

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 17, 2013 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Law Day and the 31st anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise today to pay tribute to Law Day and the 31st anniversary of *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Law Day is celebrated nationally on April 17.

Law Day recognizes the anniversary of the proclamation of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* signed on April 17, 1982. It was indeed on April 17, 1982, that Queen Elizabeth II and the Prime Minister signed the *Charter*. I'm going to come back to the signing ceremony in a moment.

In honour of this milestone, the Canadian Bar Association introduced Law Day in 1983 as a means to commemorate the foundation of the Canadian Bill of Rights brought forward by Prime Minister Diefenbaker in 1960. Today's celebration is also about educating the public about the legal system.

Prime Minister Diefenbaker stated that a bill of rights was needed to take a forthright stand against discrimination based on colour, creed or racial origin. The Canadian Bill of Rights protects numerous rights including the right to life, liberty and security of person, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, equality rights, rights to fundamental justice and the right to counsel. These rights are reflected in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which we are celebrating today.

The bill of rights also included the right to enjoyment of property, which is not enshrined in the *Charter*. I mentioned the Diefenbaker bill of rights because of his government's important commitment and contribution to the Canadian rights. I also want to note that Canada was able to advance our constitutional development through peaceful dialogue and negotiation. This is one of Canada's greatest contributions to the world: the commitment to the peaceful transfer of power.

As we watched the funeral for Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, I was reminded of her legacy. I admire the willingness of her government to agree to the transition of power from the United Kingdom to Canada. That signing ceremony we celebrate today is a reflection of Canadian ideals and values of Canadian rights and freedoms.

Law Day is marked by projects and activities designed for the public to learn about the law, the legal profession, and the legal institutions that form the cornerstones of our Canadian democracy.

Law Day is organized nationally by the CBA and locally by the association's Yukon branch. I encourage everyone to visit their website and watch the interesting video of the signing ceremony.

Law Day's purpose is to educate and inform Yukoners about the role and importance of law, with a particular emphasis on access to justice. This government continues to ensure that access to justice remains a priority for all Yukoners through funding to Legal Aid and alternative courts, such as the Community Wellness Court and the Domestic Violence Treatment Options Court. This year the Government of Yukon is involved in a special campaign to ensure that some of our most vulnerable citizens — children — are provided with access to justice through a national Cybertip campaign.

Internet crime, particularly crimes against children, is on the rise throughout the world. We need Yukoners to report these crimes through www.cybertip.ca or your local RCMP office when they are discovered. As adults, we must also take the time to teach our children how to use the Internet appropriately to help them avoid cyber crime and cyber bullying before it occurs.

To help celebrate Law Day, the 23rd annual Law Day charity fun run and walk will take place on Friday, May 3 at noon.

Not only will I start the race behind the Whitehorse Visitor Information Centre, along the Millennium Trail, but I am participating in the walk/run along with Whitehorse's Mayor, His Worship Dan Curtis. I urge all Yukoners to take part in the run/walk as the proceeds raised will go to a very good cause: the Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon.

LDAY's aim is to enable persons with learning disabilities to reach their maximum potential. This is a great organization, making a very valuable contribution to Yukon. The proceeds from this year's Law Day run will be used to help young Yukoners from low-income families to attend Camp Raven, where they can improve their social skills, build self-esteem, and express creativity and have fun. I would like to thank and congratulate the volunteers who make the Law Day charity fun run possible.

Ms. Moorcroft: On behalf of the Official Opposition, I rise today to pay tribute to the 31st anniversary of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. On April 17, 1982, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II signed into law the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, forming the first part of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

The establishment of the *Constitution Act, 1982* did several things. Notably, it created a document that codified the fundamental rights and freedoms that Canadians have fought and struggled for since Confederation in 1867, and it entrenched the principles contained in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Law Day is a national event celebrating the signing of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Originated by the Canadian Bar Association and first held in Canada in 1983, Law Day is aimed at educating and informing the public about the role and importance of law. Since many people have a limited knowledge about the law and how the legal system works,

Law Day empowers the public at large. It provides an excellent opportunity for the profession to educate the public about the vital role that lawyers and the judiciary serve in guaranteeing an open, independent and unbiased judicial system.

On the occasion of the anniversary of the *Charter*, I would like to note its impact in Yukon in two particular areas. Section 35 of the Constitution and section 25 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* contain clauses protecting the aboriginal and treaty rights of Canada's aboriginal peoples. According to Renée Dupuis, former chief commissioner of the Indian Specific Claims Commission, the recognition of aboriginals as peoples in the *Charter* and in the Constitution directly referred to international law and indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination. It sent a very important message.

Yukon First Nation rights that are established in the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and in 11 final land claims agreements are constitutionally protected, and government must meet a high test in respecting the intent and content of these agreements. The duty to consult with First Nations means that arbitrary decisions taken in the past can no longer occur. As a result of the *Charter*, governments now have a duty to consult aboriginal peoples when resource development and other government changes greatly affect them. It ensures First Nations will be able to participate in the process. The Supreme Court of Canada upheld government's duty to consult with First Nations before infringing on aboriginal title when lands claimed by First Nations are proposed for development. In *Delgamuukw*, the court heard and recognized the validity of oral history evidence from First Nation elders, who took the court back to how they had practised their laws to protect the lands and resources long before the first European knew they existed.

Another legacy of the *Charter* is the recognition of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer community. Since 1982, court decisions across Canada have extended equal rights to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Canadians.

As a result of the *Charter*, the culture has changed, and there is far greater acceptance of the LGBTQ community in our society. The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* reminds us that we must continue to work on inclusion and affirmation in Yukon, particularly of LGBTQ youth. We must show leadership in demonstrating tolerance and acceptance in our school system toward gay and lesbian youth so that they know they are equal members in our society.

Today, as New Zealand passes its marriage equality bill recognizing gay marriage, here in Canada we celebrate 31 years of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as one of the first countries in the Commonwealth — indeed, in the world — to formalize equality rights for all of its citizens. Thank you.

Mr. Silver: I rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to Law Day and to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Law Day was originated in 1983 by the Canadian Bar Association to raise Canadians' awareness of our legal rights and obligations. More recently, Law Day has been chosen appro-

priately to also celebrate the signing of Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Today, April 17, 2013, marks the 31st anniversary of the patriation of the Canadian Constitution and the creation of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. This opened a new chapter in Canadian history and the emergence of an important influence on Canada's development.

Canada first received limited autonomy in 1867 through the *British North America Act*, which became the first Canadian Constitution until 1982. The first Constitution of Canada did not delineate the inherent rights of Canadian citizens, but did imply that Canada would be a free and democratic society with freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of association for all. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, however, specifically outlined these freedoms, and others, in the Constitution, which guarantees every citizen extensive rights under the law.

As the first Commonwealth nation to adopt a bill of rights, Canada has influenced other former British colonies as they create or revise their own constitutions. The *Canadian Charter* has been influencing not just Canadian law, but jurisprudence and the drafting of constitutions around the world. Israel, Hong Kong and eastern European countries have also drawn from the Canadian example. From the enactment of the Bill of Rights in 1960, through the dawn of the 1980s, the overall global constitutional trend was one of increasing similarity to the Canadian Constitution. Our *Charter*, with its significant global impact, serves as an example to the world. The *Charter* has been a driving force of change and progress. It has shaped the important aspects of our identity and the affirmation of our society's values.

The *Charter* has had a major impact on the promotion and protection of human rights in Canada and what we, as Canadians, believe is necessary in a free and democratic society. We must take time to pause and to reflect on the persistent human rights challenges that still continue worldwide. As millions of people are protesting for basic freedoms and who dream of having their democratic rights and civil liberties protected, we in Canada have the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guaranteeing our fundamental human rights.

As Canadians, we can be proud of our country for we are a nation that believes in the rights of its citizens. The promise of fairness, justice, and opportunity is a beacon of hope that has drawn millions of new Canadians to our shores and opened up Canadian societies to greater diversity.

We take this opportunity to thank and recognize the hard work done by our Yukon Human Rights Commission and the Yukon Human Rights Board of Adjudication in defending the rights of many Yukoners. We would also like to recognize the acknowledgments of many human rights workers around the world in their struggle fighting for freedom and for democracy. Thank you.

Speaker: Are there any introductions of visitors?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Kent: During what everyone knows as Education Week, I feel privileged to introduce three classes from Whitehorse that have joined us here today, starting with Madame Colgan's grade 4 class from Whitehorse Elementary School. Many of the students in attendance wrote letters to me when we were seeking advice for setting the school calendars, and I thank them for their input into that process. Also joining us today are two classes from Porter Creek Secondary School — Mrs. Renate Schmidt's grade 10 social studies class, as well as Mr. Tim Falkenberg's grade 11 social studies class.

As has been the custom here lately, I would invite any members who are able to join me after Question Period in the members' lounge to meet with the students, to do so. At this time, I will ask everyone to welcome them to the Assembly.

Applause

Mr. Silver: I'd like to also introduce today in the gallery a vital member of the EMS community, a guitar god and also a longtime Yukoner, but from Antigonish, Nova Scotia originally, Mr. Gerard Dinn.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I have two documents for tabling today. The first is the current protocol between the minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation — me — as representative of the Government of Yukon, and the chair of the Yukon Development Corporation as representative of the Yukon Development Corporation.

I also have for tabling the 2013 shareholder letter of expectation from the minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation to the Yukon Development Corporation, signed by me and the chair.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any introductions of bills?

Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to move energy planning in-house, away from the Yukon Energy Corporation, to allow for broader public policy concerns to be part of the decision-making process.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Music programs in the schools

Mr. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, this week we are fortunate to be able to listen to and applaud the efforts of young Yukoners performing during the Rotary Music Festival. Studying music develops areas of the brain involved in language and reasoning, encourages persistence, and provides children with a means of self-expression.

However, less than half the schools in Yukon have designated staff to provide music as a subject. Why is this the case when there is so much research indicating the importance of music to the learning success of students? It is clear we need to provide teachers with training on music education and we need to recruit and support staff who are trained as music teachers. What is the minister doing to ensure that all primary students have access to learning and exploring music on a consistent basis?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I know that there are a number of initiatives underway in many Yukon schools that encourage music. As mentioned, we are very fortunate this week to be entertained during lunch hour by participants in the Rotary Music Festival from 12:15 to 12:45 all week. We also have a number of students who provide us with entertainment during the Christmas season as well. When it comes to teacher training, as members know, we have moved from 14 different calendars to two common start dates for the school year. At the front end of those common start dates will be two teacher institutes. Perhaps that's an opportunity for us to introduce music training to teachers.

I guess the other aspect is trying to group some of the rural schools into rural hubs and perhaps have shared resources between communities that are in close proximity, provided their calendars align. We have just received the final calendar start dates for many of the schools. We'll look to incorporate some of the ideas brought forward by the member opposite when we're able to cluster those schools. I couldn't agree more — music is an extremely important part of what we're able to offer to our students as far as their learning development and becoming good citizens in our society.

Mr. Tredger: I would like to hear more on music education being provided to students living outside of Whitehorse. Research shows that the benefits of incorporating music into the daily education processes are many. It allows for a strong connection to local culture and traditions. First Nation culture has long been transmitted through song and dance. Music accesses different learning styles. It connects with students and can provide them with success that they might not be experiencing in other subject areas. Music education is experiential education.

While rural schools present special challenges, there are solutions. What is the strategy for ensuring that all Yukon students, particularly students in rural Yukon, have music offered to them in a consistent manner?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I guess, in addition to some of the programs that I mentioned in my opening response, there are also enhanced resources to the Artist in the School program of

\$100,000 per year. I know I've been fortunate to attend many, if not all, of the All City Band Society concerts that have taken place, and that program is an award-winning program that travels Outside at least once per year to different music festivals — a very well-run and successful program.

As mentioned again in my opening response, when it comes to delivering education in rural Yukon, I think we have to look at innovative ways to do that. Clearly, we can't afford to have a music teacher in every school, but perhaps by setting up rural hubs that gives us an opportunity to share resources among communities that are in close proximity. There are a number of different options that we can explore, and I look forward to doing just that as the rural strategy and the rural action plan develop over the coming months and as we look to offer new programming, and look to have those clusters, or those hubs, of schools identified that have chosen to adopt the same start date and are in close proximity to each other.

Question re: Renewable energy strategy

Ms. White: Yukoners are very disappointed in the lack of direction shown by government on renewable energy. Yukoners participated in good faith in the energy charettes. They like the softer language of the Energy Corporation — language that hinted at flexibility, with words like “transition” and “option”. I have for tabling the Yukon Energy Corporation background paper entitled, *LNG Transition Option*.

The Yukon Party's true colours are showing. “Transition” is now “replacement”. No options, no cost-benefit analysis. The minister is directing Yukon toward an increased reliance on and consumption of fossil fuels, oil and gas extraction, pipelines, offshore development. This is the Yukon Party's direction on energy, as it is found in their 2011 election platform. It's not evidence-based; it's political.

When will the minister provide this House with a cost-benefit analysis and timeline for replacing diesel with LNG, so that Yukoners can compare it with the cost associated with renewable energy options?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, as has become unfortunately all too common in the House, the member, like many of her colleagues in Question Period, is quite simply wrong and does not have her facts correct. I would refer her and all Yukoners to the *Energy Strategy for Yukon*, which is available online. It is something that is not only signed by me and committed to by this government, but in fact it is referenced in the protocol and letter of expectation that I just tabled that is the current protocol between the Yukon Development Corporation and me and the letter of expectations for the Yukon Development Corporation and its subsidiary.

It does make reference to the pursuit of and support for development of renewable energy, but as I've explained to the member in the past, unlike her love for wind as the preferred source above all others, our primary focus is ensuring that when the development of new energy sources occurs, it's done so in a manner that is responsible and does not place an undue burden on ratepayers or taxpayers.

Ms. White: Yesterday in this House, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources committed Yukoners, the resources and the public utility to long-term increased reliance on

a fossil fuel. This commitment to fossil fuels was made despite the Yukon Party government's promise to implement the energy strategy. All last week, the minister failed to answer our questions based on the energy strategy, specifically — and I quote from page 4: number one, “increase renewable energy supply in Yukon by 20% by 2020”; and number two, “support and demonstrate renewable energy projects in communities off the electrical grid to reduce diesel use.”

Why won't the minister share his plan to support and demonstrate renewable energy projects in an off-grid community, if he has one, and what is the minister's plan to increased renewable energy supply by 20 percent by 2020?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would remind the member, if she looked at the *Energy Strategy for Yukon* that she just quoted from, whose signature is on that document. It's mine.

That is something that this government remains committed to. I see the assistant heckler in chief is starting up from the NDP benches again. I would point out to members, in fact, that we remain committed to the pursuit of renewable energies. We are currently working in support of feasibility studies in a number of areas.

The specific project that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King stood here and asked me to commit to is a project that will be assessed on its merits, but we're not going to engage in commitments to support specific energy projects by specific proponents here in this House. They will be evaluated on their merits. They will be evaluated by staff of the Energy Corporation and, of course, by the Policy branch in Energy, Mines and Resources. Also, as members may not know, because the NDP seems to often have a very loose understanding of the facts, there are also requirements under the *Public Utilities Act* for the review of projects, and projects over certain size have to have approval by the Yukon Utilities Board before they can be added into the rate base.

Ms. White: I am sure Yukoners are confident now that they know the minister's signature is guaranteeing their renewable future. A lot of good departmental work on the potential of renewable energy has already been done. I have for tabling a list of projects largely abandoned by this government, to be replaced by LNG, a fossil fuel.

Also, apparently, to be replaced with LNG is a 2009 pan-territorial commitment to develop an inventory of current and future renewable energy sources. Under this minister's direction, Yukon will lose out on the opportunities associated with diversified renewable power. Wind energy is one of the fastest growing energy sectors, but the Yukon Party prefers the fossil-age approach.

Where is this government's commitment to the long-term development of our hydro resources? The minister is saying it takes a lot of time, but the Yukon Party has been in power for over 10 years and Yukoners have had enough waiting. Can the minister tell this House what progress it has made with long-term hydro power planning?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member does not seem to be aware of it, but in fact the largest single federal investment in developing renewable energy north of 60 was the investment in the Mayo B energy project. However, the timelines for hydro

projects are quite significant. They are multi-year projects. We do have a number that have had some work done on them that the Yukon government has inherited from the NCPC, Northern Canada Power Commission. There has been internal work done. Yesterday the Member for Klondike criticized the Yukon government's interest in working with the State of Alaska on the possibility of the West Creek hydro project. We have made clear in our 2011 election platform our commitment to development of renewable energy, including and especially development of hydroelectric projects. As I explained to the member yesterday, the best way to characterize the use of liquefied natural gas is as a replacement for diesel's role in the system.

Diesel generators and diesel-produced electricity have been part of the Yukon Energy Corporation's mix and Yukon Electrical's mix for years. Both utilities are looking at moving to liquefied natural gas, because the capital infrastructure is roughly the same cost for a generator, and the cost of fuel is roughly a third of that of diesel, plus the carbon emissions are lower.

Question re: Student information system

Mr. Silver: In 2009, the Auditor General of Canada issued a very critical report of the Yukon Party government's handling of education.

In her report, it emphasized the need for a comprehensive student information system. The government took the report and bought a system from British Columbia and called it YSIS, or the Yukon student information system. At the time it was purchased, there were already problems with it in British Columbia. In 2011, B.C. scrapped it altogether. The Government of Yukon has now been forced to do the same thing.

Why did the Yukon Party government buy a system that was already being boycotted by teachers in British Columbia? Can the minister confirm that over \$750,000 was spent on a program that never actually worked properly?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The Yukon student information system, or YSIS, has been stable this year.

Teachers are more proficient and comfortable using the system. Many of the problems have come forth, particularly in rural Yukon, with respect to the connectivity aspects, and we're working with the provider to address those as well.

When it comes to the replacement of that system, it has become necessary because the developer, Pearson School Systems, is going to be decommissioning YSIS. It will need to be replaced by early 2016. We're working with the B.C. Ministry of Education. They've sent out an RFP, and the Yukon has been included with B.C. in that RFP. So we are taking proactive steps in looking to replace YSIS.

In my initial tours of community schools upon being named Minister of Education, that was one of the topics I addressed with staff in many of those schools. While there have been some problems with the system, I do believe it is meeting some of the requirements that were addressed by the Auditor General in providing us with good statistics and good information. Again, we look forward to the replacement system and look forward to engaging the education community in doing that.

Mr. Silver: I'm glad that it's finally stable, but the Yukon Party government has spent more than \$750,000 on a student tracking system that was dead on arrival. Mentors of mine compare it to operating with a hammer. It was already failing in B.C. and the government was warned by the Yukon Teachers Association not to buy this product.

The government went ahead anyway, and they didn't listen. The Yukon Party likes to brag about good fiscal management — the centrepiece of this year's budget is the \$27-million bailout for the Yukon Hospital Corporation. This bailout is necessary because the government allowed the corporation to borrow money that it could not pay back. Now, one of the biggest capital items on the Education budget, is an extra \$750,000 to replace YSIS with a new program.

Does the government think that having to replace a \$750,000 tracking system only two years after using it is good fiscal management?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Perhaps the member opposite didn't listen to my first response, where I said it has become necessary to replace the system because Pearson School Systems will be decommissioning YSIS, and it needs to be replaced by 2016. Again, during my early time as Minister of Education doing the community tours and talking to staff and school councils and students, particularly in rural Yukon, I was able to address and listen to concerns about the YSIS system. As mentioned, it is providing us with very valuable data. Some of the data I have referenced in the House with respect to student attendance has been derived from YSIS, and we're getting more accurate information. Again, this spring, a committee of stakeholders will meet to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current system and determine requirements for any new student information system.

The price of that new system will be dependent on whether or not we select the same system as B.C. or choose independently. We're working hard to meet the requirements. Again, we aren't decommissioning YSIS — it's the system owner, Pearson School Systems. We're looking forward to a replacement by early 2016, and that's precisely what I want to do — concentrate on moving forward and providing a system for our teachers and our educators that is user-friendly, but gives us the data that we need.

Mr. Silver: It's a good thing that the company finally has given us an out to move away from this system, because it didn't do those things that it was supposed to do. The Government of Yukon didn't plan properly for the purchase of this new tracking system to begin with. In 2010, it bought something from B.C. that didn't work properly and that was pretty archaic. They spent over \$750,000 on it, and now Yukoners are paying again — another \$750,000 for a new product to provide the same service. This is poor planning. This is poor fiscal management.

I can only hope that the government does a better job with the new system than it did with the old one, and I really hope that the minister is involving teachers, school councils and administrators and making sure that they are involved from the beginning before we select it.

Can the minister tell Yukoners when the new system will be up and running in our schools?

Hon. Mr. Kent: To repeat for the member opposite answers that I gave in my previous two responses: Pearson School Systems will be decommissioning YSIS and it will need to be replaced by early 2016. That's in response to when that system will be in place.

With respect to his question about involving stakeholders, as I mentioned earlier this spring, a committee of stakeholders will meet to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current system and determine requirements for any new student information system. We are working with British Columbia right now, we're part of their request for proposals, so many of the questions raised in the final supplementary are questions that I've already answered, but I'm always happy to repeat myself during Question Period for the benefit of the member opposite.

Question re: Alaska Highway corridor functional plan

Ms. Moorcroft: The Alaska Highway corridor is the transportation hub of Yukon. The traffic stream from downtown Whitehorse has increased dramatically over the years with the development of new country residential subdivision lots east of Whitehorse, from Mount Sima Road through to the Cowley Creek subdivision. There is heavy traffic along the Whitehorse Alaska Highway corridor with Marsh Lake, Mount Lorne and Carcross commuters travelling to and from Whitehorse daily, as well as from Porter Creek and neighbourhoods west of Whitehorse.

In spite of the extensive development, the Whitehorse Alaska Highway corridor stretch of highway hasn't changed much to accommodate the increased traffic. The Yukon government needs to create a long-term comprehensive plan to improve safety and traffic flow for the Whitehorse Alaska Highway corridor from the Carcross Cut-off to the Mayo Road Cut-off.

When will this government be tabling its plans for Alaska Highway improvements along this high-volume traffic area?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: As I rise today, I just want to thank those who do work for us keeping our highways safe and secure. This morning is a good example of a bit of surprise from Mother Nature, and I heard our maintenance people were out there.

Addressing the member opposite, that's exactly what we are doing. We have a corridor study that we're doing. It's not finalized yet; when it's finalized, I'll be tabling it in the House.

Ms. Moorcroft: Last year, the minister said that they would anticipate having public consultation on the Alaska Highway corridor functional plan in the fall of 2012. There have been a number of fatalities on the highway over the years. A look at safety and accesses is overdue. None of us want to drive by any more of those roadside shrines that spring up when a traffic death occurs.

There have been many developments over the years along this stretch — intersections and lights. Some people have reported safety concerns, about which I have written to the minister. The intermittent turning lanes that have been developed to provide access to country residential lots and subdivisions are

hazardous. Mr. Speaker, the current conditions are not safe. We need a better plan.

Once again, I have to ask the minister: Where is the long-term planning? Why has the minister not put a higher priority on planning highway improvements along the Whitehorse Alaska Highway corridor section?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Like I alluded to earlier, I will be tabling that when it's done.

I wanted to get the point across here that we do work with the City of Whitehorse on this; it's within the city limits. A good example of one of the things that we do is with the proponents of the Meadow Lakes Golf Course. When that was built, we worked with the city and worked with the proponent to put in the lanes that were required there for safety. I figured that at some point in time I was going to get a question on the KMA Speedway from the member opposite. There is a lot of different stuff that we do — MacKenzie RV Park and their development — we're looking at access routes for that.

We're also looking at the big picture and that's the whole corridor from cut-off to cut-off. When that comes through, there will be a lot of different facts that come through from working with the city. Whether it is ambulances or whether it's the city maintaining it or us maintaining it, we work with the city on it, so it's important that we do this thoroughly and we engage people. When the corridor study is finished, I will bring it to the House and we'll probably debate it.

Ms. Moorcroft: The minister said that the government worked with the City of Whitehorse in providing access to the new subdivision by the Meadow Lakes Golf Course and he referred to the proposal to turn the KMA Speedway into a recreational facility for the Yukon Horse and Riders Association. The minister, however, has not agreed with the city to work to provide access from the existing access to the old KMA site. So again I ask why there is such a delay? Will the minister commit to providing a safe access to the former KMA Speedway site so that it does not have to disrupt a quiet cul-de-sac in the area?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I'm just going to quote from the letter that I sent the Member for Copperbelt South: "Highways and Public Works confirmed that this intersection does not meet current Transportation Association Canada safety standards" — that's why we're doing a highways corridor study too, by the way — "The posted speed limit is 90 and a minimum site distance of 305 metres is required in both directions. Site distances at this access are approximately 250 metres to the south and 265 metres to the north. Given the current conditions, this access is not safe."

That's why I said we're working with the City of Whitehorse. I talked to the two proponents and their projects — before their costs are accommodated, we'll work with them on that, and if they decide to go in there, they're going to have to provide the funding themselves, as did the Meadow Lakes Golf Course and MacKenzie RV Park.

We work with the city; we address where the issues are. If the city is proposing a subdivision, we'll work with the city on giving exactly what I just read in my response to the Member for Copperbelt South — whether it meets tax standards or not.

We'll work with the city to make sure it's safe for the travelling public.

Question re: Emergency medical services

Ms. Stick: A medevac doctor is on call to support the emergency medical service workers and community nurses. On the front lines, EMS workers and community nurses are the first responders. If it is their opinion that a treatment needed is beyond their scope of practice, they call the medevac doctor to get orders to proceed.

If a physician is needed to attend to an emergency in rural Yukon, it is the medevac doctor who travels by medevac or by ground ambulance. The Minister of Health and Social Services mentioned in June 2012 that the medevac fee for physicians in the territory was negotiated out of the last physician agreement but that he was currently having discussions on this issue.

Can the minister tell us if the medevac program will be maintained, or what options to replace and provide essential emergency services to rural Yukon communities are being considered?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Of course the medevac system will be maintained in the Yukon. The only item at issue is how it will be paid for. As I stated earlier, the on-call fee that was paid to physicians at Whitehorse General Hospital of some \$764 a day, I believe, to be on call to the medevac system, was negotiated out of the contract. It was an agreement between doctors and the government. Unfortunately, what wasn't clearly articulated is what would follow, and that's what we are in the process of doing now. To suggest that we won't be continuing the medevac system in the territory is ridiculous.

Ms. Stick: I was not suggesting that there would not be a medevac service in the Yukon. I was asking the minister if he could tell us what the options are that are being considered so that people in the communities, and workers, would know what they can expect. Front-line responders provide an invaluable service to all Yukoners. Emergency responders and nurses need to be safe and supported on the job. Front-line workers have training and liability that extends as far as their scope of practice and no further. As first responders, they face difficult dilemmas regarding the scope of practice in an emergency. That's why they need backup and support in an emergency. I was asking the minister what this government's long-term plan is for supporting the local and rural EMS workers and community nurses.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Well, Mr. Speaker, we're all too aware of how important our emergency medical services are across this territory. That's one of the reasons that the Minister of Community Services recently had a large increase in that budget, because we do appreciate the job they do for us.

As I said to the members opposite some time ago, we are currently discussing — not only with the medical community and the Emergency Measures community — what format we will use in the future, but we are hoping to come up with new and innovative features. We all know that the cost of health care in the territory is increasing at a dramatic rate, and what we're looking for are not only solutions that will provide the current service, but perhaps to provide it in a better way, per-

haps at a lower cost. Those are the things that we are currently looking at.

There is nothing that says EMS or services provided currently by physicians in the Whitehorse General Hospital cannot be provided by physicians in other parts of the territory or in other parts of the country.

Question re: Dawson City recreation centre

Mr. Silver: Before the spring sitting began, I attended a Business After Hours meeting in Dawson, where the Premier announced a new capital construction project. He began by saying it was a project that was championed by the former MLA for the Klondike. At that point, people's ears perked up because the building that the former MLA championed was the new recreation centre. He even held a sod-turning ceremony with the former Yukon Party Minister of Community Services, but alas, the Premier's announcement was actually about the McDonald Lodge being replaced.

The long-standing Yukon Party commitment to build a new recreation centre in Dawson seems to have fallen off the table since the last election. This year's budget contains no funding and nothing is mentioned in the long-term plan either.

Will the minister admit that plans for a new recreation centre in Dawson are off the table?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'd like to thank the MLA for Klondike for raising this important question. Actually, I had a number of discussions with the City of Dawson — the newly elected mayor and council — on this very issue. In fact, during a recent visit back in the month of January, early in the new year, during my community visits in the territory, I again had the opportunity to discuss this issue and had the opportunity to certainly take a look first-hand and review what work has proceeded at the recreation centre, the issues that carry with the recreation centre, and to talk about options with the mayor and council and the community on a go-forward basis.

So there are dollars included within this year's budget, as there were the last number of years. In fact, we have extended our agreement with the City of Dawson, which will continue with the \$4.5 million, I believe it was, in ongoing work in structural upgrades and repairs to the current facility.

In the meantime, we look forward to hearing from the community of Dawson in terms of their priorities for recreation on a go-forward basis.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate the minister's answers. I'm very well aware of the meetings that they've had and the funding that is allocated for the existing building; however, the minister didn't answer my question, which is about a new facility.

The Yukon Party candidate in the Klondike during the 2011 election campaign told voters a newly elected Yukon Party government would build a new rec centre. People expected the government to live up to that commitment, and it looks increasingly like this is not going to happen. There is no money in the budget for it to happen this year and nothing in the long-term plan either.

The Yukon Party has broken its promise for a new facility and instead wants the municipality to try to fix the old one. The City of Dawson recently submitted its phase 2 report to the

minister, as the two parties try to determine if the building can, in fact, be saved.

Why has the Yukon Party backed away from its promise to build a new facility in our community?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Again, just to correct the record for the member opposite, we are carrying on with our commitment of a \$4-million contribution agreement with the City of Dawson. In fact, that agreement did expire at the end of this fiscal year, but we have honoured our agreement at the request of the City of Dawson to extend that agreement for a number of years to carry on with structural upgrades and/or repairs of that particular facility. So there are dollars contained within this year's budget, as there have been in the last number of years.

There is an oversight committee comprised of representatives from the Department of Community Services, as well as representatives from the City of Dawson. In fact, they are putting together their annual plan to determine the expenditures on a go-forward basis with respect to this facility. As I understand it, there is an engineering assessment, and that will help us find and determine ways to make the best use of the facility and to identify ways to improve recreation infrastructure in the community of Dawson.

So again, we are working with the City of Dawson; we are working with the community, and we certainly look forward to doing that in the year to come.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, before the last election the Yukon Party held two sod-turning ceremonies for two capital projects. One was the F.H. Collins Secondary School, which has undergone extensive changes since the announcement but appears to still be on the agenda for this government. There will be a new F.H. Collins Secondary School.

In Dawson the sod-turning orchestrated by the former MLA and the former Minister of Community Services was as far as the new recreation centre has gone, and it seems like that's as far as it's going to go. It's clear that a new facility has been taken off the table and that the government has broken a major commitment it made to voters during the 2011 election campaign.

Let's turn the page. What is the cost for that stabilization mentioned in the engineering reports for the current facility in order to make it fully functional and also able to have an ice plant installed?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Indeed, to start off where the member opposite began his question, I would like to acknowledge the former MLA for Klondike, Mr. Steve Nordick, for the work that he did in ensuring that something so important to the community is erected, because what we had — McDonald Lodge — is timing out. We will go forward with a new seniors nursing home for that community, which will also be larger. We will be able to facilitate a broader scope of health services. I would like to acknowledge and thank the former member for the work that he has done.

But talking about investment in Dawson City recently — if I just do the quick math — this government has invested over \$75 million in Dawson City in the last few years: a new health centre that is almost completed right now; the new waste-water treatment plant; the district heating system; KIAC, the Klondike

Institute of Arts and Culture. This government looked for and found specialized asphalt to put on Front Street to minimize the erosion from permafrost. To find a solution that works in Yukon, we had to have that asphalt brought in from Europe. This government continues to support the Klondike in spite of what this member has to say.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 380

Clerk: Motion No. 380, standing in the name of Mr. Hassard.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to enhance marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through research-based, market-driven campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's primary markets of the United States, Canada and German-speaking Europe; secondary markets of Australia, the United Kingdom and Japan; and Yukon's emerging markets of the Netherlands, South Korea and France.

Mr. Hassard: It gives me great pleasure to rise today to speak on behalf of Motion No. 380.

In 2012, the Yukon hosted over 320,000 visitors, including nearly 34,000 of those visitors being from overseas. In 2012, there was a four-percent increase in visitors over 2011, and a two-percent increase in foreign visitors alone.

Each year, tourism generates approximately \$200 million. Over one-quarter of the businesses in the Yukon generate some of their revenue from tourism. More than four percent of the Yukon's GDP is directly attributed to tourism. This year we have seen a record 294,000 passengers travelling through the Erik Nielsen International Airport, and it was the fourth straight year for growth in Yukon air travel.

Germany continues to be the Yukon's largest overseas market, representing approximately 26 percent. This is largely due to Condor, which brought over 4,000 visitors to the Yukon this year. They contributed approximately \$8 million to \$10 million to the Yukon's economy. We had more than 3,400 Japanese visitors to the Yukon this year, most of whom came in the winter to experience the northern lights.

Why do people come to the Yukon? Well, I believe they come for the beauty, the culture and the history. For 2013, the *Lonely Planet* listed Yukon as a top 10, must-visit travel destination. Subsequent global media coverage generated tremendous exposure for Yukon and expanded awareness of Yukon as a premier outdoor travel destination.

Following media familiarization trips led by the department, both *Reader's Digest* and *Outside* magazine have highlighted Yukon as a must-visit Canadian destination, highlight-

ing some of the exciting new visitor experiences Yukon has to offer.

Visitor information centres in six Yukon communities provide travel information and visitor services to over 231,000 visitors. They inform visitors of opportunities to experience the culture and history of the region. The Yukon government has installed interpretive signage panels at over 180 sites on scenic routes and points of interest throughout the Yukon. In terms of the culture, Yukon government provides \$1.2 million to 13 museums, seven First Nations cultural centres that present our culture and history to over 100,000 visitors each year.

Last year, the Government of Yukon added 10 works to the Yukon permanent art collection, which is now valued at more than \$2.5 million, with 370 pieces featured in 24 public government buildings throughout the Yukon. Last year, the government provided \$80,000 to support 22 advanced artist projects that contributed to artistic and community development.

\$100,000 of funding was provided to support 20 Yukon artists and ensembles to tour creative works nationally and internationally.

Last year, the government, through the Department of Tourism and Culture, provided \$2.4 million in funding to 62 non-profit arts organizations and collectives. This funding enabled over 100,000 audience members to enjoy more than 1,000 arts events.

The Culture Quest fund has been established as an ongoing funding program with \$157,000 annually for projects that animate our arts and culture.

The government provided \$345,000 to the Northern Cultural Expressions Society in funding to support its carving programs that help emerging artists develop the artistic, social and business skills required for personal success.

A \$200,000 contribution from the department helped 80 Yukon performing, visual, literary, culinary and fashion arts to be showcased at the Northern Scene, which is a 10-day festival in Ottawa featuring established and emerging artists from here in the north.

In terms of marketing, Yukon artists shared their talents with fellow Canadians and with audiences abroad in Australia, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States through assistance by the touring artist fund.

The new Haines Junction visitor information centre located within the Dä Ku Cultural Centre in Haines Junction showcases the work of 41 Yukon artists while providing travel information to Yukon visitors.

The Yukon government's Beringia Centre and the MacBride Museum are without a doubt the Yukon's most-visited museums with over 20,000 visitors per year.

How does the Yukon support and protect these cultural and historical sites? We have identified and recorded over 3,900 archaeological sites and maintain a collection of over 47,500 artifacts.

In collaboration with the Klondike Placer Miners Association, over 3,000 new fossils were collected for the paleontology program last year alone. Recently, the Government of Yukon

and Kwanlin Dun celebrated two special Yukoners who found some ancient bison and reported them.

Our history is interesting and compelling. Visitors to our territory want to experience our culture and our history. The government co-owns and co-manages three historic sites with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Selkirk First Nations. Yukon historic sites inventory lists over 3,500 records of historic resources such as gravesites, engineering features, buildings and structures. The government has worked with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation to complete an archaeological survey of the Blackstone River and to locate and identify unmarked graves in the Moosehide cemetery. Seven locations across the Yukon have been designated and protected as territorial historic sites under the *Historic Resources Act*. The government has improved visitor access and interpretation at three of its major sites through trail and bridge improvements at Fortymile, enhanced interpretive facilities on Herschel Island, and a third interpretive building at Fort Selkirk.

The government is leading a \$479,000 archaeological site inventory and predictive modelling project supported by CanNor. In partnership with the local First Nations, this project will assist the placer mining industry in meeting regulatory and YESAA requirements.

In June of 2012, the government co-hosted the Frozen Pasts — Third International Glacial Archaeology Symposium with the Kwanlin Dun First Nation. The symposium explored Yukon's ancient cultures and our changing environment.

The palaeontology program continued to provide an enhanced presence in the Klondike goldfields and, in cooperation with placer miners, seasonal staff acquired over 3,000 new fossils for the Yukon palaeontology collection.

The department's historic properties assistance program distributed \$90,000 for 12 projects to preserve historic places in Dawson City, Mayo, Keno, Carcross, Whitehorse and my hometown of Teslin.

In May of 2012, the Heritage Resources unit's popular archaeology publication, *The Frozen Past: The Yukon Ice Patches*, received national recognition, winning a public communications award from the Canadian Archaeological Association.

Some Yukoners may not be aware of how much the Yukon has to offer. How does the government market the Yukon? Well, Tourism and Culture is implementing the overseas travel destination awareness project to mitigate the possible effects of the global recession on Yukon visitors. Supported by CanNor funding, this project is intended to market Yukon as a year-round quality travel destination to overseas markets. Investment made through this project has resulted in a significant increase from Japan and Australia and investment in tourism packages by Korea's largest tour operator. The department's marketing project with CanNor resulted in an increase in higher yield overseas visitors, which has offset an anticipated decline in visitors from the U.S. and other countries that are suffering from depressed economies. In October 2012, the government entered into a three-year marketing project with Holland America for \$50,000 a year to support joint efforts to promote cruise

tour product that provides significant revenue and benefit to the Yukon tourism industry.

The government organized the Canadian Tourism Commission GoMedia marketplace in May 2012, hosting 125 international and domestic media as well as 170 tourism industry members. A few of us here were involved with the GoMedia thing that was here in Whitehorse, and it was very interesting and very educational.

Also in 2012, the Yukon government signed a two-year \$150,000 cooperative marketing agreement with Fulda to promote the event in Yukon. Each year the Fulda Challenge generates European media coverage valued at over \$5 million. In 2012 the government helped celebrate the Hannover Zoo's Yukon days event, which included goldpanning, music and entertainment and other activities designed to educate attendees on the Yukon.

Overseas visitors to the Yukon generally stay longer and spend more than Canadian and U.S. visitors, which aligns with our strategy to attract high-yield customers to the Yukon. The primary targets for these initiatives are Germany and Switzerland; secondary are U.K., Australia, and Japan; while emerging markets are identified as France, the Netherlands, and South Korea.

Visitation from Australia has increased to overtake the U.K. as Yukon's second largest overseas market behind Germany. Visitation from Japan for both fall and winter aurora viewing has grown more than tenfold in the past two years and Japan is now a secondary market for Yukon.

The Department of Tourism and Culture is undertaking a strategic assessment of its investment in tourism marketing. The marketing program assessment will measure the effectiveness and the efficiency of marketing investments delivered in Yukon's domestic, U.S. and overseas markets. This assessment will be undertaken annually to guide Yukon's tourism marketing strategy and allocation of the marketing budget. This work is being done in response to a 2011 recommendation by TIA, or the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon, that Yukon undertake a review of its global marketing investments.

The marketing program assessment will assess the return on investment for all geographic markets. The data for the marketing program assessment will be drawn from border crossing statistics, air arrivals, the 2012 Yukon visitor tracking program and other relevant studies and surveys.

The motion talks about the Yukon as a quality travel destination. Well, I can tell you about a couple of quality destinations in the riding of Pelly-Nisutlin. One is the George Johnston Museum. The George Johnston Museum and Heritage Park is a must-see Teslin attraction named after the Tlingit elder, trapper, fur trader, entrepreneur and especially photographer. George Johnston's photographs, his 1928 Chevy car, all painted and white for hunting wolves on the lake, and the colourful exhibits of Tlingit ceremonial regalia and traditional artifacts tell the story of the Inland Tlingit as they met rapid changes of the first half of the 20th century.

The museum's gift shop replicating George Johnston's 1950s general store stocks Tlingit artifacts and crafts and has small Yukon gifts. There is a small theatre which shows a film,

including the film by the National Film Board, *Picturing a People*, by Tlingit director Carol Geddes. Visitors can view a 1940s-era radio building exhibit, stroll prepared trails or picnic at the interpretive rest areas.

The Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre welcomes visitors to participate in the day-to-day life of the Tlingit people whose traditions are reflected in every aspect of the facility. The striking building on the shores of Teslin Lake houses the Great Hall, home of the clan governance for the Teslin Tlingit people. It has interpretive displays featuring masks and artifacts that explain two centuries of Tlingit history and culture of the Inland Tlingit people. Feel free to stop by and visit the gift shop and the gallery, and maybe purchase some of your own authentic Tlingit art.

The Campbell Region Interpretive Centre is a great place for tourists to get information and interesting displays on the Campbell region's history, geology and wildlife. You can get information on the Faro Crane and Sheep Viewing Festival, which just happens to be coming up two weeks from now, May 3 through May 5. Everyone is invited, but please call ahead and get a room because once you get there, you are probably going to want to stay for a day or two. Unfortunately, there has been a lot of snow this year, so don't bother taking your golf clubs because there is a little too much snow for that. If anyone would like to get any more information on the Crane and Sheep Viewing Festival, you can check out the *The Frozen Mukluk*, which is Faro's newsletter, and you can find it on the town's website. For those people interested in hiking, I should mention the Dena Cho Trail that connects Ross River and Faro. It is a trail that was traditionally used by the Kaska people travelling to Mount Mye.

Tourism and Culture recognizes cooperative marketing initiatives as a strategic tool to significantly increase its global marketing reach and impact. Yukon businesses can apply to this fund to help them in their marketing efforts and Tourism Yukon matches the funds that partners put into a project, which doubles the marketing investment.

Through cooperative marketing, the Yukon government leverages approximately \$1.8 million each year from marketing partners and stakeholders. The government funds cooperative marketing initiatives in three areas — travel trade marketing, partnership marketing and local industry partnerships. \$500,000 each year is allocated to travel trade cooperative marketing with tour operators and tour wholesalers in Yukon's target markets. Travel trade initiatives utilize a variety of campaigns to promote Yukon experiences in overseas markets.

\$600,000 each year is allocated to cooperative partnership marketing agreements with destination marketing organizations, NGOs, non-traditional partners, Canadian Tourism Commission and others. Partnership marketing agreements focus on selling Yukon and the partner's destination, product or experience in a joint program.

\$700,000 each year is allocated to the tourism cooperative marketing fund. This fund provides 50-percent funding to marketing investment by Yukon operators, businesses and partners. The TCMF, or tourism cooperative marketing fund, supports marketing delivered by fund applicants. A diverse range of

Yukon businesses, operators and organizations have received funds, including Air North and the Klondike Visitors Association. I'm pretty sure that the Minister of Tourism and Culture will speak to the partnership marketing agreements with Tourism North — with Alaska — and our partnerships with the Canadian Tourism Commission.

In relation to Yukon's primary markets of the United States, Canada and German-speaking Europe, there are different types and kinds of tourists: cultural explorers and the authentic experiencer are two kinds of tourists who have a higher than average interest in visiting Yukon.

Our marketing campaigns are designed to attract these kinds of visitors. In addition to Canada and our neighbours in the United States, the primary target markets are Germany and Switzerland. The Yukon has focused our Canadian marketing on Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and Toronto. I am told that the U.S. ranks first as our visitor market, accounting for 77 percent of our total visitation. The German-speaking Europe market accounted for approximately 9,400 visitors in 2011.

The Fulda Challenge contributes approximately \$4 million annually in media coverage. As I mentioned earlier, our secondary markets include the United Kingdom, Australia and Japan. Australia represents a strong growth market, a strong interest in finding new destinations, a significant segment of consumers who have visited Canada previously and are keen to explore more. The United Kingdom is Yukon's third largest overseas market, just under two percent of all visitors and almost 20 percent of overseas visitors. Japan is a strong secondary market for the Yukon. The important thing about Japan is that a large portion of the Japanese visitors come during the winter.

The Yukon's emerging markets are Netherlands, South Korea and France — we had over 1,200 visitors in 2011 from the Netherlands, which equates to approximately 5.5 percent of overseas visitors. South Koreans, like the Japanese, a large portion of these people come for the northern lights. We had approximately 1,000 visitors. France, which is having a relatively high awareness of the Yukon as a travel destination, produced approximately 1,000 visitors as well.

I would just like to say in closing that I believe everyone understands the importance of tourism in the Yukon, how important it is to the economy and the number of jobs it creates. I look forward to hearing other people's remarks in regard to Motion No. 380, and I look forward to unanimous agreement when it comes time to vote. Thank you very much for your time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Barr: I am honoured to stand here and speak to Motion No. 380:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to enhance marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through research-based, market-driven campaigns, especially in relation to the Yukon's primary markets of the United States, Canada, and German-speaking Europe; secondary markets of Australia, United Kingdom and Japan; and Yukon's emerging markets of the Netherlands, South Korea and France.

I would also like to thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for his comments and his consideration in preparation for this motion.

I would like to also say that tourism is one of Yukon's dominant economic activities. Yukon is not only blessed with the rich history that leaps out to the public and a natural environment that is second to none, but it is also blessed with hard-working women and men who have made the Yukon a quality travel destination. The importance of this sector cannot be underestimated. Hundreds of thousands of folks come to the Yukon every year. Tourism, according to the government and the industry, brings in over \$200 million per year in direct revenues to the Yukon, and it is anticipated that this number may reach up to a quarter of a billion dollars this next year.

Mr. Speaker, this is a dependable income stream. Let us reflect on this for a moment. There is more than \$200 million per year of direct revenue, not including the indirect revenues. This \$200 million means jobs, taxes, purchases and all the things that build families, communities and the territory. According to the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon, there is a 29:1 return on investment for each dollar spent promoting Yukon's tourism opportunities. Where else can a business sector or a government get a 29:1 return on its investment? Combine that with the more than \$200 million per year in revenues that are generated — it is incredible.

It should also be noted that the tourism industry supports the hard work of the mining industry and the importance that industry plays in the Yukon, as does the Official Opposition. The tourism industry also notes that it should not be about mining everywhere at all costs. We cannot allow our two most important industries to be divided and set off against each other.

Both industries need room to grow and to thrive. The mining industry also has a role to play in tourism, as evidenced by Dawson City. I'll have more to say on that later, as the Member for Klondike cheers me on with that statement.

The motion speaks of enhanced marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through research-based and market-driven campaigns. The tourism industry is an industry that lives or dies on the basis of its product and how that product is marketed. There is no question that tourism companies have done, and continue to conduct extensive focus and work on the Yukon brand. They have found that the brand consists of three elements: culture, outdoor adventure and pristine spaces. According to industry leaders, it is the pristine spaces where all of these overlap. The industry has found that the best bang for its buck and the government's buck is to highlight the pristine wilderness of the Yukon. As one industry spokesperson said to me, "It is the sweet spot in the marketing." Yukon's pristine wilderness is what draws the tourists here, and then they take advantage of Yukon's culture and outdoor adventure. This, in turn, builds those elements of Yukon's tourism story. The data keeps telling us that folks come here to the Yukon because of the wilderness.

As this House knows, I run a B&B in the Southern Lakes region, and I have a direct opportunity to speak to tourists about the Yukon and their experience there. Sometimes I'll be cooking them breakfast, and the conversation will go on from

8:00 in the morning until noon and ranging over a variety of subjects: “Where will I go fishing in this area? I’m heading up the road — where should I stay? How is the road over the Top of the World Highway into Alaska?” If it’s in the wintertime: “Where are the ski trails?” In the summertime: “Where are the hiking trails? Can I get snowmobile rentals? How is the fishing off the Tagish Bridge?”

It just goes on, and it also speaks to the people who come to the Yukon. When I’m speaking with them, they are interested in the First Nation culture, and they’re also interested in the government and how the government deals with the legacy of residential schools — some of them are quite informed about that, or they have been exposed to that topic and they want to explore that. And they’re really interested in being able to attend ceremonies or attend First Nation gatherings, where they can watch and listen to drumming.

I would like to note, for example, the rising sun ceremony in Carcross that happens on National Aboriginal Day on the 21st — tourists are up with the sunrise, along with members of the community and the people who drive from Whitehorse to witness such an event, and then they stay the whole day to have the sunset ceremony and in that feel the life of the community and the life of the people. So the conversation over these long breakfasts is not only about what they see, but they want to meet the real people of the Yukon; they want to meet the Colourful Five Percent. They talk about some of the folks who they’ve maybe read about in Jim Robb’s magazines, and the fact that they could even maybe have conversations. They want to stop in at fish camps along the highway and they not only want to be able to see the realness that they read about, they want to feel it.

When they’re hiking on the trails where they might spot a moose or a caribou or an eagle flying by, they also want to just take off into the bush, so they would like to bushwhack. You get these different people who really want to experience that sense of freedom. When there was a German-speaking tourist this winter, we were snowmobiling up in the mountains out that way. One of the comments to one of the gals was, “How do you like that?” In her German English, she said, “I like it. No, no. I love it.” It was so real.

Then listening to other people who maybe get to experience this — we get to experience this. I believe that’s why some of these people who come here on holidays end up moving here. We do have many, for example, people from the United States and from Europe who have taken up residence here and have chosen to run businesses and live in a place such as the Yukon, which is really unsurpassed anywhere else in the world, as far as being intact, pristine wilderness.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have?

Speaker: You’re unlimited. We’re here until 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Barr: Hang on. At 5:30 p.m. we will be going home. I know that many more of my colleagues would like to speak to this, although I do have more to say.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Barr: Say as much as I will — I will.

Some of the things that the people come to see and talk about are there as they get off at the airports. We see these pic-

tures of wilderness, we see the expanse of mountains and vistas, and then you’ll see one of the Dakhká Khwáan Dancers — some of the folks from Northern Cultural Expressions Society are part of that in the pictures of the drumming and regalia. They want to see that. My concern, as I’ll get to later, is that we in government have a responsibility to guarantee that what we are advertising is here for the people to see.

There are some little things that I think we have to pay attention to when we do market — for example, the highway lodges that are now closed down, or from season to season. Many people experienced a closed gas station, no longer open, and they’re thinking that they can get gas. I would hope that the Minister of Highways and Public Works is listening to ensure in this next upcoming season that people know they are closed ahead of time, before they get there and realize they are out of gas. I know that in Carcross last summer there were a few of us who kept gas cans handy for tourists travelling the roads who couldn’t get to Whitehorse. They don’t expect this and although it means they sometimes stay an extra night — which might be good, but they do miss deadlines and things, so we have to let people know what’s happening as they travel the road.

The Official Opposition supports Motion No. 380, but it would seem that the government is trying to eat their cake and have it too. I’ll explain this.

It is not enough for this government to pay lip service to tourism and then support removing pristine wilderness as a tourist draw and obliterate people’s livelihoods, but then they dismiss those very same tourists. The comments from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources send the wrong message to tourists. The views of tourists from Düsseldorf, Toronto and Pasadena are not relevant to this government — just their wallets, it would seem.

This government has spent tens of thousands of dollars researching the Yukon brand. They have interviewed tourists, they have hired consultants, they have designed logos, but all of this work points to the environment as the source of tourism dollars, as a source of important jobs and as a source of steady government revenue.

This government has re-branded the Yukon two times since the Yukon Party government has been in power. This is either indecision or, more likely, a sign of a government that doesn’t really know what to think about tourism and wilderness tourism.

This isn’t a baseball game. The City of Whitehorse is called “the wilderness city”. Look at the controversy when the city tried to re-brand away from what everyone knows to be true — that it is not only mining that makes the Yukon, but it also is the call of the wild. It is the draw that brings so many tourists to our home. These tourists, in turn, tell others; and they, in turn, tell two friends; and they, in turn, tell two more friends, and so on. That’s why the Yukon is in travel guides. It is for the wilderness and the wildlife. That is not to say that our mining heritage is not cool too. Dredge No. 4 is the favourite of many families, and then there’s the *SS Klondike*. Let us not forget that many of those tourists decided to relocate to the Yukon, as I’ve stated before, to help build our economy and

our communities. In some ways, the government seems stuck in 1898. Not only is it all about “gold in them thar hills,” but they seem to have copied some of the more interesting urban design ideas. What I am alluding to here are the old building facades.

We all know what I mean — those fake fronts that make rickety old buildings look grand. It would seem that this is the approach the government has to tourism in Yukon’s communities. Even when this government tries to meet the needs of tourists, they seem to get it wrong. The Southern Lakes, for example, is one of the gateways to the Yukon. While the government ensures that tourists have washrooms at the Carcross dunes, they let the local infrastructure of Carcross slowly collapse. Tourists who walk the one block away from the train station in downtown Carcross see a community infrastructure that is in poor condition. The government has held meetings with Carcross and the Carcross-Tagish First Nation about reinvigorating the downtown of Carcross, but it would seem that despite community input the government decides on what it wants — not want the community needs.

I was just listening to the Premier previously in Question Period speaking about bringing over a colour of sand that would be able to aesthetically pave the Front Street section of Dawson City. I can’t image what that costs. I’m glad that Dawson City has that — don’t get me wrong.

What I do think of, though, when I do speak to what the community wants and needs or would like to see in this community — when I think of that section of Front Street in Dawson City alone — yet we cannot fix the drain in downtown Carcross that floods every year or when we have a downpour that floods nearly half a block that tourists would then have to walk through or that affects the direct business to the other side of the road — people who depend on people walking into their business, let alone the people who are going to walk into our nursing station. Could we please have that drain fixed, for example?

When we have people coming to the Yukon, we want people with smiling faces who see a sense of community — strong and vibrant. Because I live right outside of the town of Carcross and I’ve been there for 26 years, I will speak to this. I know it extends to other communities in the Yukon as well. The community house and the community centre are there to greet tourists when they get there. However, Carcross does lack a youth centre and an emergency response services building. They are there to greet tourists when they get there.

I am happy to see that there have been forward steps with the First Nations with the new village this summer. We heard talk in the House yesterday about paleontology and how we are running out of space in our vaults to house all the artifacts. The Member for Pelly-Nisutlin spoke to this and how several thousands of new pieces coming in are going to have to be housed. The community house wants to have a museum. A bulk of the paleontology artifacts are in drawers. Perhaps they could be displayed for the public to see in this Southern Lakes area and possibly in conjunction with an aviation museum in that particular area.

That makes a lot of sense, especially when that port of entry is one of the larger entries into the Yukon from people who visit from Outside, whether from the States, as we’ve talked about, or from people who have come up on the cruise ships, and — what was it? — 75 percent of people come from the United States? Why not capture them when they’re first entering into not only the wilderness that’s there, but in some of those opportunities, rather than not listening to the local people — whether it’s there or other parts? What I just have to say again — in Carcross then — not getting it right or just doing what the government would like, rather than hearing the people, like the curbs that the tourists fell over because they were built high, and they had to replace them, and the one-way street that — well, if you followed the RCMP — I don’t know if they go around that because people don’t pay attention to that sign. And actually, I’ve noticed that the signs that were in the middle of sidewalks, or the ones that say “Park at Your Own Risk,” which I don’t understand, if you want to have a friendly reception. Some have been taken down by the government, which I’m happy about, but others have just mysteriously disappeared.

So it shouldn’t be that local people have to — instead of stopping at four stops signs as you come into a kilometre stretch and then signs disappear mysteriously — if the government would just listen to the communities before they spend the money putting up this stuff and then have to spend money again to take it down. That’s not fiscally responsible, nor does it create an energy between government and communities that is a healthy working relationship.

I could go on about those different things in that one area, and I guess I will. This area and the new visitor reception centre — yes, we need it. However, if you speak to the people who deliver that service — and it goes back to the government not listening to the people.

The Yukon Party just does not seem to want to listen to the people — especially the people who deliver the service. The people who have made agreements, the people who are emergency services — and I’ll use Tagish for example — wait to get the proper clothes, or want to take it out of their budget, which is not allotted, but they see that their clothes don’t fit or they’re old. It is not an honouring of these agreements.

As I heard in Question Period, the teachers who deliver the service aren’t being listened to as far as what the Member for Klondike was talking about in delivering education tools or the ability to have a say in that. The visitor reception centre in Carcross: there were some great ideas that the people of Carcross wanted that would include the *SS Tutshi* on the riverfront. It seemed to make a lot of sense if you lived there full-time — their ideas — but they weren’t listened to. Yes, now we do need a visitor reception centre. Could we not have planned this and worked with the community? I know when I want to do something and I have felt listened to, if I buy into it, I deliver with great enthusiasm.

I think of the people in Carcross at the visitor reception centre who greet the tourists day after day after day. You want to make them happy. Let them know that you’re listening and work with them, as in all sectors.

I think of Ross River lately and the advertising that goes into focusing on the sites of the Yukon. It doesn't show in the photo brochures of what you want to see in the Yukon, that "Danger: Do Not Cross" part of the visual of when you would actually get there. The picture misses that part of that. I would like to see that in the communities that are out there — let alone the suspension bridge, which is not safe to walk across; they don't say that in the brochures or the advertising. They also don't tell you that once you get past the Ross River, that's where we would want a sign: "Drive at Your Own Risk" from this section to Ross River — rather than have "Park at Your Own Risk" in Carcross, which makes no sense to me.

We have also seen how this government fails at capital projects, and many Yukon communities are examples of this government's neglect and poor planning.

I would also like to speak to land use planning. The members opposite may wonder what land use planning has to do with their motion, but it has a lot to do with it and I must make a passing reference.

The mission statement of the Yukon Land Use Planning Council states, "The Yukon Land Use Planning Council advocates land use planning as a comprehensive means of addressing cultural, social, economic and environmental sustainability. The Yukon Land Use Planning Council promotes an open, fair and public process carried out by all Yukoners as set out in the Yukon First Nations final agreements."

Mr. Speaker, land use planning sets out areas for various economic players, including tourism. The tourism industry — particularly wilderness tourism — has a vested interest in land use planning, as they are an actor on the land base and they are building a sustainable industry that brings in hundreds of millions of dollars per year to the Yukon.

The *Lonely Planet* guide has listed the Yukon as one of the many top-10 places to visit in 2013. This is true, and I will say again for the record today, as the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin and other members from the Yukon Party like to quote this. It's interesting that the Yukon Party seems to want to pick and choose bits of information on the record for their own understanding of what would possibly foster the Yukon Party's idea of tourism in Yukon.

The *Lonely Planet* guide does say — and it says the rest of it, which doesn't get said — the Yukon "has a grandeur and beauty that can only be appreciated in person." However, the guide states that change is coming. It says that it is one of the top 10 places to visit in 2013 — actually fourth — but it does not say get there now because change is coming fast to the Yukon because of climate change and a renewed interest in mining. It does say that, yes. It does say that, but it doesn't get mentioned from the Yukon Party whenever that quote is discussed.

That brings us to the Peel land use planning process — a case in point here. It would appear that this government does not take land use planning seriously. They see it as a process where other actors interfere with the mining industry, it would seem. I'll state that again — they see it as a process where actors interfere with the mining industry, it would seem.

Mining and tourism, along with Yukoners and other sectors, need to share the land. Many areas of the Yukon have been developed and access to pristine wilderness is at a premium. The Peel watershed is one such place. To put the interests of mining ahead of all others is a mistake. We need balance in the Yukon. The Dawson region is largely orientated toward mining. Southern Yukon is where most people live. The Kluane and Watson Lake regions have forestry opportunities, for example, that hopefully will be met with land use planning, in addition to other interests. But it is places like the Peel that promote the pristine wilderness that our brand is based on, that our \$200-million a year in direct revenue is based on. I would hope that this government makes land use planning a priority in the next few years as we need certainty on the land for all sectors and for all Yukoners.

This brings me to land use planning. I understand the Atlin Road new campground — I was listening to the Environment minister state that construction on this campground will begin this spring and that there is a YESAA process in place that will speak to the artifacts that have been stated by locals are right in that area. The Minister of Environment also stated that there are going to be meetings in a couple of weeks with the First Nations.

It's interesting — I was speaking with some First Nations yesterday, and they haven't heard of a meeting time yet. So I would be really happy if the Minister of Environment would maybe enlighten this member as to when the meetings with the First Nations regarding the campground in Atlin will be — the time and date. I would like to hear what transpires from that meeting that is set up for two weeks from now.

Another option spoken about in the final agreements with Carcross-Tagish First Nation is Conrad becoming a historical site. I might add there is a road in there, and there are historical buildings in Conrad. There is actually a bear cave people could go see.

There are old buildings from that town of Conrad. That has been talked about, and I would invite the Minister of Environment to speak with those people — the stakeholders who had already been discussing the opportunities of a campground there. It would not have anything to do with disrupting the Atlin area that — and this is my personal point — I finally got to see after 20 years of working, travelling with the elders and biologists, to re-cultivate the Southern Lakes caribou herd. Finally, right in the area where the campground is supposed to start being — I want to say that the Cats are going to dig it up to get the road going — to cut it all up. That is where I finally saw 28 caribou at one time. I've lived there for 26 years, and when I think of every year, like clockwork — I could drive from Carcross to Crag Lake every year in the fall.

I would see the caribou herd, which is struggling to survive, cross between Chootla Lake and Crag Lake and on to Caribou Mountain — like clockwork every year. A permit for logging was allowed there and, since then, that area does not have caribou crossing. The elders who have lived here for generations understand how sensitive this is for the wildlife. To see that with my own eyes — when I think of what is coming up in Atlin, when there has been all of this effort to regain this herd. I

saw 28, but the highest number is 37. That's amazing, when you might have seen two or three before.

There is a point where, if we continue to allow this to nurture, the elders and the people who have chosen a diet and who eat their traditional foods may be able to harvest caribou in that area again. Some have died waiting for that and have not eaten. So I would ask that we be sensitive. It's not only the tourists I was speaking about this winter who almost jumped out of the car when they saw caribou back in that area again and who waited a month to be able to see that — I can't imagine — but the other people who come to the Yukon for that pristine wilderness experience, to see something not in a zoo, but to be able to come across it as you're coming down the road, face to face. I might say, though, please do not feed the bears — that's not safe.

The motion has it wrong, Mr. Speaker, although I will be supporting it. It's not about enhanced marketing of the Yukon as a quality travel destination; it should be about marketing our wilderness brand — the call of the wild and the pristine wilderness. That is a niche market we occupy. We cannot compete with Disneyland or with 12th century cathedrals, but we can compete with pristine wilderness and with unspoiled vistas and wildlife.

Nowhere in this motion can the government bring itself to mention the environment. Studies are important, but real commitment to what makes the tourism industry a \$200-million-plus industry to the Yukon is needed. It means protecting pristine wilderness and ensuring that the tourism industry has a real and meaningful share of and access to an unspoiled and pristine land base.

It is also odd that the government trots out such a motion when it has turned its back on the impacts of federal cuts to Parks Canada. This is a government that quietly rolled over to the federal government on its cuts to Parks Canada. The tourism industry is none too happy with this government's performance in standing up for Yukon.

Last year, the Member of Parliament for the Yukon stated the cuts to Parks Canada would have no effect on tourism in the territory. Then we saw the closure of the *SS Klondike* and *Dredge No. 4*, as well as the historical archives in Dawson City and the layoffs that hit towns like Haines Junction and Dawson City hard. Now the federal government, at the last minute and due to industry — I say industry — and public pressure has allowed private operators to run guided tours to the *SS Klondike* and *Dredge No. 4*. Industry spokespersons have noted that this government has shamelessly tried to take credit for this development. But, alas, it was the voices of Yukoners and tourism operators that got the federal government to the table; essentially the Yukon Party government went along for the ride because it would seem they did not want to upset Ottawa — shameful.

These cuts will hurt our tourism industry. There will be long-term effects, including the maintenance of these facilities. These are not my words but the views and opinions of many prominent figures in the tourism industry. Thankfully the private sector stepped forward at the last moment and I wish to acknowledge their hard work and commitment to maintaining

Yukon's cultural heritage. However, we now have a privatized public service with no real plan in place as to how to ensure that governments protect this heritage into the future.

The question of Dawson City's historical artifacts is still an issue. These artifacts are part of our history. Who will maintain this invaluable collection and be able to have the skills that were in place to ensure that they are preserved as they need to be, by people who know what they're doing, who have a love and a passion? This is why they entered into that field. These people don't depend on profit margins, because it's an important part of Yukon history that needs to be preserved in a good way, in a respectful way, in a manageable and skillful way. Again, this raises the question of government's real commitment to the tourism industry.

In conclusion, this government just doesn't get it. Yes, they can string together the words to form a sentence and thus a motion about tourism, but they do not seem to understand the real nature of tourism. It would seem that they see tourism as an afterthought and one that they are not entirely comfortable with. They put their other sectors ahead instead of on par. Look at the performance in pushing for resource extraction. Look at how they have dealt with the Parks Canada cuts and the poor infrastructure in our communities. Look at the ever-shifting branding exercise they have undertaken for the last 10 years and their refusal to share the land base in the Peel in a way that balances out the territory. You have heard what tourists from Germany and the United States think about protecting Yukon's pristine wilderness — the wilderness that drew them here to spend their hard-earned money. Our tourism model is largely based on a niche market that requires wilderness.

So, while supporting this motion, it is the Official Opposition's real hope that this government will stop paying lip service to tourism and put a real effort into protecting what makes Yukon tourism an industry valued at more than \$200 million a year. It is about balance, not the government's fake balance in places like the Peel, but a real balance that builds on our brand of Yukon being a pristine place with vibrant cultures and adventure. That should be the agenda of this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As Minister of Tourism and Culture, I would especially like to thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing this motion forward. There is certainly a lot to share with respect to our work in marketing overseas and, as I have only 20 minutes to speak, I'll have to summarize to a certain degree. There is a lot of good work being done.

Here is what we know. In 2012, Yukon hosted more than 320,000 visitors from around the world. Of that 320,000, nearly 34,000 were overseas visitors. In fact, in 2012, there was a two-percent increase in foreign visitation.

I found it extremely interesting to learn that the overseas marketing we are doing in Japan specifically paid off. More than 3,500 Japanese visitors have come to Yukon this year to experience Yukon's winter and the northern lights. Here is a market with extremely good potential. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, Germany continues to be the Yukon's largest overseas market, representing approximately 26 percent of overseas visi-

tors. This is definitely a market that we will continue to pay close attention to.

I find it fascinating that Whitehorse, Yukon, is the smallest city in North America with direct flights to Germany. Condor Airlines brought more than 4,000 visitors to Yukon in 2012, contributing an estimated \$8 million to \$10 million to our economy.

We also know that tourism is very important to the private sector economy of Yukon with an estimated \$200 million generated in Yukon business revenue annually. We know that over one-quarter of all Yukon businesses generate some of their revenue from tourism with more than four percent of Yukon's GDP being directly attributed to tourism. I've boasted about these numbers before in my hat's-off to the staff and management in the Department of Tourism and Culture for their work at identifying emerging markets around the globe for our territory.

Larger than Life — our solid Yukon branding has been so successful that Yukon was designated by *Lonely Planet* as a top-10, must-visit travel destination for 2013. Subsequent to that, global media coverage generated a tremendous amount of exposure for our territory, and it expanded awareness of Yukon as a premier outdoor travel destination. I won't stop at that.

Following media familiarization, or FAM, trips led by the department, both *Reader's Digest* and *Outside* magazine have highlighted Yukon as a must-visit Canadian destination, emphasizing some of the exciting new visitor experiences that Yukon has to offer. Again, thank you to the department officials for their work on marketing our territory.

So how do we make this possible? For one, the department's marketing project with CanNor resulted in an increase in higher-yield overseas visitors, which has offset an anticipated decline in visitors from the U.S. and other countries suffering from depressed economies.

We're also very pleased to enter into a three-year marketing project just last fall with Holland America, for \$50,000 per year to support joint efforts to promote cruise tour product, providing significant revenues and benefits to Yukon's tourism industry. Holland America marketing, as many of us already know, has a worldwide reach. I'll read you a quote from the executive vice-president of Holland America, Paul Goodwin. He said — and I quote: "As the only cruise line to bring guests to Yukon, we understand the unique beauty, history and charm of this wonderful region. Our roots in Yukon's visitor economy extend back many years. We are grateful to the Government of Yukon for their support and are pleased to continue to offer our cruise tour guests the chance to experience Yukon's colorful Klondike Gold Rush history, wild scenic beauty and rich cultural heritage." That's a pretty significant statement.

Our ongoing relationship with Germany is also proving to be successful. I've mentioned before that just last year we signed a two-year, \$150,000 cooperative marketing agreement with Fulda to promote their event in Yukon. Each year, the Fulda Challenge generates European media coverage valued now at over \$5 million.

I was very pleased to visit Yukon Bay at the Hannover Zoo during the Yukon Days event, which included gold panning,

music, entertainment and other activities designed to educate zoo attendees about the Yukon. The exposure Yukon gets in Germany with this new zoo addition is remarkable. There were over 27,000 visitors during the two-day Yukon Days event at the zoo last fall.

It's important to speak about how this government supports the touring artist fund.

Yukon artists just recently shared their talents with fellow Canadians and with audiences abroad in Australia, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. I would be remiss if I didn't give a shout out to our Yukon Gold Comics, comprising of Steve McGovern, Claire Ness, Jenny Hamilton and George Maratos, who performed for audiences at the Adelaide Fringe Festival in Adelaide, Australia, about a month ago. I am very proud to be part of a government that showcases our talent around the world.

Our tourism sector continues to be a solid and steady contributor to Yukon's economy. We know that 2012 was a good year for tourism in Yukon, with a four-percent increase in visitation compared to 2011, outperforming the national average for one or more night visitation by non-residents. We will build on the successes of 2012 and reports of a strong winter season, and we are forecasting a modest growth in visitation of between one and two percent for 2013.

It's important to note that the Department of Tourism and Culture implemented an overseas travel destination awareness project to mitigate the possible effects of the global recession on Yukon visitation. Supported by CanNor funding, the project is intended to market Yukon as a year-round quality travel destination to overseas markets. In fact, as I touched on earlier, the investment made through the project has resulted in a significant increase in visitors from Japan. It has also resulted in significant visitation from Australia and an investment in tourism packages by Korea's largest tour operator.

Overseas visitors to Yukon generally stay longer and spend more than Canadian and U.S. visitors, which aligns with our strategy to attract high-yield customers to Yukon. The primary target markets for this initiative are Germany and Switzerland; secondary are the U.K., Australia and Japan; while emerging markets are identified as France, the Netherlands and South Korea.

The additional \$500,000 per year has enabled Yukon to increase its market share compared to the rest of Canada in key European markets. Visitation from Australia has increased to overtake the U.K. as Yukon's second-largest overseas market behind Germany. Visitation from Japan for both fall and winter aurora viewing has grown more than tenfold in the past two years, and Japan is now a secondary market for Yukon.

What a great potential the Japanese market has for the territory. Through the Department of Tourism and Culture it is our objective to drive the preference for Yukon aurora to potential travellers in this market. We will work in partnership with the Japanese tour operators and Yukon aurora suppliers to move customers from their Yukon travel consideration phase to actually making the travel purchase.

The Department of Tourism and Culture will also provide training and support to Japanese, the U.K., Australian and South Korean travel industry sales staff and promote the urgency of seeing the aurora, which is now at its peak of the solar cycle. We will also develop relationships with other airlines servicing Japan to increase air access.

With this work it's important to build a culture within the territory where we're looking at developing new summer and fall products for the Japanese, the U.K. and the Australian markets and other markets alike. It's important for us to create opportunities to visit Yukon during the summer and fall to research, design and develop new products for those and other target markets.

At the same time, it's important for us to increase our Yukon product distribution within these markets, as well as other primary and secondary markets for that matter. What we want is to generate consumer awareness of Yukon through media relations to our secondary markets like Japan, Australia and the UK, generating unpaid media coverage with an ROI of \$50 equivalent in advertising value for each dollar spent on media visits. It is important that we work in partnership with the Canadian Tourism Commission in Australia, Japan, the UK and South Korea to identify and attract high-producing travel media who reach our target segments through unique and interesting story pitches.

I find the Australian market quite interesting. Of all Yukon's international markets, Australia represents one of the strongest growth potential markets. As such, we have enhanced our marketing efforts and investments there. In fact, last year, this market overtook the UK for number-two position in Yukon's international markets, with 5,688 visitors, or 2.3 percent of overall and 25.2 percent of overseas visitors. Australia is a market with high levels of interest from both wholesalers and media and a desire for new destinations and products, as well as a very large segment of consumers who have previously visited Canada and who are keen to explore more.

The success of the recent aurora campaign suggests that there is an opportunity to grow winter business as well. With a strong and stable economy, much like ours in Yukon under this Yukon Party government, Australia is generally a resilient market.

Of course, we have to give credit where credit is due. The Department of Tourism and Culture has been working diligently for a number of years to enhance visitation from German-speaking Europe. Germany, Switzerland and Austria are collectively described as German-speaking Europe, which forms Yukon's largest overseas market and third largest market overall. There is a very strong awareness of Yukon as a travel destination at the consumer level, and we enjoy direct, non-stop weekly flights in summer from Frankfurt.

The German-speaking Europe market is significant for Yukon. Germany, in particular, boasts a strong and growing economy that is the engine for Europe. As I mentioned earlier, our relationship with the Fulda Yukon challenge and Yukon Bay at the Hannover Zoo presents additional opportunities for exposure within this market, and it provides us with excellent

opportunities for public relation activities, trade events, brochure launches, media events and education.

We utilize a wide variety of tactics to increase visitation in our Australian and Asian markets. The Australian tourism market is increasingly important to Yukon, with Australian visitation surpassing visitation from the U.K. for the first time last year. We see significant opportunities in the Australian markets for a number of reasons. Australians tend to travel extensively and make overseas trips once per year. Australian tourists are seeking the adventure experiences that Yukon has to offer. Long-distance travel is common in Australian tourists, so Yukon is in a competitive position compared to other markets, and Australians are seeking both summer and winter vacation experiences.

For the Australia and New Zealand markets, these tactics include hosting freelance media on Yukon fam tours, attending the Corroboree marketplace, funding cooperative marketing campaigns with our tour wholesalers, consumer and print advertising, and promoting Yukon's aurora visits in consumer and trade publications.

In addition, the department supported *Gurus Explore* TV fam tour in 2012.

A crew travelled to the Yukon in late August filming two, five-minute stories, including one on Dawson and one on Yukon's wilderness. As I mentioned earlier, visitation from Japan is also growing, and the Yukon government sees the potential for significant growth in this market. Similar to the Australian market, Japanese tourists are accustomed to long-distance travel and Yukon's abundant service to the Vancouver gateway makes Yukon an attractive destination for Japanese visitors. The Yukon is also very well-positioned to take advantage of the growing market of aurora tourism from Japan. With significant tourist accommodation capacity in the winter months, Yukon tourism operators are also well-positioned to competitively meet this growing area of visitation. For the Japanese market, the department supported Alpine tour's cooperative advertising, USAN co-op advertising, Japan Canada Travel Association co-op advertising and the Japan Travel Bureau grand tour. The department also supported summer and winter cooperative advertising campaigns and attended the Showcase Canada marketplace in November of 2012, providing funding for Ruby Range Adventure and Arctic Range Adventure to attend this showcase.

In November 2012, the department coordinated a sales call training seminar for Vancouver-based receptive tour operators targeting the Japanese market.

Just a couple of months prior, in September of last year, the department hosted Japan Canada Travel Association for a fam tour of the Yukon. Yukon purchased an ad in the *Canada Japan Journal* and reprinted a variety of Yukon's promotional materials into Japanese, including the City of Whitehorse map and flyers highlighting aurora viewing.

In addition, Yukon is in the second of a three-year program with Travel Vision-Air Canada cooperative advertising. As part of this initiative, a crew travelled to the Yukon in late August, as I mentioned, filming a three-part miniseries for Japanese broadcast television, which aired in February.

It is clear to me that Yukon and the solid Yukon brand is well-aligned in our primary and secondary overseas markets. As Minister of Tourism and Culture, I look forward to another successful tourism season. I would again like to extend my thanks to the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing this motion forward, and I look forward to the support of all of the members in this Legislative Assembly.

Ms. White: I am really excited, actually, to be talking about an up-and-coming tourist market, and that is mountain biking. I started mountain biking when I was in my early 20s and mountain biking was just starting its upward climb in popularity. My first season, I was working at the Chocolate Claim as a baker. I earned bruises, scrapes and scratches every day and it was the most exciting time. I started biking on a Kona Nunu, which is kind of an entry-level hardtail bicycle. My friends would take me to the top of Grey Mountain and say, “Okay, let’s go.” My introduction to mountain biking was fast and furious and I fell in love. I self-identify as a mountain-biker.

In the City of Whitehorse we have two bike shops: Icycle Sport and Cadence Cycle. They are both phenomenal local businesses. People can rent a commuter purple bike and bike for the summer, and that’s great for people who are visiting for a short amount of time or a long amount of time.

It’s super affordable. I think it is \$125 for the summer and you get all but \$50 back at the end of the season when you return the bike. We have three companies that offer mountain biking adventures: Up North Adventure, which can be found at www.upnorthadventures.com; Cabin Fever Adventures, which can be found at www.cabinfeveradventures.com; and last, but certainly not least, Boréale Mountain Biking, which can be found at www.borealebiking.ca.

We’re graced in the Yukon with a phenomenal amount of trails. The trail network is incredible. The trail network on Montana Mountain was identified for its biking value long ago by Wayne Roberts, the author of *Fireweed Hikes and Bikes*. He spent a long time scrambling around on Montana and recognized that there were old established trails from the silver mine that would be great for mountain biking. He focused on a now world-renowned trail that is referred to now as “Mountain Hero”. This is a trail that gives you a view like you’ve never seen. You’re at the very top of a mountain after a kind of grueling two- to three-hour pedal up to get to the top and then it comes all the way down the mountain and it has views like you’ve never seen. This trail was designated as an “epic ride” by the International Mountain Bicycling Association last year and that’s incredible. There are not many trails in Canada that have been given the “epic ride” title, so that’s awesome.

The Carcross-Tagish First Nation got behind mountain biking and they’ve developed Montana Mountain into a world-class mountain biking destination. You can check out their website at www.montanamountain.ca. Not including Mountain Hero, they have 35 kilometres of hand-built and restored single track, and the trails up there are beautiful. They incorporate natural obstacles — so we’re talking about rock ridges that have wooden bridges that come up on to them. We’re talking

about views that are incredible. You cross over small bridges on mountain streams — the best water you’ve ever had. The mountain biking there is incredible. I think the really interesting point now is that other people are starting to recognize that as well.

I’m going to talk a little bit about Boréale Mountain Biking, because it’s an amazing home-grown Yukon company. Boréale is the dream child of two local entrepreneurs, Marsha Cameron and Sylvain Turcotte. They had their first season on the bluffs of the Long Lake Road in the summer of 2008. As much as Boréale is mentioned in international mountain biking publications, you might think that they’re lucky, but they got where they are with hard work.

They have memberships in organizations like the Adventure Travel Trade Association, and through that organization, they actively pursue any and all journalistic leads that they’re provided. The reason why this is really important is because I believe Boréale Mountain Biking has brought the world to the Yukon, as far as mountain biking is concerned, with the help of Tourism Yukon.

So Boréale goes out and finds the media connection and, with their partnership with Tourism Yukon, they are able to bring journalists up on flights. In the last five years, the Yukon has been highlighted in publications in the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States and Canadian magazines. I think the important part about that is that if we don’t have an article in every magazine, we have a photo or a selection of photos in every magazine. So even if it doesn’t have the big titles, there are pictures of Yukon single-track.

I think this is very important. I just want to show how big mountain biking could be for the territory. The first time we were mentioned was in 2007 in *Mountain Biking UK*, and the title of the article was “Yukon Adventure”. We have been in *Outer Edge Magazine*, the ultimate adventure magazine, and the title of that article was “The 24-Hour Party People”. That was in August 2009. We have been in *Vélo Vert, l’Alaska et le Yukon Canadien* in October 2009; we have been featured in *North Shore Mountain Biking* or www.nsmb.com. The first article was called “Riding Yukon Style”, which were articles in February, March and April of 2010. We have been featured in the *Globe and Mail* with the title of the article being “Biking in the Land of the Midnight Sun” in May 2010; *Yukon, North of Ordinary*, “Blazing Their Own Trail” in summer 2010.

We’ve been featured on the Ride Guide. The Ride Guide is a video clip. We had the Ride Guide Whitehorse come up here and it aired in August 2010. In *Outside* magazine — *Outside* is actually one of the relationships that Boréale was able to forge with the help of the Adventure Travel Trade Association. So they first made the connections with *Outside* magazine through that organization. The first time we were featured in *Outside*, the article was called, “Mountain Biking Gets with the Flow”, and that was in February 2011. We’ve been featured in *Explore* and the article was “Go here: Mountain biking in Whitehorse” in March 2012.

Last, but certainly not least — oh, not quite yet, sorry. *Canadian Cycling Magazine* had “Wild Whitehorse — Mountain Bike Trails” in April 2012. Then again, *Bike Magazine* “North-

ern Rises” in fall 2012; and most recently, on March 12, 2013, we were listed as “Best Biking Destination: Whitehorse, Yukon Territory” by *Outside* magazine. That’s a pretty exciting thing. So I’ve had the opportunity to meet a lot of these people, but this is the quote from the magazine: “Call it the Bike Rush: after ten years of connecting a mashup of mining, animal and recreational paths, the neighbouring cities of Whitehorse and Carcross have created a single track network to rival Vancouver’s North Shore.”

That might not move you like it moves me, but Vancouver’s North Shore is world-renowned. It’s the birthplace of a lot of what mountain biking is today with technical trails and obstacles. The fact that our single track is being compared to Vancouver’s North Shore is a big deal.

So it’s no surprise, Mr. Speaker, the City of Whitehorse has 300 kilometres of mapped single-track within the city limits. It has 400 kilometres of double-track and old roads. This is all easy to access within city limits. We have iconic trails along the Yukon River. Trails that are featured in almost all of those magazines — often it’s the Yukon River trail. We have trails all over Grey Mountain, Haeckel Hill and Mount McIntyre — the mountain itself and the Mount McIntyre Recreation Centre. The City of Whitehorse has put a lot of money in recent years into trail building and trail maintenance. We have a trail network that I would say is — so would the magazine now — world-renowned. We have a bike park with jump lines, drops and a pump track at the McIntyre rec centre. It’s pretty fun. It’s pretty fun up there.

I have had the good fortune to be able to go into communities like Ross River, Carcross, and even places within Whitehorse to do kids bike camps — helping kids improve their mountain biking and getting them excited about riding bikes.

The mountain biking community in the north is vibrant. We have organizations like VeloNorth that encourages road riding — so the road bikes that you see on the highway — and the Contagious Mountain Bike Club, whose sole goal is to get people involved in mountain biking. It’s contagious because it’s fun, so it’s the Contagious Mountain Bike Club. The sole purpose of both those organizations is to encourage people to get out on their bicycles.

We have a couple of special races in the Yukon, so we host the only 24-hour bike race in the world that does not allow headlamps, and that’s the 24 Hours of Light. The reason why that’s a big deal is that 24-hour bike races down south happen at night and it’s dark, so you need headlamps. Whitehorse’s 24 Hours of Light race is so phenomenal because you are riding under the midnight sun. I’m not going to lie — it’s not bright, but you can see the trail the entire time. There is something pretty special about a 4:00 a.m. lap when you can still see, and people have started to come from far and wide. We don’t have the big prizes that these races typically have, but we sure have a lot of fun. So the 24 Hours of Light is a must-see or something to participate in if you like bicycles.

We also have the Kluane Chilkat International Bike Relay, also known as the “Haines to Haines”. That starts in Haines Junction and ends in Haines, Alaska. It is 238.3 kilometres long, and it’s an eight-part bike relay for those of us who prefer

to break it up, and the people who are particularly hard core sometimes ride as solos. That race has been going on for a number of years and it’s well-attended and sells out every year.

Although we’ve been awarded *Outside* magazine’s best biking destination, those of us who ride here have known that forever. We know that we have phenomenal opportunities here. In the last five years, we’ve been featured in nearly every biking publication, if only in photos.

I think the one thing I’d like to see is how the Government of Yukon can support the City of Whitehorse and their ongoing trail construction and trail maintenance and how they might be able to support the Carcross-Tagish First Nation in their ongoing work on Montana Mountain. Maybe this is a new way we could start advertising, because we have what people are looking for. We have the views, we have the trails — we have the technical trails, the easy-to-ride trails — and we certainly have the biking community.

I look forward to having this incorporated in the promotions that we’re talking about, knowing that, in my mind, mountain biking is the tourist wave of the future.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It brings me great pleasure to stand up today and speak to Motion No. 380 put forward by the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin. I’d like to thank him for that. Tourism is quite the interest of mine, just as mountain biking is for the member opposite. I just would like to add to her comments that Paddlewheel Adventures in Haines Junction also has mountain bikes for rent.

The natural beauty of Kluane is within reach of visitors. Kluane National Park is a vast natural reserve on the border of the Yukon and British Columbia that would take a lifetime to explore, but if you only have a few days — it’s a UNESCO world heritage site — it’s easily accessible to casual visitors travelling along the Alaska Highway. I’ll speak a little bit to its accessibility after.

Within Kluane’s boundaries is Canada’s tallest mountain. I’ve spoken about this mountain before as I am the MLA for Mount Logan, which is part of the St. Elias Mountains. The park is actually part of a larger collection of adjacent parks in Alaska and British Columbia that protect 97,520 square kilometres of spectacular northern wilderness. The other parks are Alaska’s Glacier Bay National Park and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and British Columbia’s Tatshenshini-Alsek Park, which I have spent some time in during Easter.

The jumping-off point for many of the visitors to the Kluane region is my hometown of Haines Junction. Not far from Haines Junction is Kluane Lake, Yukon’s largest body of water, where visitors can quickly get a taste of its natural treasure, but let’s not forget the many other lakes in the Kluane region rich with history and tourism opportunities.

For an even better view, you can go by air. For an awe-inspiring view of the park’s towering mountains and massive glaciers, you can pack in more scenery in an hour of flying over the park that you could in a month of hiking. It’s certainly the easiest way to get to Mount Logan. The glaciers are a particularly impressive sight from the air as they slowly cave their way through mountain valleys. One of the highlights is the

Lowell Glacier, which I've been to, as it descends into Lowell Lake, where you are sure to see giant chunks of ice calving into the freezing waters. I'm sure when the Prime Minister was here last time, he got the opportunity to go there. I spoke with him about that, and he thought it was pretty impressive.

The glaciers are remnants of the last ice age, making Kluane and the adjacent parks one of the largest non-polar ice-fields in the world. The glaciers are constantly being refreshed by new water from the huge amount of snowfall in the park, which is fed by most of the Pacific air.

This time of the year the Dall sheep are low on Sheep Mountain, which is our most common large mammal in the park. You would likely only see them as a white dot unless you check them out this time of the year. The same goes for the mountain goats. The odds are much higher that you will spot a moose, grizzly bear or black bear, and you most likely won't have to travel very far to see one. If you drive along the Alaska Highway along the edge of the park long enough, you're sure to spot a "bear jam," as people pull their cars over and observe the bears feeding by the side of the road.

If you do spot one, be sure to keep at a distance in your car, approximately 30 metres away from it, which is about the length of three buses, in order to not harass the animals. Often, spring is most desirable for this type of viewing, as is viewing the swans that fly in to the open sloughs and swamps. But remember, at this time of year, if you think you see a baby swan in the spring, it's not; it's a duck.

I want to speak a little bit to the tourism opportunities, as a wilderness tourism guide for many years, and having worked with the tourism industry, with the Chamber of Commerce. There is a vast number of opportunities for tourism in the Kluane riding. I want to speak a little bit about the Kluane game sanctuary and the Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial Park. The Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial Park is part of the chain of parks I spoke to. Snowmobiling is allowed in that park in certain areas. The game sanctuary runs, when you leave Haines Junction — that stretch of mountains — Mount Decoeli and Mount Archibald, the tallest one on the front at a little over 8,000 feet. That's also closed to hunting, and it goes all the way to Silver City, but you can access it.

There are many tourism opportunities in the Tatshenshini-Alsek park by snowmobilers in the game sanctuary, by ATVs, by hikers, bikers, joggers, walkers and talkers. I talked to a resident who had been hiking up there for many years. The Decoeli area is where the community goes with their kids to go tobogganing. They take the snowmobiles and go up there. In his many years of hiking, he was famous for telling the people he was hiking with, "I'm guiding you guys today. So what about bears? I run faster than you do — not a problem."

But he said it's garbage — seeing the destruction that we hear from the members opposite about snowmobiles and ATVs from some of the other residents of the Yukon. It's pristine wilderness, and there is a lot of access in there if it's done right — a balanced approach. This brings me to the point of the Peel watershed. We're talking about "this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to enhance marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination..."

The Member for Takhini-Kopper King talked about mountain biking. Mountain biking is incredibly popular. It was very popular in the southern parks. It's not very welcome in Kluane right now. Hikers don't like the bikers. But it's time to look at maybe some of our national park — I'm a firm believer that there's no reason that the 90 percent of the tourists — the people we're getting over here, who are going out with a guide or renting an RV or renting a camper and trailer and trying to get out there — the Minister of Tourism and Culture and I had this conversation this morning.

There is no reason they can't see the Kaskawulsh Glacier — and that's 90 percent of travellers. We have to be careful where we put parks and what we do with parks because existing trails, i.e. up in Tombstone — if you ask somebody 20 years ago about Tombstone, they would have thought that that was a good movie. It was a good movie, Mr. Speaker. It was a western. There was, I believe, one or maybe two miners somewhere in there and the odd guy on an ATV or a dog team or whatever. Now it has been changed, and now there is only a certain type of access, which takes away from other tourism opportunities.

I was looking through the greater Kluane — what's that called? — tourism and economic development plan that they did in 2000. I was looking through Kluane National Park and Reserve. A question of access — this was something that was reported in 1988. The Member for Kluane, Bill Brewster — I've spoken to this thing before. This is a thick document that was put into the House to talk about a question of access — having a balanced approach and open thought to how we go about utilizing Yukon's wilderness.

I want to speak a little bit about some of the marketing that Tourism does. I've had the opportunity to work with Tourism; I've been on numerous fishing shows. I was looking at the areas, the primary markets of some of these areas — and I'll speak a little bit to each area. I was in the industry where the Condor flight would land and we'd pick our clients up. Not many people knew where we were going or what we were doing, but they were with a guide the whole time they were there. When we went down the river — I won't say which river because I don't want it to be closed for me to go down — there was a cabin there with a frying pan hanging on it. The customer would say, "Can we stop there? I want to get a picture. Oh, can I take this?" No, this is somebody's traditional territory. They were guided by a true Yukoner who had been here for awhile, who knew how tall the mountains were, but some of them didn't. Some of them came and wanted to hike in Kluane, which was great.

Thirty people worked at the establishment I worked for; they provided economic development in the community. Now it's the biggest driver in the community.

I had the opportunity to work with Tourism and shoot a few shows. This winter when I was flying out, they were showing some winter tourism stuff and there was some snowmobile stuff I had done with Tourism Yukon for the Olympics. There was some film they were playing. I also noticed some fly-fishing.

I had the opportunity to defend our great country of Canada in a fishing competition with Robson, who was a famous actor on the Discovery Channel. He came to Canada and shot two shows in B.C. and three in the Yukon. He had won the fishing competition. It was two for two and for the last one I had the opportunity to fly fish with him at Kathleen Lake. It cost us \$1,200 for the permit so they could film in the national park. We could have filmed somewhere else for free in the Yukon, but they really wanted the background and the scenery with the goats and sheep in the background and the pristine blue and green water.

I am just happy to say that I defended Canada. I caught a 35-pound lake trout on my fly rod with about six minutes left in the competition, which was the bigger fish. If you ever get the chance to see that show, he gives kudos to the Canada and the fact that he had to sleep overnight in a tent with bear spray. He was quite cautious of the bears.

I believe we need to promote tourism in Yukon, but we have to promote tourism and have a balanced approach to it. I don't think legislating and regulating everything to death — which I keep hearing from across the way — when will legislation come forward or regulation come forward? Why don't we trust the keepers of the land — the people who live in rural Yukon, the people who are out there, the local companies in Whitehorse that have guides who are out there.

They do a fine job showing off the Yukon. Tourism Yukon does a wonderful job; their employees are incredible. I have had the opportunity to work with them on many occasions. Another thing I just wanted to speak to before I finish is that the demographics of the average tourist are changing. I sat down as a member of the Kluane Park management board years ago and had a community meeting where we talked about more access to the national park and what we would like to see. I remember that when mountain biking came up, it was like, "Not on our hiking trails." That was, "Whoa," right away. Well things are changing. The baby-boomers on the five-day overnight trips who are going down to Cost Rica or the Tatshenshini, Alsek or to Dry Bay on the 10-day trip are now getting to the social security level and the younger people are looking to do that sort of stuff, not for five days, and at any given time there's a quick tweet and a post on Facebook. So things are changing and we have to adapt with the times.

We have to look at some of the other jurisdictions, like the United States and Canada and Germany. Tourism Yukon does a wonderful job of seeing into the future — our Asian markets; we see more and more tourists coming from Asia in the winter-time. I notice that now that I am in Whitehorse a little bit more often. I think it's very, very important that we not forget that we have to adapt with the times that are changing. Everyone has to have the opportunity to go out there.

A good example is when you pull into town in Haines Junction, we get a chance to go to the cultural centre. Parks Canada is just about to display some of their new stuff in there. The Yukon government already has their stuff in there; Champagne and Aishihik is setting up. That is a great opportunity for the tourists and travelling public to come and see, but we are not in Kluane National Park when we are in the visitor recep-

tion centre. There has to be an opportunity for all Canadians from all walks of life and all travellers of whatever age to be able to have access to what we so gallantly post on the website when we look at Kluane National Park and the pictures, or the website for Up North Adventures or the Kanoe People or my old website. There has to be an opportunity for all. We have to look at it with a balanced approach and make sure that we all have the opportunity to create a little business in our communities.

I would just like to speak a little bit about the businesses in our communities. Ron Chambers is a wonderful First Nation friend of mine who runs a boat tour on Kathleen Lake. I listened to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King plug some businesses, so I guess we can do that and I'm going to do that here. I would just like to say that that is just an elegant trip to see bears and goats. If you ever get the opportunity, he is at Kathleen Lake just about every day of the week.

There are a few other businesses: Paddle/Wheel Adventures does some great canoe and kayak stuff and some rafting. Bob Daffe of Tatshenshini Expediting does a wonderful job. The Tatshenshini is an incredible river to go down. It's a Class 6 in the spring and when the water is high. It is definitely worth it. I've fallen into that river and crawled back into the raft numerous times. There are local fishing companies too. Dalton Trail Lodge provides a great service to some of the foreign tourists we have been talking about. There is a boat on Kluane Lake, and you can go out with Sam, my friend. He does a great job of catching the big lakers out there.

In closing, I am encouraged to see that this is the avenue that we're looking at with this Yukon government — that we are looking to other jurisdictions and other markets and getting a campaign out there. I'm happy when I see our Tourism minister and some of our tourism reps get over to Germany and some of the other countries because, you know, when you travel — and I've travelled around the world quite a bit — because when people see either the Canadian flag or the Yukon flag, they ask you about it. Yukoners who travel are the ambassadors for our territory and for Canada, and it's important that we get out and enhance the marketing for the Yukon.

In closing, I'd just like to thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing this motion forward.

Mr. Silver: I'd like to start by thanking the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing this motion forward today, and I will say for the record that I will be in support of this motion. I do have a few concerns to address about how this will be accomplished and where the money is coming from.

Our tourism industry could thrive with more government involvement — absolutely. But the marketing budget is static. In 2011-12, the budget was \$6 million. This year it is forecast to be only \$5.7 million. The real value put into the market itself is probably closer to \$1.5 million. Given the limited funding we do have, it would be my preference to concentrate our efforts on existing markets. There's a risk of stretching our dollars too thin and making no impact at all in some of these markets the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin has mentioned in his motion.

There are other monies out there. This year, the government received \$590,000 from CanNor for overseas travel destination awareness funding — overseas travel marketing. It was a smart move by the Department of Tourism and Culture to get this federal money. This allows Tourism and Culture to spend its own money on staffing and other projects. Now, a big percentage of the actual in-market spending comes from Canada, and 2014 is the final year of this agreement with CanNor.

So what is the plan moving forward? Where will we get the money to market overseas when this funding runs out?

Will there be cuts, or will it come out of the Destination: Yukon domestic market? Or will the government find money to replace it? These are all very valid questions, and I look forward to hearing some responses from the opposite side of the House.

This is an issue, as this department has domestic spending on the doorstep that I hope they have plans for as well. I'll put a few of them on record here, specific to my constituency — but clearly, there would be others.

The slot machines at Gertie's, for example — they're worth millions in revenue dollars for this government, and they're in need of an overhaul. Hundreds of thousands of dollars will be needed to retrofit these machines to allow them to accept the new polymer Canadian bill. Does the government have money set aside to help KVA with this extremely pressing issue? Look into your wallet, Mr. Speaker. Seeing as we're talking about Gertie's, I would make a bet that — well, for one, you have more money in your pocket than I do. But I would also make a bet that all of those bills — all those 100s, all those 50s and all those 20s in your wallet — are polymer bills. So, even with your best intentions coming to the town of Dawson City, you're not going to be able to donate to our cause. So it's definitely something to be looking at. Even if you wanted to, you wouldn't be able to give us those dollars.

There is also a new program on the History Channel called *Yukon Gold*. I am very biased, but I will say that this is my favourite new TV show. I have friends in Puerto Rico who watch Ken and Guillaume and Hero and Karl and all the gang every week. I was just wondering what the department has done to advertise with this show. I imagine that buying commercial time would be very expensive, but the Yukon private sector has found a way around this. I know that Air North has a banner that runs directly after the commercials, directly on the show itself. It says, "Win a trip to Dawson City. Air North". It's brilliant, absolutely brilliant. What a great untapped market we have here. A conversation with the producers or the directors of this show would go very far to advance and advertise Destination: Yukon on an international market.

Not to mention, there is Discovery Channel's new season of *Gold Rush* — if they get their permits in place, that is. Again, an excellent opportunity to open a dialogue with this production crew, to showcase Destination: Yukon. These are just a few examples from within the domestic market.

I will be supporting this motion; however, I am a bit perplexed as to where the money will be coming from, and I hope the secondary market spending will not be to the detriment of our responsibilities domestically.

It's very well-known that Parks Canada is not able to provide the same level of service it used to, and this is unfortunate. Our tourism industry has leaned on their able shoulders for years; however, over the past 10 years we have seen Parks Canada slowly pulling out of the Yukon. This year's cuts are only the latest round. A few years ago, the Bear Creek facility was shut down. I hope to see a plan from this government moving forward to keep these resources alive so department officials can have something more to talk about and share when they are promoting the Yukon in our international markets.

It must be stated that the marketing budget remains almost unchanged from when the Yukon Party government took office over a decade ago. This has not been without consequence. Border crossing numbers in 2012 are lower than they were in 2005. Recognizing the importance of this industry, we must do more to promote and protect the natural beauty and historic resources of our territory, which help bring in over \$200 million a year.

In closing, once again I'd just like to say that I support this motion and thank the member opposite for bringing it forward.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would like to thank my colleague, the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, for bringing this important motion forward, which speaks to the importance of tourism as a major economic mainstay in the territory. It speaks to the importance of marketing and the role it has played and continues to play over the years.

I served as Minister of Tourism and Culture for a few years leading up to the last election. I can say I had the opportunity to learn a few things about tourism and culture. Just to be very succinct: I grew to garner a better appreciation for the industry and all it provides, the intrinsic benefits and value to our quality of life and to the economy as we know it today.

I learned that tourism is ever-evolving and has been since 9/11. I don't have to remind you, Mr. Speaker, what happened on that very day. Ever since then, there has been a chain of events throughout the globe. It has made a significant impact, not just to the Canadian tourism market, but certainly it has had significant changes on the whole globe.

I have learned how competitive tourism is globally; it is in fact very fierce. I had the opportunity to see this on a number of occasions when I had the opportunity to travel to ITB, the largest travel trade show in Berlin, Germany. It really opened my eyes to just how important the market is and what it is that Canada is up against.

I also learned — in order to sustain tourism, in order to continue to deliver the very valuable programs and services provided by Tourism and Culture, and in order to maintain its competitiveness in the overall market — the importance of strategic partnerships; partnerships with the private sector, with other governments with other countries, with First Nation governments, communities and with industry itself.

Really, that's what this motion speaks to; it talks about research based, industry-led, market-driven — those are all very important because it wasn't long ago that we didn't actually have as strong a partnership with the tourism industry as we do today. I can say that through the Tourism Industry Association

of the Yukon and their very important efforts, hard work and diligence every day on behalf of industry — the partnership that the Yukon government has been able to work with, TIA Yukon, is through the creation of the Senior Marketing Committee. The Senior Marketing Committee is primarily based with industry-led individuals, individuals who have expertise in marketing skills and who are in the industry. They live and breathe it and they have come to know over the years what works and what isn't working and it provides government that sense and that industry-led approach to delivering tourism marketing.

It is because of this direction and strength of industry, working in collaboration with the Yukon government, that we have been able to be resilient. Because of all these changes, it has really enabled the Yukon to become a very resilient and strong force when it comes to administering tourism.

I can't say enough about the important role that SMC has in providing that strategic advice on an ongoing basis in terms of providing advice for the programs it delivers, how it delivers and where it delivers, which also leads to the development of the three-year strategic plan. This was developed in collaboration with industry. Each and every year there is a tourism implementation plan, which is almost like a report card on how we're doing. It is really having that strong industry lens on those public investments and many private investments — it's a true partnership.

It has enabled the Yukon to become strong and resilient to change. Tourism is all about change. As changes occur in the global market, so too does industry. Ever since I can remember, there have been many changes in how we deliver programs and where we dedicate those resources and determine what the return on investment is for every dollar toward every marketing program. It is paying off.

I have to say that when you look at the rest of the country, Yukon has done relatively well. I truly believe this because of the net results. Yes, there have been challenges, and there are challenges all across the good country and throughout the world. Again, it is strategic advice by industry that has really made it resilient.

The tourism implementation plan, again, is like the blueprint or road map for the way forward for the year ahead. It does provide a breakdown of all the key markets — the domestic market, the overseas market — and it even gets down into meetings, conventions, incentive travel, sport tourism — and the list goes on. It's a great document and it helps guide and keeps focus on industry and the Yukon government to carry on. Of course, it is reviewed, like any good plan. It is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that we are on track, so that when things do happen and evolve in the global market, we are able to respond readily, efficiently and effectively. It has worked.

I just wanted to mention that, because I think it's a really important key attribute to the success of Yukon's industry.

I am also very proud of the many investments that have been made by the Yukon government over the last number of years, many of which the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin has already alluded to, as have other ministers on this side of the Legislative Assembly. Again, it's important that it's not just

about dollars into marketing programs; it is dollars into visitor services and product development. Those are all very key. They are investments in sports tourism, the conventions and the conferences that we continue to host. We have quite a lineup to be proud of in terms of the number of events that we have hosted over the years.

It is events such as even the 2010 Olympics that took place in Vancouver, where we were able to leverage that investment being made in Vancouver, just a stone's throw away from the Yukon, and we were able to really capitalize on having it in our backyard and by really maintaining those strategic partnerships with the travel trade. We brought up members of the media and had familiarization tours and partnered up with industry. That in itself helped leverage the marketing reach of our dollars, as compared to taking out an ad. Of course that only goes so far, as I am sure you would know.

We have taken advantage of other events, such as Canada Winter Games and Arctic Winter Games, and we have again leveraged that by working with the Canadian Tourism Commission and leveraged funding through CanNor in other strategic investments made through the Government of Canada. It has helped facilitate campaigns such as Look Up North. That was the first time that the Yukon had partnered with the N.W.T. and Nunavut for the pan-northern marketing campaign, something that carries on. Again, it really has put the north on the map and it has really exposed us as a very attractive and unique place to travel, to live and to raise a family.

We also used events such as Hockey Day in Canada. I'm sure all of us will remember Hockey Day in Canada and what a huge event that was and how we were able to leverage 30-second clips throughout that whole day for our Destination: Yukon campaign. That also helped leverage and extend that marketing reach even more than had we taken out an ad in print or radio or other.

I do commend the creativity of the Department of Tourism and Culture, and I commend the expertise lent and shared by industry, which has made us the very strong territory we know today. Likewise, all the partnerships we've been able to garner with Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon, the Sourdough Rendezvous, Yukon Quest — these are all premier festivals we have used to not only support their ongoing operations, but extend that reach — again, by making great use of media and familiarization tours. All of this has contributed to a very strengthened tourism industry.

Our partnerships with arts and culture — over the years, there were a lot of examples of other provinces that looked to the Yukon as kind of a template for how you could work at strengthening the ties between tourism and culture. It is so very true. When we look at the cultural programming, and the importance of our historic sites, museums and cultural centres and how we are able to incorporate that in our marketing tools and how we use that to really extend our reach, as well, as a destination of choice. It is investments such as those that we continue to invest in.

Air access is another important one. I know the Minister of Tourism and Culture spoke at great length about this as well. One only has to take a look at the recent statistics. In the last

five or six years, people planing and deplaning at the Whitehorse International Airport continue to blow the records. We're receiving increased travel, and hence the investments in extension of the airport and also investments in the past in airports, such as Old Crow and runway improvements in Dawson and Old Crow — again, to facilitate jet access and so forth.

Those are all very important to facilitate and to continue to maintain that momentum that we have had over the last decade and some, by having international visitors coming directly over to the Yukon. We are very fortunate to have that access, and it has really led to huge investments. The marketing that Condor Airlines provides would be very difficult for us to even try and match a portion of their annual marketing budget, but by partnering with them and the State of Alaska, we are able to extend that reach even some more — likewise, other companies like Holland America. You know, Holland America — if you look at their product catalogue every year, their distribution channel is a million-plus to their prospective travellers. Again, by partnering with the State of Alaska and Yukon tourism, we are again able to extend our reach.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that we have done very well with the dollars allotted and we have worked to enhance dollars. The tourism cooperative marketing fund — and I'll say this about the MLA for Klondike. There is reference to the reality shows of *Gold Rush* and *Yukon Gold*, and I can say that it comes with mixed reactions. I happen to have a family member who is in the placer mining industry, and he has mixed views of those shows because they may not showcase the industry in the best light, but at the same time wherever I travel and people hear I'm from the Yukon, they go, "Have you seen that show? Have you seen *Yukon Gold*? Have you seen *Gold Rush*?" Actually, yes, I have. "What do you think? Do you know those people?" How fascinating this is. We utilize television shows like that to extend the reach of the name "Yukon" that we are blessed to have and we are proud to call ourselves Yukoners.

It is important to continue to invest in marketing programs, and it is very important to continue to invest in visitor information centres or individuals and continue to invest in infrastructure. That is so critical to the continued development and growth of the tourism industry.

I just wanted to say thank you again to my colleague from Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing forward this important motion. I certainly look forward to receiving the support of all members and, of course, receiving the support of all of the members opposite for the budget as well, which speaks to the importance of tourism.

Ms. Stick: I will keep my comments brief. I would like to thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing this motion forward. Tourism is certainly an ongoing economic driver for the Yukon. I would just like to refer to the comments from the member across the way on the *Yukon Gold* show. I too have seen it and have heard people comment on it. I'm very clear when people ask about it that yes, *Yukon Gold* is about the Yukon and not the other program, *Yukon Men*, which is not about the Yukon at all. It's an Alaskan show. I wouldn't want people to —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Ms. Stick: Yes, enough details. Anyway, I'd like to thank that member.

I'd like to take a bit of a different approach on tourism and I'd like to speak to this motion as a small business owner and critic for small businesses in Whitehorse also. You will not find many small businesses in our downtown core, in our communities, or along the highway that aren't impacted by tourism — even a small used bookstore. We welcome tourists from around the world, coming into our businesses, looking for — in my case — Robert Service poetry, looking for books on our history, or just looking for a book to read in their hotel room, their motor home, beside their campfire or in their canoe.

I find it's the small business people who often have more opportunity and time to chat and meet our tourists and to share our knowledge of the Yukon. They are constantly being asked questions. I find that in a small business, we get to find out who they are and what they're interested in, and we get to steer them to other businesses or events — whether that's a restaurant, Arts in the Park, a bed and breakfast or even other bookstores. We end up giving them directions; we hand out pamphlets; we make phone calls on their behalf. We recommend mechanics. We recommend the best beer.

I always remember in my first location how many times I had to tell people that Canadian Tire isn't just tires. They had no idea.

Yukon small businesses promote Yukon authors, poets, photographers, artists and craftspeople. We promote our Yukon musicians by displaying and selling CDs. Sometimes we even sell used books. Enhanced marketing of the Yukon as a quality travel destination is important. It is important to the small businesses. We provide many of the services that we don't think about. It's the drugstore where someone goes to get their prescription renewed or look for a medication that they've run out of. It's the grocery stores that fill the motorhome. It is books or whatever. Small businesses do a lot for tourism. They might not be a tourist business, but they do provide service to tourists.

Unfortunately for small businesses, I find personally that advertising is one of those big-budget items. We are constantly torn: are we advertising to the locals or are we advertising to tourists? Often those are two very different ways of advertising. The one might be magazines and promotional materials; with the other we would just advertise in the local newspaper where a tourist might not see it. That becomes a concern for small businesses. How do we get our product out there? When there are tough economic times or a tight budget, it is often the tourist advertising that we tend to cut.

Our local Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce is supportive of small businesses with training and planter-box programs, et cetera, but not much in the way of advertising. I would suggest that perhaps this government could start thinking about this and find ways of being more supportive to small businesses in helping them out with their marketing. We are not going to be travelling to Germany or to any other countries promoting our businesses, because we are not tourist businesses, but we do depend on tourism. Not every business can be on Main Street, where they are highly visible. There are a lot of hidden gems

off on the side streets of Whitehorse that tourists might not find.

So I would just like to close by saying that I support this, but I would welcome and support partnerships that would also give small businesses more opportunities to market their businesses, as well as marketing tourism.

Mr. Tredger: I am pleased to rise to speak to this motion. I would like to thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing this forward. I would also like to acknowledge and thank all of the people in the civil service who work in Tourism and work to market the Yukon and to encourage people from around the world to come to the Yukon and visit it. In a sense it also is to build it, for it is in sharing what we have that sometimes we come to understand its real value. Yukoners are known for their ability and desire to share what they have with people who come to their land to visit. It began with our First Nations, who shared their land and culture and values with the first explorers and with the first gold seekers who came to this land. That tradition has continued. I want to congratulate the Department of Tourism and Culture for what they have done and how they have enhanced and built Yukon's image.

I am very fortunate to represent the riding of Mayo-Tatchun and I'm very proud to do that. I often say that as I get out of Whitehorse in my car and head up the highway, my spirit lifts and it feels a lot better as you head into the area, which I'm lucky to represent, be it Mayo, Carmacks, Pelly Crossing or many places in between, or to some of the land around that. It's quite invigorating. There are a number of sites that I can recommend in my area and encourage people who are listening — people who are here and people who read this — to visit these places because they are very unique and very special. Like people who have spoken in the House earlier, I'm proud of my area. I'm proud of the Yukon and we are indeed fortunate to be in the Yukon.

I think of Keno City and the work that they've done there to build the museum and a washhouse so that the tourists, when they come, have a place to wash. I think of the signpost up on Keno Hill that looks out over the area. The Keno City Mining Museum is in Jackson Hall, Keno City's oldest community centre, which was built in the 1920s. I'm excited when I go there and I talk to people like Mike Mancini, Jim Milley and Jordon and other people who have worked so hard to make Keno City an attractive and nice place to live. I congratulate them for it.

I'm always excited when I visit Mayo. I've often taken time to go to Binet House and see the latest displays and what's being advertised and the look that gives into Mayo and historical Mayo and the pride the citizens of Mayo have shown when they display the stuff that has made Mayo what Mayo is today. They share the information and it's a way to encourage tourists to get to know a little bit more about Mayo and its surrounding district.

I think I would be remiss if I didn't talk about one of my favourite weekends of the year, and that's the Mayo Midnight Marathon.

People from across the world come to run. We heard people talking about the all-night bike relays and bike races. Mayo's Midnight Marathon is just a wonderful event where the whole community comes together and celebrates and makes an opportunity for people to be involved in a marathon. Accompanying that is the art show and festival that occurs on that weekend — and the farmers market. That's where the people of Mayo bring their wares, their produce, and things that they've produced. There are musicians and it's just a wonderful celebration in the park. If you do get a chance, it is a wonderful way to spend a weekend. It occurs on the weekend around the long weekend in June, and I would encourage everyone to attend that.

We move down the highway a little way and end up in Pelly Crossing where the Big Jonathan House allows the people of Selkirk First Nation to display some of their culture and some of their traditions. It's well worth a stop. Big Jonathan House is modelled on a house that was built at Fort Selkirk.

If you can see it at Fort Selkirk, I would highly recommend that. Fort Selkirk is really a jewel. Over 2,000 people a year stop there. It's accessible only by water or by plane. The majority of people, of course, would come by water on Yukon River trips. I know Parks Day is a day many people talk about because it's an opportunity for many people to get a ride from the Pelly River Ranch into Fort Selkirk to see it. I am most fortunate in that I live very close and I get to go there many times throughout the summer. In fact, this winter I was out there and it was just a unique experience. I highly recommend Big Jonathan House.

In Carmacks, the Tagé Cho Hudän Interpretive Centre is open throughout the summer. It is an interpretive centre that showcases the past and present culture of the Northern Tutchone — many fascinating exhibits. There's a moose-skin boat, a dugout canoe, rare collections of stone and bone tools and it's an opportunity for the people from Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation to share some of their values and some of their culture with everyone.

There are many sites and many things to see around the Yukon, but I think our most valuable resource is the people. I alluded earlier to the people who share their place and their culture and their ideas. The beauty of tourism is that it's an interchange. Both parties benefit. I think of times when I've sat around a campfire and heard two or three different languages being spoken and talked to people who came from Spain to experience the Ultra or from Alaska to participate in the Quest, people who have volunteered to take part in that. The real richness and the real beauty of tourism is the delight, the learning, the diversity that we celebrate when we engage in it.

I will warrant that word of mouth goes a long way and tourists, when they return home, talk of our spaces. They talk about the hills and the vistas and the rivers. They talk about that great little used-book store in Whitehorse on Fourth Avenue. They talk about the people they met at the Gold Rush Inn. They talk about the people at the tourist office and the hospitality and friendship. When I think about trips I have been on, I think of the places I went but I also think of the people I met.

One of the tourism opportunities that is expanding, and expanding very quickly, is tourism that involves cultural activities and First Nations. People from around the world are coming to Yukon to share and experience First Nation cultures, to hear about a way of life, to experience what the First Nation people experience, the values they have, their world views and their visions.

It's critical that when we start to talk about tourism we talk about the expanding cultural and First Nation tourism industry and the value added — the carving, the painting, the music, the art — and it's very exciting to see — to visit Mayo or Pelly Crossing and see the First Nation dancers in their regalia and the pride with which they strut their stuff.

There are some things I think a government can and must do to support the tourism industry. We need investments in infrastructure, and there are many Yukoners who are willing to do so, but they're hesitating because of a lack of land use planning. Some people will scoff at that, but those people don't understand business — because, as a business investor, I need some certainty.

I ask you: Would you build a motel in Whitehorse if you had no certainty that next door there would not be an industrial development?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Tredger: Perfect — I appreciate that. The minister opposite says to check with the City of Whitehorse. The City of Whitehorse has zoning bylaws. So, when I purchase that property, I know with certainty. Contrast that with a resort owner who finds a piece of property in the wilderness, off the main trail, and he's looking to invest in some cabins. Depending on the type of operation he wants to have, it may be that he also includes some boats or ATVs, or he invests in some hiking trails. But there is no certainty — there is no land use plan.

So once he gets it built, the next day that land can be staked. As soon as that land is staked — this piece of wilderness — structures without foundations intended for use of not more than 12 months can be built either on or nearby. Up to 250 person-days can be housed there per year — no more than 10 people at a time, though — construction of lines not exceeding 1.5 metres in width; construction of corridors not exceeding five metres in width; trenching not exceeding 1,200 cubic metres on a group of three or more claims.

This isn't a pipe dream. This can happen. We're asking people to invest in the infrastructure necessary for wilderness — surface area of clearings not to exceed 200 metres; off-road use of vehicles in the winter; use of explosives not exceeding 1,000 kilograms — we're asking people to invest in our wilderness and in our tourism with no certainty.

A great leap of faith — can you take it to the bank? Can you get a loan on that piece of property? Can you sell the night sky when nearby a mine opens up and all of a sudden there is light pollution?

We've been very fortunate in the Yukon. As long as you can get farther than about 100 kilometres from Whitehorse and away from many other communities, you can find a darkened night sky. Tourists from around the world will pay to go to that. Operators will build their lodges; people will have their cabins

on lakes if we can give them some certainty. Land use planning, or lack thereof, takes that away.

Yukon is famous as a quality destination. Yukon is a quality destination. It's our job as stewards of the land to keep it that way.

Sometimes people laugh when you suggest that maybe ATVs shouldn't be used above the treeline or run through sensitive areas or restrict their use to trails. Sometimes people laugh and say you're restricting their freedom when you say maybe the people who built that lodge have prior claim to the people who are going to mine the area. The answers aren't easy, but if we're going to have a tourism industry that grows and expands, we have to take advantage of our strengths, and our strength is the Yukon as a quality destination. Our strength is in our people; our strength is in our culture and our values; our strength is in the wide open spaces and the unscarred landscapes. That is what the people are willing to pay a premium for.

I had the good fortune to see a couple of tourists come with Great River Journey, which unfortunately did not survive bankruptcy. But they had people paying big money to come on a regular basis to experience our rivers, our cultures and our people. We have a gem. The Yukon people are the gem and we can build on that and we can build a tourism industry. That is why I'm excited about this motion. That is why I'm excited about the work that the Department of Tourism has put into this. That is why I'm excited about the way we are looking to create a place where people from around the world can come and have a quality experience, where they can visit one with another, where my children can share their stories with people from Spain or Düsseldorf or Toronto, where people from around the world are welcomed, encouraged and lived with. Thank you very much.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise to speak in favour of the Yukon government marketing the Yukon as a unique and special travel destination.

How could I not, when — as others have said in speaking to this motion today — we have the privilege of living in such a special place?

The beauty and grandeur of Yukon's wild places, its majestic mountain ranges, vast watersheds of rivers and lakes and the wildlife this habitat supports is something to take your breath away. Whether it's the northern lights, or the stars in the cold, clear night sky, or summer's midnight sun, the changing seasons and the tapestry created by the changing colours of the landscapes, the cloud patterns — you can walk out the door and look at the very same view and see something incredibly different and incredibly beautiful every day.

As the 2013 *Lonely Planet* travel guide says, "This vast and thinly populated wilderness has a grandeur and beauty that can only be properly appreciated in person." The *Lonely Planet* travel guide says Yukon's wild landscape of rivers, mountains, snow and ice fields makes it one of the top 10 regions to visit in 2013. In fact, *Lonely Planet*, one of the most popular travel guides available, listed the Yukon fourth, behind the island of Corsica, the Negev in Israel and Palestine, and a region in Ne-

pal. While *Lonely Planet* says the Yukon is one of the few places in the world that remains virtually unchanged by time, it encourages tourists to see the Yukon now because of climate change and a renewed interest in mining, which is changing the nature of the territory quickly.

Climate change means that parts of the far north are actually dissolving into the Arctic Ocean and the glacier-clad peaks are undergoing profound change. Canada's five tallest mountains and the world's largest icefields below the Arctic are all within Kluane National Park. The scientific evidence on climate change is conclusive — the glaciers are shrinking. We can see the evidence on the ground. There is a shrinking glacier aspect to the discovery of Kwäday Dän Ts'inci — translated as "Long Ago Man Found". In 1999, three British Columbia men discovered the body of Kwäday Dän Ts'inci, along with several artifacts.

The story went that the wife of one of the men on the hunting trip made him promise that he would walk around the edges of the glacier and not over the glacier because she was fearful of what might happen out there on the glacier. In fact, the scientific investigation that was done on Kwäday Dän Ts'inci found that it was likely he had either fallen into a crevasse or been caught in a sudden snowstorm. Radiocarbon testing tells us that he died 200 years ago, give or take a few decades. This was a wonderful example of a partnership between the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and the B.C. government, who came to agreement on how to respectfully conduct the scientific investigations, take temporary care of the remains, and then undergo various scientific research. They found DNA links from Kwäday Dän Ts'inci to many Champagne and Aishihik First Nations citizens.

When we speak about the Yukon's wild landscape, we have to remember that First Nation people have sustained life on the land for thousands of years. Many First Nations continue to practice a subsistence lifestyle as they hunt and trap and harvest food at annual fish camps.

I listened with interest to the Minister of Highways and Public Works talk about a balanced approach and the need to trust the people who take care of the land. That would be the First Nations people of this territory who have occupied the land since time immemorial. I would like to caution the government that if it chooses to destroy special areas like the Peel region by opening it up to staking and resource extraction throughout, instead of adopting the *Final Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*, which does take a balanced approach, then government can never replace wilderness that has been destroyed. There will undoubtedly be negative impacts on the wilderness tourism industry if the government fails to adopt the *Final Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* and proceeds down the track of unrestrained resource extraction.

Tourism is an important sector of the economy. As the Member for Takhini-Kopper King noted, mountain biking is a huge outdoor attraction bringing many people north to check out trails. Wilderness tourism, canoe expeditions and whitewater rafting, and outfitters' trips into concessions for moose,

sheep or bear hunts, dog mushing and photography expeditions all contribute to economic development.

The arts, music festivals, art festivals, cultural events, museums and First Nation cultural centres also draw visitors to the Yukon. We have historic sites; we have archives. Indeed, research and the knowledge-based economy, as well as archaeology and paleontology, are all part of the tourist attraction of the Yukon.

The hospitality industry — bed and breakfasts, hotels and restaurants, all benefit when we promote our tourism industry and when we protect the land that sustains it.

Tourism dollars bring in a lot of local benefits. I want to encourage this government to recognize the value of Yukon's clean environment as not only the key to our tourism industry, but as an irreplaceable treasure for the globe. Tourists, like Yukoners, are smart people. The Yukon land claims regime, which envisions public and First Nation governments planning together, such as by developing regional land use plans, are well-regarded outside our borders. Leadership from the Yukon Party government in adopting the *Final Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*, which was developed over a six-year period with participation of representatives of the Yukon government and of the First Nation governments who have lived in that area — Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Na Cho Nyäk Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Tetlit Gwich'in — would go a long way toward boosting the credibility of government and increasing our tourist potential.

I want to urge the government to recognize that recognizing land claims agreements and taking a responsible approach to development is not only the right thing to do, but that it will in fact benefit our tourism industry, which we are speaking to in this motion debate today.

Ms. Hanson: It is a pleasure to be able to stand in support of the motion presented today from the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin. I'm not going to take a lot of time on this because I think we've heard the views expressed quite eloquently by members on both sides of this House this afternoon about how important each of us in our own personal way and as representatives of the people and the constituents that we've been elected to represent view the tourism industry, the tourism sector in this territory.

I think we do because we recognize that, as my colleague from Riverdale South mentioned, roughly 70 percent of Yukon's employed population work for businesses that report some level of tourism revenues. That is a significant amount. The fact that over seven percent of our gross domestic product is reliant upon the tourism sector and that roughly \$300 million annually is generated through the tourism sector — that is significant. It is probably triple what will be spent this year in mining and mineral exploration. It is huge, and it is a growth industry. It is a growth industry that needs care and nurturing, because one of the things that we know is that, as the Minister of Tourism and Culture mentioned in his remarks, we carefully — through the research, and by supporting this motion we are supporting the marketing research and identifying where the business opportunities are and where the opportunities are to

attract the kinds of tourists that can and want to come here. As he referred to them, they are “high-yield tourists” from places like Germany, Switzerland and Japan, and one of the questions we need to ask ourselves is what it is about the Yukon that these high-yield tourists — to be crass, that means people who are willing to spend big money to come to this territory. They’re coming here because they’re seeking authenticity. They’re seeking what they no longer have in their own countries.

You have travelled. Many of the people in this Legislative Assembly have travelled. Many developed countries in Europe are overdeveloped. They no longer have those wide open spaces — talk to the average German tourist. Their notion of a forest is a carefully planted plantation, essentially, after hundreds and hundreds of years of deforestation and replanting.

Their notion of camping is not your or my idea of camping. One year, we went down the Yukon River and we stopped at a place and thought, “This is fine — a nice place. There are no people here.” The next thing we know, there are these tourists coming along behind us and they happened to be from Germany and they camped right beside us. I thought, “My goodness.” So I actually said to them, “Nice to see you, but why are you cheek to jowl with us?” They said, “In Germany, you have to camp that way. You’re not allowed to camp spaced out along the river in different places.” Their view of what was acceptable and what should be done was very different. By the time they got to Dawson, they were relaxed. They knew that it was okay. You didn’t have to be on top of each other, and that’s what the Yukon does and gives to tourists in this territory.

One of the reasons I think it’s really important that we support the notion of research with respect to the marketing of the Yukon and its tourism potential is that there is whole marketing and then, as quickly as that occurs, there’s counter marketing. We need to be able to inoculate this territory against negative impressions of this territory. When the Minister of Tourism was speaking earlier this afternoon and said that Germany was our largest market currently at 26 percent of the tourism market, and we continue to pay close attention to this market, I couldn’t agree more. I think it’s a very attractive market, but I have to ask myself why this Minister of Tourism would permit his Cabinet colleague to trash-talk the views of tourists and others coming from Germany when they express their views — their heartfelt views — on the wilderness areas of the Peel.

When you travel, one of the things that you notice and you know is that the impact of the social media is enormous. Tourism destinations have lost significant tourism dollars because of Facebook, Twitter, and TripAdvisor — comments made about safety; comments made about what was an authentic place, no longer an authentic place.

In 2007, I had the opportunity after many years of work to take three and a half months and travel around east and South Africa. One of the places that we spent some time was in the Serengeti, the Maasai Mara area. In 2010, roughly, the Tanzanian government had an election and they decided that they were going to put a road through the Serengeti — it sort of

echoes putting a road through the Peel. You know what, Mr. Speaker? There was a massive international backlash. The tourism industry in Tanzania suffered incredibly. The Serengeti is very different in many ways from the Peel, but in some ways it’s very similar. There is a significant ecoregion where 1.5 million wildebeest go across the plains each year in this massive migration. It’s the most bizarre thing to watch — back and forth. It’s one of the biggest places where you’ll find the most lions in a concentrated mass of area, and the government was prepared to put a road through it. National Geographic, citizens who had been there, tourists — now the Tanzanian government tried to do what this government has done. They tried to dismiss those tourists as some sort of raving environmentalists or whatever, but you know what? The National Geographic Society has very deep pockets. Luckily, tourism prevailed in that case. There still is a healthy tourism industry and the road did not go through the Serengeti.

Money spent on cooperative marketing agreements with the tourism industry is really important, but the work that is done on those cooperative marketing arrangements with private sector tourism industry can be eliminated in a flash by views like those stated by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. As my colleague the Member for Mayo-Tatchun said, it’s all about people. If we show that we disrespect people — because that is what a tourist is; they are not a widget, they are a person who is making an actual conscious choice to spend their money in our territory. We have to respect them. We have to show that respect in every single way, because things that are said in this Legislative Assembly are conveyed in our media and are transported around the world in a flash, again through social media and through every other means possible.

When my colleague from Mayo-Tatchun was speaking with respect to the importance of supporting the tourism sector in not creating more risks for the private sector that gets involved in the tourism sector, I heard a heckle from across the way with respect to the fact that business is all about risk. But do you know what, Mr. Speaker? Tourism is already a very risky business. The margins are very tight. Tourism operators are brave risk-takers, but they do not need their government to ridicule them or their potential or current customers. As we go forward and as we support this government as it develops research-based and market-driven campaigns, we’ll be working to make sure that that research is mindful that we are in a global economy that is struggling, and people are making difficult choices about where they are spending their money. As we go after those high-yield tourists, they have choices and they will make those choices based on whether or not, when they come here, they are going to be seeing the authentic Yukon — whether or not they are coming here — and they will be respected.

When they leave here, and they comment about what they saw and why they think it’s so valuable — from whatever their perspective is — they would hope that their views will be respected, and not dismissed or ridiculed.

So I’m pleased to support this motion this afternoon. We look forward to supporting the dynamic growth of a very dynamic industry — the tourism industry in the Yukon.

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

Mr. Hassard: It's very interesting to be here today and to listen to the viewpoints of everyone here in the House. I could make a lot of comments, but it's probably better if I just keep them to myself, and we can take this motion to a vote. Thank you very much.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Madam Deputy 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.

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

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

Motion No. 380 agreed to

Motion No. 409

Deputy Clerk: Motion No. 409, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Watson Lake

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to continue to implement the housing and land development commitments outlined in the Yukon Party's 2011 election platform, "Moving Forward Together", by developing a housing action plan that builds on strategic investments and addresses the needs of Yukoners for a variety of housing options.

Ms. McLeod: I am pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 409. This government recognizes the need to continually address all facets of the housing continuum in the Yukon.

I'd like to acknowledge the hard work of the Yukon Housing Corporation. Certainly, this is an area where government's

actions are highly visible and where you can never say that your work is done. Housing is a matter that affects everyone — young and old, those considered high income and those not so much. We all need somewhere to live, and how we address social housing is one of the areas of focus for the Yukon Housing Corporation.

I'd like to take a little time to talk about the projects in my riding of Watson Lake. We would like to keep our seniors in their home community as long as possible and, to be sure, most of them want to stay. So it is with thanks that I recognize the completion of the 12-plex seniors residence, now called Wye Lake Manor. Yes, there have been some minor issues around these units and these are being addressed as needed. Our seniors are a resilient bunch. I have been to a few functions at the manor, and I can say that the seniors have created a warm and caring environment for all the residents. Being the trailblazers they are, Joyce and Lorne Armstrong were the first to take up residence. The last time I checked, there was only one vacant apartment.

In Watson Lake, one year ago, Yukon Housing Corporation supported 46 social housing units and 34 staff housing units. That is about 100 homes, or just shy of 25 percent of the total housing in our community.

That is an amazing presence. Of course, southeast Yukon represents but a small portion of the good work that Yukon Housing Corporation does.

I'm extremely pleased to hear about the innovative way that Yukon Housing Corporation is addressing the need for staff housing in rural Yukon. It's very exciting to think how that will affect the economic livelihood in communities.

I appreciate the work being done in the education of homeowners and prospective homeowners. The self-builder courses held earlier this year, in partnership with Yukon College, were fully embraced by the public. They also provide training on EnerGuide for houses, best practices for oil-fired appliance and oil tank installations, certified ventilation install and design and HRV balancing, just to name a few.

This motion calls for a housing action plan that builds on strategic investments and addresses the needs of Yukoners. I can see that much thought and deliberation has gone into the upcoming 207 Alexander Street seniors residence and, really, the building of seniors homes throughout Yukon. Programs designed to assist seniors to stay in their own homes and programs designed to help with the purchase of a home are all investments to address the needs of Yukoners.

The housing action plan will be an excellent tool to ensure that housing for Yukoners is a living plan that is able to bend as it needs to bend and allow for monitoring and improvement as needed.

Finally, I commend the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation for his diligent work on behalf of Yukoners by listening to Yukoners, and by moving forward. Thank you.

Ms. White: I rise to speak to Motion No. 409, put forward by the Member for Watson Lake.

Housing remains the single most important issue for many Yukoners. The Yukon NDP has been calling for a housing strategy all along. You might not remember as clearly as I do, but my very first opposition Wednesday called on this very thing. My motion read: “THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with all governments, including First Nations governments, as well as non-profit and private housing providers to develop a Yukon housing strategy and policy framework that will: (1) include all Yukon communities; (2) have performance and risk management measures; (3) be comprehensive, innovative, practical, and achievable; (4) increase the housing supply; (5) improve housing affordability; and (6) support individuals and families in greatest housing need.

That day was a very valuable one for me, as I was reminded about the power of language. I put forth the motion that I truly believed this House could get behind.

An amendment was moved that deleted the words “develop a” and replaced them with “implement its”. It doesn’t sound like a big deal, does it? But it was and it still is.

We were told in this House on December 14, 2011, that the Yukon Party had a housing strategy and all they needed to do was implement it. We learned three weeks ago that in fact they didn’t have a plan and that no action was taken. So here we are — 15 months later nearly to the day, glad that the government has finally listened to our recommendation and announced it will develop a housing action plan, but we are saddened that it has taken so long.

We need more than words and certainly more than clever word games. Homelessness continues to be a growing concern. Many rental unit prices continue to be through the roof, and real estate prices simply are not affordable for many Yukoners even with the new down payment assistance program, especially in this economy that is creating a growing gap between the rich and the poor.

Yesterday I took a look at the job board on YuWIN. Most of the jobs available have a pay scale between \$10.54 an hour and \$15 an hour. Folks making around \$14 an hour, for example, make roughly \$27,000 a year. Excluding social housing, what are the affordable options for workers making \$14 an hour? Yukoners in this income bracket are being left behind by the Yukon Party’s approach to housing.

Today’s motion is weakened by its reference to the Yukon Party platform.

I went back to look at the Yukon Party’s 2011 election platform to see what was said about housing, and it’s pretty thin soup. Yukon’s housing crisis has grown under the Yukon Party’s watch. Vacancy rates have remained low, housing prices have doubled, rental rates have skyrocketed, and more than 100 people in Whitehorse are homeless or tenuously housed. Housing challenges exist in almost every community in the territory.

Instead of moving forward with a comprehensive housing plan, with meaningful targets and timelines, this government continues to rattle off its list of one-off projects in consideration or underway, but a list of disjointed actions does not constitute a plan. An ad hoc, one-off approach to housing is part of

what got us in this mess in the first place, and it’s going to take much more than a long list of promises to get us out.

The housing challenges facing Yukoners run the full spectrum — from difficulty paying the rent or mortgages to homelessness. Working and middle-class people can’t afford pricey residential lots and new home construction. Businesses struggle to recruit and retain the staff they need to operate. Young people, families and transient workers are forced to leave the territory to find work where housing is more available and affordable. The list goes on. My point here is that the housing crisis affects us all.

The motion before the House urges the government to continue to implement the housing and land development commitments outlined in the Yukon Party’s 2011 election platform “Moving Forward Together” by developing a housing action plan that builds on strategic investments and addresses the needs of Yukoners for a variety of housing options.

When it comes to housing, there is another key problem with the Yukon Party platform. It is overly reliant on an ideology that is simply not delivering results, like affordable housing or living wages. I am talking about the persistent trickle-down theory. When it comes to housing, this theory manifests itself as a belief that currently housed Yukoners will upgrade by buying bigger houses or building on new, expensive lots like those in Grizzly Valley, and then this upward mobility will lead to an increased supply of more affordable vacancies to rent or buy. The trickle-down theory, it turns out, does not hold water.

The Yukon Party platform has not delivered on this most important issue of housing — the issue of affordable housing and homelessness. That is precisely why the government is now acknowledging it needs an action plan. An action plan must be comprehensive; it must include all stakeholders in housing in urban and rural communities; it must respond to the needs of people with all levels of income and cultural identities. An action plan must be innovative. The creative solutions are out there, but it will take government vision and a willingness to lead and to be bold to turn those solutions from ideas into reality. An action plan must be practical and achievable. It needs to be grounded in the reality in the current housing crisis. It must contain concrete steps, with sufficient resource allocation to achieve them. The way forward must be carefully planned or nothing will be achieved.

A comprehensive action plan must include all Yukon communities. As I mentioned, the housing crisis is territory-wide.

It affects more than just Whitehorse. A comprehensive action plan needs to have performance and risk management elements — a check and balance sheet, if you will.

Strategies and action plans are effective only if they have framework in place that allows the elements in them to be measurable and evaluated. It’s hard to measure progress if we don’t know what we’ve set out to achieve. Goals, timelines and benchmarks are critical if we truly want to address this crisis in a systematic and lasting way.

Another item from the platform that did not bear fruit was — and I quote from the platform: “Make Crown land available

to the private sector to ensure new rental accommodations are available in Yukon.” With much fanfare, the Yukon Party announced their “innovative approach” to affordable rental housing with its release of Lot 262, with the requirement that any development have a minimum of 30 affordable rental units.

What happened to Lot 262? Their innovative approach that would be a template to help bring affordable rental housing throughout the City of Whitehorse on government-owned land did absolutely nothing. This is a response I got on May 3, 2012 from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources when I was trying to figure out what went wrong — and I quote: “The approach with Lot 262 was one that we identified as an innovative approach that we would put forward and evaluate also what we received through it. Unfortunately, despite the strong interest we received from the private sector last fall during the expressions of interest stage, we received only two bids. Neither bid met the minimum eligibility requirements.”

Even with the information we gained from ATIPP, it is still unclear why the two bids were denied and were said to not meet — and I quote: “the minimum eligibility requirements”. Sadly, Lot 262 was quietly forgotten until it was re-released as Lot 1547, no longer with stipulations in place for affordable rental housing.

Government must work cooperatively with private developers. They cannot expect the private sector what is ultimately a societal problem. Their job is to develop land, build houses and earn a profit. It’s the job of government to help address our collective challenges. Government must establish clear expectations and guidelines for private partners. What we heard from developers on Lot 262 is that there must be incentives, possibly in the form of subsidies or cheap land purchasing options to ensure success. Government cannot ask the private sector to take all of the risks.

Yesterday in the Justice debate, my colleague from Copperbelt South asked the Minister of Justice the current status regarding First Nations and the land titles issue. The debate ended before we heard his answer. Government must partner with First Nations and facilitate their desire to become involved in development of their traditional areas. In the City of Whitehorse, the two First Nations are the second-largest land owners.

By helping them with titling the land and leasing arrangements, they will become paramount in lot development. This, I might point out, Mr. Speaker, is also an item in the Yukon Party platform — an item on which there has been no visible progress. The Yukon Party platform has not delivered on these most important issues of housing; that is precisely why the government is now acknowledging it needs an action plan, a strategic approach that considers and integrates a full continuum of housing needs.

I would like to support this motion but in order to do so, I propose the following amendment.

Amendment proposed

Ms. White: I move

THAT Motion No. 409 be amended by deleting the phrase “continue to implement the housing and land development commitments outlined in the Yukon Party’s 2011 election plat-

form, ‘Moving Forward Together’, by developing” and replacing it with the phrase “develop and implement”.

Speaker: The amendment is in order.

It has been moved by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King

THAT Motion No. 409 be amended by deleting the phrase “continue to implement the housing and land development commitments outlined in the Yukon Party’s 2011 election platform, “Moving Forward Together”, by developing” and replace it with the phrase “develop and implement”.

Ms. White: The motion as amended would read “THAT this House urges the Yukon government to develop and implement a housing action plan that builds on strategic investments and addresses the needs of Yukoners for a variety of housing options.”

I think I was clear in where I was coming from prior to the amendment. I believe that simplicity is key. As it stands now, the government has already started on this good work. On March 26, 2013, the government released this news release. I am going to read it off now: “Work has started on the development of a Housing Action Plan for Yukon, Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation Scott Kent announced today. ‘I have asked the housing corporation to invite a number of organizations and stakeholders to participate in developing a Housing Action Plan for Yukon,’ Kent said. ‘Ensuring a range of housing options for Yukoners is vitally important and our hope is that all stakeholders with an interest in housing will help to create an action plan that is fully encompassing.’ The Yukon government will lead the process through Yukon Housing Corporation and the departments of Community Services, Energy Mines and Resources, and Health and Social Services. Building on this week’s Northern Housing Conference, it will identify the range of interests in Yukon’s housing sector and set the direction for the Housing Action Plan.

“‘Housing is an issue that is important to all Yukoners and by working in partnership with stakeholders, I am confident that we can move forward to create a realistic housing plan for all Yukon,’ Kent added. ‘Yukon Housing Corporation’s five-year strategic plan defines the goals and objectives of the board and the corporation, and having a fully supported Housing Action Plan will provide the clear direction needed to turn ideas into action,’ Yukon Housing Corporation chair Claire Derome said. ‘We are looking forward to the outcomes of this planning.’ The development of the action plan will take into account the strategic investments in housing and land already initiated or completed by the government to meet its commitments. These include land development, an expanded youth shelter, new second-stage housing for women and children fleeing violence, the expansion of the Options for Independence facility for adults with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and seniors housing, such as the replacement of the former Alexander Street residence and a recently announced seniors housing facility in Mayo. The Yukon Housing Corporation has also introduced a new Down Payment Assistance Program.”

I think that lays it out pretty clearly, and I'm pleased to see that movement from government. Knowing that this is the press release that came out on March 26, 2013, and knowing that it goes very well with what the amendment would read, I support the minister and the Yukon Housing Corporation in their efforts to develop a housing action plan for Yukon that they have already started.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I want to thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward the original motion and let members of the House know that we will not be able to support the amendment brought forward by the MLA for Takhini-Kopper King. I'll go into some of the reasons why over the next number of minutes during my time here.

When it comes to "Moving Forward Together" — our platform for the 2000 election — it was built and grounded in a lot of the great work that was done by previous Yukon Party governments when it came to housing. Over \$100 million was invested by previous Yukon Party governments in housing projects around the territory. From 2009 to 2011, the Yukon Housing Corporation alone constructed or purchased 77 housing units for low-income Yukoners. Those weren't just in Whitehorse. There is a 19-suite affordable housing building in Dawson City and a 32-suite Whitehorse affordable housing project for single-parent families, in partnership with the Women's Directorate. The minister responsible for the Women's Directorate and I were pleased to announce the extension of the coordinator position for that project recently. We value the great work that's being done by that coordinator and we're looking forward to that continuing.

Previous Yukon Party government — again a six-unit family townhouse in Ingram; four single-family residences in Carmacks; four single-family residences in Ross River; six duplex suites in Takhini North — the Member for Takhini-Kopper King's own riding — six mobile homes, three of which were in Carmacks and three were in Ross River.

Again, Yukon Party government's investments from 2007 to 2011 — and again this is providing that context for members in the House on how we arrived at those commitments in the 2011 election platform. Through the Yukon Housing Corporation in that time — the 2007-11 window — the Yukon government constructed 113 affordable housing units for seniors and elders in the territory. That's an important thing for me to also address here, that those are affordable rental units. They are based on rent geared to income, such as 25 percent of income for seniors. I can't think of a more affordable rental unit than that. So when the member opposite criticizes us for what we've done with respect to affordable rentals, these types of investments are action that we've taken on developing affordable rentals for Yukon residents.

Of those 113 units, the buildings promote independent living and the opportunity for seniors to reside in their own home and remain in their community, close to families and friends. So 30 of those — the 30-suite Waterfront Place seniors facility was constructed in Whitehorse; nine suites in Haines Junction; 12 suites in Watson Lake; a six-suite facility in Faro; an eight-suite facility in Teslin and 48 suites in the member's riding —

again, the athletes village residence in Whitehorse at 600 College Drive.

Those were tremendous investments that previous Yukon Party governments have made in housing and, I would argue, significantly more than any previous government before. I think the partnership with the Government of Canada and the work that we have been able to undertake — or the previous Yukon Party government was able to undertake — has led to those significant investments that we have been able to make for social housing and seniors housing over the past number of years.

Now where we've arrived at is the planning for the 2011 Yukon Party's election platform, "Moving Forward Together". I think that many of the aspects in there, of course, are very important to Yukoners. We want to take immediate action on housing. That's what we heard on the doorsteps. That's what Yukoners expected us to do, and that's a promise that we made to them. They responded by electing the third consecutive Yukon Party majority government to this House. We were elected with the understanding that we would take immediate action, and that's exactly what we did.

The Minister of Community Services — a huge investment in lot development around the territory, including work on Whistle Bend with the City of Whitehorse, I might add, to come up with a design that works for the city, and now we have lots available for sale over the counter — something that existed in the Yukon 10, 12, 13 years ago for perhaps different reasons, but now the demand is there and we've matched that demand and exceeded that demand with extra supply.

Yukoners wanted us to take immediate action for adults living with FASD, and that's what we've done through Options for Independence. The Yukon Housing Corporation, in partnership with CMHC, was able to fund that facility and that society. I understand it will be open, perhaps as early as this fall, with a number of units they've put in place.

I think I should take this opportunity to congratulate that non-government organization, Options for Independence, for their work and their commitment, as well as take the opportunity to thank the contractor. I know there were some delays with getting the building off the ground, but the contractor honoured his original bid, and they were able to build it. I know, in talking to representatives of the organization, it will be coming in on budget, as they originally planned.

Yukoners asked us to take action on housing options for women and children who were fleeing abuse, and that's what we've done with Betty's Haven, an investment made by this government of \$4.5 million. I understand that construction is progressing quite rapidly on that facility as well.

Yukoners asked us to take action on a youth shelter. The Minister of Health and Social Services has done that, in partnership with the Yukon Housing Corporation, and we have a new youth shelter that is now available in the downtown Whitehorse core and have taken those shelter beds out of the Sarah Steele Building where they were previously located.

Yukoners asked us to take action on seniors housing, and that's precisely what we've done. Last August I was able to participate along with the Premier, the chair of the Yukon

Housing Corporation Board of Directors, Mme. Derome, as well as our Member of Parliament, Ryan Leef, in announcing a new, 34-unit seniors complex that will be built at 207 Alexander Street. I'm happy that the Yukon Housing Corporation officials were able to clarify for members opposite some of the details around the tendering process for demolition of that building. I've been by there; the fences have gone up and demolition is expected to be complete by June 15 so that construction can begin.

Those are a few of the government's accomplishments, but there are also partnerships that we've undertaken over the past while. There are a number of accomplishments since the 2012 fall legislative sitting. The Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors and executive developed and are now implementing the corporation's strategic five-year plan. I know that's an exciting development for them, and it has been supported by many NGOs, including the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, because it's different from the last one. The Housing Corporation Board of Directors and the staff of the Housing Corporation put a significant amount of work into developing that strategic plan, which would facilitate access to more attainable and sustainable home ownership in the Yukon — that's one of the goals.

Number two is to support initiatives to increase the availability and affordability of rental accommodation in the Yukon.

Third, to develop strategic partnerships with Yukon government departments, other governments, non-government organizations and the private sector in pursuit of collaborative initiatives to enhance the full range of choices along the housing continuum in Yukon.

The fourth strategic goal — the fourth and fifth are more internal strategic goals, but I am going to read them into the record because they are important to the individuals who work at the Housing Corporation. The fourth one is to work to continually improve the corporation's organizational effectiveness and accountability framework to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the corporation's established and newly created or enhanced programs.

The fifth is to ensure adequate human resources planning and capacity to support the strategic goals and operational plans of the corporation.

There has been a tremendous amount of work and I applaud the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors for the work that they have put into this new direction. I'm looking forward to working with them as we move to implement that. Again, going back to the Yukon Party's 2011 platform, there were a number of initiatives that were identified in there and they were real initiatives, real projects that we needed to get off the ground immediately to address the needs of Yukoners who were looking for housing. Absolutely, we took an innovative approach to Lot 262. It was something that hadn't been tried here in the territory before.

We didn't want to miss an opportunity to attempt something like that. I applaud the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Premier for identifying innovative opportunities for us. Another one was announced this week by the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors, and that's the

option for them to seek an expression of interest — they have issued an expression of interest to identify parties who may be interested in providing staff housing services in Dawson City. I'll read from the press release, just as the member opposite did from a previous press release, and this is a quote from me as minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation: "Following on the principle that it takes a community to effectively address housing needs, we want to have a better idea as to who may be interested in providing staff housing in Dawson City. The corporation will be examining all options to address both staff and social housing services in communities."

The press release goes on to state that, "The Yukon Housing Corporation (YHC) administers the Government of Yukon's rural staff housing program. This program assists in recruiting and retaining staff to deliver government programs and services."

Speaker: Order please. The hour being 5:30 p.m., this House stand adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

Debate on Motion No. 409 and the amendment accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following Sessional Papers were tabled April 17, 2013:

33-1-79

Yukon Development Corporation: Protocol Between the Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation (as representative of Government) Government of Yukon and the Chair of the Yukon Development Corporation (as representative of Yukon Development Corporation) (Cathers)

33-1-80

Yukon Development Corporation: Shareholder letter of expectations 2013 from the Minister Responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation ("the Minister") to The Yukon Development Corporation ("Development") (Cathers)