

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, November 27, 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.

Introduction of visitors.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

PETITIONS

Petition No. 16

Mr. Barr: I have for presentation the following petition to the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

This petition of the undersigned shows:

THAT the historic Ross River footbridge across the Pelly River provides foot, bicycle and ATV/ORV access for residents and visitors alike;

THAT the historic Ross River footbridge is an important part of the history, heritage and culture of the community of Ross River and of the Ross River Dena people;

THAT the historic Ross River footbridge is an important tourist attraction and contributes to the economic well-being of Ross River; and

THAT residents of Ross River do not want the historic Ross River footbridge demolished.

THEREFORE, the undersigned ask the Yukon Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Yukon to commit to making the necessary repairs and renovations to the footbridge to save this important historic site in a timely manner.

Speaker: Are there any further petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urge the Minister of Justice to enact regulations, prior to March 1, 2014, pursuant to the *Coroners Act*, section 36, establishing transparent and accountable rules of procedure for the conduct of a coroner's inquest that provide for:

(1) the right of family members of the deceased to have legal standing and attend at an inquest;

(2) the right of family members of the deceased to have legal representation at an inquest;

(3) the right of family members of the deceased and/or their legal counsel to call witnesses and examine or cross-examine all of the witnesses called; and

(4) the timely disclosure of evidence to family members of the deceased and/or their legal counsel.

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

THAT this House do order the return of the "new Chief Coroner job description" referred to by the Minister of Justice on November 13, 2013.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Highways and Public Works to provide a report of the total value of all maintenance expenditures and all studies commissioned related to the Ross River suspension bridge over the last 12 years.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Local procurement

Ms. Hanson: Local, small- and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of Yukon's economy.

Through their purchasing power, governments do have an opportunity to strengthen the local economy by working with locally owned companies to capture a bigger share of their local and regional markets. Governments could do this through procurement policies that support locally owned small- and medium-sized businesses.

Does the government keep track of how much it spends on purchasing goods and services from locally owned small- and medium-sized businesses? Will the minister share that information with this Assembly?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Approximately 40 percent of our government's annual budget is expended through contracts and YTG issues over 6,500 contracts annually, including more than 3,500 contracts to Yukon businesses.

In the last little while, two significant milestones occurred on April 1, 2013 with changes to the contract and procurement regulations and the introduction of the new procurement support centre. The centre opened its doors April 1 and will be fully operational by April 1, 2014. This new office reflects the government's commitment to purchasing activities that are fair, open and achieve the best value for our taxpayers' money.

Ms. Hanson: I'm glad that the minister has the information with respect to the contracting. In May of this year, the University of British Columbia's business school partnered with an alliance of B.C. companies to carry out a study of the economic impact of local procurement. Results of the study show that locally owned small- and medium-sized businesses recirculate a significant proportion of their revenue locally as compared with other businesses. Economists call

this the “multiplier effect.” The report concluded that — and I quote: “Local businesses employ and are owned by friends and neighbours, who are heavily invested in the strength of our communities and our quality of life. They create good, local jobs, buy more goods and services from other local businesses, give more to local charities, recirculate more money in our economy and strengthen our social fabric.”

Can the minister place a monetary value on the local expenditures on small and medium enterprises by this territorial government?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: The Yukon business community is very important to this government and we have many contracts, whether it is a cleaner in a government building in rural Yukon or a snow removal contract. It’s pretty tough for me to come up with a dollar-and-cents figure, but we support the local economy. The Yukon supports local contractors. We have a great procurement office here in the capital of the Yukon, Whitehorse. Our property management departments in rural Yukon support private enterprise through our third-party rental book. There are many avenues for locals and Yukoners to work for the Yukon government and they do. I’m proud of the businesses that we support and I encourage them to bid on every contract that comes out.

Ms. Hanson: Typically, local independent businesses spend significantly more of their earnings locally. They buy goods and services from other local businesses and pay staff who live in the community. Those businesses, in turn, spend their earnings on more goods and services and more staff. Adding to all this, local business owners and their employees spend more of their personal income locally. This is what is called a small-business multiplier effect. That’s why it is such a good idea for governments to do whatever they can to support locally owned businesses.

Beyond the generalized statement of support, which this government is strong on, can the minister speak specifically about the specific initiatives that this government has put in place since the 2011 election to support small independent business owners who are doing so much to bring wealth and jobs to our local economy, and will he commit to providing the financial and economic impact of those commitments that he says they have made?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I find it amusing to be lectured by the NDP when it comes to the economy — an economy, since we have taken over, that has had tremendous growth in GDP with most years surpassing the growth of average GDP of the nation. In years when the economy contracted in the world and the rest of Canada, we continued to have strong growth — not only growth in GDP but also in population.

What we do know is that during the last reign of the NDP and Liberal governments, we had a mass exodus of people and the closure of many small- and medium-sized businesses. I find it very interesting and amusing that the NDP are going to lecture us on how and what we should be doing to support the economy locally.

Of course, we continue to support the local economy. I was a part of that local economy for many years. Through the growth that we have in our economy, through the increase in

population, we continue to see an expansion of local businesses. Those businesses continue to provide better support as well as a growing variety and a wider variety of goods and services for all Yukoners.

Question re: *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*

Ms. White: The *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* was passed last December. At that point, the department started working on what would be required for the new residential tenancy office. The new director was hired and first on the list was the drafting of regulations for public comment and then finally to set up an office. Last April, the then Minister of Community Services said — and I quote: “We’re hoping that by the fall — probably late fall — we’ll have this office fully up and running.”

The new legislation cannot come into full force and effect until the regulations are completed. This means that for landlords and tenants, nothing has really changed since the new legislation was passed.

Can the minister responsible let Yukon landlords and tenants know when the draft regulations will be available for public input and when will the residential tenancy office open its doors?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The draft regulations for the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* are in the final stages. Public consultation, as I indicated to another member in an earlier response — those regulations will be out for consultation and public feedback very soon.

Ms. White: Without regulations, nothing has changed for landlords and tenants — nothing. Yukon needed this new legislation for landlord/tenant relations. We all know there have been problems and frustrations expressed on both sides. With the continued lack of affordable and accessible rental housing, many Yukoners are looking to long-stay hotels to fill the housing gap. This means a room in a hotel with beds, a bathroom and, more often than not, no cooking facilities. The minister has assured this House that social assistance is a safety net people can access and social assistance often pays for this housing arrangement.

Does the minister know how many people are currently being housed in long-stay hotels by government and at what cost to government?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, I would remind the member opposite of the work that has been done. The select committee, the all-party select committee that made recommendations in this area that I was part of, the work leading up to the development of the act — the act was, after the consultative process occurred, put into force and effect. The regulations have substantial detail in them and it’s important that we get it right.

I would remind the member that this work has been ongoing but if we were to rush it through, the member would be the first to complain that there hadn’t been adequate consultation or complain about the results of a rushed product. Staff is doing their good work. As I indicated to the member, the regulations are ready to proceed to the next stage very shortly and there will be consultation quite soon. We have

taken a number of steps, including a new director and two tenancy officers, and public education materials have already been put in place. They are preparing for the new responsibilities they'll have once the regulations come into force and effect.

Ms. White: I'm sure that any tenant or landlord in a conflict situation is waiting with bated breath for the minister. Tenancy agreements in long-stay hotels can be the subject of conflict between tenants and landlords. I have a scenario for the minister — a real-life scenario. An individual entered a month-long rental agreement with a hotel, paid both the security deposit and a month's rent up front and signed a tenancy agreement. They lived there for four days, received one noise complaint and were given less than a 24-hour notice of eviction.

The new act lays out minimum eviction notice requirements for weekly, monthly and yearly arrangements, and none of these, under normal circumstances, reference a 24-hour eviction notice. With the regulations not yet implemented and the tenancy office not yet open, what are this person's options to seek help?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, the member has forgotten some of the issues that were identified in the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and the issues that will require careful thought by the public — as well as NGOs and both landlords and tenants — in a consultation on the regulations, including the question of whether the rules should apply to hotel rooms of a lengthy stay and, if so, what length that would be.

Here again is the usual kibitzing and heckling from the NDP benches here, but I would encourage members to actually review what was there before. I would remind the members that it is this government that is addressing this legislation, which is 50 years old, and we're modernizing it.

Some of the member's own colleagues had the opportunity to modernize this legislation and failed to do so, but we have taken the steps through public consultation. We will be entering the next stage of public consultation to seek feedback on the regulations before those are finalized because we are committed to doing this work, but we are also committed to doing it in a responsible manner after getting the details right and to seeking public feedback before it is finalized.

Question re: Dawson City sewage project

Mr. Silver: The August deadline for handing over the new waste-water treatment facility to Dawson came and went and the residents still don't have a functioning plant. Over \$30 million has been spent during testing done this summer and the plant failed three out of the four required tests. This has cost more than it should. It has taken longer than promised and still isn't working properly. The list of concerns on this project remains very long.

Does the minister still have confidence in the facility and when does he anticipate that it will be working properly?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: This is an area where I remind the member that we were compelled to assist the Town of the City

of Dawson after a previous mayor pled guilty to violating the water licence. This is a result of court orders that flowed as a result of this, and we have taken steps in collaboration with the municipality of Dawson City to identify which solution they felt was appropriate for treating sewage.

The plant that was established is the result of that work and we are in a period right now where the contractor for the facility does have an obligation to prove that it can be run successfully before either the Yukon government or the City of Dawson accepts the handover of the facility. There is also a warranty period written into the contract so that within — if memory serves — two years of the date we have taken over the keys, so to speak, if there are issues to be addressed by the contractor, the provisions of the contract are intended to ensure that we are able to enforce them doing just that.

Mr. Silver: Taxpayers are on the hook for \$30 million for a plant that has yet to work properly. It has been operating for more than a year, but this summer, like I said, it failed three out of four of those mandatory tests. The City of Dawson is refusing to take over the operation of the plant until it works properly, and well they should.

Another concern is the cost to operate the facility itself. The government has made vague comments and commitments to the town saying that the town will not be left on their own to flounder with this thing. Dawson residents already pay a very high price for water and sewer services, and any increases would be difficult for most residents to endure.

What assurances can the minister provide that residents will not be left with higher water bills because of mismanagement on a \$30-million plant?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Highways and Public Works, in partnership with Community Services, provides the project management, as we know.

I want to clarify a few things. Corix is the company operating the plant under the conditions set out in the acceptant testing clause of the contract between Highways and Public Works and Corix. Now through this whole process, the contract allows for an extension to the acceptant testing period, which is necessary to prove the plant can comply with the water licence for three months continuously. We are running it until it runs effectively and then we will turn it over to the residents of the City of Dawson.

When it comes to the costs associated, we have met with mayor and council. We've talked to them about the cost of it. We've talked about the benefits of having a biomass plant — for them having to heat their water so it doesn't freeze. The City of Dawson is definitely being treated fairly on this and we're working closely with them. They're happy to be working with us and I look forward to more engagement with them as they take over this project.

Mr. Silver: We still don't have a commitment that we will not be downloaded extravagant costs for operation and maintenance.

I am pleased to hear the minister's assurances today. I want to be clear, though. Residents should not be left holding the bag in the form of higher bills because of this overbudget project. People in Dawson remember a previous Yukon Party

government's decision to throw out the bid of a local company on this project and go with a company from Outside — the bid of which was \$10 million over that of the local company's bid.

At that time, a representative of the local company said — and I quote: “Dawson, Yukon and Canada taxpayers better pay heed or they're going to end up with another white elephant.” Five years later and those words are ringing true, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday we learned WCB has completed an investigation of the facility over problems with mould. Given the missed deadlines, the test failures, WCB investigations and the unresolved issues that the new plant will cost Dawson City, I still ask the question: will Dawson residents have to pay for increases to O&M or to water bills because of this white elephant?

Speaker: Order please. The member's time has elapsed.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would remind the member that the plant that was put in place was the result of working with and listening to the City of Dawson. Feedback from the municipality was that they preferred that to an open lagoon, which is, of course, the much more common method of treating sewage.

The mechanical solution was chosen as a result of their input and we are currently in a phase where Corix, the company that has the contract, has an obligation to demonstrate that the facility will operate effectively. Prior to handing over the keys — and, more accurately, the responsibility for the facility — to Dawson or to the Yukon government — and after that transfer of responsibility has taken place — there is still a two-year warranty in place, which is intended to ensure that, if there are any deficiencies in operation, we and the City of Dawson will be able to ensure that the contractor addresses them.

The member taking a failed-bidders' side of things and phrasing that as accuracy — if the member wishes to delve into every contract and every contractor's view of why they should have received the contract instead of a competitor, we're not going to have a very useful debate here. I would again remind the member that the approach that was taken was as a result of what we heard from Dawson City, and we are focused on ensuring that Corix fulfills their obligation —

Speaker: Order please. The member's time is up.

Question re: Keno area mining activities, health impact assessment re

Mr. Tredger: Over a year ago, the government released the results of a health impact assessment of mining activities near Keno City, Yukon. The health impact assessment made a number of key recommendations to address the concerns of Keno residents and reduce the potential for future adverse health impacts of past and present mining activities in the Keno area.

These included appropriate monitoring, evaluation and assessment, and reporting of drinking water and air quality. At the time, the Minister of Health and Social Services said that

an interdepartmental team had been set up to follow through with the assessment and to make recommendations to ensure the protection of public health.

Over a year later, I ask which department is leading this effort and when can residents and industry expect to be informed and involved in a unified strategy to address the chief medical officer's recommendations?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'm sorry, I don't have the exact information here available to me at this time. As I'm certain the member opposite is aware, responsibility for water quality is shared among a number of departments on this side of the House and I'll have to consult with my department to find out exactly what's happening in Keno and get back to the member.

Mr. Tredger: Water contamination is one of the key health concerns raised by Keno residents. The health impact assessment noted that past mining activities had left behind a legacy of groundwater contamination in the area and the current expansion of mining activities with the Lucky Queen and Onex projects have significantly added to residents' concern. The assessment recommended that a strong groundwater monitoring plan with an adaptive management component — and a strong focus on communications — was essential to ensuring the safety of the local drinking water supply.

Can the minister outline what the government is doing to ensure transparency and ongoing communication with Keno residents while addressing concerns for the safety of the community's local water resources?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is quite correct that groundwater monitoring is an important aspect of ensuring that Yukoners have access to clean drinking water and that Yukon's water resources remain clean and effective for Yukon citizens. In the specific case of Keno, of course, I don't have the exact details as to the member's question, but I should note that we have committed to a very open and transparent process around the development of a Yukon water strategy that will include the need for Yukon citizens to have adequate drinking water, and, of course, in that work we're also considering the input from residents of Keno.

The member also noted that there is an interdepartmental working group that is coordinating work to deal with the specific projects in Keno, and Environment Yukon is participating in that, as are representatives from the departments of Health and Social Services and I believe an official from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. That interdepartmental working group continues to do their work and we have confidence that they will provide us with an update in due course. At that time, I'd be happy to provide it to the member opposite.

Mr. Tredger: Over a year ago, the chief medical officer said the proof is in the pudding when he presented his report. I'm concerned at the inaction. The Keno health impact assessment concluded that a number of measures must be taken to minimize the negative impacts of past and current mining activities on the health of residents. The assessment

also concluded that the lack of a governance structure or organized representation within the community is a big challenge for the efforts to develop a unified strategy that responds to community needs.

What has this government done to involve Keno residents in establishing a representative governance structure that includes all Keno residents?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member is taking an interesting angle on this. Certainly, citizens across the territory in any community who wish to form a local advisory council, if the community is of sufficient size, have the ability to make an application pursuant to the *Municipal Act* through the form of a petition and it will be considered once we have received it.

What I would remind the member, with Keno — as I know he has forgotten or not understood in the past — is that, in fact, there were significant historical liabilities in place within the Keno and Elsa areas as a result of the previous operations of United Keno Hill mine.

The current mine, Alexco, has a unique, dual obligation to the federal government and to us in that they are not only a producer, but they also have a responsibility for doing remediation for federal environmental liability sites within the area. It is as result of the fact that there is mining in the area that some of these existing issues around Onek and Lucky Queen have been discovered.

Without the additional groundwater testing done by Alexco and by Yukon government as a result of Alexco's work, these matters would never have been discovered and would not be addressed. We are taking appropriate steps to address them, and I would remind the member that we have invested significantly in the water treatment centres across the Yukon and significantly in improving the supply of clean drinking water to Yukon citizens.

Question re: Off-road vehicle use

Mr. Tredger: Changes to the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* were passed by this House on Monday. The act gives the minister the authority to restrict or prohibit the use of off-road vehicles in sensitive areas on terms and conditions the minister considers necessary. The minister said that the selection will allow the government to address some of the more sensitive areas while we are waiting for regulations to be put in place. The minister went on to acknowledge that it will take some time to put the regulations in place. During the extensive consultation process leading up to the drafting of the act, many sensitive areas such as Trout Lake, Sifton Mountains and Miners Range were identified.

If regulations are not in place by next spring, will the minister commit to provide identified sensitive areas interim protection?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member opposite is quite correct that we, of course, are providing a new suite of tools for government to target specific areas in this territory that have or are likely to have negative impacts as a result of the usage of off-road vehicles. Those areas could include sensitive

wetland areas or alpine areas that are particularly vulnerable to impacts of motorized vehicles like ORVs.

We have heard a number of suggestions from groups around the territory of where we might start. What we committed to is that we should develop a process that had buy-in from Yukoners, had the support and understanding of First Nations and, of course, that we consult Yukoners on it. We're not going to rush into that. We're not going to do that in a haphazard way. We want to do it in a way that creates a strong process that helps us to identify key areas that are in need of specific protection.

The member also noted that, in the meantime, there are provisions in the act for the minister to identify areas outside of the regulatory process to provide temporary measures — or, if I may use the term “emergency measures” — to protect certain areas. We will take into consideration any suggestions we have from groups of the public as to which areas we should identify and whether or not protection is needed.

Mr. Tredger: The minister has said that the government will consult on specific regulations for the *Lands Act*. This will take time. We wait for this government, as the minister opposite said, to get it right. It has already taken several years to get this far and I would like to thank all those who contributed in the development of the act.

Each year, we see more and more trails opened up and more impact on sensitive ecological areas. We will need regulations that create proactive mechanisms for protecting these sensitive areas. Until such regulations are in place, will the minister use his authority under the act to restrict new trail building in identified sensitive areas before the next off-road vehicle season?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned during debate on this bill this week, the necessary regulations will be developed after the legislative amendments are adopted. That occurred through unanimous support of the House. I believe all parties — all members in this House — voted in favor of that legislation. What we need to do is provide full opportunity for First Nation, stakeholder and public engagement during the development of those regulations and what they're going to do is provide clarity as to the process and operating conditions for designated ORV management areas.

With respect to the question the member asked, the Minister of Environment spoke to the authority that I would have as minister to temporarily designate areas for withdrawal while the regulations are being developed. Of course what we would prefer is that the extensive consultations take place with stakeholders, but in any event there are those opportunities for us to make those temporary withdrawals and we will explore them on a case-by-case basis.

Question re: Nurse practitioners

Ms. Stick: A year ago, this Legislature unanimously passed nurse practitioner legislation and at the time the minister said, “We still have work to do to ensure that nurse practitioners have the ability to practice to the full extent and scope of their abilities and training throughout the territory in a number of different settings.”

The minister went on to say that this government would be bringing future pieces of legislation forward in the coming year.

We know that nurse practitioners are key players in collaborative care. A year ago, we had one nurse practitioner working to the full extent and scope of their abilities in a continuing care facility. Can the minister tell us the number of nurse practitioners working to full scope in a collaborative care model in the Yukon at this time?

Hon. Mr. Graham: If the member opposite is referring to how many are working for Health and Social Services, it is still one. However, we expect very shortly to be able to make a number of announcements — in fact, I believe one will probably be done in the remainder of this week — with respect to further enhancements to the projects that we have been working on. As I said a year ago, this is a long and involved process. It takes a great deal of consultation and negotiation between a number of different health professions and organizations.

We're attempting to get that done as quickly as possible because we believe this is where our health care system should be headed and, as quickly as we can, we'll be implementing those changes and, as quickly as we can, we hope to see a truly collaborative care system developed in the territory.

Ms. Stick: On November 20, we heard the minister speak of collaborative care — and again today — and how important it is for patient-centred care and health outcomes. He waxed eloquently about what this could look like and how planning and change is slow. The minister spoke of an agreement with the Yukon Medical Association to involve nurse practitioners and local practices.

He has also charged the deputy minister and the Yukon Hospital Corporation to develop a long-range plan to move toward a collaborative care model. I note that, until recently, the Yukon Hospital Corporation was primarily focused on acute care, so we're happy to see this, but how and when will the minister responsible also include Yukon Registered Nurses Association and the Pharmacists Association of the Yukon in the planning and implementation of collaborative care in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The member opposite speaks as if this is a one-time thing. This is an evolutionary process that we're engaged in here and we want to make sure it's done properly and that all of the relevant organizations are consulted. Like I say, the member opposite seems to think that we will rush out, consult once and that will be that. As I said, this is a process that we're involved in here. We talk with these organizations and with individual members of these organizations on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Part of the process is making sure that it's done correctly, that everyone is involved and that we're able to not only include everyone but to afford the changes that are necessary, which is also very important.

We'll continue doing as we've done so far and that's consult everybody and roll out the process as quickly as we possibly can, but we won't be rushed into it by a member

opposite who evidently has no comprehension of exactly what's involved in the process.

Ms. Stick: We're glad the government's on board and engaged with collaborative care. We've been championing it for years and our persistence is paying off. The minister said they would be using Dawson City hospital as an area to pilot collaborative care. He said they had preliminary discussions with the physicians and local department staff. That's great.

The minister also said, and I quote: "This collaborative approach is underpinned by a patient-centred continuum of care..."

Shouldn't patients be involved in this too?

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us how patients will be included from the beginning in the development of patient-centred collaborative care? Is the minister considering the implementation of patient and family advisory committees?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the member opposite takes credit for nurse practitioners in the Yukon. She also took credit, I understand today, for an inquest called by the chief coroner. They would probably take credit for the sun that rose yesterday too — and the clouds that are here, they would blame on us today.

Unfortunately, that's not the way it works. We will continue to consult and we will continue to do as much as we possibly can to enact a collaborative care and integrated service delivery model throughout the territory. We're working at it, as I've said. We're attempting to include everybody and that takes time, but we also have to make changes within the system. We're not going to bully anyone into accepting our way of doing things. We're going to be collaborative and we're going to get it done right.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 531

Clerk: Motion No. 531, standing in the name of Mr. Elias.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to recognize the cultural and economic importance of a sustainable, humane and well-regulated seal hunt to Canadian coastal and Arctic communities by appealing the recent decision by the World Trade Organization that allows the European Union to unfairly ban Canadian seal products.

Mr. Elias: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to this motion today. Before I begin, however, I'd like to commend the Government of Canada for announcing its decision to appeal the World Trade Organization's ruling.

On Monday, November 25, a joint statement from International Trade Minister Ed Fast, Fisheries and Oceans Minister Gail Shea and Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq confirmed Canada's intentions to appeal the decision. Essentially, this confirmation fulfills the goals of our motion.

To my fellow northerners, brothers and sisters in the Inuit community: I wish you all the best in your steadfast efforts to overturn the World Trade Organization's ruling. Preparing for an appeal only increases the urgency of a balanced, factual discussion on the importance of the seal hunt in Canada. The seal hunt is embedded in Canadian heritage. Canada is one of six countries involved in seal hunting for economic purposes, along with Namibia, Norway, Greenland, Iceland and Russia. Sweden and Finland also engage in seal hunting for Maritime management.

Archaeological evidence suggests the seal hunt has been ongoing among Canada's Inuit populations for over 4,000 years. Seal products have been an important source of income and food for many coastal communities for centuries. Traditionally the seal hunt has played a vital role in the sustenance of communities throughout the Arctic, yet sustenance does not only mean hunting for food. The seal harvest drives the general coastal economy by facilitating trade and providing employment to many coastal families. Canada's seal industry is well regulated by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, or DFO.

Canadian fishery officers closely monitor the hunt to ensure that the regulations and licence conditions are followed. They do so with regular patrols and inspections at sea, on land and in the air, as well as with help from the at-sea observers and the public. Officers maintain a presence on the ice floes 24 hours a day, seven days a week throughout the sealing season and work with the Canadian Coast Guard and local police forces to ensure that sealing regulations are enforced.

In order to ensure the seal hunt is humane, sealers must follow a three-step process when dispatching animals to ensure that it is done quickly and humanely. This process was identified and supported by the Independent Veterinarians' Working Group, which examined the harp seal hunt in 2005. In addition, DFO sets the total allowable catch, limiting the total number of animals that can be harvested commercially in any given year.

These limits are based on long-term conservation and sustainability principles and fluctuate to ensure that, in any given year, seals are not overharvested. At the same time, the total allowable catch limits take into account other marine management objectives, such as the maintenance of codfish populations.

Seasons and areas for the seal harvest are set by the marine mammal regulations. The majority of harp sealing occurs between late March and mid-May. The timing of the harvest depends largely on the movement of ice floes on which seals are located. The grey seal harvest generally begins in mid-February. There are many stakeholders whose interests play a role in influencing DFO's decisions. The Atlantic Seal

Advisory Committee is the primary consultative body between the department and sealing stakeholders. The committee meets annually to develop advice for the minister on management issues and provide information and updates on a variety of related activities, such as market access and international trade issues.

Now to the controversy — there is a common misconception that seal populations are endangered and that the hunt is detrimental to their survival. This is simply not the case. The harp seal population in Canada is nearly triple what it was in the 1970s, estimated at about 7.3 million currently. The grey herd seal population is around 750,000 animals.

There is also a stigma, particularly among those with no first-hand experience with seal hunting practices or responsible hunting practices more generally, that seal hunters are savage poachers. This stigma is driven by the misconception that it is legal to hunt baby seals. In fact, it has been illegal to hunt baby harp seals in their infant or whitecoat stage or baby hooded seals or bluebacks since 1987.

Significant controversy also surrounds the methods used to dispatch animals. Frequently, seal protestors brandish images of the traditional club or hakapik as an example of the harvest inhumanity. However, the hakapik is one of the most humane ways to dispatch any animal, whether seals on an ice floe or cattle on a farm.

In 2008, when the European Union first considered the ban on seal products, Canadian jurisdictions considered whether banning the hakapik would make the seal hunt more humane. Traditional and commercial sealers responded with a resounding "no." Humane societies responded similarly. A spokesperson for the Humane Society of the United States confirmed that removing the hakapik would only serve to prolong suffering of animals, as it is indeed the most humane method of dispatching. The hakapik was also identified as a humane tool in the three-step process adopted from the Independent Veterinarians' Working Group report. Yet these considerations did not appear to factor into the World Trade Organization's decisions to uphold the European Union's ban on Canadian seal products.

Now, with regard to the moral case — and I'm sure some of my fellow colleagues will speak to this as well — in its ruling, the World Trade Organization noted that one of the rationales it relied on to make its decision was that the European Union's ban fulfills at least to a certain extent, "the objective of addressing EU public moral concerns on seal welfare." This objective aligns with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Article 22(a), which refers to measures that are "necessary to protect public morals." The public morality clause is exceedingly ambiguous, because morality itself is a difficult issue to define.

I do not question the importance of morality. I respect that there are members of the European Commission and members of the World Trade Organization whose moral values prevent them from supporting the seal hunt. I respect that there are individuals whose moral values will prevent them from purchasing seal products. Yet I do not support the

World Trade Organization's claim to define the moral values for all citizens of its 159-member states.

The wording of the European Union regulations refers to the fact that seals are sentient beings that can experience pain, distress, fear and other forms of suffering. I do not question that animals are creatures deserving of respect. Respect for wildlife is built into traditional hunting practices and upheld in the regulations governing modern hunting in Canada and especially in our territory. However, I do question that the European Union's ban implies a preference for seal welfare over the human welfare of those who depend on their responsible harvest.

If the World Trade Organization's ruling is upheld, one can only wonder where the limits of its definition of public morality might end. If other bans on animal products are to arise in the future, it is to be expected that the World Trade Organization will rely on its precedent-setting rulings in this case.

Some questions to me are: what will the World Trade Organization say if a country decides to ban the import of French foie gras out of moral reasons to spare ducks and geese from force-feeding? What will the World Trade Organization say if a country decides to ban the import of American beef claiming the close quarters in which cattle are kept and the methods of slaughter are contrary to its moral values?

In my opinion, the World Trade Organization should not decide that one moral code supersedes another. To me, that is exactly what happened this week. The World Trade Organization decided the European Union's moral code superseded Canada's.

Now for a bit of a positive outlook — it is unfortunate that the European Union's ban defines an incompatibility between hunting and seal welfare when the relationship between the two can and should represent a symbiosis. This symbiosis exists in traditional Inuit hunting culture and it exists in modern Canadian hunting practices as well.

To our coastal communities, to my fellow northerners and to everyone in the Inuit community in particular, this ban is about more than the seal hunt. This ban is an affront to an age-old and proud tradition. This ban is an affront to an important mainstay of coastal indigenous economies. This ban is an affront to northern moral values. I hope that all members will join me today in supporting this motion and showing our fellow northerners across the country that we stand in solidarity with the Government of Canada's decision to appeal the World Trade Organization's ruling.

Thank you, nakurmik and mahsi' cho.

Mr. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to speak to Motion No. 531:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to recognize the cultural and economic importance of a sustainable, humane and well-regulated seal hunt to Canadian coastal and Arctic communities by appealing the recent decision by the World Trade Organization that allows the European Union to unfairly ban Canadian seal products.

Many Yukoners participate in the sustainable and humane hunting of moose and other wildlife across the territory. Yukoners know how to hunt in a sustainable and humane way and understand the value of harvesting and hunting whether for food or other animal products.

Yukon First Nations know the value of traditional practice, and it is through traditional practices that they transmit their culture, their values and their worldview. It is through their traditional practices that they have been able to sustain a life on this land over the millennium. They know that it is through traditional practices that they are strengthening their children, their communities and their First Nations. That same ability to traditional practices must be afforded to all peoples across the north.

One only needs to look and attend a fish camp to talk to an elder as she uses a salmon as her book to explain life to one of the children. One only needs to attend one of our schools' hunting expeditions as we go to hunt bison or moose, and the pride, care and respect that the elders and the traditional people show.

The interaction between the animal and the human and the sharing of life on this planet is profound. That practice is repeated across the north in tiny northern communities and in small camps. We must take every measure necessary to ensure that the traditional ways and world views of our aboriginal people and the traditional ways of our aboriginal leaders and children are maintained and sustained.

In Canada, regulations govern how seals can be hunted, who can hunt them and how many can be taken. Quotas are set in consultation with biologists, wildlife managers, holders of traditional knowledge and First Nation representatives to ensure that populations remain healthy and in balance with the ecosystems in which they live.

In order to be a sealer in Canada, you require a licence and must work rapidly and humanely in accordance with methods and regulations established by government authorities. The world conservation unit supports the sustainable use of seals and other wildlife as long as this is from abundant populations. Responsible, sustainable-use practices benefit the communities that are dependent on coastal and marine wildlife. The commercialization of seal products from abundant seal populations is part of this sustainable and evolving use.

The EU ban on seal products impacts the livelihood of people in Atlantic Canada, Quebec and along Nunavut's coastal communities. The seal harvest provides valuable employment for people in these coastal communities. While many people believe that the seal hunt is exclusively about harvesting skins and fur, seal meat is enjoyed by many people in coastal communities in Canada and is a source of income, clothing materials and nutritious meat.

Subsistence hunting is important, but the use of seals for clothing, for example, has been an important source of income for Inuit in and across the north — clothing which has sustained the Inuit in a harsh climate since time immemorial.

In the community of Kugluktuk in the Kitikmeot Region of western Nunavut, the local hunters and trappers association

is starting to offer a week-long course for young people who want to learn how to hunt seal. Skilled hunters will provide classroom instruction to a group of young people before taking them out on the land and sea ice to get real-time experiential learning on the seal hunt. After the week-long course, the hunters will learn how to prepare seal meat and how to dry skins. The seal hunting course is part of a larger effort in many Inuit communities to reconnect young generations with traditional knowledge, traditional activities and traditional culture.

As I mentioned, the Yukon people and the First Nations of the Yukon know the importance of traditional knowledge and traditional ways in re-establishing their presence on the land. So important is it to Yukon people that the people of the Teslin Tlingit nation import salmon because there are no longer salmon coming up that far in a sustainable manner on the Yukon River. So important is the passing on of that knowledge to them that they are importing salmon to feed so they can maintain their traditional ways.

We must do everything in our efforts as a government, as a people and as citizens of this land, to ensure that the sustainability of wildlife and wild fish so essential to the traditional knowledge and the traditional way of First Nations is maintained.

As I mentioned, the seal hunt was central to the way of life of Inuit people of the Arctic and Subarctic North America until the 20th century. Today it remains an important value for the Inuit. Despite the fact that the Inuit are exempt from the ban, they no longer have a market for sealskin products. Before the ban, Inuit hunters could sell the sealskins to supplement their incomes.

The cost of living is very high in the Arctic. While many people believe that the seal hunt is exclusively about harvesting skins and fur, seal meat is also enjoyed by many people in coastal communities in Canada and is a source of income, clothing materials and a very nutritious meat. The seal hunt helps increase food security in communities and parts of the seal are eaten by humans and/or dogs. These are the same communities that are bearing the brunt of climate change. Subsistence hunting is important, but the use of seals for clothing, for example, has been an important source of income for the Inuit across the north — clothing that has sustained the Inuit in a harsh climate since time immemorial.

It is important that First Nation people and people in the north have the right to engage the traditional and commercial seal hunt, both of which are important to Inuit economic, social and cultural well-being.

A dispute settlement panel reported Monday that exceptions under the ban for aboriginal hunts and those conducted to manage seal populations and to protect fish stocks are not being fairly applied. As a consequence, those exemptions — and I quote — “accord imported seal products treatment less favourable” than for domestic or other foreign products.

It's really about fairness, since there are many other ways in which Canadians can have access to sustainable and humane hunting. This ban unfairly impacts Inuit and coastal

communities in Canada that depend on the harvest of an abundant seal population. The federal government has appealed the decision by the World Trade Organization to uphold the European Union ban on Canadian seal products. As such, the Yukon NDP Official Opposition supports this motion.

Mr. Silver: It gives me great pleasure to stand and speak to this motion.

I don't have a lot to say, but I do want to read a few different quotes from other jurisdictions into the record in Hansard today.

Here is what the Government of Nunavut had to say earlier this week in news releases. I quote: “The Government of Nunavut is disappointed with the World Trade Organization's (WTO) response to Canada's challenge to the European Union (EU) seal ban. The WTO agreed that Inuit sealers had been treated unfairly, but defended the EU's legal right to adopt trade bans based on ‘public morality’.

“We strongly support the Government of Canada's decision to pursue an appeal against this misguided ruling,” said Premier Peter Taptuna. “We feel that the public morality argument is misplaced. Seal populations are abundant and the Canadian seal hunt has been scientifically demonstrated to be humane.”

“Following the adoption of the EU seal ban in 2009, international demand and prices for sealskins collapsed. The Government of Nunavut continues to purchase sealskins from hunters through the Department of Environment's Fur Pricing Program; however, sealskin prices remain well below pre-ban levels, and demand from within the EU for Nunavut sealskins has disappeared.”

Here's another quote from Johnny Mike, who is the Minister of Environment for the Government of Nunavut: “How is the seal hunt more harmful to public morality than any other animal harvest?” He continues, “The market collapse caused by the EU seal ban has had a major impact on Inuit, and the Inuit exemption to the ban has proven to be ineffective at protecting the market for our sealskins.”

“Seals are hunted in Nunavut primarily for the nutritious food that they provide in communities where fresh food is expensive or unavailable. Seal pelts, the useful byproduct of the hunt, are sold to offset the costs of harvesting activities and the high cost of northern living. Seal populations in Canada in Canadian waters are healthy. Historically, market demand for Inuit sealskins has been closely linked to market demand for other Canadian seal skins.”

The only concern I do have with our motion on the floor today is, as we all know, the Government of Canada said that it would appeal a World Trade Organization decision to uphold a European Union ban on seal products, so we're debating something that has already happened. We're told that the appeal will likely be heard next year. With that in mind, I do want to present a friendly amendment to the motion basically to keep the motion up to date with what has gone on and to add our support for the Canadian government. I do have the amendment here for consideration.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Silver: I move:

THAT Motion No. 531 be amended by replacing the word “urges” with the word “supports” and by adding “’s decision” after the word “Canada”.

Speaker: Order please. The amendment is in order. It has been moved by the Leader of the Third Party:

THAT Motion No. 531 be amended by replacing the word “urges” with the word “supports” and by adding “’s decision” after the word “Canada”.

Mr. Silver: Once again, this does not change in any aspect at all the intent or the substance of the motion. All it does is update it to keep it in pace with current events. We’re 100 percent in support of the industry and I thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing it forward today.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I’ll rise just very briefly to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing forward the amendment. As I’m sure he appreciates, when the motion was put forward on Monday by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, it reflected the fact that at that time a decision had not yet been taken as to whether or not the government would be appealing.

Of course, they had indicated that they were likely to, but hadn’t indicated formally that they would. That is why I’m sure the initial wording was chosen on Monday for that motion. The government caucus will be supporting that amendment, as we do feel it does strengthen and update the motion from its initial state and look forward to supporting it.

Amendment to Motion No. 531 agreed to

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the motion as amended?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I’d like to rise to lend my support to this motion as amended. I’ll start by thanking the member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing it forward. I think it’s an important motion and probably more important than we might realize. I’ll explain why when I begin my discussion on this motion.

I’d also like to thank the previous speakers, the Member from Mayo-Tatchun and the Member for Klondike, who both rose and gave accurate and compelling arguments in favor of the motion. I’d like to thank them for their words and their support of this motion.

The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin did discuss some of the reasons behind the motion, but I’d like to add a particular dynamic that I feel is important and that is the fact that I think this particular decision by the WTO is somewhat problematic and could have future implications for us. I will speak about that in a moment.

I know that some members who will speak will note the somewhat — well, the degree of hypocrisy or irony of the European Union’s ban on the import of seal products, when the EU themselves allow what I would characterize is far

more morally questionable food or animal treatment practices within their own borders.

The member for Vuntut Gwitchin spoke a little bit about the moral code that the EU seems to be imposing and the fact that the decision to ban seal products was, in effect, an attempt by them to have their moral code supersede that of Canada’s. That is something that is important and worth discussing, but what’s particularly troublesome for me, as a Yukoner and as the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Economic Development, is the implication of this particular decision and its reference to the public morals clause. This is problematic for me.

The decision by the World Trade Organization was that the EU’s ban of seal products was — it did undermine trade obligations, but that it was justified due to a clause that provides for public moral concerns. My concern with that is, first of all, it’s very rarely used. In fact it may — and I stand to be corrected — have been the first time that particular clause has ever been used in a decision. Nonetheless, it is most certainly a rarely used clause, if not a never-used clause. I think it’s certainly controversial. It’s one that will invoke, I think, a fairly vigorous debate in the international legal community around its use and around the implications of allowing public moral concerns to weigh into international trade law.

What this means essentially — and what my question is — is that, if this sustainable, humane and well-regulated hunt is deemed to be unacceptable for reasons of public morality, then I wonder what is next? That’s what concerns me as a Yukoner and as a minister in this government, because here in Yukon we have a number of animal products that are harvested in a very similarly sustainable, humane and well-regulated fashion and some of those are used and intended for export out of our borders, out of the territory, and sometimes out of the country. For some Yukoners, that is an important practice and is an important part of their economic livelihood, but also their cultural livelihood, and for many people, especially many First Nations, it is a part of their history and culture. My concern is, as I said, what is next?

We know that here in the territory, as I said, we have a range of products that are created and exported out of our borders. The first one that comes to mind is our fur. The fur trade in the territory is an important aspect of our history and our culture and an important economic driver for many Yukoners.

In Yukon we have a unique regulatory approach to hunting, trapping and fishing in this territory and much of that is driven by the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. We have co-management bodies in the territory that provide for input from First Nations, as well as other Yukoners, into the setting of regulations, the amending of regulations and the creation of regulations in the territory.

At the top of that list — and I don’t mean this as a hierarchical thing — but the first thing that comes to mind for me is the Fish and Wildlife Management Board that was established under the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the renewable resource councils that are established pursuant to

each of the respective First Nation final agreements. What those bodies do is provide an opportunity for First Nations and the public government to nominate members to those councils and boards and for those boards to hear from Yukoners, to hear from organizations and to hear from First Nations about their concerns with the current or contemporary regulations and provide recommendations to the government or the First Nations about how they might be amended and changed.

I don't need to go on at length on this, but the point is that we have a system that provides involvement for First Nations and it provides involvement for the public government. It is, in my opinion, a fairly progressive and successful system of fish and wildlife management. It's worth noting that there are similar co-management arrangements across the Canadian north. In fact, I would argue that the Canadian north is on the leading edge of co-management. The co-management regimes that exist in the Canadian north are some of the most unique and, as I said earlier, most progressive.

While the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the First Nation final agreements cover the majority of the territory, it is also worth noting that we have the unique arrangement in the north Yukon and the North Slope area, which is an arrangement that is derived from the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*. That's important, expressly in the case of marine mammals like seals, because they provide that input from northern residents, especially the Inuvialuit.

The *Inuvialuit Final Agreement* sets out a system by which the hunter and trapper committees of each of the communities — there are six HTC's, or hunters and trappers committees, and those include Aklavik, Inuvik and another four or five that exist. All of those hunters and trappers committees elect members to the Inuvialuit Game Council, which then provides members to each of the co-management bodies across the north. The most relevant for Yukon and the most relevant for our North Slope is the WMAC. They refer to it as YMAC even though it's a W. It's the North Slope wildlife management committee.

It's important to note this because, as I said, these are the ways that we, as Yukoners — and in the north as well — the Northwest Territories individuals — have chosen to manage our fish and wildlife. It's a process that stems out of final agreements. It's a process that took a long time in negotiations to achieve and it's something that we feel is certainly within our moral code here in the territory and in Canada. If we were faced with a challenge to that from another institution or country or collection of countries like the EU, it would be fairly troubling for us because a number of the products that we harvest here in the territory are exported outside of our borders.

I think it's worth taking note of this decision by the WTO. It's worth lending our support to the Canadian government to appeal this decision because it is setting, in my opinion, a dangerous precedent and one that needs to be reconsidered.

I would ask that Canada appeal this decision — they have announced that they will — and I would ask members to join us in presenting a united voice on behalf of Yukoners — and

not just Yukoners, but northerners across this country — and a united voice in not only condemning the ban on seal products in the EU, but condemning this decision by the WTO, which raises a — if I may use the turn of phrase — Pandora's box of legal implications and trade implications that could be potentially dangerous and calamitous for Yukon's first industry in the territory, and that's, of course, fur harvesting.

That's all I have to say, but I just wanted to raise that additional angle. I know that a lot of folks in the Yukon tend to latch on to the hypocrisy or the irony of the EU banning the import of seal products when they themselves have far more morally questionable practices going on within their own borders, but for me the most concerning aspect of this is the opening of this public morality clause, which I think is a dangerous precedent for the WTO to use and I think it's going to create a whole range of additional legal and trade implications, the likes of which we haven't seen in some time.

That's all I have to say, and I'd like to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for raising this issue and for bringing forward this motion. I'd like to thank my colleagues in this Legislature for joining us in sending a unified voice to Canada that we support them in their appeal of this rather calamitous decision.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I rise today in support of this motion. I want to start by thanking our Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for putting this motion forward. I really want to speak for a few minutes about the Inuit seal hunt in our sister territory, Nunavut.

Nunavut, for the record, has a population of about 32,000 people. Approximately 85 percent of those people are Inuit, and they live in a number of communities — approximately 25 communities — across Nunavut. Nunavut itself comprises probably about one-quarter of the entire landmass of this great country of Canada. It certainly has in it many, many kilometres of Canada's coastline to the third ocean, the Arctic.

The seals have certainly been vital to the survival of the Inuit people for millennia. Subsistence continues to be a primary motivation for Inuit hunting of the seals. Seals are a very excellent source of fresh, flavourful and nutritious meat that is very high in protein, iron, selenium and omega-3 fatty acids. If you talk to your pharmacist, he'll tell you that that's good for you. Seal blubber and liver are excellent sources of vitamin A, vitamin D, zinc and folate as well.

Ringed seals alone contribute up to 67 percent of the edible weight of all wildlife harvested in the Baffin region. The imputed or replacement food value of ringed seals is estimated to be as high as \$5 million in Nunavut, and seal continues to be one of the most valuable and preferred food sources for the Inuit people. In addition to the meat, all other parts of the seal, including the blubber, organs, skin, claws and bones, are consumed, used domestically as dog food or for commercial purposes. As well, the seal is used for clothing, as we know, and for arts and crafts. Very little is wasted.

Sealskins are used first for domestic or for home use, and what is surplus is then sold commercially. The cash value of

sealskins as by-products of the hunt is important to hunters for financing the costs of harvesting supplies and equipment necessary to sustain land-based activities and expose Inuit youth to the traditional lifestyle. So they use that money to ensure that they have the equipment, the snowmobiles and all the gear that they need to continue on the hunt, which is also so important for passing on that traditional knowledge to their youth.

It has always been central to the foundation of Inuit culture, sustaining traditional sharing customs, a special knowledge of the seal resource and its ecosystem and the passing on of skills and values from the elders to the youth. Social problems are the alternative, as is more dependence on unsustainable options.

Since the introduction of the cash economy in the Canadian Arctic, seal hunting has also been an important factor in the socio-economic well-being of Inuit people. Seal hunting in Nunavut occurs year-round and is an important part of daily life in every coastal community.

The population of the ringed seal is in the order of one and a half million to two million seals. The current Inuit take is estimated at approximately 30,000 animals per year, much less than the historical levels and certainly less than the sustainable yield. Ringed seals do not occur in concentrated herds like the harp seals and they do not migrate. They are widely distributed across their habitat in the circumpolar north and that just speaks again to the importance of this animal to Inuit people throughout Nunavut.

Ringed seals have never been endangered and provisions for maintaining a sustainable harvest are central to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and the Nunavut *Wildlife Act*. The Inuit harvest of ringed seals in Nunavut is practiced on a small-scale and family-centered basis. As ringed seals are preferred food sources for the Inuit, they therefore comprise a majority of the seal harvest that is accomplished in Nunavut. As I have mentioned, the total annual ringed seal harvest is approximately 30,000 from a population that is estimated somewhere between one and a half million and two million.

Now the harp seals are hunted in relatively small numbers in Nunavut, as harp seal meat is less desirable than ringed seal meat for human consumption. This is despite an increasingly abundant population, which now is estimated to exceed 9.5 million. Bearded, harbour and hooded seals comprise the remainder of the Inuit seal harvest.

The impact of the EU seal ban on market interest in sealskins was immediate and apparent well in advance of the official implementation date for the ban. In fact, market interest in ringed seal pelts and products declined sharply in 2008 following the submission of a proposal to the European Parliament and the council concerning a regulation on the trade of seal products. Following this development, international fur buyers and brokers were unwilling to risk purchasing sealskins due to the uncertain future of the market and to the uncertainty surrounding the international shipment of these products and the transshipment through the EU.

The cash generated from the sale of sealskins which are a by-product of a traditional subsistence hunt, finances continued hunting activities, which have become increasingly expensive due to higher capital and operating costs. In addition to the direct economic benefits, the seal hunt results in substantial benefits to Nunavut's human health, subsistence and their economy. For example, the replacement value of the domestic seal meat consumption in Nunavut, as I mentioned, is probably around \$5 million a year if you eliminated that from their diet. The use of sealskins for traditional clothing, footwear, and arts and crafts are important examples of domestic use. Traditional seal hunting is essential to the cultural fabric of Inuit communities and will continue regardless of the decreased demand for sealskin products in Europe.

On an international scale, the number of ringed sealskins traditionally harvested in Nunavut for commercial sale is relatively small, typically less than 8,000 per year. Despite the fact that the ringed seal and the harp seal are distinct species with pelts that exhibit strikingly different colours and patterns, the pelts of both species share many similar commercially important properties: similar leather characteristics, similar hair length, similar hair texture and similar size. Thus, in the international marketplace, many of the same manufacturers who purchase and use harp seals also purchase and use ringed seals, as the same garments and products can be made from both species.

The annual production of fewer than 8,000 pelts is insufficient to generate market interest alone on an international scale, so the ringed seal pelt industry in Nunavut benefits from the harp seal industry by piggybacking on markets that were created and maintained by the much larger harp seal industry. Increased market demand for harp seal pelts and products typically leads to increased demand for ringed seals, and decreased market demand for harp seals of course then leads to decreased demand for ringed seals.

This market reality is one of the major factors contributing to the ineffectiveness of the Inuit exemption to the EU seal ban. The absence of harp seal pelts in the marketplace and the absence of harp seal garments on the fashion runways of Paris, Milan and other EU fashion centres have led to a major decrease in market demand for both harp seals and ringed seals internationally. Non-EU fur manufacturer superpowers, such as China, frequently look to the European Union to set those fashion trends that are then reproduced at a lower cost by Chinese manufacturers. Therefore, the impacts on the EU ban are not limited to a loss to the European customers, but are in fact global in scale.

The second major factor contributing to the ineffectiveness of the Inuit exemption to the EU ban is the fact that under the ban, only Inuit-made sealskin products are considered exempt, while Inuit-harvested sealskins are not. Sealskins are the primary seal product produced in Nunavut. The wording of Regulation No. 1007/2009 is that if an EU manufacturer were to purchase Inuit-harvested ringed sealskins, it would be illegal to place on the market anything manufactured from these skins, as the finished product would

no longer be considered an Inuit-produced seal product. This particular part of the EU regulation effectively destroys all trade in Inuit-harvested ringed sealskins with the EU as there is no longer any end use for these skins.

While there is a growing sealskin garment and arts and crafts sector in Nunavut, it remains primarily a cottage industry that does not yet have the production capacity to market products on an international scale.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I did want to note for the record that there are many members on the government side who are today proudly wearing sealskin products — either ties or pins. Not only are we supporting this through the vote, but we are also supporting this through economic incentives by purchasing these products and wearing them proudly.

As has already been articulated, this sealskin hunt is certainly sustainable. It is humane and well-regulated and I too have a concern about where we go next as one part of the world tries to impose a bit of a hypocritical morality to what they do and what they are imposing.

I do have some concerns about how this could also move forward. Our Minister of Environment talked about furs, and we could also mention such things as elk antler velvet as well.

For a lot of different reasons, I am very excited that we will see unanimous support for this motion. I want to thank all members who have or will stand up to support this motion and to acknowledge the opposition for supporting this motion. The amended motion now reads:

THAT this House supports the Government of Canada's decision to recognize the cultural and economic importance of a sustainable, humane and well-regulated seal hunt to Canadian coastal and Arctic communities by appealing the recent decision by the World Trade Organization that allows the European Union to unfairly ban Canadian seal products.

I'd like to again thank our Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing forward this motion and speaking so eloquently to it, and I look forward to hearing other comments from the members.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: When I was driving to work early Monday morning, I heard the ruling that we're speaking about today and it did disappoint me. I have a lot of friends in the Arctic. I was very glad when my fellow colleague from Vuntut Gwitchin brought this forward and also with the amendments that the Member for Klondike brought forward.

I decided that, standing here today, I wanted to get a few of the facts out there.

When it comes to the seal hunting, the Native Americans and the First Nation people in Canada — you have heard this already today — have been hunting seal for at least 4,000 years. It's tradition. When an Inuit boy kills his first seal or caribou, a feast is always held. The meat was an important source of fat, protein, vitamin A, vitamin B12 and iron and the pelts were prized for their warmth. The Inuit diet is rich in fish, whale and seal. The seal is very important. The ringed seal was once the main staple of food and has been used for clothing, boots, fuel for lamps, as a delicacy, containers, igloo windows and in harnesses for huskies and dog teams.

Though no longer used to this extent, the ringed seals are still an important food source for the people of Nunavut. Called "niknik" by the central Alaskan Yup'ik people, the ringed seal is also hunted and eaten in Alaska.

A few years ago when I had the opportunity to be on the east coast instructing a national shooting team from the north, I had three kids from Nunavut, one from the N.W.T. and one from the Yukon Territory.

I was talking to some fishermen on the east coast when we were in Goose Bay. The frustration of the fishing industry increased also in recent years as cod stocks have continued to decline despite the decade-long fishing moratorium. Disappointingly, natural mortality of cod and other groundfish remains extremely high. Fish are losing ground and disappearing at smaller sizes than has ever been observed before.

For instance, cod, which once survived in these waters for up to 50 years, are now experiencing virtually a complete natural die-off before the age of seven or eight years. What is the problem? It seems obvious to many that a sensible, corrective action for the troubled groundfish today would be the elimination of natural fish predators such as seals. Fishermen are getting increasingly impatient with the situation. We've heard quotes from fishermen: seals continue to be a big problem for the fishing industry; groups call for huge seal harvest; seals go for soft, rich parts of cod, the cod fishermen report.

The Fisheries Resource Conservation Council recommended to the Canadian Minister of Fisheries and Oceans that a seal hunt be organized to lower the number of grey seals on the Scotian Shelf, thereby hoping to reduce the damage that has been inflicted on the fragile groundfish stocks by seals.

A regular diet for a seal consists of a variety of different fish, depending on the location that the fish inhabits. Seals will eat whatever fish is available to them. Fish that seals eat include small fish like herring or artichokes, or larger fish like flounder and salmon. They will also go after mackerel, rockfish, sardines and, of course, cod.

What is really fascinating about seals revolves around the way they digest their food. Seals have the ability to take the fish they find and swallow large portions without taking any bites.

One of the fishermen I was talking to talked about his father and his grandfather saying that they never used to see seals in fresh water. Now they are seeing seals 40 to 50 miles up freshwater streams looking for fish. A simple analogy by a fisherman stated that there were four considerations that he wanted to get across to the environmental groups — four simple facts they wanted to get across to those who wanted to ban the seal hunt. Seals eat fish, cod are fish, seals and cod live next by each and that leads to hostility, with the cod on the losing side of the argument. Another fisherman stated: "We are good hard-working people. We only want to make a living."

I had the opportunity this summer — and before I speak to that, I just want to talk about some of the reasons why

we're here today. Some of the high-profile Canadians and international stars who jump on the bandwagon, basically with absolutely no education on this — stars such as Sarah McLachlan, Pamela Anderson or Sir Paul McCartney, Leonardo DiCaprio, Gwen Stefani, just to name a few — have all called for the end of the hunt according to the people of PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. This is going to play into something that I would like to speak to a little bit.

This summer I had the opportunity to be a trapping instructor for the summer enhanced training seminar, where we had over 200 youth — 200 Junior Rangers — from across the north, from all the communities across. Every single one of those Junior Rangers got to go through my trapping stand. Before I got out there and showed them what a conibear was or a wolf snare site, I asked them if they trapped in their communities. Some of them put their hands up, some of them talked about it. I asked them what they did, and they said, I go out with my grandfather or my brother, and they talked about seals and caribou and all the different stuff they do, and they talked about a balanced approach. What I got out of a lot of the youth — they would ask me why there are famous people who don't want us to live our traditional life. I said well, they're not educated and I wouldn't heed too much what they have to say. I would take into consideration what the elders in your community, what your grandfather or your uncle, aunt or grandma, what they taught you, and you should be very, very proud of that.

We've seen the examples with the European Union with the fur trade. Just before we came into the House, I was talking with the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin about trapping in the Yukon in the mid-1980s to the 1990s. The industry and the prices tanked because of people who don't live here — with no idea — wanting to change the world.

We see that even now. Look at the comments that we get on a lot of stuff that we do in this House. We debate stuff in this House. We get comments from people across the world. I'd like to heed and listen to the locals, the local traditions; I'm in agreement with that. I told those youth that it's very important to be proud of yourself and proud of your way of life, and seal hunting is a way of life in the north and they should be proud of it.

I've had the opportunity on more than one occasion to eat seal. In the Arctic, at 25 below with the wind, no trees, with one Inuit man from Pangnirtung standing by a hole with his .303 rifle with a feather on it waiting for a seal — an hour and a half. He smoked seven or eight cigarettes — rolled them with one hand. When he shot the seal, when the feather moved, he grabbed that seal and everyone came over and it was a feast. They were happy, happy, happy.

In closing, I am just really encouraged and we need to have more of these motions that apply to the north. The north is ours and we should be able to control the north, whether it be legislation or regulations that we bring forward, but it should be for all the locals. We should be taking into consideration the traditional ways of life of our First Nation

people, but also the traditional way of life of the gold miner and everything else that goes with this.

I'd really like to support this motion as amended. I think it's very wonderful. I would just like to thank the Government of Canada and quote what Leona Aglukkaq had to say.

She said that the ban on the seal products adopted in the EU was a political decision that has no basis in fact or science. Madeleine Redfern, the former mayor of Iqaluit, Nunavut's capital city, also tweeted: "Animal rights target vulnerable minorities, usually indigenous ppl's animal byproducts/economies — easier than mainstream products."

I'd just like to say to my friend Jackie in Tuktoyaktuk and to my friend Alan in Holman and Sammy in Gjoa Haven and John in Qikiqtarjuaq, Debbie in Rankin Inlet, Timasu in Pangnirtung and Ella, who made my nice hat for me, in Aklavik. We definitely are here for you and we support you in your endeavours living the traditional life.

Thank you, mahsi' cho, gunilschish, nakurmik.

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

Mr. Elias: I thank all the members who spoke today in favour of this motion and I think it sends a strong message to the global community that our elected officials in the territory and the people we represent are supportive of traditional economies and the seal hunt.

In closing, I wanted to mention a couple of things. Today is my son Johnny Elias' thirteenth birthday, and I was having breakfast with him in a local restaurant today and I was telling him what I was going to do today. He said, "Dad, what's the EU?" I had to explain it to him and I thought it would have some value to put in Hansard today some things about the European Union.

The European Union was created in the aftermath of the Second World War. The first steps were to foster economic cooperation, the idea being that countries that trade with one another become economically interdependent. That's more likely to avoid further conflict. The result was the European Economic Community, or the EEC, that was created in 1958, and initially it increased economic cooperation between six countries: Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

The European Union is a unique economic and political partnership between 28 European countries that together cover much of the continent. The member states include: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands and Poland — which is a country that I have many fond memories of that I will cherish forever — as well as Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. There are some other candidate countries like Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey that are potentially going to be a part of the European Union soon.

I also wanted to put on record some of the quotes across the country that stood out to me. One of them was from the

president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Terry Audla, who said that, “The ban runs contrary to principles of fair trade, and it is truly inexplicable that the WTO does not dismiss outright the European Union’s Orwellian ‘moral grounds’ justification of this outrageous trade impediment.” He also went on to say that, “The only Inuit exemption that would have a chance of working would be one negotiated with Inuit to the satisfaction of Inuit.”

Aaju Peter, a lawyer and activist who is committed to preserving Inuit culture, says that the seal community is part of the indigenous way of life in Canada and is now under threat by the ongoing ban of seal products in countries that comprise the European Union. Ms. Peter also went on to say, “I have been trying to communicate to the Europeans for many years that these bans will hurt the Inuit. They are not listening! Any ban on any seal product anywhere hurts Inuit everywhere.”

A quote from our Member of Parliament, who at the first possible opportunity stood up in the Parliament of our country and said, “We are proud to protect a traditional, sustainable, and historic way of life for Canadian sealers across this great country.”

That reminds me of about 10 years ago when I was in Washington, D.C. and I was asked to speak at the Canadian Embassy about the protection of the Porcupine caribou herd’s calving grounds on the North Slope of Alaska. I couldn’t find any of my elders because they were all over in different offices, speaking to senators and congressmen and congresswomen.

So I took some time out and I went to the gravesite of John Fitzgerald Kennedy and Jacqueline Onassis. There’s an eternal flame there. I didn’t know what to say to all these people who were going to be at the Canadian Embassy that evening, so I prayed. I just turned around, looked at the skyline and there were monuments and memorials about the American people saying, “This is what we want to tell the world about who we are as a people, what we stand for and our history.” There were monuments that reached for the sky and they were made out of stone and granite that people are going to see forever. Those were the monuments saying, “This is what we stand for. This is what we want to tell the world about who we are as American people.” So I turned that on myself as a Yukoner and I said, “What do we want to tell the world about who we are as Yukoners? What do we want the world to say when they point to the map about where we live, as Yukoners?”

I thought about our monuments, what we stand for and what we want to tell the world about ourselves. I thought about our living languages, our history and our culture; I thought about our beautiful people with a kind and friendly demeanour; I thought about our pure waters and our lakes and our rivers and our creeks. I thought about our land and our wildlife. I thought about our sustainable resource extraction industries and how we do that sustainably. I thought about the strength in our convictions and, most importantly, I thought about how we respect and utilize our natural resources. That’s what we want to tell the world about who we are as Yukoners.

So when we stand on the floor of the Assembly today, that’s what we are trying to represent and trying to protect in the global community. It is our use of natural resources — to protect the northwest Atlantic ecoregion seal harvest and stand in solidarity with our fellow northerners in protecting our way of life and the value it has in the global community. That’s what I explained to the people at the Canadian Embassy about 10 years ago in Washington, D.C.

I made that connection between what we as Yukoners think is important, so it’s a pleasure for me to stand on the floor of the Assembly today and speak to this motion. I’m glad to see that it has our elected members’ full support.

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

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. 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.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

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

Motion No. 531, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 533

Clerk: Motion No. 533, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Watson Lake:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to support the growth and development of Yukon College through actions including:

(1) providing funding for the development of the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining;

(2) encouraging partnership with the mining industry to host an industrial research chair in mine life cycles;

(3) providing funding support for the research, innovation, and commercialization of cold climate and other technologies;

(4) partnering with other groups and governments in the study of climate change in Yukon;

(5) supporting the operation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice; and

(6) continuing to explore options for the development of a northern university.

Ms. McLeod: It's my pleasure to rise and speak to Motion No. 533.

I have a long and personal relationship with Yukon College. In fact, I was a student back when it was the Yukon Vocational and Technical Training Centre. Now, that was a few years ago, but later when I moved to Watson Lake I was a volunteer member on the Watson Lake Training Advisory Board and that too was a few years ago.

Continuing education is something that I believe in very strongly. Yukon College has community campuses in Watson Lake, Old Crow, Teslin, Ross River, Faro, Haines Junction, Mayo, Pelly Crossing, Dawson City, Carcross, Carmacks and a few right here in Whitehorse. Throughout my life, I have availed myself of several training and education opportunities that would have been very difficult, if not impossible, to participate in if not for our community campuses. Keeping people on an educational curve increases the quality of life for all of us. Our community campuses can help us upgrade our skills and knowledge to further our careers or embark on new ones. Our campuses engage us in training just for the pure joy of learning a new skill.

It's important that these types of opportunities can be done in our home communities. Technology continues to make this much easier. Training dollars are leveraged when an instructor teaches in Watson Lake this week with Teslin students joining in by videoconferencing, and the next week the instructor is in Teslin and Watson Lake students are joining in. It's this type of technology use that keeps the college current and growing.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a little time to brag up some of the things that are going on at the Watson Lake campus. We have quite a busy campus, with many thanks going out to Michelle Koehl, the coordinator, who is doing an amazing job of meeting the community's needs. The campus is extremely busy and has been for a number of years. Cynthia Kearns has recently joined the local team as office administrator. Kayla McColl and Elizabeth Dixon are the evening instructors.

Our campus has four classrooms and they are all occupied from opening to closing at 10:00 p.m. The campus is open generally six days a week and the occasional Sunday as well.

Standard first aid training is offered on a continuing basis. WHIMS, transportation of dangerous goods, fall arrest, confined spaces and H2S Alive are all standard fare. The FoodSafe course is currently underway and I know some young folks who are taking that.

The skills for employment in the portfolio of development programs started in September. Students will

acquire a portfolio and enhance nine essential skills through English and math modules. Students will receive their first aid, FoodSafe and bar certificates and, as I said, meeting the needs of the community is a very high priority.

Funding has recently been confirmed for four computer courses and two accounting courses. The courses will be starting shortly and continuing on until May. Local instructors are being used to deliver these courses. Ms. Cheryl O'Brien and Ms. Leatha Anderson have extensive experience — and this is yet another example of maximizing training dollars.

Skills for employment in trades exploration just started with 12 participants and Clint Walters is the instructor. The students will explore aspects of carpentry, plumbing and electrical applications, and I'm quite excited about the prospect of future tradespeople on our community and around the territory.

We have the Department of Education and CanNor to thank for the funding to put a trades trailer to work for students across the Yukon.

To Quote Brad Thrall, who was chair of the Yukon Producers Group, "Better access to professional trades training will increase the number of Yukon skilled workers able to participate in the opportunities created by resource developments happening close to their communities".

One of the specific points for discussion in Motion No. 533 is to encourage a partnership with the mining industry to host an industrial research chair in mine life cycles. The overall objective of the chair is to develop research leadership to address northern specific challenges and opportunities within the mining industry. Two streams of applied research will be investigated by the chair: mine-influenced water management treatment and terrestrial reclamation practices. The first stream will focus on discharge water treatment and the second on soil reclamation and land revegetation in northern conditions.

Yukon is home to the world's largest iron ore deposits and one of the world's largest undeveloped lead-zinc deposits. It also contains large resources of gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, and nickel. The Yukon mining industry currently represents 10 percent of the Yukon economy. Four mining companies of the Yukon are committed to this chair, namely Alexco Resources, Capstone Mining Corporation, Yukon Zinc, and Victoria Gold Corporation.

Yukon College and the mining partners selected Dr. Amelie Janin to hold the industrial research chair in mine life cycle. Dr. Janin specialized in metals chemistry and environmental remediation during her PhD in water sciences and her following experience as an NSERC Collaborative Research Development grant coordinator.

Mines today are recycling as much water as possible during their operations. However, the quality of recycled water is not as good as the quality of fresh water and this seems to impact the efficiency of the milling process in the mines, especially the floatation cells. The objective of this project is to look at possibilities for water treatment to avoid the buildup of contaminants in the recycled water used in the mill. The objective of this project is to identify which

contaminants affect the mill and develop technologies to improve the water quality.

Unlike usual water treatment, the objective here is not to remove all contaminants, but simply to reduce the buildup, which will create opportunities for innovative technology designs. Various technologies will be tested during this project. Passive, biological treatments have been proposed as a possible efficient, cost-effective treatment of metal-bearing water during mine closure. Several bioreactors are under study in Yukon and lead to variable but promising results up to now.

The objective of this study is to help the development of bioremediation in Yukon by providing a better understanding of the biochemical processes. The project is divided into two components: (1) operation of lab-scale bioreactors; and (2) to boost bioremediation by promoting adsorption mechanisms.

Several biological and chemical mechanisms arise in the reactor and altogether lead to a reduction of the metal concentration in the effluent. One of the mechanisms involved is chemical adsorption. This project intends to look at various low-cost substrates and nutrient sources that could promote the adsorption mechanisms in order to improve the overall efficiency and stability of the reactor. Some materials may disturb the microbiological equilibrium, while some of them will result in a significant metals removal enhancement. Lab-scale testing of these materials will allow for the screening of the materials while subsequent research work will allow for assessment of the performances of the adsorption boosted bioreactors.

Laboratory testing is an easy and inexpensive way to gather useful technical information required for the design of pilot scale bioreactors. Effluent from various mine sites is going to be tested at lab scale to target various contaminants. Later tests will look at the bioreactor efficiency at pilot scale.

Mr. Speaker, I think I'll leave it at that. Obviously one could talk at length on this motion, and I want to thank you for the opportunity to brag a bit about my community and talk about some exciting research on the treatment of water.

Ms. Moorcroft: It is always a pleasure to speak about the role that Yukon College plays in our society today and to continue to encourage the Government of Yukon to provide funding to support the growth and the development of Yukon College. This motion before us today addresses a number of points. Before I start, I'm just going to comment on some of those.

Providing funding for the development of the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining is an announcement the Government of Yukon made to provide capital funding and also federal capital funding for this. There has been a long-standing need to ensure that there are locally trained people who can be employed in the mining industry.

It's important to also note that trades training has been at the heart of Yukon College programming for 50 years. That's another evolution of that.

The partnership with the mining industry to host an industrial research chair in mine life cycles is a partnership where the government has asked the mining industry to ante

up the money, and there have been a number of mining corporations that have contributed to the funding for this chair. I wonder whether the Yukon government has considered the possibility of having a research chair address the issue of mine energy cycles and energy supply for northern mines. That's also a significant area needing attention in looking at the mining industry in the Yukon.

In speaking to providing funding for the research innovation and commercialization of cold climate and other technologies, I want to note at the start that the Northern Research Institute began with an NDP vision recognizing the importance of northern research and establishing a legacy fund. The Yukon NDP government of the day provided the Northern Research Institute its first contribution grant, and the Yukon Research Centre, as it's now called, engages in a number of diverse projects. Those range from the Science Adventures program, which was formerly Innovators in the Schools, to projects that deal with housing.

We recently saw the vacuum-insulated panels that were developed. Those panels are high-insulation panels that can be used in housing construction. A half-inch panel can provide an insulation R-value of 27. I note too that the vacuum-insulated panels were used in the construction of the tiny home, the Steve Cardiff house, which opened a short while ago. I believe the Yukon Research Centre donated that to the project — also a number of local businesses donated.

Other research projects at the Yukon Research Centre include a year-round in-river five-kilowatt microhydro project, research on a system of converting plastics to oils, and a composter. A prototype was built and the model is now in use at the Whitehorse landfill. There is also partnering with groups and governments in the study of climate change in the Yukon.

Yukon College, throughout 2013, has been celebrating its 50th anniversary. From its beginning in 1963, opening as the Whitehorse Vocational Training School in the white building on the Yukon River banks, across the river from the Legislative Assembly building where we are speaking today, Yukon College has offered a wide variety of programs to many people.

In 1965, it was renamed as Yukon Vocational and Technical and Training Centre. I doubt if there is a single one of us today in this Assembly who has not been part of a program, attended a conference, taken a course, volunteered, taught, or worked at Yukon College, participated in strategic planning or had a family member take part in the life of the college in some way. Some of us have done all of these things. The mover of the motion has just spoken about her engagement with Yukon College both in Watson Lake and at the Yukon Vocational and Technical Training Centre at 1000 Lewes Boulevard.

Certainly I remember between June and September of 1998 packing hundreds of boxes of books in the library at 1000 Lewes Boulevard and unpacking hundreds of boxes of books in the new library at Yukon Place before the first students arrived for orientation day. That was in the new \$50-million complex, which also hosts Yukon Arts Centre and

Yukon Archives. I'm proud to say that these beautiful, well-used public buildings, with local artwork throughout, were built by NDP governments with a vision for a lifelong learning centre that would serve all Yukoners long into the future. This is indeed the case.

At the official opening and potlatch ceremonies in October 1988 on the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'an Council traditional territory, where Yukon College is now located, Tagish elder Angela Sidney spoke to the assembled students, faculty and staff, leadership and dignitaries. She was asked to give the Whitehorse campus a First Nations name. Mrs. Sidney gave the name "Ayamdigut" to the Whitehorse campus in recognition that the institution would educate all of its students in a spirit of respect for indigenous people's culture.

She began her story by describing how her father's people had built a killer whale house on the banks of a river and then had to move it when they discovered that the house was too close to the riverbank. Observing the similarity between the killer whale house and the main campus, she named the new college Ayamdigut, a Tlingit name which means, "she got up and went".

When Yukon Vocational and Technical Training Centre first opened, courses were offered in office administration, building trades, auto mechanics, heavy equipment operation, drafting, food services, practical nursing and hair dressing. There certainly has been an expansion in the scope of courses and programs offered at Yukon College since that time.

In 1989, the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program, YNTEP, was implemented through a tripartite agreement among the Yukon territorial government and the University of Regina. At the same time, the Saskatchewan Instructional Development Research Unit of the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina was contracted by the Yukon territorial government to do a parallel evaluative research project to document the growth and development of YNTEP through its initial three years. The program was initiated to educate Yukon First Nation citizens to be teachers and to respond to the education needs of First Nations peoples.

I would like to quote from the 1993 research report entitled, *Yukon Native Teacher Education Program: Beginning the Story*.

At the signing ceremony for the new program, with former NDP Education minister Piers MacDonald, the late chief Elijah Smith said, "I want a first class professional training for them. Make it hard, but make sure it's good." The YNTEP program took those words to heart. Over the decades, the participatory action model of research used for the initial three-year evaluation has been a feature of the program. YNTEP students needed to understand land claims. YNTEP students have developed curriculum materials based on their own First Nations culture and traditions, have engaged in experiential learning models that benefit First Nation and non-First Nation students alike and have contributed a valuable record of research projects and lesson plans still available at the institution today. First Nation students in Yukon classrooms helped to cross the racial divide.

There has been discussion over the years, particularly since the implementation of land claims and self-government agreements, over whether First Nations would draw down responsibility for education. The partnership with YNTEP was a good-faith measure that contributed to First Nations continuing to engage with the public education system. Today, First Nation educators in Yukon and nationally are examining aboriginal school models. In all cases, First Nation curriculum has an enormous value and the contributions of YNTEP are significant for that.

The *Yukon College Act* amendments in 1989 provided another significant measure under NDP leadership by establishing an independent board of governors for Yukon College. Yukoners from all walks of life have served on the college board, establishing visionary goals for programs and services.

I remember former Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes MLA Steve Cardiff, who made his contributions as chair of the Yukon College Board of Governors for nine years. Steve spoke with great passion about a board planning session that developed a model of governance that considered the ends and the means. In other words, where does the college want to get to and how will it achieve that vision? Steve was also a sheet-metal worker and worked to promote the value of the building trades and all trades training.

Trades training in Yukon has unique and specialized applications for construction in cold weather climates. For example, speaking to an issue that has been debated in this House this week, engineers must have an understanding of the construction methods used at the time of construction and apply that understanding to the analysis of old structures, such as the Ross River suspension bridge, which was built 70 years ago.

Yukon College board members bring diverse perspectives and expertise to guide the administration, faculty and staff in meeting the post-secondary education needs of all residents. The *Yukon College Act* ensures there will be a diversity of educational groups and interests guiding the board. The *Yukon College Act* in section 6 provides that the board members shall include: at least three chosen from people nominated by at least one Yukon First Nation; at least three chosen from people who are members of and have been nominated by a community campus community; one who shall be a student of the college and chosen from people nominated by the students of the college; and one an employee of the college chosen from people nominated by the employees of the college.

I have another comment on the library services at Ayamdigut Campus, because it relates to the knowledge-based economy today. In 1990, library staff said goodbye to the old card catalogue when automated cataloging and circulation arrived. Today, on-line reference services and databases offer access to worldwide information resources in the library and anywhere that students, faculty and the public can connect to in the digital universe.

The digital world is a feature of a knowledge-based economy that attracts people to live in the Yukon. For its 50th anniversary, Yukon College has hosted a number of great, free

events. As part of the Yukon College speaker series, Bob Watts presented “2013: Time to Right the Relationship — True Reconciliation in Canada” at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre in Whitehorse.

Bob Watts also presented in Watson Lake, and at both events resolution health support workers were in attendance to assist anyone who may need support during the talk, courtesy of the Council of Yukon First Nations and Liard First Nation. This is a demonstration of how Yukon College continues to work in partnership with First Nation governments to support lifelong learning for us all.

One of the efforts that Mr. Watts referred to in his presentation was the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which was conducted some years ago. We have learned that the enforcement and the stealing of children from their homes and removing them from their communities to be placed in what was called a residential school, where they were often unable to see their families from September until June and sometimes for many years, has had a devastating effect and these continue today. This is why it’s so important to ensure that there is First Nation programming and indeed that is one of the priorities that came out of the recent Yukon College strategic plan initiative, and I’ll be turning to that further in a moment.

The Northern Research Centre was established at the new Yukon College Ayamdigut Campus in the 1990s to support research by the north, for the north, in the north. Re-named the Yukon Research Centre, programs today include innovations into issues of critical concern to northerners: mine reclamation, cold climate construction, climate change impacts, community health and economic diversification — another initiative, Mr. Speaker, that comes out of a New Democrat government legacy.

The Northern Institute of Social Justice has also offered not just speaking series, but has developed programs. One of the initiatives I would like to speak to is work that is continuing and which came out of the 2010 review of Yukon’s police force. Recommendations were made to ensure that the RCMP became more representative of the community it serves, so recommendations spoke to providing training for First Nations and for women so they would be qualified to go into careers in northern policing.

The Northern Institute of Social Justice is also well-placed to work in partnership with First Nations to look at recommendations that came out of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People to reverse the colonial damages that have been done.

In speaking to providing funding for various Yukon College activities to truly make Yukon College an affordable and accessible education facility, it’s important to increase funding to be applied to reducing tuition costs for students. Publicly funded education has always been a priority for the New Democrats.

The Government of Yukon should consider consulting stakeholders on developing and expanding innovative scholarships, grants and loan programs to address financial obstacles to post-secondary education for low- and middle-

income students. It’s important to decrease the debt load of students when debt loads for students are at an all-time high at Canadian colleges and universities. We want to be sure that we allow part-time students access to grants and loans and to increase the number of rural and single-parent post-secondary students.

The Yukon government could also play a role in encouraging the federal government to bring innovations in their post-secondary programs by shifting spending from universal expenditures on tax credits and saving schemes to need-based grants. We want to eliminate the financial barriers for education and invest in future Yukon knowledge-based accomplishments by investing in our students. Higher education should be equally accessible for all on the basis of capacity and not simply on the level of family income.

In rising to speak for this motion, I want to acknowledge that a decision has been made and endowment lands have been transferred to Yukon College. It is important to give credit where credit is due and I’m very pleased to see that this decision has been made and that the college does now have the endowment lands. This has been an outstanding issue for a number of years and those endowment lands could provide significant value for environmental programs, for experiential learning and for recreational trails, as well as potential future sites for more facilities and infrastructure for the college.

I must say though that I’m perplexed that the motion before us does not refer to the 2013-16 strategic plan development, which began with the spring 2012 community consultation process.

That process started in the spring with a broad community consultation under the leadership of the Yukon College Board of Governors to learn what people feel today about the college and how it should prepare for the future. Over 420 people attended meetings and provided input through online questionnaires. There were public meetings held in every community and 12 additional focus group meetings occurred in Whitehorse. Presentations were made to municipal leaders, school council members, business, Yukon government and students. Members of the President’s Advisory Committee on First Nations Initiatives were also consulted. Seventy-five Yukon College staff and faculty participated in six separate sessions and the college produced a report of these sessions, a community consultations 2012 report.

Then in phase 2, there was the Your College Forum: Creating a New Direction. The forum included over 120 invited guests and some of us had also taken part in the phase 1 meetings. Guests spent the day exploring key directions that were identified in the community consultations and more deeply exploring possible goals.

In phase 3, the board of governors met in the new year to draft the strategic plan. It was a long, in-depth process, considering all of the input and worked to distill it down to a realistic, focused, three-year plan.

After considering what the Yukon public had to say about building a community of learners and working together with all Yukon communities, the college came up with a strategic plan that noted some items that are missing from this motion,

so I want to just speak briefly about some of those: working together with all First Nations; making sure that Yukon College works with all communities; collaborating with First Nations to strengthen relationships and enhance capacity; designing a unique post-secondary education model; and engaging Yukon communities to enhance their educational facilities.

I would like to make a friendly amendment to this motion, because I think, in putting forward the motion, all of the items that are enumerated in the motion are ones that the Yukon government provides funding for.

Amendment proposed

Ms. Moorcroft: Accordingly, I move:

THAT Motion No. 533 be amended by inserting the words “provide funding to” after the words “continue to” and before the word “support”; and

THAT Motion No. 533 be further amended by, under item number one, deleting the words “provide funding for” and replacing them with “supporting”; and

THAT Motion No. 533 be further amended by, under item number three, deleting the words “providing funding support” and replacing them with “supporting”.

Speaker: Order please. With two grammatical changes, the amendment is in order.

It is moved by the Member for Copperbelt South:

THAT Motion No. 533 be amended by inserting the words “provide funding to” after the words “continue to” and before the word “support”; and

THAT Motion No. 533 be further amended by, under item number one, deleting the words “providing funding for” and replacing them with “supporting”; and

THAT Motion No. 533 be further amended by, under item number three, deleting the words “providing funding support for” and replacing them with “supporting”.

Ms. Moorcroft: The amendment is merely one that provides clarity and — just to read into the record how the motion would read with the changes — I’m confident that the government members will be able to support this motion. The motion as amended would read:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to provide funding to support the growth and development of Yukon College through actions including:

- (1) supporting the development of the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining;
- (2) encouraging partnership with the mining industry to host an industrial research chair in mine life cycles;
- (3) supporting the research, innovation and commercialization of cold climate and other technologies;
- (4) partnering with other groups and governments in the study of climate change in Yukon;
- (5) supporting the operation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice; and
- (6) continuing to explore options for the development of a northern university.

As I said at the outset, it is indeed a pleasure to speak in support of the Government of Yukon funding the activities of Yukon College. I want to note, though, before concluding my remarks on the amendment, that we cannot lose sight of what Yukoners have said in regard to Yukon College — that it must continue to have a First Nation focus. The strength and influence of First Nation students’ culture, knowledge and potential was consistently iterated as an important area of focus.

Leadership and presence is significant. Community members expressed hope that Yukon College would be seen as a partner, a presence and sometimes a leader in all communities and within all sectors, including the areas of justice, mining, health care, arts and culture, research and environment.

The amendment also speaks to supporting activities of Yukon College, and the fundamental role of the community campus over the years must be acknowledged as a strength. There was a stated need for increased support of the community campuses. Solutions for local education and training needs must be determined by the community in which the needs exist. The college is expected to be flexible, provide leadership and provide a welcoming and supportive learning environment.

In addressing the education gap, business leaders, school principals, elders and community members are distressed by the numbers of Yukon youth and adults who either do not complete high school or complete high school but then must take college preparation courses before entering a Yukon College program. This education gap makes it difficult for the college to provide appropriate training. Yukon College must address the difficulties associated with transitioning from the rural communities to Whitehorse or from high school to Yukon College.

Again, I urge the Government of Yukon to support this amendment, which would urge the Government of Yukon to provide funding for all of the activities of Yukon College that have been presented in the original motion.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The amendment brought forward by the Member for Copperbelt South seems fairly minor and grammatical in nature. Quite frankly, I don’t actually see the point of it. We don’t have a problem with it, but it appears that in all areas where the Member for Watson Lake had said “support”, the Official Opposition wants to amend it to say “provide funding to”, and in all areas where it said “provide funding to”, they want to replace that with “support”. I’m not sure if there was a point to this amendment, other than to have made an amendment — because it seems that the net effect is that it is not only grammatically incorrect in the amendment presented and it needed to be adjusted by the Clerk, it does seem to be one that doesn’t really have a net effect on it.

That being said, in the interest of expediting debate, if the specific wording is important to the Member for Copperbelt South and makes a difference in their support for it, we’re happy to accept the amendment, in the spirit of cooperation.

Amendment to Motion No. 533 agreed to

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard on the motion as amended?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I want to thank the members opposite in the Official Opposition for their friendly amendment and for the Member for Copperbelt South and her remarks in support of this motion as amended.

It's hard to believe that we are reaching 50 years of celebrating Yukon College as a post-secondary institution — where the time goes. Since its inception in 1963, when it was known as the Whitehorse Vocational Training School, I think we can all agree that Yukon College has provided Yukoners with quality education that is specific, responsive and relevant to the north as we know it today.

It has graduated from offering a small number of programs to offering bachelor's degrees, diplomas, certificates as well as teaching university transfer courses that are accepted and welcomed at universities within British Columbia and Alberta systems and well beyond. It continues to offer relevant training, engaging the interest and meeting the educational needs of Yukoners today, just as it did some 50 years ago.

For all of us — and as the member opposite alluded to — I think that we all have our own personal anecdotes and stories and personal reflections of what Yukon College has done for us — in support not only of us as individual Yukoners, but in support of our communities and where we are today. It has been and will very much continue to be a source of great pride for all of us, for education in the Yukon and for Yukoners.

I think that when we look across the spectrum of the individuals who have been touched and the lives that have been touched by Yukon College and the delivery of programs over the years, it is overwhelming. The number of people impacted by the wide-ranging delivery of programs and encompassing a diverse range of people is overwhelming. From recent high school graduates preparing for university outside of the territory to Yukoners undertaking one of the many certificate and diploma programs, as well as working to obtain the training for employment in one of the many trades, Yukon College has always appealed and will continue to appeal to a wide range of audiences.

Interesting to note, the 2012-13 school year had over 6,000 students enrolled and over 150 certificates, diplomas and degrees were granted in 2013 alone.

I suppose that is really what is so timely about this motion. It is an opportunity for us to celebrate the successes of Yukon College and all that it has become over the years, but also an opportunity to look forward to the future. As the Minister of Education, I would like to commend the significant work that has been undertaken by Yukon College on its recently approved and endorsed strategic plan, which marks the course of the next number of years from 2013 to 2016 and the degree of participation of Yukoners they were able to engage and the strategic goals and the vision that they have put forward over the next period of time.

This motion speaks to moving forward. Just as we have seen significant growth over the past 50 years, we always need to continue to keep our eye on the ball and continue to have a vision for the next 50 years.

As a lifelong Yukoner — someone who was born and raised in the Yukon — my entire family has been touched by Yukon College in some way. My mother received her business administration certificate some years ago and was very proud to do so because it has served her very well as she carries on her education and her profession on a whole variety of levels. Likewise, my father, who is a lifelong building contractor but had never received any formal training, went back to school and received his journey level in carpentry after some 35 years of being in the industry. Soon thereafter my brother also took to the profession and earned his journey level in carpentry and subscribed to Yukon College to do that.

I have also subscribed to many courses over the years at Yukon College, from business development to business administration. I have always been impressed by the professionalism delivered, by the calibre of teachers and instructors and by the whole variety of courses being offered by Yukon College over the years.

Last but not least, I would be remiss if I didn't mention my son, who also attended Yukon College — although preschool, I should say. I just have to put in a plug for the preschool and the quality child care centre at Yukon College and how it really has set the stage for his lifelong learning course, as he approaches grade 4.

I could go on at great length about what Yukon College has provided our family over the years, but today's motion really speaks to a number of different items. The one thing I would like to say is that we, as a government, over the last 11 years have worked collaboratively with Yukon College. We have been able to help support a number of initiatives — helped fund and worked in partnership with many partners over the years. The Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, for example, was but one of the many initiatives that the Yukon government has partnered on recently with Yukon College. It's very exciting. It provides matching funds in capital funding over the next five years, and it also provides ongoing operation and maintenance dollars in support of this CNIM and this particular initiative in support of the mining industry.

It has been largely driven by industry and we have a number of producing hardrock mines in place. It really will enable Yukoners to train and to work in the territory and will give them in-demand trades experience that they can use in our mining industry, as well as a number of different varieties of industries like construction, manufacturing, working for our towns, our City of Whitehorse, and so forth. It certainly is not just in support of mining, but really in support of industrial trades overall.

We're very pleased to be able to provide new funding in support of the ongoing operation and maintenance expenditures that will enable the college to deliver new course offerings. It will also give the college a much stronger position to leverage further funding from other sources —

other governments, Government of Canada and industry itself. We're very pleased to be able to provide that funding.

Now I know that probably my colleagues have a lot more to say about CNIM, but again this has been a work in progress over many years and it is great to see it coming to fruition with this great announcement that was made at the end of October by our Premier on behalf of the Government of Yukon. I would just like to again congratulate Yukon College on this major endeavour.

The motion also speaks to providing continued support for research, innovation and commercialization of cold climate and other technologies. When I was Minister of Environment a number of years ago, I was very pleased to be able to participate in the initial discussions at that time about being able to embark upon a new journey with Yukon College, in collaboration with industry and other institutions across the country and across the circumpolar north. It was really driven by taking advantage of our cold climate and taking advantage of providing that necessary support to be able to capitalize upon that cold climate with new technologies. There have been a number of initiatives underway over the years, but providing ongoing support — I know that not long ago, we committed almost \$3 million over five years for the Cold Climate Innovation Centre, which is a division of the Yukon Research Centre.

When the Yukon Research Centre was first being discussed, it was really an opportunity to be able to take advantage of the research that was being undertaken in our backyard, but not necessarily with our knowledge. Having Yukoners take advantage of that research being undertaken by scientists and researchers from all over the world every year, now there is an actual centre in place, delivered by Yukon College in collaboration with many different entities. The funding that the college has been able to leverage over the last number of years and the fantastic research and the partnerships that they've been able to leverage with industry, with other governments, the City of Whitehorse, municipal governments and First Nation governments is really impressive, to say the least, and perhaps superseded any expectation that I had years back when we were first working on this Yukon Research Centre.

As I said, there are several key programs — biodiversity monitoring, the Cold Climate Innovation Centre — as I referenced before — and the Northern Climate Exchange, which has been around for many, many years before the Yukon Research Centre came about. We just spoke recently about the NSERC Industrial Research Chair for Colleges in Mine Life Cycle, which also this motion speaks to — technology innovation, Science Adventures, and resources and sustainable development in the Arctic.

Again, this is very key because it really focuses on that collaborative research with individual students, communities, First Nations, industry and local government. I know that the Yukon Research Centre has tripled its staff over the last four years a result of the funding that they've been able to leverage through departments of Education and Economic Development, but more importantly, by being able to extract

resources in kind and financial from many other universities and institutions and individual businesses — Northwestel comes to mind — but there is a whole host and variety of different businesses. As a result, we have been able to expand the amount of research into areas such as mine site restoration, bioremediation, cold climate technology innovation, climate change and social science of resource development in the Arctic. Those are all very responsive and all very relevant to the north as we know it today.

I also wanted to congratulate the Yukon Research Centre as having been recognized as ranking fourth in Canada's top 50 research colleges in the category of research income. It is preceded only by SAIT Polytechnic, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and College of the North Atlantic.

So again, that speaks volumes about the capacity of what can be achieved when in fact we invest in the college and programs such as this and really look forward to the future.

Of course, the motion also speaks toward partnering with other groups and governments in the study of climate change in the Yukon. I referenced that so briefly, but I know that the Yukon government has been working on delivering and implementing its own climate change action plan, really coming out of the strategy that was adopted by the Government of Yukon a number of years ago. Again, it really makes reference to the importance of changes in our environment but also, by making investments on how we can respond effectively to climate change, how we can take our own individual actions and also by incorporating actions on behalf of industry and governments alike.

We have established climate change research study areas with CYFN, the college, the University of Northern British Columbia and across the spectrum of a variety of different departments in the Yukon government. We've been able to continue to work with other governments, as I mentioned — primarily with pan-north circumpolar governments — to be able to also work on pan-territorial adaptation initiatives in support of moving forward.

I just also wanted to make reference to a couple of other things but I see that I'm running out of time. Northern Institute of Social Justice for Yukon College will be spoken to by my colleagues, but again, it's another very important initiative that was undertaken back in 2010. Recognizing that there is a need for this specific type of training, of course, professional development and the Northern Institute of Social Justice has enabled us to provide a whole variety of programs in collaboration with various partners over the years.

I wanted to close — just because I see my time is running out — in terms of looking forward. I think this is really key — that we have been very pleased — back, I believe it was later on or just recently within the last month — to make an announcement from our government, in collaboration with Yukon College, that we were able to expand our land reserve for the college. It was really to provide the college with the availability to create that longer term plan for further development of the college, looking forward to the future and building upon what has already been achieved.

I would just like to say that the land reserve, with this decision, will now enable the college, together with many key stakeholders, to create its long-term plan — its long-term vision — over the next five years that will be able to sustain its operations to be able to meet its needs over the next number of years. Long-range planning for the future will enable the college to grow to meet its full potential and I couldn't be more excited to see how its long-term plan will help the college grow and to continue to develop to best meet the needs of Yukoners.

We certainly know it's a priority for Yukoners to receive post-secondary training and education right here in the territory. Yukon College has very much made this a reality for the territory with the expansion of new facilities in a number of our communities and by being able to build on programs and being able to deliver those programs that are relevant and responsive to today's needs, but also those of tomorrow.

So we look forward to continuing to work together to advance the evolution of the college and enhance the college's mission of being a leader in education, rooted in its diverse cultures and northern environment where everyone is inspired to dream, learn and achieve.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Hanson: Before I start, I'd like to invite Members of the Legislative Assembly to welcome visitors in the public gallery. It's nice to see people sitting through an afternoon debate. Aileen McCorkell and Eleanor O'Donovan, welcome to the Legislature.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: As my colleague for Copperbelt South spoke about earlier, the Official Opposition, of course, supports the intent of the motion that has been presented today by the Member for Watson Lake.

I just had a couple of comments that I wanted to make with respect to the scope of the motion. I don't believe that the member, in putting forward the six enumerated objectives of this motion, was attempting to be exclusive or to limit the scope of what was intended here.

I'm presuming that these are intended as examples and, again, not in any way intended to limit this focus of Yukon College as it evolves. As the minister opposite just spoke about, we all know that Yukon College is evolving and, in fact, one of the end points that is mentioned in this motion is the options with regard to exploring the establishment of a northern university — but I'll come back to that.

I say that because there is fair focus in these six enumerated aspects of this motion with respect to the really important activities on the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining and the industrial research chair in mine life cycles, cold climate technologies and climate change. Where there's not as much focus and part of what the legacy and the history that Yukon College — Yukon Vocational and Technical Training Centre, as the minister and others have referenced — was, even going back as far as the 1960s and 1970s, the genesis of Yukon College was home to a fine arts program

and it was taught by a renowned artist, Ted Harrison. If you recall the legacy of that has been the many students who have gone on to develop their own careers, and I include in there Jim Robb, Tlingit artist Jean Taylor and Kaska artist Mary Caesar — and many others. I know many people in the Yukon and across Canada would perhaps love to see the establishment of a Harrison chair in fine arts in what could become the Yukon College University.

So I would encourage the members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly to keep in mind, as we're talking about Yukon College, a vision for the college that includes liberal arts and studies that include literature, languages, philosophy, history, mathematics, psychology and science — all underpinnings to a well-rounded and well-educated individual — studies that have at their core, in my view, the development of the capacity for critical thinking, which is really the foundation for advanced learning and the application of those critical thinking skills is so essential when we want to see people being able to advance in the very, very technical areas of mine life cycles, in terms of the innovation and opportunities for research in this territory.

If we want to be the centre of that innovative research in Canada for the north, then we need to have people who have the capacity to do that — and to my mind, critical thinking is a critical tool by which one can come about reasoned conclusions. It incorporates not only the passion that we all feel for the north and the creativity that we know rests in every single one of the Yukoners and those coming in the halls of the college, but critical thinking is guided by discipline, is practical and is common sense. I think that one of the things that we want to ensure is we develop the whole student coming into this college, with the liberal arts aspect and the underpinning of critical thinking really built into it.

As we work toward the notion of — as the sixth point there talks about, the options of a northern university and continuing to explore those options for the development of a northern university, I think that we need to keep in mind that we already have a really strong genesis for that with respect to the fact that Yukon College was a founding member of the University of the Arctic. That is a cooperative network of universities, colleges and other organizations committed to higher education and research in the north. Its motto is "In the North, For the North, By the north."

There have been many discussions over the years, and I can remember 10 years ago when there were discussions within the federal system with territorial governments about the idea of how, when and where a northern university should be located. I think all members of this Legislative Assembly would agree that the logical location for a northern university in Canada is Yukon. We have many, many reasons to believe that.

The basis and the solid foundation that we've built within the Yukon through Yukon College is a really strong testament to that, so we have enormous opportunities as citizens and members of this Assembly to continuously build on that solid foundation. We need to ensure that the vision that we hold and that we carry forward from Yukon College as it goes forward

is inclusive of all aspects of the full learning spectrum. As I said at the outset, we will support this motion and we'll continue to work with members opposite and with other members in the community to expand upon the potential that is Yukon College.

In terms of the notion of the university, I have to say that one of the huge opportunities — some elements of it are being developed. But in terms of a northern focus and a centre of excellence, Yukon College already has the genesis of being the centre of excellence for governance studies in terms of academic studies where we bring in the academics currently doing research about the north from southern universities and actually having them as visiting chairs here. This is all a part of building on the realities of the governance model that has been built in this territory, with territorial governments and First Nation governments sharing jurisdiction on so many areas. It has challenged and intrigued academics from around the world and we should be inviting them to be using this college as their university base.

Mr. Speaker, the Official Opposition is clearly passionate about the potential for the growth of our academic institutions in the north and, in particular, about the potential for Yukon serving as the home for the northern university for Canada.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this motion as amended put forward by the Member for Watson Lake. The development, and perhaps even the evolution, of Yukon College has taken place over the last 50 years.

The evolution of Yukon College has taken place over the last 50 years. In 1963, the Whitehorse Vocational and Technical Training Centre opened its doors with a focus on teaching employment-related skills. In fact, I have met a few welders who told me that they learned their trade there in the 1960s and the 1970s.

In 1977, the trade school partnered with the University of British Columbia to offer university-level courses. In 1988, the vocational school became Yukon College with the passage of the *College Act* and it was indeed the *Yukon College Act* of 2009 that gave the college the degree-granting authority.

What we have seen over the past 50 years is a steady trajectory of increasing academic standards, student competency and faculty accomplishments. I recently did some more reading about the importance of colleges and post-secondary establishments. Some of the articles spoke to their importance of the students' personal development. Other articles focused on the contribution made by advanced education to our economy. Some addressed the investment made in research and development by universities and colleges that many companies simply cannot make. I believe that college can play an important role in shaping how we think as individuals and the kinds of questions we could and should be asking.

I am a firm believer in critical thinking. According to several websites, critical thinking is a way of deciding whether a claim is true, partially true or false. It is a tool by which one can come about reasoned conclusions based on a

reasoned process. This skill can be developed through several avenues, but advanced education is one of the most common methods.

Shaping and honing our thinking skills in a college or university environment is one of the best things that these institutions can provide. Several studies noted that while higher education is expensive, it's often a significant factor in improving one's earning potential within today's economy. Depending on how regulated the industry is, employers may be looking for certifications and qualifications.

One of the studies I read noted that with the transformation of the North American economy from manufacturing-based to a knowledge-based economy, the ability to comprehend and use information is increasingly important. However, I also think we need to ensure that, while we pay attention to more abstract or philosophical thinking skills, we do not lose sight of the importance of skill development.

I'd like to talk for a moment or two about the first element of this motion: providing funding for the development of the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining. I understand that Yukon College has created a five-year program plan for the development of the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, CNIM, to integrate and house mining- and exploration-relevant and industrial trades training programs within our territory.

I spoke earlier about the value of an education including the ability for the student to obtain a certification or qualification in trades or professions. One of the outcomes of this project is the acquisition of a trailer to support the delivery of industrial trades instruction throughout Yukon communities.

Partners include the mining industry, Yukon Education, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, CanNor, several Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Mine Training Association. The Prime Minister has indicated that Canada will invest some \$5.6 million in the CNIM.

Training a student is an expensive undertaking not only is there a cost to the student, but there is also considerable cost to the institution. It makes sense to have a robust partnership between our educational institutions and industry so that students graduating have linkages to possible job opportunities and prospective employers have access to a pool of candidates who have the requisite skills training and certification necessary for employment.

I want to now turn my attention to the second point of this motion. As I mentioned previously, colleges have the ability to conduct research that would otherwise be outside the scope and budget of a commercial operation. The ability to conduct research and development is one of the great assets of a college. They have approached this aspect of their work using several models. One of those models is for a dedicated chair at the institution.

The concept of endowed chairs goes back to the days of Roman emperors apparently as early as 176 A.D. This approach was adopted by England in 1502 when Lady Margaret Beaufort endowed the first chairs in divinity at the

universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Other individuals followed suit by endowing professorships in other fields of research. Perhaps the most famous is the Lucasian Chair of Mathematics at Cambridge. Isaac Newton was in fact the second to hold it, beginning in 1669. Isaac Barrow was the first chair in 1664 and the current occupant is a physicist, Stephen Hawking.

Depending on the type and size of the endowment, an endowed chair often provides the holder of the chair with a partial or full salary so that they are free to focus on conducting research.

NSERC, which stands for National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, aims to make Canada a country of discoverers and innovators for the benefit of all Canadians. The agency supports university students and their advanced studies, promotes and supports discovery research, and fosters innovation by encouraging Canadian companies to participate and invest in post-secondary research projects. NSERC researchers are on the vanguard of science, building on Canada's long tradition of scientific excellence.

Yukon is home to one of the world's largest iron ore deposits and one of the world's largest undeveloped lead-zinc deposits. It also contains large resources of gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, and nickel. The Yukon mining industry currently represents 10 percent of Yukon's economy. Four mining companies of the Yukon are committed to this chair, namely Alexco, Capstone, Yukon Zinc and Victoria Gold Corporation. The overall objective of the chair is to develop research leadership to address northern specific challenges and opportunities within the mining industry.

Two streams of applied research will be investigated by the chair: mine influenced water management and treatment, and terrestrial reclamation practices. The first stream will focus on discharge water treatment and processing effluence treatment, and the second on soils reclamation and land revegetation in northern conditions.

In addition to the work being done in the area of mining, one of the areas that I see where Yukon can make a significant contribution is in the area of research related to cold climate conditions.

I support the concept outlined in the third point of this motion. Yukon has a Cold Climate Innovation Centre, or CCI. According to their website, this is focused on the development, commercialization and export of sustainable cold climate technologies and related solutions for subarctic regions around the world. CCI supports the partnership between applied scientific researchers, industry and government, dedicated to addressing cold climate issues affecting northerners.

Closely related to that is the next part to this motion. But because of my time, I'm going to move on to the next element of this motion, which is supporting the operation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice.

In 2002 the Yukon Party committed to addressing FASD. As the previous governments worked on this file, it became clear that Yukon needed a cost-effective, made-in-the-north response to many of the challenges we face with respect to

FASD. One option the previous administration considered was to send our staff to a place in the south and have them take training down south. It quickly became clear that between paying for course modifications and paying staff to go to school down south, the costs would be prohibitive. The government of the day decided to develop the Northern Institute of Social Justice FASD curriculum as a pilot project.

An FASD and justice curriculum was developed in partnership with Yukon College and the Northern Institute of Social Justice and was piloted in a training program in the spring of 2010 to front-line workers whose clients have FASD and may be involved in the justice system. The development costs were \$21,000 in phase 1 and \$47,000 in phase 2. The departments of Justice, Education and Health and Social Services participated in that pilot program training. Following the pilot, the program was revised and broken into the following: firstly, core competencies for FASD, awareness to understanding, which is a one-day course as a prerequisite for any of the streams and the accommodating for the challenges of FASD program; second was the accommodating for the challenges of FASD, understanding the practice, which is a three-stream program and each stream is two days in length; thirdly was accommodating for the challenges of FASD justice, safety and protection services, as well as accommodating for the challenges of FASD education and training services, and finally, accommodating for the challenges of FASD in health, wellness, social and human services.

At the request of the Government of Nunavut, the NISJ-FASD training team has delivered the above training in Iqaluit to 15 employees of the Department of Justice and 15 employees of the Department of Health and Social Services. The FASD training is co-developed and delivered with the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon. To date, FASD training has been provided to 296 people.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I support the final item in this motion. During the 2011 Yukon Party election campaign, we committed to create a Yukon university by developing Yukon College into a northern university by exploring models — identifying which model is best suited for Yukoners and northerners — and beginning the process of achieving that goal. We also committed to identify land for additional facilities, like a centre for northern innovation in mining and a new student residence.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we have work underway on that front and I commend the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this motion forward for debate on the floor of the Legislature today. I'd like to extend a happy anniversary to Yukon College and wish them all the best in future endeavours.

Mr. Tredger: I'd like to begin by thanking the member opposite for the intent of this motion and allowing us in this Legislature to show our support for Yukon College on this occasion of their 50th anniversary.

I have had the good fortune to work closely with Yukon College in many ways and areas — firstly, in rural

communities, as I worked in high schools in rural communities and we interacted with the college in many different ways. We developed courses together. We shared ideas together and we worked with the communities to develop educational programs with the mind of moving from cradle to grave and the idea that education is a lifelong learning experience and the schools and the college system have an integral part to play in all aspects of that.

I'm also fortunate to have worked and taken courses at Ayamdigut Campus in Whitehorse and watched it grow and evolve over the years. I'm quite excited about the directions that they're taking and the learning that's going on. The inclusiveness of the learning, the strength of the Yukon presence in the college and in the university courses that they are currently offering is truly inspirational.

I also had the pleasure to serve on the Yukon College Board of Governors. That was indeed an honour and a real learning experience. Sometimes we take for granted things just run. To have the good fortune to serve on the board of governors as directions were being developed and thought was being given into who we were serving, how we were serving them and what the college was evolving toward was truly a humbling and rewarding experience. I think through it all, Yukon College's strength is their support of the growth of an individual and of the individual ways that we or their students can contribute to community. They can form community and relationships that bring people — Yukon people and people from across the world — together in a field of rigour to examine and to look at what we are, who we are and where we're going.

One of the concerns we wrestled with was the importance of developing the whole student. This is particularly relevant in this day and age when we have students who grow up now anticipating five different careers in their lifetime. Think of that for a moment. We may train them for one thing now, but throughout their life they are likely to be in five different situations.

We must avoid the trap of training for one particular thing. As an elder once told me in Pelly, we are going to be here a very, very long time. Mining will come and go, tourism will come and go, but we need to live and learn to live on the land forever.

In Yukon, we have a unique opportunity. We do have a wonderful college. We have experienced educators. We have passionate educators. We have experienced scientists. We have passionate scientists. We have leadership that, for many generations, has looked to education and recognized the importance of education and has supported our teachers in our schools and our teachers in our colleges and, maybe most importantly, supported our children and our students as they progress through our educational institutions.

There are colleges and universities across Canada. I was talking to a college president from Alberta and he was talking of how they were looking at going to a university and becoming a university. He was talking about how they were competing for students. The gist of our conversation was that we need to build on our strengths. The strengths in the Yukon

are the people of the Yukon — the First Nations, the citizens and the land upon which we live — in many ways unique to the world, in many ways very much the same. But we need to build and allow the college to build on its strengths.

The First Nation focus of Yukon College is one of its strengths. We talk in this House about self-government agreements and land claim agreements and how unique they are to Canada and the world. We talk about how the Yukon is interacting with industry in establishing ways to work with our land for the betterment of all our people.

We must remember our partnerships with First Nation governments and must be sure that they are included in our development, that traditional knowledge and the rigor of lessons learned by First Nation people through the millennia are incorporated into our teachings at the college.

We must remember the words and the wisdom of the elders when they brought forth the document called *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*. I was proud to be part of the YNTEP program, the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program, and have students in my schools and graduates teaching in my schools. I was proud to have them as colleagues. They did bring something special to our classroom and to our children. Their experiences, their touch with traditional knowledge and their touch with the land created an atmosphere of sharing, caring and understanding. That is the strength of Yukon College. That is the strength of our YNTEP program. That is the strength of our bachelor of social work program where Yukon people can come together and share our experiences, apply a rigor to them, learn from them and share with us.

The other very important aspect of Yukon College and its strength is its roots into the communities. Whether it be John Reid in Mayo instructing a foods class, or whether it be a heavy duty mechanic course in Pelly, or whether it be a transitional class from high school to college, Yukon College has made a real effort to be part of the communities and Yukon College has been well-rewarded by those communities because that is the strength and the uniqueness of Yukon College.

The communities bring leadership to Yukon College. The communities bring a presence. The communities bring a flexibility to the college as it works around ways to deliver and meet the needs of the individual communities. That flexibility strengthens the college, makes it unique and has helped to build it into what it is today.

Yukon College recently underwent a strategic plan. Being an educator, I've been through a few strategic plans. This is not something to be undertaken lightly. It requires a commitment of resources, time and energy. It requires a commitment from leadership, from the staff, from the community and from individuals involved in the process. It is an incredibly valuable and enlightening experience. Strategic planning guides and strengthens us in our resolve to do the best job that we can.

The strategic plan arrived at through hundreds of hours of consultation, through meetings, through input from a wide variety of people, gives focus and direction to Yukon College.

I won't spend a lot of time going into the details, but I would encourage everyone in this House to spend a few minutes reading the strategic plan, realizing the strength and the accomplishment of that plan — a First Nation focus; leadership and presence, the strength of community campuses, addressing the education gap — I alluded to from the cradle to the grave — the importance of accessibility for all of our citizens to a college or university, to build on the strengths; the fact that Yukon College is more than an educational institution; and to address the expectations of user groups. Those are their guiding principles.

My concern with this motion is, despite its good intentions, it is somewhat prescriptive. My fear as an educator — as someone who has gone through a strategic plan and committed to that strategic plan — is that the Legislature, in its good intentions, by debating this for an afternoon, may be suggesting a reallocation of resources from identified directions to shift those results on the basis of an afternoon debate. The strength of a strategic plan is the involvement of all those who had input and the ownership of all those who had input.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I voted in favour of the amendment, as suggested by my colleague from Copperbelt South, because it does shift from being prescriptive to more supportive. I will read the amended motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to provide funding to support the growth and development of Yukon College through actions including:

- (1) supporting the development of the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining;
- (2) encouraging partnership with the mining industry to host an industrial research chair in mine life cycles;
- (3) supporting the research, innovation and commercialization of cold climate and other technologies;
- (4) partnering with other groups and governments in the study of climate change in Yukon;
- (5) supporting the operation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice; and
- (6) continuing to explore options for the development of a northern university.

But the key is the funding goes to the college to support their strategic planning and their efforts.

I thank all the members for their contributions and I join everyone here in celebrating the 50th anniversary of Yukon College. It is indeed a pleasure. It's exciting to be celebrating education in the Yukon and knowing we have the strengths, we have the abilities, we have the personnel, we have the ingenuity and we have the integrity to be a world-class educational institution.

Mr. Hassard: I'll just take a few minutes this afternoon and say that it's a pleasure to rise to speak on behalf of Motion No. 533, as amended. I'd like to firstly thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this important motion forward.

I would like to speak about Yukon College's community campuses for a few minutes, because they are vital to the

education of residents in rural Yukon — whether it be for the younger students needing extra assistance in going forward with their secondary education or older students who are trying to enhance their education and perhaps just learning something as simple as computer skills so that they can keep up with their children in today's technology.

The Teslin campus opened in 1985 to provide programming to the residents of the Teslin area and true to Yukon fashion, Teslin campus has resided in some rather interesting locations over the years, including the backseat of an instructor's car after a fire destroyed the campus. The Teslin campus provides a wide variety of programs and courses based on community demands and interest. As well, both of the other communities in my riding of Pelly-Nisutlin house their own community campuses.

Ross River, along with Teslin, also opened in 1985 and is a very important tool in the delivery of education in that community. Faro too has a very busy community campus. These community campuses are extremely helpful in keeping residents up to date on things like safety courses such as flagging, power-saw safety or transportation of dangerous goods certificates. These types of training keep residents up to date so they can partake in various job opportunities throughout the north and in turn help maintain a thriving economy in the Yukon.

As you know, the Whitehorse campus is rapidly outgrowing its physical space and that's exactly why this Yukon government is expanding the Yukon College land reserve.

This expansion will support a long-term planning initiative for Yukon College to complete a campus master plan. The college has committed to completing this plan within a five-year term.

The land expansion and the master plan are more important now than ever with the continued work on research, innovation and commercialization of cold climate and other technologies. As well as the development of the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, the college needs space. If Yukon College grows as much in the next 50 years as it has in the past, my children and grandchildren will have witnessed an amazing transformation. I believe that all members of the Assembly today appear to feel as I do that Yukon College is very important to the Yukon and that all and any funding provided by the government is of great value.

I am encouraged by the support I've heard from all members today and I look forward to seeing unanimous support for this motion as amended.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you to the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward this motion and to my colleagues who have spoken already today about the college and the support that's intended to be provided by the government for the college.

I think the motion in its original form as well as the amended version that we have with us today on the floor is a sound one. It attempts to highlight some of the key features of the Yukon College moving forward, as well as some of the work

that's been done to date. I would like to speak on all of the topics that are listed here. As the Leader of the Official Opposition noted, this isn't an exhaustive list. It is intended to highlight some of the more prominent features of the college, but it's certainly not exhaustive and there's certainly much more that could be discussed, as we've heard today.

I'd like to focus on a few of these issues, particularly those that relate to a few of my departmental responsibilities with both Economic Development and Environment in mind. The list enumerated in this motion is good, but the second, third and fourth bullets are the ones that I'm going to focus on in particular because of my departmental responsibilities, as I noted.

The second bullet discusses the — well I'll read it aloud: "encouraging partnership with the mining industry to host an industrial research chair for colleges in mine life cycles". This was a bit of a watershed for the college and, I believe, the territory as a whole because it was quite an achievement for a small college like ours to host an industrial chair like this. NSERC, as we all know, was the national funding body for research and scientific work and it's a very prestigious body.

It is a great boon for Yukon College to be hosting the research chair in the territory. What is particularly valuable about this is the partnership that this particular industrial research chair provides for industry. The role that industry has played in stepping up to the plate and providing the researchers at the college with real-world northern mining challenges that they face on a day-to-day basis is an exceptional feature of this particular program.

The individual who we have attracted to the territory to fill that NSERC industrial research chair is Dr. Amelie Janin. I believe she is originally from France but has worked in Canada for a short while now, and we are certainly very lucky to have her here. She is an exceptional individual with a high-quality set of credentials and, from what I've heard from those at the college and those in the industry, she's doing some fantastic work related to the mining industry and, in particular, the water usage at mines.

She has a number of projects underway right now. I'll get into those specific projects, but I think it's worth noting that the advisory group that oversees her work consists of industry representatives and has those involved in the actual mining projects at the table. It's a valuable structure and it's a sound one, and I think it ensures that the research that we're doing here at the Yukon College — in particular that of Dr. Janin — is done with the goal of meeting the demands of our industry and finding solutions to real-world challenges faced here in the Yukon.

One of the projects she has underway is a bioremediation project. The goal of that project is to help the development of bioremediation in the Yukon and build confidence in the technology by providing knowledge and data. There are two objectives. The first is to set up a lab-scale bioreactor and to build the capacity of those bioreactors. The second is to assess northern-specific substrates, which, in a more simple term, is the recipe for the correct formula for the bioremediation.

The bioreactors are set up. For a layman like me, I would compare it to a filter. Essentially, the water enters these and they measure the discharge limits and whether or not there is compliance with discharge limits on a number of factors. Essentially it is looking at biochar, gravel, wood or other bioreactor material.

The next project is the recycled water project. To put that in context, on a mine site water needs to be recycled for a number of reasons. Of course there are regulatory requirements that require it, but for the mining companies themselves there are cost savings associated with that. There is a strong interest from the companies to recycle and use water as many times and as often as they can to save on costs and to also meet the regulatory requirements.

The quality of recycled water changes over time. There's an understanding that while they try to recycle the water as much as they can, over time the water does reduce in quality the more it's used. The goal of this particular project is to enhance water recycling practices and reduce its impact on flotation. In the water-collection process and the tailings process, water is an important feature and this particular project is aimed at solving a specific problem identified. I believe, in this case, that it's related to the work being done at the Wolverine mine.

The objectives of this project are to assess the economic impact of water recycling, to test and screen appropriate technologies for water treatment and enhancement of metal recoveries, and to conduct a pilot project. There are a number of screening technologies that are used. I won't get into the details and the methodology, but the collaboration between the Yukon Research Centre and, in this case, Yukon Zinc is excellent.

Another feature of this motion and of Yukon College is highlighted in the third bullet, and that reads that Yukon government provide "...funding support for the research, innovation, and commercialization of cold climate and other technologies", and with the amendment, I believe it would read, "support the research, innovation, and commercialization of cold climate and other technologies."

Now this is the bullet in this motion that I will speak to the most because of the fact that it's directly intertwined with the work being done in my department, and indeed the Department of Economic Development provides funding on a number of the projects in concert with the Yukon Research Centre and Cold Climate Innovation.

Early in our mandate, I was pleased to announce, in conjunction with the then Minister of Education, that Yukon government would be providing certainty to the Cold Climate Innovation and the Technology Innovation Centre at the YRC by providing stable, long-term funding.

On March 12, 2012, the then Minister of Education, who is now the Minister Energy, Mines and Resources, and I announced that the Yukon Research Centre and Cold Climate Innovation at the Yukon College would be receiving \$5 million in funding support from the Government of Yukon over the next five years. The funding agreement for the Yukon Research Centre committed \$2.2 million over the next two

years from the Yukon government, and the funding agreement for the Cold Climate Innovation committed over \$2.8 million for the next five years in operational and project support.

I think that was an excellent step early in our mandate in recognizing that this was an important feature, not only in the growth of the college, but in the growth of business and the private sector here in the territory, and that the work being done at the Cold Climate Innovation — it was then known as the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre, and it's now abbreviated to just Cold Climate Innovation so I will just refer to it as CCI — and the Technology Innovation Centre, the TI, were critical, not only for the growth of the college but for research being done in the private sector to enhance business and manufacturing practices here in the territory.

Two of the other individuals who are quoted in that news release of March 12, 2012 were Dr. Chris Hawkins, who is the vice-president of research at Yukon College, and also Dave Borud, the general manager of Northerm. He said at the time, "I think it's great. This gives us an opportunity to delve into some projects we have been hesitant, until now, to start on. It's great news for us, and for other people and companies involved in innovative business." I think you see that the work being done at both the Cold Climate Innovation Centre and Technology Innovation Centre are well-received by the business community.

I'll return specifically to the Cold Climate Innovation branch of the Yukon Research Centre. The Government of Yukon works with key partners and stakeholders to support Cold Climate Innovation in the Yukon. Housed at Yukon College, Cold Climate Innovation — or as I said, CCI — is a partnership between applied researchers, industry and government dedicated to developing, commercializing and exporting sustainable cold climate technologies. The centre's vision is to become an internationally recognized hub for the development, commercialization and export of sustainable cold climate technologies and related solutions for subarctic regions around the world. This will support the development, enhancement and success of Yukon's technology industries.

Cold Climate Innovation Centre's subsidiary program — Technology Innovation — enables Cold Climate Innovation to support a broader range of technology projects rather than just those related to cold climate. The centre continues to work with the private sector, universities and research institutions on a number of projects. The government's commitment to innovation and commercialization has led to other levels of government providing additional funding support to the work done.

Research, innovation and commercialization of cold climate and related technologies will provide important economic opportunities for Yukoners and contribute to the diversification of Yukon's economy. That last point is one that I should reiterate about the diversification of Yukon's economy. As members in this House have certainly heard me say before, specifically the information technology industry and, more broadly, the knowledge industry, is one sector of our economy that I think has tremendous potential for growth. It's a sector that we've identified as one that will certainly

contribute or increase its contributions to Yukon's economy in the coming years and one we would like to see more growth in.

To that end, a lot of the way we support that industry is through the Cold Climate Innovation Centre and the Technology Innovation Centre — through the CCI and the TI. There are a number of projects — in fact, too many to list today — but I would encourage members or any members of the public who visit the Yukon Research Centre to explore some of the pamphlets that they have on their shelves that demonstrate the long list of very exciting and innovative projects that are ongoing there. There are a few, though, that I did want to highlight because I'm particularly excited about them. I think there are a lot of benefits and potential growth coming from some of these projects. Some have received media attention already, but I think it's worth rehashing the details of some of them.

The first one I wanted to mention was a project that was done through the Cold Climate Innovation Centre with Northwestel. That was one that did receive some great coverage in the media locally. There were stories in the newspapers, and I think there was even some coverage on the radio discussing this project. Essentially it had to do with Northwestel's remote sites which, up until recently, had been powered by diesel generators, and that came with a whole host of problems.

Northwestel operates 87 off-grid microwave stations, of which 37 can only be resupplied via helicopter. Maintenance, repair and upkeep costs of all remote locations are excessive and, as a consequence, Northwestel continues to investigate options to reduce operating and running costs. In particular, Northwestel is very keen to exploit renewable energy sources. As such, it was introducing a 15-kilowatt, solar PV system at its Engineer Creek location in the north of the Yukon in early summer 2013 — earlier this year — and will begin streaming data to its ICN shortly thereafter. The photovoltaic system will operate in unison with the existing diesel generation system.

Data collected on this project will serve to demonstrate — or otherwise — the benefits that can be gained from solar energy in the northern winter and, in particular, that there are significant cost savings by using the photovoltaic/diesel hybrid, as opposed to a straight diesel generating system. Success will be measured in reducing O&M costs and an analysis of the data showing how effective the photovoltaic array is throughout the year. Depending on the success of this project, Northwestel will then introduce a hybrid solar/diesel system at other remote stations.

I think members will appreciate the investment that Northwestel has made in this, and the partnership that they have provided with the Cold Climate Innovation Centre.

I should also note that Economic Development is funding this project as well through a direct grant to the Cold Climate Innovation Centre. It's a sizable one and one that we hope is successful, because we'd like Northwestel to not only reduce their operating costs of these remote sites but reduce their diesel usage in a number of locations throughout the territory.

This list of projects, and excellent projects they are, is a long one and one that, as you're indicating to me now I don't have time to list, which is unfortunate because I think they do deserve recognition and perhaps to be put on the record, but recognizing the fact that I'm running out of time I will move to my concluding remarks.

Before I do that, the third part that I wanted to touch on was the partnering with other groups and governments on the study of climate change in Yukon. Some of the work that is being done in the Yukon Research Centre on this front is very exciting, in particular — not to choose one over any others but because I only have so much time — I will recognize the work that's being done around permafrost and understanding the permafrost regime here in the territory.

As members and anybody listening will understand, the changing permafrost regime in the territory is causing significant challenges for some of our infrastructure, and the work being done at the Yukon Research Centre is really leading edge. In a recent announcement of funding from the federal government and the Department of Highways and Public Works towards some of this research, I went as far as to say that Yukon and the Yukon Research Centre was a world leader in permafrost research and I would like to reiterate that comment, because I really feel that the work being done here is exceptional.

There was evidence of this, too, in the fact that last year, two Russian scientists came over here to learn about the work being done in the Yukon because they wanted to take it back to Russia and, in particular, Siberia, to apply it there. So that's an example of course of where we are really becoming a world leader in an issue that is local and relevant to us here in the territory.

So, Mr. Speaker, recognizing that I only have a few seconds left, I will simply say that I appreciate the motion put forward by the Member for Watson Lake. I will naturally be supporting it and I look forward to implementing a number of the bullets here in the motion, specifically the three that I've listed today. Of course, in our role as government, we will endeavour to meet each of these bullets and more. I look forward to working with the college and the folks in the Yukon Research Centre in the coming years and I'd like to thank them for the work that they've done and I look forward to passing this motion unanimously today.

Mr. Barr: I would just like to take a few minutes to thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward this motion and the Member for Copperbelt South for the amendment. I will also say a big shout-out to the 50 years of the Yukon College being in existence and to all the staff who work very hard.

I know the campus in Carcross from being involved back there over the years as a NNADAP worker, dealing with substance abuse issues. The office was right beside the campus and I know about the passion that the folks that work at that college — and have for years — have for the community and the good that they do for the community and all the community members that benefit.

I think back to when I quit high school early, as do many people in the communities and especially First Nations. They end up going back to our community colleges and receiving their upgrading. Then they are able to pursue careers that require at least high school or level three, or whatever. That's how it was when I went back for upgrading. It did allow me to go on to college and work with emotionally disturbed adolescents.

It's so great to be able to train the people here in the Yukon. I remember back speaking with Paul Dabbs, a guy who is retired in Tagish now. It was at Peak Fitness in the steam room and I had met him at a dinner at Art Johns' previous to that. It was the first time I ever met him, and then realized in the conversation that he's working in the government and talking about the need for the expansion of the college. Realizing that it was Piers McDonald in the NDP who was listening in those days, and now we have the new campus where it is now that expanded on the programs.

The conversation I had with Paul was that people come up to the Yukon, they get their experience and then they leave here — whether it's teachers or social workers or the jobs that were available here at the time — that we wanted Yukoners to be filling those jobs and living in the communities. My daughter did the YNTEP program and is now a teacher in the Yukon — and how much it was necessary that people had the opportunity to learn the profession they want in the Yukon, who are invested and living in the Yukon. Such a change that has been in the last 20 years for the people who live here, get trained here, are professionals who invest and continue to invest in the Yukon — not just flying in to get the experience on their resume to get jobs Outside. That was a huge conversation back in the days that I remember, so kudos to Yukon College and all those who work there.

Ms. White: I'll keep my comments brief as well and the acknowledgment that the Yukon College Whitehorse campus is in my riding, so I'm fortunate to have such a place.

There are a couple of things about the college that I think need to be recognized or celebrated. The college has developed their English as a second language program like none other. We have an amazing population in the territory now of visiting students who choose the Yukon — who choose the north — to learn English. I think there is an exciting opportunity there for the college to develop that program and to continue inviting the world in. They have the line and the description of the course and it says, "Yukon College welcomes the world!" — and they sure do.

There are a couple of other things that I'm really excited about, and one has to do with the Yukon Research Centre. The minister opposite spoke of permafrost. Right now we have a master's student in the territory who is doing permafrost mapping, but it is being done like it has never been done before. He has travelled around the territory and he has at least 200 test sites. What he's doing is building a computer program to actually give us an idea of what that permafrost looks like around the territory, to speculate and to design. It's

a very fascinating thing, although kind of complicated, but it's a neat process to watch the figuring out.

One of the things I really like about the Yukon Research Centre is the different directions it is able to go in and one of my favourite projects that they have is the greenhouse. They have a greenhouse that grows food 12 months of the year and the reason I like this so much is the idea of food security in the north. With the development of the greenhouse and hashing out the details and making it better, we're getting that much closer to year-round food production in the north.

So just a quick couple of comments about the college and how I'm really fortunate to have it my riding and I'm looking forward to helping celebrate the 50th anniversary on Friday.

Mr. Silver: It does give me great pleasure to stand up in support of this motion but, more importantly, to show my support for local educators and for curriculum developers, students and the educational fraternity at large.

I started my experience teaching in the Yukon in 1996 and I did a good complete generation of teaching here in the Yukon. When I started, I did a couple of years at F.H. Collins and I went on to Dawson City. When I first started teaching, the kids who were in kindergarten graduated my last year, so I have a lot of experience with the fraternity, with the power of educators and the system as far as the teachers, the parents and the kids — there are no problems there, I'll tell you that — the professionals who develop our curriculum, and the list goes on. It's an amazing education fraternity that we have up here.

With that being said, I do feel obligated to offer some healthy critiques on the issue. We've had many reports and many strategies and action plans and motions over the years regarding education, in regards to Yukon College, training and our support therein. The main thing that I come across with this — that keeps coming in my head — is a little less conversation, a little more action. Somebody should write a song or something about that.

I just want to do a little timeline here of a few different events. It's not to belittle what we're doing here; it's just some bookmarks that we should pay attention to. I don't think there's anybody in this room who's not concerned about education, I don't think there's anybody in this room here today who doesn't want to do their best for education so, in my humble opinion, I just want to add a couple critiques, like I said.

1998 was the last time that we did a Yukon-wide training strategy report, consultations and recommendations. Eleven years later, the Auditor General of Canada produced a report on education and it reported that a community training strategy was needed and that the department at that time was unable to demonstrate that it had a strategy.

Like I said, working in education, it's not the people on the ground floor who don't have these strategies. There is lots of great information from the community itself. If I had an overarching theme here today, it would be to listen to these people.

In 2012 on the floor of this Legislative Assembly, I put forth Motion No. 106, which called for unanimous support

from the government to work with the private sector, mining communities, First Nations, Skills Canada and Yukon College to develop a comprehensive plan to offer quality training and skills, trades and technology and to — among other things — create short-term, immediate solutions, using cooperative learning, to address the current need for training and the long-term vision with defined, achievable timelines.

An investment in education has to be one of the most important things that we can do, and it's one of the most important things that we can talk about in this Legislative Assembly. There are no limits to education's ability to improve life's circumstances. By improving educational opportunities for Yukoners, we improve the overall economy and the overall well-being of this amazing territory.

The items listed in this motion are absolutely worth supporting. The phrasing of the motion, however — it's very difficult for me to readily agree that government is doing enough to effectively support the growth and development of Yukon College. There are initiatives — and we've heard them listed here today — but I would argue that we're not going and doing enough; that we're not going far enough. I would argue that there is more that we can do and I would argue that there is more attention that we need to pay to the Yukon's educational community. There are so many great people working at the college. I would say that Dr. Karen Barnes has an incredible team working with her on a number of forward-thinking initiatives. The college has a unique opportunity to lead thinking in the north.

When developing policy to support mining in the Yukon, I would like to see that attention coming more from our professionals and our academics here in the Yukon — individuals who have more at stake than just the economy, but the future of our territory.

I was intrigued to learn that the Yukon Party is exploring options to develop a northern university. We haven't heard very much on this since the government made this commitment a few years ago. Yukon College has the potential to lead the nation in several fields, absolutely — but it will need more government support to do so. The college has unparalleled access to a wealth of knowledge on First Nation self-government. They are at the forefront of climate change adaptation innovation and, finally, I think they have a unique ability to enhance the management of mines throughout the mining life cycle and I would encourage the government to show more leadership on these opportunities. That's my piece.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I too will keep my remarks relatively short, given that we have the opportunity to vote on this motion here today to really celebrate Yukon College and some of the great things that they do. Obviously not all of the awesome things that are done at Yukon College are contained within this motion, but I think there are a number of important initiatives that are going on at the college that are contained in the motion put forward by the Member for Watson Lake.

I'm going to start out maybe on a little bit more a sombre note. Of course, we all know that for all colleges and universities, the most important part of those post-secondary

education institutions are the students, and many of those students can point to a number of role models when they were growing up who assisted them in getting to the point where they are making a difference when they're taking their post-secondary education and as they move on and lead their lives. Many of those role models for those students when they were growing up are, of course, teachers.

I was reading the paper on Friday and came across an obituary to Brian H. Hunt. I'm just going to read a little bit of it. Mr. Hunt, as I remember him, was born December 8, 1943, and on November 18 of this year, after a brief but courageous battle with cancer, passed away peacefully at Whitehorse General Hospital. He is survived by his loving family, his wife Gudrun, his sons Derek and Carson, and their immediate families, as well as his extended family throughout Canada and Austria. He will be remembered by all the lives he touched through education and youth and fitness involvement throughout his life and career and the time he invested — and his dedication will never be forgotten.

I count myself as very lucky to have had Mr. Hunt as my grade 6 teacher at Selkirk as well as a volunteer cross-country ski teacher with the TEST program that was pioneered by Father Mouchet here in the Yukon.

As I came across this, it certainly reminded me of the importance of those individuals who are helping students get through those early years in elementary school, junior high, in my case and in high school. I point to Mr. Hunt as one of the most memorable teachers that I ever had and my favourite teacher. I know that so many people join me — I'm sure thousands of Yukoners were touched by Mr. Hunt's involvement as a teacher and his involvement with cross-country skiing and fitness.

I just wanted to offer that as a brief tribute to Brian and his family. I know they've also put in this obituary that anybody who has any memories or thoughts or pictures can e-mail them to memorylane@thehuntfamily.ca. As I mentioned, I'm sure Mr. Hunt had a role in shaping the lives of thousands of individuals.

Getting back now to the college — Yukon College is in its 50th year. It started as a vocational school and then moved to its current location — I believe in the 1980s is when it moved up to its current location. It has grown into more than just a college on that site. The Arts Centre is there. We have student residences on-site as well as senior residences on-site. Of course, Archives is up there as well.

It's a tremendous facility for the territory at the Whitehorse campus, but we can't forget, as mentioned, all those community campuses and the importance of them.

During my past time as Minister of Education, I was very fortunate to visit a number of those rural campuses in Dawson, Teslin, Watson Lake, Ross River, Pelly Crossing and Mayo — to name a few. It's great to see those individuals in those communities being able to get the training that they need right on-site.

I guess maybe what I'll talk about just quickly here over the next five minutes — I was going to talk about a number of things, but I'll focus in on the Centre for Northern Innovation

in Mining, as that is one of the things that is important in my new portfolio as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. This new centre is designed to complement programs already delivered by Yukon College and provide a Yukon-specific solution to address the current and future skilled-labour shortage facing the territory's mining industry. It's going to offer dedicated facilities, comprehensive technology and trades programming and applied research that is focused on the mining industry. The mobile trades training trailer will make training more accessible by delivering courses in the smaller communities across the territory as well as at operating mine sites.

I think one of the keys to the success of this new facility has been the involvement of a number of stakeholders, but most importantly industry. Brad Thrall, who is a senior official with Alexco Resources, is the chair of the CNIM advisory committee. I think that this is a model that many — when I was in Iqaluit for education ministers this summer, I talked about this model and many of the ministers and their officials who were there were looking to this as something that they could use in their own community.

So, for everyone involved in setting this up, they should be very, very proud of themselves because I think we are going to see something that is modelled across the country as far as ways to deliver mine training or trades training to individuals. What we're anticipating with the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining is having the capacity, once all the funds are secured, to serve a projected total of 1,234 students over that six-year period.

In the summertime, the Prime Minister was here and made the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining the focus of his visit, committing \$5.6 million of federal funding to the project. Just prior to this fall sitting of the Legislature, the Premier, as well as the Minister of Education, others and I were up at the college to announce a matching \$5.6 million in capital funding to the federal government, as well as a further \$5.9 million to support programming across the next five years.

This is a tremendous show of support by our government and the federal government to mine training. Even though we're experiencing a bit of a slowdown in the industry, this is certainly the time to train up individuals. We still have a number of people travelling from other parts of Canada to take on some of the jobs and opportunities in our mines. Training those individuals locally will certainly help matters as far as ensuring that we are able to maximize the Yukon benefits from the mines.

There were a number of other things I was going to talk about, such as the science fair and the bridge building that take place at the college, as well as our support to expand the Yukon College land reserve. I think that it's important that we as legislators get the opportunity to vote on this motion put forward by the Member for Watson Lake. I'm sure I'll have ample opportunity in the future to talk more about the importance of the college to Yukoners and what it means to all of us who live here.

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

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. 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.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

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

Motion No. 533, as amended, agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the House do now adjourn.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.