



Yukon Legislative Assembly

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HANSARD

Wednesday, April 23, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

SPEAKER — Hon. David Laxton, MLA, Porter Creek Centre

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

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Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Community Services; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation; Yukon Lottery Commission Government House Leader
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Yukon Energy Corporation; Yukon Development Corporation
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Environment; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Highways and Public Works
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Justice; Tourism and Culture

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Jan Stick	Official Opposition House Leader Riverdale South
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Lois Moorcroft	Copperbelt South
Jim Tredger	Mayo-Tatchun
Kate White	Takhini-Kopper King

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 23, 2014 — 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 with the Order Paper. Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Canada's Outstanding Principals Award recipient Marj Hlady

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed my honour and privilege to rise in the Assembly on behalf of the Assembly today to pay tribute to Marj Hlady, long-serving principal of Christ the King Elementary School and recipient of the Canada's Outstanding Principals 2014 Award.

This prestigious award recognizes exemplary principals who have made a measurable difference in their communities and in the lives of their students. Marj Hlady — or “Mrs. Hlady”, as I have come to know her over the years as a former student of Johnson Elementary School in Watson Lake — is not only recognized as an outstanding educator, but a strong, caring leader in our community.

Over the years, her work has enriched many lives through building partnerships with families and building a strong community of staff, students and parents in support of lifelong learning.

The school motto at Christ the King Elementary is “every child matters, every child succeeds” — a vision that Marj strives to achieve each and every day. Building the character of students in Ms. Hlady's care is indeed a high priority, as is maintaining effective communication with students and staff, parents and the greater community as a means of building success all around.

According to Marj, there is nothing more important than education and doing what is best for the students. That has been and remains her driving force over the 30-plus years she has served as a principal and as an educator. She sees the value of developing personal relationships with every child who walks through her school doors as well as their families, building on that school's motto that every child matters.

Canada's Outstanding Principals award recognizes Marj for implementing a service-learning program at her school, teaching students the value of being involved in their community, giving unto others and helping those in need.

The award also recognizes her work in supporting English language learners, not only at Christ the King Elementary, but also at the departmental level. Thanks to her leadership, she and her colleagues have made great strides in ensuring new Canadians, new Yukoners, feel welcomed as members of the school community and our territory at large.

Marj has demonstrated and continues to demonstrate leadership by supporting teachers as they reach toward their own learning goals by implementing professional development opportunities, professional learning communities and assessment for learning strategies.

In speaking with families whose children attend or have attended Christ the King Elementary School, their description of Marj's leadership is that of providing gentle but firm leadership, always fair and a champion of academics.

I understand she has never missed a Christmas concert and has never failed to create a more spectacular event, which, according to some, has been recognized as the most sought-after ticket in town — that is, until they received a warning from the fire marshal and had to do two shows from then on. Above all, she is recognized as seeing many students successfully through their formative years, championing excellence in public education and putting students' interests first.

Earlier this year, Marj joined recipients from the other provinces and territories as members of the Learning Partnership's National Academy of Canada's Outstanding Principals. The academy offers principals ongoing networking, mentoring and professional development opportunities — an unparalleled learning opportunity and one that can enrich the knowledge base of the Department of Education as a whole by providing insights and ideas from across our great nation.

Building on the strength of our already strong leaders is a blueprint for success in Yukon schools and with this award, Marj joins many other outstanding principals in our territory, who have also been recognized over the years, including Maggie Mann, Dennis Darling, Paul Bennett, Gloria Coxford, Ted Hupé, Penny Prysruk, the late Brian Shanahan, Patrice Berrel, Kerry Huff, Thomas Jirousec and John Wright.

Joining us today in the gallery is Marj Hlady herself and a number of her colleagues and students from Christ the King Elementary School, including — I have a list here provided to me — and I would just perhaps ask each and every one of them to stand, as I bring their names forward.

Joining Marj Hlady are a number a number of teachers: Ms. Mackie and Mrs. Burns, as well as their students, Zhen Albios — and forgive me if I mispronounce your name — Kaelen Basnett, Ave Burns, Malcom Ellis, Jaymi Hinchey, Zuri Howard, Nathan Iskra, Kya Larkin, Airam Lee, Benjamin MacLeod, Jhanelle Madrigal, Meira Manzo, Kaelob McGovern, Francine Mislant, Maebel Perez, Samantha Ritchie, Charles Snider, Ethan Stoker, Brooke Tanaka, Isabella Twigge, Brooklyn West and Zephyr Bingham.

We also have joining with us are Monica Lauer, who is the chair of the school council. I would also like to welcome her and other members of the school community who have also joined us.

Ms. Hlady, I thank you for your ongoing efforts and for your continued leadership in Yukon education. Welcome to the Assembly today.

Applause

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.
Are there any returns or documents for tabling?
Are there any reports of committees?

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Mr. Hassard: I have for presentation the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees.

Speaker: Are there any further reports of committees to be presented?
Are there any petitions to be presented?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House do order the return of any and all records regarding the costs of the Government of Yukon's budget for on-line advertising.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Health and Social Services and the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation to assist the Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program and the Child Development Centre, which provide valuable prenatal and early childhood support to Dawson City families, to find new accommodations as soon as possible, as their current space lease is expiring without renewal at the end of May 2014.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House requests the Government of Yukon formally recommend to the federal government that it amend the *Fair Elections Act (C-23)* to ensure that all Yukoners, including First Nation members, youth and the homeless, are able to more easily identify themselves for voting, including permitting the continued practice of vouching.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Lobbying legislation

Ms. Hanson: Three weeks ago the Yukon NDP tabled lobbying legislation to ensure government transparency and accountability. The Premier initially kept the door open to the idea, but in last week's response to questions he showed he might not understand how lobbying legislation works.

Let me reassure the Premier that the cashier at the Superstore or constituents attending a community barbeque are not lobbyists and would not be affected in anyway by legislation. The legislation would only cover activities conducted where someone is paid to influence government decisions on behalf of private interests. Yukoners know that

lobbying happens in Yukon. It's legitimate. It needs to be transparent, not done behind closed doors.

So having cleared that up, will the Premier support the *Paid Lobbyist Act*, or at least support creating a select committee to look into legislating lobbying in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I think we have spoken about this issue on many occasions. As I have articulated in this House this session, we believe that in such a small jurisdiction as we have here people wear many, many hats. This government is about speaking to people, not restricting access to people.

As I've mentioned many times, ministers and caucus members have visitors on a regular basis, or are going out to communities to talk to non-government organizations, First Nation development corporations and many different committees and organizations that help Yukoners in many ways.

We are not going to limit access to ministers of this government. We'll continue to be as open as we can to all Yukoners and we feel that's the right way to go.

Ms. Hanson: It's interesting — the Premier doesn't get it, but yesterday on Twitter, a person tweeted about an excellent meeting between the minister and his organization — the ministers of Environment and Highways and Public Works — about mining, engineering and infrastructure. You know, this is about government transparency and accountability. It's an issue that is supported by parties of all political stripes across Canada.

Yukon Conflict of Interest Commissioner has repeatedly suggested that lobbying legislation be considered for Yukon. Most provinces in Canada have some form of lobbying legislation; even some municipalities have established lobbying registries. The registries are supported by lobbyists themselves and the organizations they represent.

Everyone sees the value of lobbying legislation except the Premier. Why? Why is the Premier refusing to make lobbying activities open and transparent?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: We live in a jurisdiction that has less than 40,000 people, and in a jurisdiction of that size, all of us — many of us — have a lot of roles and responsibilities. Some of them are on a volunteer basis; some of them are related to the work and functions we perform. In a jurisdiction of this size where there is accessibility to ministers on a daily basis by anybody, we feel this is not necessary.

We know that the Opposition feels that you solve all problems by creating more legislation and more regulations. On this issue, we again disagree.

Ms. Hanson: By the Premier's own boast, we live in a jurisdiction that is well-sought-after for our natural resources. The Premier's avoidance of this issue is little comfort to Yukoners who feel that their voice is not being heard by this government. Yukoners are all too familiar with the Yukon Party's habit of ignoring or paying lip service to consultation with Yukoners. At the very least, Yukoners deserve to know who has the ear of this government. There is no good reason to not support more transparency and accountability in government. The *Paid Lobbyist Act* would have no impact on the ability of anyone to talk with their

MLAs. It would simply ensure that people paid to influence government decisions do so in an open and accountable way.

Mr. Speaker, if the Premier is so set on rejecting a *Paid Lobbyist Act*, what clear, concrete alternatives does he have to increase government accountability and transparency?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: To imply that there are no processes in place to ensure that whatever happens in Yukon is not assessed and regulated is absolutely unfounded and untrue. No matter what we do — and I know she was referring to the extraction industry — we are all aware of all of the processes, such as those through the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, through the *Waters Act* and regulations. Everything that we do in this territory certainly is controlled. What the Leader of the NDP is failing to forget is that this is a Yukon Party government that, through a duly transparent and democratic election, was elected by the people of the Yukon, and we will continue to ensure that this government is accessible to all those people who wish to speak to us, and that's what we will continue to do.

Question re: Burwash Landing policing

Mr. Tredger: Last sitting I asked a question regarding the state of policing in the community of Burwash Landing. Apart from the presence of a part-time police officer for a short time during the summer, Burwash has no permanent RCMP detachment. The closest RCMP detachment is 127 kilometres away, in Haines Junction. This means that Burwash Landing has a minimum two-hour response time for RCMP calls. When I last raised this issue, the Minister of Justice assured me that he was working on addressing the needs of the people of Burwash Landing.

What has the minister done to improve the RCMP response times in Burwash Landing?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Since 2008, the Department of Justice has funded an RCMP reservist in Burwash Landing to address the heightened policing needs of that community, especially in the summer months. RCMP reservists are fully trained, regular police officers. The Kluane First Nation, the RCMP and the Department of Justice arrived to this solution based on the community's policing needs, including an assessment of when calls for service are at their peak.

Community members reported to us that the presence of the RCMP resulted in a reduction of speeding on the highway and less drinking and driving, especially for community events. They also reported that this police presence was a deterrent to crime and undesirable behaviour.

Again, I need to applaud the RCMP's efforts in this operational matter — in addressing the unique needs of Burwash Landing.

Mr. Tredger: I applaud the minister for extending the hours of the summer officer. However, this doesn't solve the problem for the rest of the year. I recognize that there can be some jurisdictional issues when working with the RCMP to determine how policing will operate in the Yukon, but the Minister of Justice has a responsibility when it comes to determining where the RCMP will be deployed.

Part of the minister's powers under the *Territorial Police Service Agreement* is agreeing to the number and location of detachments of RCMP in Yukon. If there is a need for RCMP presence during the summer months, why is there not such a need during the winter?

How did the minister determine that Burwash Landing doesn't require a permanent RCMP presence before agreeing that a permanent detachment was not needed in the community?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I should note that many small communities across Canada do not have a permanent police presence and they receive police services via hub detachments, similar to the RCMP detachment in Haines Junction. Several communities across British Columbia fall into this exact category. So our officials are open to engaging with the RCMP, with the Kluane First Nation and with Burwash Landing in a dialogue on the policing needs of that particular community.

Mr. Tredger: Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay are the only jurisdictions in Yukon without an RCMP detachment.

Mr. Speaker, the safety of residents of Burwash Landing should be a priority for this government. When things go wrong, these people face unacceptably long response times. The people of Burwash Landing deserve the same level of safety that everyone else in the Yukon expects and not only during the summer months. Violent incidents in the last year highlighted the need for a more regular police presence. The Kluane First Nation chief said that a permanent detachment would be a big improvement.

Will the government commit to working with the RCMP and Kluane First Nation to establish a permanent RCMP detachment in the community of Burwash Landing?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my last response, many small communities across Canada do not have a permanent police presence and receive police services via a hub, as does Burwash from Haines Junction. As I mentioned, several communities in British Columbia also fall into this category.

We'll continue working with the communities of Haines Junction and Burwash Landing and the Kluane First Nation through the Department of Justice and the RCMP. We have the reservist program in the summer that works quite well — that is a hub out of Haines Junction. The Department of Justice provides 100 percent of the costs to this program. The actual costs of the program were just over \$30,000 in 2013-14; just over \$22,000 in 2012-13; and about \$36,000 in 2011-12 — all of which the members opposite continue to vote against.

Question re: Diesel to liquefied natural gas generator conversion

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I have another question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The Yukon has depended on diesel fuel for energy production for many years. We have also known for many years that the now 45-year-old diesel generators would be in need of replacement. There was

plenty of time for the government to research and to understand the different options available to provide this backup energy.

Why did it take the government so long to initiate a plan to replace the aging diesel generators, therefore eliminating some very valuable options?

Hon. Mr. Kent: To be clear, the option of the replacement for the diesel generators at the Whitehorse Rapids power facility was something that was brought forward by the board of the Yukon Development Corporation as well as the board of the Yukon Energy Corporation. They felt that natural gas had emerged as the best replacement option for the 46-year-old diesel engines in Whitehorse and they made the business case to my caucus and Cabinet colleagues and we, at that time, determined to move ahead with the project.

Of course, the project is currently working its way through the Yukon Utilities Board process as well as the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Board and the oil and gas licensing processes. There are still some public opportunities that need to be exhausted, but should those public processes prove the viability of this project, we look forward those natural gas generators in place this winter.

Mr. Silver: I do appreciate the minister's answer, but we are talking about the timeline. I'll move on.

Mr. Speaker, the government has proposed a new \$34-million LNG facility to backup power. The government has told the public that this new facility will, in the long run, save Yukoners money. Total diesel consumption from the past 12 months has provided only 1.7 gigawatt hours of energy, which accounts for about 0.39 percent of the total energy consumption — hydro and diesel power combined. Since the LNG facility is slated to be used as a backup only, or a replacement for diesel — as a previous minister told this House — it is a very expensive backup system — \$34 million for less than half of one percent of our needs.

How many years will it take to recover the capital costs of this very expensive backup plan?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As the member opposite mentioned, the cost estimates are in the \$34- to \$35-million range. What this is doing — it is the replacement of the 46-year-old diesel generators with 8.8 megawatts of natural gas generators, along with the ancillary infrastructures such as LNG truck off-loading, storage and vaporization facilities.

To be clear, this option was brought forward to us by the boards of the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation for us to consider as an option to replace those diesel generators. The Premier and I, along with others, had the opportunity to tour the Whitehorse Rapids facility and got a look at some of the aging infrastructure in there, and I can assure members that it is certainly in need of replacement and we are excited to see this project go forward.

As mentioned, it is in the YESAA process as well as the Yukon Utilities Board process, and we look forward to hearing the results of both of those public processes.

Mr. Silver: If the minister believes that the corporations would be better suited to answer these questions, we would love to have them sit here this session as witnesses.

We have heard time and time again from this government and the Yukon Energy Corporation that ratepayers will not be subject to increased utility costs if the proposed LNG facilities are to be put in place. This project is currently seeking public comment in the YESAA process and is far from being finalized. Without finalization of the project, let alone approval from the YESA Board, I cannot see any guarantee in these statements.

Can the minister guarantee no increased costs to ratepayers if the proposed LNG facility is to be approved?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The processes that the member opposite speaks about — what that project is going through, such as the YESAA process and the Yukon Utilities Board process — will provide direction on whether or not the environmental and socio-economic aspects can be mitigated, as well as options through the Yukon Utilities Board process for the economics of this project.

I did have officials from the Development Corporation and the Energy Corporation in last fall. My predecessor — the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources — also had those officials in last spring to answer the questions that the member opposite posed. Perhaps it's an opportunity for us to go back in Hansard and take a look at the questions posed by the member opposite during the time that those officials were here. I wasn't planning on bringing those officials into the House this spring. There is a lot of important business before the House, such as a record budget and several important pieces of legislation. Rather than bringing in officials every sitting, we'll be looking to bring those officials back into the House this fall.

Question re: Civic addressing

Mr. Barr: I'm glad to see that this government is finally making some progress to provide 911 services to the communities after ignoring their requests for several years. It is a big step forward. However, emergency response to 911 calls requires something that has not yet been implemented throughout the Yukon, and that is civic addressing. 911 improvements will be of little use if the fire, ambulance or police response cannot find the household that has made an emergency call.

My question is simple. How much of this year's budget is allocated to civic addressing for rural Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In fact, we are working right now with local advisory councils — including two within the member's own riding — on civic addressing needs.

The actual dollar amounts to deal with this are not that large. It primarily requires main road signage, et cetera, but one of the key elements in the starting point is working with LACs to hear from them to glean local knowledge about roads, which may not be registered on the highway system. I know that the work is ongoing. I believe it was last week that I, along with the director of Community Affairs, was sitting

with the Ibex LAC talking to them about moving forward with civic addressing.

As the member should be aware, both the Tagish and Mount Lorne local advisory councils have been very much involved in advancing civic addressing in those areas.

Mr. Barr: Yes, I am well aware of the pilot project that is ongoing in Tagish. I appreciate the fact that it is helpful to have a template for implementation throughout Yukon. The road signs in Mount Lorne will also be helpful in moving this forward. However, everyone agrees that a civic addressing system is necessary to ensure that the safety of Yukoners is met. The results of these projects will not change the fact that this system needs to be promptly established Yukon-wide.

This is about public safety, Mr. Speaker. Yukoners have waited long enough. Yukoners are looking for a firm commitment from this government to have civic addressing completed territory-wide.

When will a civic addressing system be in place across all Yukon communities?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I'm not quite sure what the member is missing here. Again, we are working with local advisory councils on implementing civic addressing in those communities. Staff of Community Services have worked with them on understanding their perspective on the community's needs and their perspective on the community's need for signage. That also includes asking them to identify where there are roads that may not be on the official highway system.

As the member should know, if you drive around in much of rural Yukon, including parts of his riding and parts of my riding, there are some places where roads leave in some unusual places or leave off someone else's driveway. It's important, before we implement a signage system, that staff understand the community's perspective on what the needs are and make sure we're not missing anything in implementing the system.

We are very much committed to working with local advisory councils on implementing civic addressing there. We're also committed to going beyond the LACs where those steps are initially taken to address other rural areas of Yukon to ensure that appropriate civic addressing is in place.

Mr. Barr: This is not a complicated issue. Everyone agrees that civic addressing is an important safety issue. This government has dragged its feet for years. I'm doing my very best to ask straightforward questions to the minister, but I don't seem to be getting straightforward answers, so I'll try again.

How much money in this year's budget is allocated to civic addressing? That's the one question. When will civic addressing be implemented across all Yukon communities? The minister's answer should be a dollar figure and a date — it's that simple.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: My answer will begin with: I would encourage the member to actually do his homework and pay attention to what is actually being done with local advisory councils.

That should be reflected in a number of cases through newsletters from LACs, through their minutes, et cetera, and communication they provided to their communities. What the member is failing to understand, or perhaps what his speech writer is failing to understand, is the fact that it is not a simple cookie-cutter solution to provide civic addressing for Yukon communities. Within the member's riding, within my own riding and within other areas of the Yukon, there are areas where people have driveways leaving from unusual locations, leaving off of neighbours' roads and so on and so forth, and it's appropriate that we understand that before we implement civic addressing.

I see once again that the Leader of the NDP has no interest in the importance of this topic and is once again doing her frequent heckling.

Mr. Speaker, we very much appreciate this. We're very committed to working with local advisory councils, and that's exactly what we're doing and we look forward to completing the civic addressing system, but one that is tailored to meet the needs of Yukon communities.

Question re: First Nations health care, federal funding

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, First Nation health outcomes fall far short compared to the rest of Canadian populations. This well-known truth is long-standing, sad and unnecessary.

In 2010, the Council of Yukon First Nations issued two reports — one was a community health scan, and the second was actually called improving access to health care services for Yukon First Nations.

The minister is aware that the *Canada Health Act* requires governments to ensure universal access, comprehensive coverage and access to services without extra charge or discrimination.

Does the government have an accurate assessment of the differences in access to health care services experienced by Yukon First Nation people compared to the rest of Yukon's population?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, all of the services available to Yukon residents are available to Yukon First Nation residents as well. Participation in the health services system in the territory is not determined by gender, race or anything else. Participation in the system is available if you are a Yukon resident. If the member opposite is talking about the differences between the NIHB or the Yukon health care system, then no, I haven't done a comparison lately to find out, but what we are doing is we have a commitment to enhance our relationship with First Nations across the territory to develop better systems collaboratively with them which enhance the culturally relevant parts of the health system. We can talk about alcohol and drug care, where we're enhancing the culturally relevant parts of that, but we're also participating in a recently developed health table that includes Yukon First Nations, federal and territorial representation to provide a forum for the Council of Yukon First Nations and other First Nations to bring forward policy matters that affect First Nation people.

Speaker: The member's time has elapsed.

Ms. Stick: In fact, I am talking about NIHB or non-insured health benefits for First Nations. Navigating services is one of the five main barriers to accessing care. We've read that in reports. Yukon First Nation people must deal with two bureaucracies, the Yukon and the federal government's non-insured health benefits. From casework we've shared with the minister, he knows perfectly well that Yukon First Nation citizens have been denied medically necessary equipment and they have no right to appeal and no way to access that.

First Nation citizens have been denied medically necessary equipment and they have no right to appeal and no way to access that. So far, we have not had a response from the government as how to fix this.

When and how will this government work with the federal government to make changes to improve and give First Nation citizens equal access to the needed care and services they deserve?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I believe that the member opposite answered her own question there. Non-insured health benefits are a federal responsibility. We have — as I said — recently established the health table with First Nation, federal and territorial representatives there, to address some of the very issues she is speaking about. Where possible, even though it is not within this government's mandate, we have gone beyond our mandate to supply medical equipment to members of First Nations, where we felt that it was absolutely essential to their better health care.

But, the simple fact of the matter is that non-insured health benefits are a federal responsibility. Where possible, we will try to have an impact on the federal government to ensure that First Nation individuals receive the exact care or better care than everyone else. We will continue to do that.

Question re: Alaska Highway corridor functional plan

Ms. Moorcroft: Over a year ago, I asked the Minister of Highways and Public Works about the Alaska Highway corridor functional plan between the Mayo Road and Carcross Road cut-offs. He said — and I quote: "We will be doing the same thing that we are doing with the member opposite for Lake Laberge; we are upgrading the Takhini Road."

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Takhini Hotsprings Road functional plan began in 2005 and was completed in 2011. Throughout this process, Yukon residents were given the opportunity for consultation.

I would like to thank all of those who work to maintain our highways and I would like to ask the minister to answer my question. Can the minister tell us how far along the department is in the planning process and when will Yukon residents and businesses be given the opportunity to voice their ideas and concerns about improving Alaska Highway safety and access in this corridor?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I would concur with the member opposite, our staff here does a good job out there right now. With spring coming, I understand there are a few

small washouts and issues and the boys and girls are hard at work.

When it comes to the Whitehorse corridor project, it is developed on the Alaska Highway through from kilometres 1401 to 1441. We did an upfront consultation with the City of Whitehorse, the First Nation and the immediate businesses along the way. I spoke with a couple of the businesses the other day who had been interviewed — that is finished now. The department is working the next steps forward where we will go to do broader consultation with user groups and with residents in all the different subdivisions. So it is ongoing and a work in progress.

Ms. Moorcroft: It is apparent to me and many others that the Alaska Highway corridor cannot keep up with the level of traffic that it is now experiencing. Turning on and off the highway is a major concern. Many of the intersections, access points and turnoffs along this corridor are inconvenient, inefficient and just plain dangerous. Some have been the sites of serious or fatal accidents.

The Alaska Highway corridor is Yukon's commercial and transportation hub. The lack of adequate access points and intersections not only endangers the travelling public, it also hurts small businesses and industrial subdivisions along the corridor.

What is the minister doing to improve the access and intersections for the subdivisions and businesses along the Alaska Highway corridor?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It sounds like the member opposite has actually answered her own question. We're doing functional planning. I spoke to it in the first response.

Ms. Moorcroft: This minister has not provided any information about what is actually being done or what progress is being made in developing a functional plan for the Alaska Highway corridor. Along this corridor, there's currently an unofficial motorized and non-motorized recreational trail. Dirt bikers, walkers, cyclists, skidoos and dog walkers are just some of the groups that currently share the trail. The mix between motorized and non-motorized use presents a safety issue for all those who enjoy those trails.

The Takhini Hot Springs Road functional plan, which the minister referred to as a template, recommended the development of a recreational trail for non-motorized use on the south side of the road. Is the government planning on building a pedestrian recreational trail alongside the Alaska Highway corridor, as it has done for the Takhini Hot Springs Road?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: As I said before, we're doing functional planning. We did initial engagement with the City of Whitehorse, the local First Nations and the businesses and/or residents right along the highway who are affected. Public engagement, like the member opposite — I can't understand sometimes. I try to answer the question, but I'm getting asked 14 questions from across the way at the same time.

Public engagement on the functional plan is expected to occur this summer through to this fall. As we know, consultation with the good people of the Yukon who are out

either enjoying the Yukon or working to provide food for their families, are busy in the summertime. So we'll work on meeting with the local community groups and the local residents in the areas — in the subdivisions — throughout the summer and throughout the fall. When we get information back or are ready to bring this forward and make it public, we will.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

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

Mr. Silver: I would like to ask the indulgence of my colleagues to help me in welcoming to the gallery today a wonderful addition to the Klondike, principal of Robert Service School, Ann Moore, and from the board of the Dawson City Arts Society, her husband Mark.

Applause

Speaker: We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 649

Clerk: Motion No. 649, standing in the name of Mr. Elias.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to move forward with plans to host an alternate event in Whitehorse featuring the Arctic Winter Games sports that have been left out of the 2016 Arctic Winter Games, including seeking firm commitments from other partner jurisdictions to participate in the 2016 alternate event.

Mr. Elias: We are here today to discuss this important motion because there has been a public outcry in our territory to the Arctic Winter Games International Committee's announcement in the fall of 2012 that five sports and one category of hockey have been eliminated from the sport program of the Arctic Winter Games to be hosted in Greenland in 2016.

These include midget hockey, curling, dogmushing, figure skating, gymnastics and speed skating. The sport organizations affected by the dropped sports programs asked the government to represent their interests and concerns to the Arctic Winter Games International Committee with a view to finding a solution that will be inclusive of all the Arctic Winter Games sports in the 2016 program.

Since that announcement by the Arctic Winter Games International Committee, much has been done to remedy the situation, including participating governments deciding to explore hosting an alternate event for the eliminated sports.

This would be hosted in Whitehorse, Yukon. Currently, that alternate event will not be associated with the 2016 Arctic Winter Games. However, responsible ministers are still looking at options to make the games inclusive of these excluded sports.

It's an honour for me to bring this motion for action to the floor of the Assembly. This motion represents our high regard for the entire sport and culture community in our territory. It also indicates the government's total commitment to the promotion and development of sport and recreation among all Yukoners. The inclusion of at least the six sports into an alternate sporting games matters to me and I know that it also matters to thousands of our territory's citizens. This commitment is derived from our knowledge that sport and recreation serve to build our territory and are an essential part of our effort to improve the quality of life for all Yukoners.

The vision is this: to provide a multi-sport event for the six sports eliminated from the 2016 Arctic Winter Games that are participant-centred, sport-driven, community-supported and inspire exceptional experiences through the participation in sport.

Because the 2016 Arctic Winter Games hosted in Greenland will not be able to accommodate all sports, and in order to accommodate those sports eliminated from the 2016 Arctic Winter Games and possibly provide opportunities for other sports or jurisdictions to become involved, including but not limited to Alaska, Alberta, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, and with approximately 651 athletes participating plus the possibility of including the sports of peewee hockey, archery, shooting, judo and freestyle skiing, Yukon is proposing to host the Arctic X games in Whitehorse from March 5 to 12 in 2016 to coincide with the 2016 Arctic Winter Games in Greenland.

Yukoners obviously have the will and capability and I encourage all members in this Assembly to show Yukoners they can and will do it. I am confident that, as we continue to invest and strive toward excellence in sport and culture, we will continue to be a territory to be reckoned with at national and international sporting events.

I take this opportunity today to recognize and pay tribute to those talented men and women of sport and culture for being highly motivated, skilled and well-trained. To all the coaches and athletes who recently competed in the Arctic Winter Games in Fairbanks, Alaska, we thank you for representing our territory to the best of your abilities and for making us proud to be Yukoners.

To many Yukoners, the athletes are heroes who have brought glory to us simply by their participation in the games. I believe that our sport and culturally talented men and women must see themselves as we see them — as a crucial component of our narrative of territorial progress. Their commitment to excellence in their respective sports and cultural experiences and the maintenance of high standards serve as a reminder to all Yukoners to work hard, to persevere, and to strive to excel in all aspects of life.

Sport and recreation activity is a lifelong experience and one that our children should be involved with early in their

lives. In recent times, many young people have abandoned physical sports in favour of electronic games that are typically played while sitting. It is no secret that this trend is having a decidedly negative impact on the physical health of our young people. Childhood obesity is on the increase at an alarming rate. Coupled with poor snacking habits and the lack of regular exercise, many of our young people are establishing lifestyle habits that may have serious impacts as they grow older.

This is not a localized situation. It is widespread across Canada and other parts of the western world. Some have referred to it as a problem of epidemic proportions. Every jurisdiction in our nation is seeking innovative ways to get young people off the couch and engaged in some form of physical activity. Youth develop mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being by participating in recreational activities, because it builds on the feeling of accomplishment and being successful.

Providing these opportunities for youth and all community members to participate in creates a springboard effect that leads to a balanced lifestyle and high achievement in all areas. Sports and athleticism are important factors for building a healthy body and the ability to enjoy more of what life has to offer.

Mr. Speaker, many of our leaders of tomorrow get shaped and molded through participating in sports. In my opinion, the lessons we teach the youth of today will be with them for the rest of their lives, and there is no better place to teach children about the world than on the field of play.

It promotes respect for your opponent and teammates. It encourages teamwork and willingness to work with others toward a common goal. This especially rings true when I see our youth excel and strive to be the best that they can be. When they are challenged to succeed for their team, themselves, their jurisdiction, and knowing that the athletes hold that responsibility is so important to the debate today. All of these traits can be beneficial in every aspect of life, and not just in the sporting arena. I will expand on that from a personal perspective in a few minutes.

In many ways, developing positive, healthy physical habits early in life is similar to the lifelong learning approach that we often promote for developing our young minds. It is a lifelong aspect that I believe is vital to ensure continued health over the long term of one's life. Whether in victory or defeat, we all have cause to be proud of all of our Yukon sports and culture people. Investing in sport is investing in the quality of life now and in the future health of our young people. By participating in sport, young people develop healthy physical and social habits.

Regular sporting activity helps to reduce body fat, strengthen bones, improve coordination and balance, and improve stamina and concentration. Young people learn how to become team players and work with others to achieve a goal.

An active child is more likely to become an active adult, so encouraging youth to participate in sport is an important aspect of this program. I would like to take a moment to

acknowledge the many Yukoners who dedicate themselves to making sure our multitude of sporting organizations are in operation and are providing the training, coaching and sport official roles each and every year.

Government can assist through funding and building facilities for sport and recreation, and we do so proudly. It is the mothers and fathers, the coaches and trainers, the teachers and other adults who provide their time to assist these young people to better appreciate the many benefits associated with physical activity. The most important part of all is to have some fun.

They contribute a large part of their lives so that young Yukoners can enjoy theirs and make it fun. They are often a sympathetic ear that hears the challenges a young person may be experiencing. They are also the voice of encouragement that counsels them to achieve higher goals and strive harder to improve their personal best. They are the people who share in the celebration of achievement and the competition well won. They are also the ones who are there to provide encouragement and understanding when the competition results in a loss.

The Yukon is growing, and more and more Yukoners are taking their place on the podium as a result of better training and coaching. It's important to go over a bit more of the background that supports this motion and why we put it on the floor of the House today.

Speed skating, dogmushing, curling, gymnastics, figure skating and one category of hockey have been eliminated from the 2016 Arctic Winter Games in Greenland. As requested by the ministers responsible for the Arctic Winter Games, the Arctic Winter Games International Committee met in Edmonton from February 9 to 12, 2013 to review the options for the inclusion of the eliminated sports in the 2016 Arctic Winter Games program. The Arctic Winter Games International Committee also reviewed a first draft of a report commissioned by the Nunavut government that looked at the feasibility of hosting the six eliminated sports in Iqaluit instead.

The initial budget presented to host the six sports in Iqaluit was just under \$5 million. Subsequently, the Government of Nunavut provided a formal "no response" to the option of hosting all the eliminated sports in Iqaluit. Nunavut is scheduled to host a full Arctic Winter Games in 2020, which affected their decision not to host the six sports in 2016. Several other options were reviewed and discussed, none of which appeared feasible from a cost or logistics perspective.

The final options paper from ministers was discussed at a joint meeting of ministers and the Arctic Winter Games International Committee in May 2013 in Vancouver, British Columbia — a meeting that I attended with our former minister of sport and recreation. I must say, this meeting was an eye-opener for me.

Responsible ministers have established an alternate event committee to look at options for the hosting of an alternate event in 2016 for the eliminated sports. The committee has recommended to ministers that the alternate event be hosted in

Whitehorse and have provided several options for format and cost to the ministers for consideration.

The Arctic Winter Games International Committee continues to recommend that the contract with Greenland be honoured and the original decision on the format for the games in Greenland be upheld.

As you can see, there is much more work to be done.

I want to conclude my opening comments with a quotation relevant to today's debate. It is from our former minister responsible for sport, and now the Minister of Education, who said in the fall of 2012 — and I quote: "Never have we seen in the games' history a reduction of 25 percent of the sports that would impact over 400 athletes in the north. These games are an integral part of sports development of many young athletes across the circumpolar north. They are more than games. It's about providing that venue of competition for young athletes. It is effectively our northern Olympics for our circumpolar north." I can't agree more. Today I want to thank the former minister for her commitment to finding an amicable resolution to this issue then, and I thank our current minister for his tireless work and leadership in acting on a solution now, because it means so much to so many Yukoners. At this point in time, I will conclude my opening comments.

Mr. Barr: It's a pleasure for me to rise to speak to the motion brought forward today by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin to move plans forward to host an alternate event in Whitehorse, featuring the Arctic Winter Games sports that have been left out of the 2016 Arctic Winter Games.

We wholeheartedly support any endeavour that would give Yukoners, especially young Yukoners, the opportunity to participate in the sports that they have worked so hard to progress in. The events that have not been included in the 2016 Arctic Winter Games are midget hockey, speed skating, curling, figure skating, gymnastics and dogmushing. I might add that all of these have a strong Yukon contingent.

It is unfortunate that Nuuk was unable to host all the events and that an agreement could not be reached to have another location to co-host the games to provide a venue for these events.

For many of these athletes, the chance to travel with the territorial team and meet new people was just as exciting as actually participating in the events.

The games are a very special event. I have played at several events during the past games and it was always encouraging to see the excitement and energy of the young athletes. For a long time, the Arctic Winter Games have provided Yukoners with a unique opportunity to participate in a pan-northern sporting event. The Arctic Winter Games have always been a uniquely northern event. They give Yukon athletes a chance to participate in sporting events against other northerners. This is a great experience because the athletes share a more common cultural and geographical background than they might in competing against teams in the south.

It is also a great opportunity to compete against teams that are more equal in skill and experience level than they

would competing at the national level against other provinces in Canada. Because of these factors, these games are treated as a great opportunity to compete with our neighbours and showcase the talent they have worked so hard to attain.

For many young athletes, these games are a highlight of their young amateur career. I would particularly like to mention the young dogmushers, as outside of the Arctic Winter Games there are not as many opportunities for them. It is for this reason we are supporting hosting this alternate event.

Yukoners who have put in years of hard work to reach this level should not miss out on an opportunity like this. For many of these athletes, it would be their last Arctic Winter Games and it would be unfortunate for them to miss this window.

Part of the reason the Arctic Winter Games leaves such a positive impact on the young athletes who attend them is the social and cultural aspect that the games emphasize. The games have a long history of being a meeting ground where young northerners can meet and learn from each other.

I hope that this important aspect of the games is not forgotten in the planning for the alternate sporting events, as it is part of the reason the games are uniquely northern.

I would also like to say that I hope as much effort as possible is put into including all the teams that traditionally participate in the games

It is important to remember that not only Yukon's teams are missing out. This is particularly important for the provinces' teams, like northern Alberta and Nunavik, Quebec. It allows participants to represent their provinces when they might not otherwise be able to make the provincial teams.

Though the NDP supports these games, it is also important to acknowledge that this will not be an easy project. Food, lodging, local transportation, equipment and facilities are all areas where cost and logistics planning will need to occur. It will also be very important that if these alternate games are hosted here, there will need to be a strong engagement and relationship with the City of Whitehorse on the planning side. In past games, the city has played an important role in planning and executing these events. These events would tie up a lot of the city's resources and infrastructure for a period of time and the city would also likely incur some costs.

It is a pleasure to support this motion. In supporting an alternate sporting event, we do not want to lose sight of the original mission of the games, symbolized by the three interlocking rings of the Arctic Winter Games logo. Athletic competition is one of those rings, and we have spoken about that aspect at length today. In sports there are tangible rewards. There are winners and losers, but there are two other rings in the Arctic Winter Games logo — cultural exhibition and social interchange.

Cultural and social interactions are not competitions, but exchanges. There are no losers — in fact, everyone wins. In our support of this motion to host the alternate event at the exact same time as the Arctic Winter Games, we do not want to lose sight of these other values. Those other aspects of the

Arctic Winter Games are important and are also of huge benefit to our youth. Travel, exposure to international culture, making contacts across the circumpolar north — these are all opportunities for our youth and are important for our collective future. The three interlocking rings of the Arctic Winter Games logo are about being well-rounded. It is not about being either sporty or artsy. It is about including all aspects.

In 2002, Greenland hosted the Arctic Winter Games. They were the first jointly hosted games with athletes flying back and forth to Iqaluit, Nunavut. In 2012, the games' International Committee issued a press release indicating that ice hockey would be held in Iqaluit in 2016, but that contract was for hockey only, so some sports would have been left out.

There have been many meetings with the International Committee regarding the sports that Greenland cannot host. The motion before the House today is a result of those meetings. It is because there was no agreement about excluded sports that we are discussing the possibility of an alternate sporting event at the exact same time.

In our support of the alternate sporting event we want to state, we also fully support the Arctic Winter Games, especially given their emphasis on culture and international exchange. We hope the government will continue discussions about the future of the Arctic Winter Games as there are some hard questions to sort through. Does our support of an alternate sporting event put Greenland in a difficult position? Are other potential host countries in similar positions to Greenland? To put it very bluntly, are some countries simply not rich enough to host the Arctic Winter Games? What about opportunities for the youth in those countries? This government has an inclusion strategy — what about using that lens internationally?

In supporting this motion before us today we are hoping we have not lost sight of the original vision of the Arctic Winter Games, which was to bring the circumpolar world together. In 2016, how will that vision be honoured?

I also want to emphasize the values of the International Committee of the Arctic Winter Games and they include: cultural awareness and understanding, fair play, access and equity, partnerships and community development.

In my support of this motion today I also state my ongoing support for cultural exchange and for equity. I urge all members of the House to continue to work to long-term solutions for the Arctic Winter Games that honour these important underlying values.

Mr. Silver: It gives me great pleasure to stand and speak to Motion No. 649. I would like to start by thanking the member opposite for bringing it forward today. I doubt that anybody in this House will disagree with the intent of this motion. The Arctic Winter Games are an incredibly important part of the northern athletics program. They provide an opportunity for our athletes to compete with other jurisdictions that have similar resources, competition and competitive levels in a culturally accepting environment.

The 2012 and 2014 games both boasted approximately 2,000 participants and Team Yukon continues to be a top competitor. It is unfortunate that the International Committee announced last September that six sports — as the member opposite mentioned — including speed skating, figure skating, curling, gymnastics, midget hockey and dogmushing — would not be part of the Greenland games due to their limited hosting capacity and lack of facilities.

Iqaluit has stepped up and will be hosting women's and bantam hockey; however, midget will not be included. This hurts our young athletes, who have spent their earliest years training for these extremely important games. This is not the first time that Greenland has hosted the games. They also held them in 2002 and similar problems emerged back then as they do today, but innovation succeeded and the games were co-hosted with Iqaluit. Athletes were flown between the two host cities for the opening and the closing ceremonies.

A good question is: Why has a similar model not been adapted for these games? We encourage that dialogue as we continue the debate today to ensure that our athletes get to participate in the Arctic Winter Games.

Although I strongly support providing opportunities for our young athletes to compete, I would however ask that this motion be clarified a bit.

The motion states that this will be an "alternate event" featuring the excluded sports. The implication of the statement is that they won't be co-hosting the Arctic Winter Games with Greenland, nor will this alternate event be exclusive to the excluded sports. We're wondering if other sports will be included outside of the six that are listed. If there are any additional sports added to the games, will alpine events be included?

In June 2013, following a meeting with the Arctic Winter Games International Committee and representatives of the six permanent partners, the then Minister of Community Services announced that the Government of Yukon was exploring new options for a multi-sport event. A month later, the Great Northern Ski Society announced that they would be filing for bankruptcy and that the hill at Mount Sima was going to be mothballed. The local ski hill was saved in part by grassroots fundraising efforts. The Friends of Sima Society should be commended for their tireless work, and the Yukon government as well played an outstanding role in helping to pay off debts — nearly \$200,000 initially and then an additional \$70,000 in sponsorship matching. Mount Sima is an extremely important community resource and it's great to see that it has remained open for the 2013-14 year. But Mr. Speaker, as we ponder this in the Liberal caucus, I do have to ask this: Was the funding part of a plan for an additional 2016 games? Did the government agree to host these and maybe to find out later that Whitehorse might not even have a ski hill — just important considerations to discuss.

Another concern that I would like some clarity on is how these proposed games will be funded.

The 2016 alternate games will be outside the sphere of the Arctic Winter Games as it appears to us right now. Will

there be a cost-sharing model created within this? When the 2012 games were proposed in 2009, the estimated budget was outlined to be \$6.1 million. Would the firm commitments that the government is seeking also come with a financial commitment to help cover the costs for the Yukon? Once again, these are questions I hope will be answered today as we debate this extremely important motion.

Mr. Speaker, the Arctic Winter Games are an important biennial tradition for Yukon's youth. I would like to close by just saying that I thank the member opposite for presenting this motion. However, I would like to hear from the government on some of the details of the 2016 alternate games. It will be great to hear all the members speaking of the importance of physical fitness and maybe some historical references to participation in previous games. I really doubt that anybody's going to have a problem with this motion as we debate this in the House, but I would not be doing my job if we didn't also discuss the financing and the planning of such a worthwhile endeavour.

In conclusion, I would just like to say that the Liberals are absolutely supporting this motion and we look forward to continuing the dialogue.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I too would like to start off my comments here this afternoon by extending a big thanks to our MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing forth this very important motion, which speaks to the future of the Arctic Winter Games and, in particular, an alternate event that would coincide with the 2016 games coming up.

As members opposite have already alluded to, this topic of the Arctic Winter Games and its future and where we are today has certainly been the subject of much dialogue and discussion over the course of the last year — two years perhaps — in this Assembly. It certainly will not be the last discussion to be had.

As members will recall, I had the privilege of serving as the previous Minister of Community Services when the decision was made by the international committee to not proceed with all of the sports in their entirety for the 2016 games to be hosted by Nuuk, Greenland.

Going back in the history of that time, Nuuk, in Greenland, had actually co-hosted at that time with Iqaluit, in Nunavut, the opportunity to host the games in 2002. It was the first time that both jurisdictions had really hosted those games and had co-hosted them at that to facilitate the sports in their entirety. Nunavut, having just recently formed as a new territory of our nation, coupled with Nuuk, Greenland — also it's a first time hosting those particular games — certainly there were a number of challenges associated with that.

It was shortly thereafter that the international committee made a decision — and we respect that decision — to no longer co-host a games on a go-forward basis.

However, as we have come to know, when we do look out — and not just to 2016, but to 2018 and 2020 — and when you do have one jurisdiction solely shouldering the responsibility of having to host all these respective games — these traditional sports that we have come to love and come to

honour over since the games really started back in 1970 — it can be a challenge. We have seen that with Nuuk, Greenland and their contract to not be able to host all the respective games, thereby reducing the number of sports by six — approximately 25 percent of the complement of sports that we have traditionally enjoyed in the past.

That was really a significant decision. It was a decision that precipitated a lot of phone calls and a lot of e-mails and a lot of discussions at the rinks, at the Canada Games Centre, and on the street, by some very passionate individuals, parents and athletes themselves, and by territorial sport-governing bodies, especially those that are impacted by that particular decision.

At that time, we had agreed to go to work on their behalf and come together with our two sister territories — the Northwest Territories and Nunavut — to look at solutions as to how we could work with the international committee to better facilitate some solutions coming forward. That took form by way of an additional motion on the floor of the Assembly that was, ironically, brought forward by the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin at the time. I recall we had also tabled a motion that very day in support of looking at finding solutions — including those very games in the games and working with our counterparts across the circumpolar north to come up with alternate solutions.

There have been many solutions, many ideas that have been put forth — courtesy of our stakeholders — with Sport Yukon really championing this very effort — and all of the sport-governing bodies to individual coaches to individual athletes and family members. You know, I want to take the opportunity to commend them and to thank them for their heart and for their passion because, without these individuals and these governing bodies, we would not have such a robust sport and recreation system here in the territory.

I am very proud to be able to say that — as a parent to a nine-year-old boy who participates in everything from soccer to swimming to hockey and everything in between — we are indeed very blessed to have significant infrastructure that supports a very active sport and recreation system, but also within our schools and beyond.

Of course, when we look to supporting sport and recreation, it is not only great for our health, but it certainly makes the Yukon a very competitive and a very attractive place to call our home — and for our ability to be able to attract health care professionals to make the Yukon their home and other professionals. They look to the quality of life and, of course, our sport and recreation system is a very important facet of that.

The other day, as I was packing up my things in the Assembly for the day, I had a discussion with one of the pages. We got into a discussion about the future of the 2016 games and where things were at. To be very clear, there has been a lot of discussion and that is why I want to thank the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing forth this motion, because it does reconfirm our support for the Arctic Winter Games. It also reconfirms our support for ensuring that those traditional core sports that we value so much, and have come

to know as Northerners over the years since the inception of the games in 1970 — that we continue to include those sports on a go-forward basis.

This is another opportunity to reflect on all of the work that has been done. I want to thank the officials in the Department of Community Services and in particular the Sport and Recreation branch. I also want to thank Sport Yukon and I want to thank all of the sport governing bodies and, as I mentioned, all of the specific individuals who have really worked with the Government of Yukon, likewise with our counterparts across the north in the northern territories, to really go to work with Alaska, go to work with Alberta and go to work with Greenland to find where solutions lie.

When we look to hosting an alternate set of games, I am really excited about this opportunity. I think that it will glean many ideas put forth.

I know that the MLA for Klondike had made reference to skiing — we have freestyle skiing, we have snowboarding. We have many other sports that we could perhaps facilitate and include those as well, looking to other jurisdictions — those are all discussions that have yet to come. It is work in progress. Recognizing the time, we are looking at less than two years from now.

I can say that when we did pose the idea — the suggestion of being able to work with our stakeholders, which includes the City of Whitehorse absolutely — we have a great track record in terms of hosting some pretty successful games, the last one being in 2012 when it was hosted here in the City of Whitehorse. As I recall, we had some 360-some athletes participating in the games. We had about 2,000 volunteers who stepped up and made those games the success that they were.

I commend the City of Whitehorse, working in collaboration with the Yukon government and working with the international committee, to make those games a huge success. We do have a lot of experience in hosting, not only those set of games but also the Canada Winter Games in 2007. Every time that we have that opportunity — and to be clear, we've hosted many national and international events as well in many different sports across the territory due to our great infrastructure, but also our can-do attitude in terms of the capacity that we have built among individuals and organizations over the years.

As a result, I feel very confident that by working with our various partners, we will be able to come together with corporate sponsors, business sponsors and Yukon First Nations and ensure that we speak with our counterparts in Canada as well to look at various ways of partnering in terms of funding opportunities, but also in terms of ensuring that these games not only reflect the Yukon, but all of the participating countries and jurisdictions that will be participating in these games.

I'm looking forward to these discussions as we evolve, looking to 2016. There is a strong appetite to facilitate these games, looking at previous options that were put forth on the floor of the Legislative Assembly that have also come up in many discussions in all of our meetings. To be clear, there

have been a multitude of various meetings with the organizations over the past months and year-plus regarding the future of the games.

There is a huge appetite to make these alternate games doable and to make them a great success looking forward to 2018 and 2020. We also know that there is an appetite to work very closely. We're looking at both Northwest Territories and Nunavut both hosting those respective games. Having dealt first-hand with some of the logistical challenges associated with 2016, we want to ensure that we look at all the options.

Again, that means working hand-in-hand with the international committee and each of our respective governments and all the organizations to make sport continue to be inclusive and ensure the games live on for another 40-plus years in the circumpolar north.

I also just want to congratulate all our athletes who took part in the 2014 games in Alaska — they did a superb job of hosting those games — and to all our athletes, to all the great successes they were able to glean as a result of their hard work and commitment to training and developing their sport over the years; and to their coaches and their individual family members, for supporting them and supporting our sport system in the territory.

There is a lot I can say about this particular motion. I can go back into history, but perhaps I'll save that for another day. I want to thank the members who have spoken thus far in support of this motion. It is important that we do speak with a unified voice to be able to show support going forward in coming up with an alternate set of games.

It is unfortunate; we looked at other alternate venues, from Iceland to Greenland to other jurisdictions, but the way the rotations are set out, Yukon is taking a leadership role.

I commend the Yukon government. I commend the Minister of Community Services for really stepping up and recognizing the importance of the sustainability of the games. This is a really important component to ensure that, by including the remainder of these games and looking to other sports being included in this alternate set of games, we are not missing out on a generation of athletes. That was one of the sticking points put forth by individual athletes and organizations when that decision was made awhile back by the international committee.

It was very important for organizations — such as the Yukon Gymnastic Association, the Yukon Curling Association, the cross-country ski club, speed skating club, the Yukon Amateur Speed Skating Association, Whitehorse Minor Hockey Association, Yukon Amateur Hockey Association and many others — talking to the future of the games — that if we were to proceed with eliminating these specific six sports, it would be a generation gap for those particular athletes to continue on. One of the compelling arguments is that if we didn't go to work with an alternate set of games — or these games being included under the overarching umbrella of the Arctic Winter Games — we would see individuals gravitating to other sports that were included in those sports in 2016. We don't want that to be the case. We

want to ensure that each and every one of our sports remains alive and well, healthy and robust, and continues to grow.

That is why I am very honoured to be able to provide my support. I know that I want to thank and recognize the individuals who have spoken thus far, supporting the Government of Yukon to move forward with plans to host this alternate event and to also seek those commitments from our partner jurisdictions to participate in that alternate event. It will require resources. It will require volunteer support. It will require use of our infrastructure.

In the Yukon, as I have alluded to before, we have successfully hosted these games. I think there is not one of us in this Assembly who has not volunteered our time and effort in support of those games. Here is another opportunity for all of us to put on our volunteer caps, go to work and make sure that these games are a resounding success, and perhaps inspire the international committee and others to continue to play their part in ensuring that the games remain sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, seeing the time, I know that I am out of time. I would like to thank all members for their support thus far. I would like to commend our community and all the sports organizations and stakeholders, and my colleague — the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin — for speaking so passionately and eloquently over the years in support of sport and recreation and doing his part supporting our government over the years as well to ensure that the games do remain healthy and robust as they have since 1970.

Ms. Stick: I'll keep my comments short. I want to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing forward this motion. It's a good motion. I support athletics, volunteerism, sports, culture, recreation, and the social exchange that takes place at the Arctic Winter Games, and it is unfortunate that Greenland is not able to host all the sports. I just wanted to put forward a couple of cautionary notes — and suggestions, perhaps — to be considered with this motion.

First and foremost, I think that before this goes much further with regard to this happening is that the First Nations and the City of Whitehorse need to be involved in this. The member opposite mentioned that this is less than two years away. This has planning implications and budget implications for these groups, and they need to be a part of it. If we're looking at facilities, we're looking at the City of Whitehorse facilities. You're looking at a time during spring break when those facilities are booked up with other activities, whether it is hockey camps or day camps and those types of things.

The city and the First Nations around the City of Whitehorse need to be brought on to this plan sooner rather than later because it has huge implications for their staffing, for their budgetary requirements and for what happens even with revenues in terms of the facilities. I think it's a really important point — that before this goes any further, they have to be informed, be consulted and asked to come on board and, if necessary, given resources to help that.

It's great that the Arctic Winter Games has become such a success, but it has become so huge that maybe now it's time to start looking at different ways of delivering the Arctic

Winter Games and not depending on one community to carry it all.

Whitehorse is fortunate to have all of the facilities to be able to participate, or have all of the sports here. We are one of the lucky ones. Alaska has some, but the games are more and more going to the larger city centres, and less and less to the smaller communities — in terms of them being able to host and provide all of the facilities for the wide variety of indoor and outdoor sporting events as well as the cultural events. Just being able to manage that increase in population over a week or less than a week period is a big task.

Maybe people should be going back to the international committee and saying that it's time to relook at this. How can we do it differently so that all sports are included and no one feels that they can't submit a plan for part of the Arctic Winter Games in conjunction with another community hosting another piece of it? It is big, and at one time it was just Alaska, Northwest Territories and Yukon. It has expanded and that is great. It has become circumpolar and that is a wonderful thing, but it has also become very large and it is a big budget item.

There are things that could be happening to make it more sustainable as an ongoing sporting, cultural and social event for the north. We need to be looking at new and creative solutions.

I think that's the message that should be going back to the international committee: no longer is everyone able to host such an event of that size and that we need to look at better ways of doing it.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I support this motion, but I do have those cautions that we need to bring the partners onside sooner rather than later. It is less than two years and with the implications for the City of Whitehorse and for volunteers, it needs to happen now. I don't, but people do plan their spring breaks more than a year ahead to know what they're going to do. If we want people to be here and to be volunteers, we need to start on this sooner rather than later.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would like to begin by noting that this Assembly has previously discussed a similar motion on November 7, 2012. I would also note that it was passed unanimously, so it is timely that we revisit this topic. I would like to extend my thanks to the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this important motion forward.

I want to talk for a few minutes about the importance of the Arctic Winter Games, both as a powerful tool to share and to promote the culture of the north. Then I want to talk for a few minutes about the sports involved with a special focus on dogsledding. I want to draw a comparison to the Yukon Quest.

Mr. Speaker, the reality across Canada is that only a small percentage of our players will go on to become professional athletes, but we as a society continue to invest in sports and recreation because these activities teach important life skills, like the importance of preparation, competition, responsibility, teamwork, determination, resilience, and rewards. For those of us living in the north, the Arctic Winter Games in particular

teach us about our northern culture in addition to athletic accomplishments.

On the cultural side, this year, six young performing artists represented Team Yukon's cultural contingent at the Arctic Winter Games in Fairbanks, Alaska in March 2014. The Arctic Winter Games are a great opportunity for young performers to collaborate with their peers from the circumpolar north. This year's Team Yukon cultural delegation includes six talented artists. Those artists are Alita Powell, Cassandra MacDonald, Nicole Murdoch, Kara-Lyn Fredrickson, Emile St. Pierre and Kevin McLachlan, otherwise known as Koovy. These artists comprise the Yukon performing arts ensemble and they created a special performance for the games, called Aurora Connections. This piece uses a combination of breakdancing and contemporary dance to tell a story of adventure and love.

I know that the performers were very excited to be part of Team Yukon and to represent the territory, because it has shaped them into the artists they are today. They shared how they were excited to perform and collaborate with other passionate individuals from across the north, and to learn about the diverse cultures represented by the other contingents.

The Arctic Winter Games culture program is an important part of the event and includes daily performances and gala concerts, as well as cultural exchange and collaboration with artists from other contingents. The Arctic Winter Games included nine teams: Alaska; Alberta North; Northwest Territories; Nunavut; Nunavik, Quebec; Greenland; Sapmi; Yamal; and Yukon.

I would now like to talk about the sports that were involved and dogmushing is one that I think is very appropriate. One of the first stories I heard about the Yukon was the story of The Lost Patrol. I think we all heard the stories of Sam Steele mushing across Yukon to carry out his duties.

I mentioned just a moment ago that the Arctic Winter Games pulled competitors from across the north. We have a competition that I think does so much to promote the values that make the north special. In the Department of Tourism and Culture, we have been working very hard to promote the Yukon Quest. Dogmushing is one of the sports that I think would be well-served by continuing to offer opportunities to northerners — especially young northerners — to develop those skills.

Wouldn't it be great if we had a progression of races and competitions that helped develop our local mushers to compete in dogsled races like the Yukon Quest?

I want to mention some of the areas where our government is supporting this sport, because I want to show that this motion is consistent with our belief in this sport. Our government has consistently stepped forward with financial support for the Yukon Quest, which is in my mind, the most challenging dogsled race in the world. Since 1999, the Yukon government has supported the Yukon Quest Canada with more than \$2.3 million for marketing initiatives.

Each year, Tourism Yukon provides \$150,000 to Yukon Quest Canada for program development, cooperative marketing — including foreign media familiarization tours — race administration and community outreach.

Our government also provides additional support through the community development fund for website development, trail grooming, on-line interactive tools and promotional DVDs.

Tourism Yukon has incorporated the race into its winter marketing strategies aimed at Canada, the United States, Europe and Asia Pacific markets. I mention this because I want to show that dogmushing is an important part of Yukon's culture. Yukon government support helps the Yukon Quest to fulfill its mandate to make the race an iconic winter event that puts Yukon and Alaska in the spotlight by journalists, media, visitors, volunteers and tourists who follow this very important race. It's an event that showcases a unique way of life when communities relied on dogmushing to connect people across remote northern regions.

When I think about what makes Yukon special and what makes the Arctic unique, I think it's our attitude toward each other and toward nature. But dogmushing teaches more than how to get from Whitehorse to Fairbanks the fastest. It also teaches the importance of animal care, of respectful competition, of sportsmanship and community, of planning and, of course, of endurance in the face of tremendous challenges and obstacles.

The Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2013. Having worked with the dogmushing community for a while, I'm sure each of us here can appreciate the kind of determination and persistence that is needed to survive for 30 years. Teamwork shows what the human heart and the canine spirit can accomplish by working together. Dogmushing teaches the importance of partnership and of teamwork. Dogmushing also shows us a community of mushers who, even as they compete against each other, are also looking out for one another.

We have all heard of the numerous examples in this year's and previous years' races where individuals helped others in distress on the trail. This spirit of community is what makes dogmushing in general and the Yukon Quest in particular so special. It is an important life lesson that I think we should continue to promote. I think its omission from the Arctic Winter Games is unfortunate.

For Yukon and Alaska, the Quest reflects on our ongoing cross-border partnership and spirit of cooperation. Friendly rivalry exists alongside mutual respect, and our own success is tied to our neighbour's good fortune. When it comes to Yukon and Alaska, there is an old saying "geography has made us neighbours, history has made us friends." The Yukon Quest is a big part of that history. It is a value shared with the Arctic Winter Games.

At the beginning of my comments I talked about how sports in general and the Arctic Winter Games in particular were all about teaching important life lessons. Dogmushing teaches core values like focus on the mushers and their dogs. It emphasizes having a fair and safe race and about providing

outstanding canine care. It also teaches values so incredibly important to living successfully in a community, such as honesty and integrity.

It would also seem appropriate to ask ourselves why sport is important for our youth. I can tell you that physical education and sport have many impacts on young people, including an educational impact. In fact, changes can be seen in motor skill development and performance and in educational potential. This clearly shows the positive relationship between being involved in physical activities and psychosocial development.

Sport and physical education seem fundamental to the early development of children and youth, and the skills learned during engagement in recreation, physical education and sport contribute to the holistic development of our young people. Through participation in sport and physical education, young people learn about the importance of key values such as honesty, teamwork, fair play, respect for themselves and others, and they learn how to adhere to rules and boundaries. Sport also provides a forum for young people to learn how to deal with competition and how to cope with both winning as well as losing. These learning aspects highlight the impact of physical education and sport on a child's social and moral development in addition to physical skills and abilities.

In terms of physical and health aspects of child and youth development, there's an overwhelming amount of evidence that focuses on the effects of sport and exercise on physical health, growth and development.

The Yukon Party government has long been a fan and a big supporter of the Arctic Winter Games. You may recall audiences attending the 2012 Arctic Winter Games cultural events at the Yukon Arts Centre and the support that the Yukon Party government provided to share with our audiences Surface, which was an exhibit of new works acquired for the Yukon Permanent Art Collection. The artwork in the collection is an important record of the territory's evolving visual arts scene and cultural legacy for Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, Lotteries Yukon provided \$482,000 to 40 organizations for Arctic Winter Games-related projects contributing to the development of art, sport and recreation in Yukon. The Arctic Winter Games was also provided with \$134,000 to help art, sport and recreation organizations with travel expenses for 803 participants to attend events both inside and outside Yukon.

Following a decision from the Arctic Winter Games International Committee, ministers responsible for sport in Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut — along with the Lieutenant Governor of Alaska — committed in June 2013 to work together to ensure the sports eliminated from the 2016 Arctic Winter Games in Greenland will have an alternate venue.

The members of the Legislative Assembly will recall last June when more than \$876,000 in Yukon Recreation Advisory Council grants and more than \$525,000 in funding for athlete and coaching initiatives were announced under the Yukon Sport for Life, high performance and elite athlete programs. I would like to thank all of those who made that possible.

We know that some children are natural athletes, while others have less physical coordination. Sports and athletic activity are good for building confidence for both of those groups. For the well-coordinated, the discipline of honing skills gives a sense of improvement and accomplishment. Winning games and moving to higher levels of competition permit these children to sense their personal progress.

Children with less coordination need to begin involvement in less competitive sports at first, or in activities in which they can achieve improvement compared to past accomplishments or a personal best to measure their own growth. Playing at B or C levels or intermural teams at schools and community recreation centres permits them some winning experiences, and lets them know that, despite the unlikelihood of their excellence, they can, not only improve their competency, but also thoroughly enjoy the fun of sports and competition.

Many Yukon Party MLAs attended the Special Olympics banquet and fundraiser about a week and a half ago. The Special Olympics, which takes place nationally for children with special needs, is an extraordinary example of children who often have varying degrees of disabilities enjoying the benefits of athletics. The Special Olympics motto is exceptional: "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt". Special Olympics is the world's largest sports organization for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, providing year-round training and competitions to more than 4.2 million athletes in 170 countries.

I had the pleasure of attending the opening ceremonies here in Whitehorse in 2012 and again in Fairbanks last month, along with the Minister of Community Services. From their own website, it reads: "The Arctic Winter Games is a high profile circumpolar sport competition for northern and arctic athletes. The Games provide an opportunity to strengthen sport development in the participants' jurisdictions, to promote the benefits of sport, to build partnerships, and to promote culture and values. The Games celebrate sport, social exchange and cultures. The Games provide an opportunity for the developing athlete to compete in friendly competition while sharing cultural values from northern regions around the world."

Their website also speaks to the 2012 Arctic Winter Games impact study, saying that it confirms that the games continue to be a positive influence for athletes, their families and for the communities from which they come.

The goals of the Arctic Winter Games, with regard to the spirit of fair play, competition, inclusion, development and understanding of other people, are clearly being realized throughout participation within the games. The games enhance self-esteem and promote growth and personal outlooks, promote socialization and cultural awareness, promote positive experiences and personal benefits, provide health and social opportunities, promote a sense of belonging and strengthen community ties.

I could speak at great length about the positive tourism impacts that regions like Yukon or Greenland have when hosting events like the Arctic Winter Games. I could speak at

great length about the incredible volunteers that Yukon has — an essential component to making an event of this magnitude actually occur — but it's not about the tourism dollar. It's not about boasting the best volunteers. It's not necessarily about providing arts and cultural opportunities, and it's not about who has the best sporting venues or ski hills. It's about providing an opportunity for young people to play and to grow.

When I attend events like the Special Olympics banquet and the fundraiser, and I see the Premier there and half of Cabinet and Yukon Party MLAs, I know that I stand behind a political team that supports the key elements to this motion and more. More so, I stand with a team that understands how physical education and sport have solid impacts on our young people, including changes seen in motor skill development and performance, as well as in educational potential. This clearly shows the positive relationship between being involved in physical activities and psychosocial development.

In supporting the Arctic Winter Games similarly to how we support the Special Olympics — let them win, but if they cannot win, let them be brave in their attempt. Furthermore, let's stand behind them to ensure that they have the opportunity to play and to grow.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It is with great pleasure that I stand here to speak to this motion that urges the Government of Yukon to move forward with plans to host an alternate event in Whitehorse featuring the Arctic Winter Games sports that have been left out of the 2016 Arctic Winter Games, including seeking firm commitments from other partners and jurisdictions to participate in the 2016 alternate event. I do thank my fellow colleague for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this motion forward. He was correct when he said there has been some public outcry. This motion does represent the high regard for sport and culture in our community.

Just doing a little work on my iPad, I happened to pop up the Sport Yukon website and it is showing lots of pictures from figure skating from the Arctic Winter Games — there's dogmushing, and the boys and girls curling and from the Dene games — there are tons of pictures on here. When I look at the pictures of the kids and youth that are on there — the concentration on their faces as to how serious they are — the ones in the background are smiling and cheering them on. All of the great volunteers in the Yukon, whether in Alaska or wherever the event may be held, the volunteers always go out there to help.

It brings to me thoughts of when it was announced that sporting events — midget hockey, curling, dogmushing, figure skating and speed skating — wouldn't be included, the then Minister of Community Services, now the Minister of Education — the look on her face was kind of like the look on some of these athletes' faces. She was quite concerned and a little upset that they weren't going to be in there. I commend her for the hard work that she has done and that the Minister of Community Services keeps on doing here.

For us proposing to host the Arctic X games in Whitehorse from March 5-12 in 2016, to coincide with the

Arctic Winter Games in Greenland I believe is important. It is important to Yukoners, but it is also important to the athletes. They have brought so much glory to our community over the years and now some of them are coaching, but then there are other ones who are going to be looking forward to participating in the games.

I am going to concur again with some of the comments made by my fellow colleague from Vuntut Gwitchin. He said that in recent times many young people have abandoned physical sports in favour of electronic games that are typically played while sitting. It is no secret that this trend has a decidedly negative impact on health for our young people. When it comes to childhood obesity, he spoke to that, and you know, it is about developing our youth's mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

When this motion got put forward, it came to my attention — I would like to speak a little bit about rural Yukon and some of the hardships that rural Yukon has as opposed to the local residents in Whitehorse with even making an Arctic Winter Games team. One of the things I want to speak a little bit about is that a few years ago, my niece and four other girls from Haines Junction made the Arctic Winter Games team. Those girls travelled two to three times a week; they travelled after school; they took their homework with them; they worked in the vans at 40-below and in the dark. Where most Yukon residents complain about the dark and how hard everything is, these kids were on top of it; they were getting good grades in school, but they had to travel back and forth, sometimes not getting home until 12:00 or 1:00 in the morning.

I can remember the local coach — a volunteer — who was travelling and the girls would get together. They sure boosted the economy and gas sales back and forth, two to three times a week. The coach of the team would say to the rest of the team, "Why don't you guys come out to Haines Junction and play?"

They always found it quite difficult to get it all together and come out to the junction, not realizing the hardship of the rural communities, whether from Haines Junction or from Dawson. It brings to my attention the last Arctic Winter Games that were here. We had three young girls who were playing on the Arctic Winter Games team and there was a girl from Dawson playing on the team. We were watching the game with the utmost enthusiasm and cheering on our Yukon girls.

One of the fathers and all of us who were watching the game were all Canadian Rangers — I find it ironic, but it was mostly our girls who were playing. The Member for Klondike will probably appreciate this. One of my friends, whose daughter was playing, had a mohawk and he said he would get a mohawk if she made the team and support it. My fellow friend, a ranger from Haines Junction, was sitting beside him. We got a kick out of that and took a couple of pictures. At the end of the game, they did well. My friend's daughter hadn't scored a goal and she was one of the top goal scorers. She said to her dad, "Dad, if I score a hat trick, will you get a mohawk?" He said, "Absolutely," because she was in a bit of

a slump. She scored six goals. We have a picture of two guys with mohawks and they were coloured and everything. That was the spirit and intent of the Arctic Winter Games.

This year at the Arctic Winter Games, we had one of the youths from Haines Junction who has been going, I believe, four years in a row now trying with speed skating. A local young fellow there — one of my son's best friends — got a medal here at Arctic Winter Games and they travelled back and forth and back and forth.

When it comes to this, the thing that brings it to my attention is that if these five sports that were eliminated — if the opportunity is not there, there will be a generation of youth who will miss this opportunity to be on that midget hockey team or to be in speed skating or to be out there dogmushing. It will be sad.

I sure hope that bringing this motion forward and with everybody working together — I think one of the members opposite brought together the City of Whitehorse and local First Nations and everybody is partnering together on this to push as best as we can. I think it's super important that the alternate event committee look at every option that there is. I believe that working together with the alternate event committee, with members here, with Sport Yukon and the midget hockey or the curling association or the dogmushers — that they all go and put everything forward and try and work together as best as possible. I just hope that this thing can be associated. I believe the kids should get an ulu for it like they do at the Arctic Winter Games. I'm very, very happy to rise today to talk to this.

I just hope the rural perspective — and if anybody reads Hansard out there in rural Yukon, there are a few rural members here who would understand what our kids and our youth have to go through for Arctic Winter Games. I think it would be sad if that opportunity wasn't there for them. It's about our youth being in school and getting an education and getting a good education, but being able to play on a sports team and to get out there and associate with other communities and make friends — they're friends for life.

In rising today, I support this motion wholeheartedly and I look forward to any more comments. I was hoping that just about everybody from both sides would have something to say on this, because this is important. This is about the Yukon; this is about a tradition. I support this wholeheartedly.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I am pleased to rise here in support of this motion. I would like to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this motion to the floor of the House. In beginning to speak to this motion, first of all, I would like to thank each and every one who has participated in making the Arctic Winter Games the resounding success they have been for so many years. It truly is a credit to all who have participated in this that the Arctic Winter Games are an event that so many Yukoners want to participate in. The exclusion of several of the sports from the Arctic Winter Games and the very fact that it is so important to Yukoners to see those sports provided with an opportunity to compete, really is a testament to the success of everyone who has been involved in this for

so many years. I would like to again give credit to everyone who has made the Arctic Winter Games what they are today.

I would also like to congratulate and commend all our athletes who participated in the 2014 Arctic Winter Games. Yukon's athletes once again represented the territory well and they should all be very proud of their performance and their success in bringing home ulus back to the territory.

I would also like to give credit to my predecessor — the Minister of Community Services — for her excellent work on this file. The exclusion of six sports from the Arctic Winter Games in 2016 has been a topic of great concern for Yukon parents, Yukon athletes and the sports community. In carrying forward the work done by my predecessor, the Member for Whitehorse West, after assuming the responsibilities as Minister of Community Services, I have, beginning in the fall of last year, had a number of meetings and phone conversations with representatives of other governments from the partner jurisdictions, beginning with the Northwest Territories. I would like to thank Minister Robert McLeod for his support for looking at options for hosting these sports.

Most recently, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin and I participated in a meeting that we had organized — a ministerial and counterpart meeting — on the Sunday in advance of the Arctic Winter Games in Fairbanks. Yukon had set up that meeting as an opportunity for the government leaders to sit down and talk about issues related to the Arctic Winter Games, including our specific concerns with certain sports being left out of the Arctic Winter Games.

We prepared an options paper that we have shared with other jurisdictions for the possible range of sports that could be included in an alternate event. Now, as some of my colleagues spoke to, the work that has been underway in discussions between the Yukon and other governments, as well as with the Arctic Winter Games International Committee, has contemplated the possibility of several other jurisdictions that had considered the possibility of hosting alternate sports, but ultimately, through discussion over roughly the past year, the conclusion has come down to the fact that the Yukon is the only jurisdiction that is prepared to host an alternate event. With that in mind, we have shared options with other jurisdictions and received positive feedback.

Next steps in this file would include gaining firm commitments from other partner jurisdictions to participate in the 2016 alternate event, as well as determining whether the alternate event would only include the sports that were specifically excluded from the 2016 Arctic Winter Games, or whether it would include additional events.

The six sports eliminated from the Arctic Winter Games in Greenland were excluded because of lack of facilities in Nuuk and lack of sports expertise in Greenland. As well, it should be noted that the sports that are of great concern for Yukon and Yukon athletes are ones that are not typically engaged in by athletes in Greenland.

In fact, during our conversation in Fairbanks in March of this year — I would like to thank the Greenland minister for the fact that he indicated that they did not actually have any

athletes who would participate in those six sports but appreciated the importance of this to Yukon and our athletes and to other jurisdictions. He indicated that the Government of Greenland would be supportive of us looking for this type of option as well. I appreciate that indication from him and recognize that the five permanent partners, other than Greenland, that do have athletes who participate in the six sports — those being midget hockey, speed skating, curling, figure skating and gymnastics as well as dogmushing. Those events are ones for which the five permanent partners other than Greenland are interested in staging an alternate event for eliminated sports.

As several of my colleagues have noted, the ministers of sports established an alternate event committee to consider options to hosting an alternate event in 2016. As a result of that work and discussion between governments, the conclusion has come down to the fact that Yukon is prepared to host this, subject to also gaining support from the City of Whitehorse, which is a very key partner in this, and gaining support from the other jurisdictions. I would note that all to date have been positive in their feedback, but it should be noted here today that confirmation from all of those governments would be a key part of actually moving forward with a 2016 alternate event.

The Yukon government recognizes the value and importance of sport to the healthy development of our youth, and providing sport opportunities is also very important to Yukon citizens, Yukon athletes and sport development.

An alternate event would provide athletes with an international, multi-sport games environment and competition in their sport from around the circumpolar north. As one of my colleagues noted, the lack of these events being hosted in 2016 was something we heard very strongly about from the Yukon public and members of the sports community — that they were concerned about the gap in the opportunity for athletes in certain sports to potentially ever participate in an Arctic Winter Games. I do want to acknowledge and recognize the Arctic Winter Games International Committee and all the host committees that have hosted Arctic Winter Games in various cities for their success in putting together an event and an opportunity that has really become so pivotal and important to Yukon citizens.

The event would provide international multi-sport competition in sport from across the circumpolar north and would also support athletes who have trained and developed for the Arctic Winter Games so they could have the opportunity to compete at the highest level through the alternate event that has been tentatively titled the Arctic X winter games. The Yukon is the only permanent partner that is able to stage an event during that time period. Other permanent partners are engaged in large events or do not have the capacity to host for other reasons at that chosen time.

We have also been involved with Sport Yukon, which has agreed to be the lead on staging the 2016 Arctic X winter games if they are hosted in the Yukon, and the alternate events are tentatively being planned for March 5 to 12, 2016 for the eliminated sports. We have had contact with the City of

Whitehorse through Sport and Recreation, and Sport Yukon has been in contact with them to have initial discussions about providing facilities for an alternate event.

I would emphasize and note that more detailed discussions need to occur. We and the city need to have a clear understanding of whether the alternate event would be limited to the six sports or would include several of the other options that we have shared with partner jurisdictions for potential inclusion in these events.

More specifically, the options we have looked at include — option one would include only the six sports cut from the 2016 games in Greenland, those being curling, dogmushing, figure skating, gymnastics, midget hockey and speed skating. The second option that we have shared with other jurisdictions includes those six sports plus the addition of peewee hockey. The third option we have shared for discussion includes the six core sports of curling, dogmushing, figure skating, gymnastics, midget hockey and speed skating, plus peewee hockey, with the addition of archery, shooting, judo and freestyle skiing.

The fourth option that has been discussed and shared with other jurisdictions is the events included in the third option, plus considering adding additional contingents from other areas that have expressed an interest in being involved in Arctic Winter Games at some point in time. Those include northern regions of provinces that are not currently participating in the games.

At this point in time, all options have been shared with other jurisdictions. It is very important for us to get a sense of the preference of those jurisdictions, because their financial commitment and their commitment to send athletes is absolutely key to an alternate event even happening.

We also acknowledge and appreciate the fact that Sport Yukon, in considering the options that have been shared, has indicated their preference for option 3. Again, we appreciate that feedback. We appreciate the commitment by Sport Yukon to be responsible for the alternate event. Discussions will need to focus in a more detailed manner on costs. The next steps in this, following what I hope will be unanimous passage of the motion, will include continued engagement by Yukon, both at a departmental level and at a ministerial level, with the other permanent partners in the Arctic Winter Games to first of all seek their confirmation of participation in one of the various options.

They will also hopefully come up with a consensus or common viewpoint on which of the four options should proceed. That is a very key step in allowing Sport Yukon, the City of Whitehorse and the Yukon government to have a clear picture on what venues need to be ready, what sporting events need to be hosted and to allow individual sporting organizations for those sports to proceed with planning for participation in a 2016 event.

Again, I would like to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this motion to the floor here today. I would like to thank him and all my government caucus colleagues for their support in coming up with options for an alternate event that responds to what we've heard from Yukon

athletes, Yukon parents and the public with regard to the importance of multinational multi-sport events, such as the Arctic Winter Games. Also a key factor I should note that we have put on the table for discussion with other jurisdictions — and note that we are not the only one bringing this forward as an issue — is that, in future, Arctic Winter Games recognizes the potential there may need to be more than one venue for hosting events.

Perhaps Arctic Winter Games, where there is more than one host city, will need to become more common in the interest of ensuring that athletes in the various sports continue to have the opportunity going forward to participate in the Arctic Winter Games, to compete for ulus and bring them home to their respective jurisdictions.

Again Mr. Speaker, in concluding my comments, I would like to once again thank and acknowledge the work of my predecessor of Community Services for her excellent work and many hours spent on this file. I would like to also thank the other permanent partner jurisdictions for their indication of very positive consideration being given to participating in an alternate event. In fact, all have given support in principle for having an alternate event being hosted by the Yukon.

I would like to acknowledge the work and thank the staff of the Department of Community Services for their work on this file and thank Sport Yukon and members of the Yukon sporting organizations, who brought this issue forward to us, for their commitment to Yukon youth, Yukon athletes and Yukon sport development.

Ms. McLeod: I want to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this motion forward for discussion today. Of course I will be voting in favour of the motion. The opportunity for our youth to get together in competition is invaluable in preparing our young people for growth and maturity. We've heard a lot today about the personal growth of the young athletes, and this can never be overstated.

I can echo the statements from the Member for Kluane around issues of rural participation. I know that it seems a monumental task for parents, athletes and coaches to make that frequent trip in for practice sessions, but they do it. Our hats are off to them.

Well, it does sound like we'll all be supporting this motion, and for that I want to thank everyone for helping to move this initiative forward.

Mr. Hassard: It's a pleasure to rise today to speak on behalf of this motion that was brought forward by the member from Old Crow.

The first Arctic Winter Games was back in 1970 when they consisted of 10 sports. By 2012, we were up to 19 sports. If we look at 2016 and see the cancellation of five sports — speed skating, dogmushing, curling, gymnastics, figure skating and one category of hockey, which was midget hockey — it would be quite a blow, I think, to the Arctic Winter Games.

With the proposed X games, as we want to call them — or Arctic X games — as requested by the ministers

responsible for the Arctic Winter Games, the Arctic Winter Games International Committee met in Edmonton in February 2013 to review the options for the inclusion of these eliminated sports.

The Arctic Winter Games International Committee also reviewed a first draft of a report commissioned by the Nunavut government that looked at the feasibility of hosting the six eliminated sports in Iqaluit instead, and unfortunately the initial budget presented to host these sports was close to \$5 million. Therefore, the Government of Nunavut decided that, no, that would not be an option, and since Nunavut is scheduled to host a full Arctic Winter Games in 2020, it definitely affected their decision not to host these six sports in 2016.

Several options were reviewed and discussed, none of which appeared feasible from a cost or logistics perspective, and a final options paper for ministers was discussed at a joint meeting of ministers and the Arctic Winter Games council in May 2013. Ministers then established an alternate event committee, and this committee was to look at options for hosting an alternate event for 2016 for those sports that were to be eliminated. The committee has recommended to ministers that an alternate event be hosted in Whitehorse and have provided several options for format and cost to the ministers for consideration.

The Arctic Winter Games International Committee continues to recommend that the contract with Greenland be honoured and the original decision on the format of the games in Greenland be upheld.

The loss of midget hockey as well as these five other sports that I mentioned earlier would see approximately 350 young Yukoners excluded from the games. That's 350 in the Yukon alone. There are probably 350 from Alaska and 300 from Nunavut, and on and on. That's a lot of young people who would be excluded from having the opportunity to participate in these games.

The proposal for the Arctic X games would be to provide a multi-sport event for the sports eliminated and to create these 2016 Arctic X games that would be centred as sport-driven, community supported and inspire exceptional experiences through participation in sport.

Because the host, Greenland, would not be able to accommodate all sports, the proposal is to host the games in Whitehorse between March 5 and March 12, which would coincide with the Arctic Winter Games in Greenland.

The host committee would be established by Sport Yukon and comprise sport and non-sport volunteers and would be responsible for the overall organization of the games. The host committee would be responsible for accommodation, food, transportation and all other items that are not associated with the running of a sport competition. The host committee would have administrative and financial reporting support from Sport Yukon.

This would be sport-driven games. Each sport in the Arctic X games will host their own event with support by the host committee. The sports will be responsible for volunteers,

officials, scheduling, awarding of medals and all items related to running their sport competition.

With this alternate event happening simultaneously with the Arctic Winter Games in Greenland, it may allow for participating contingents to use the backhaul of flights to Greenland for transportation to Whitehorse for the alternate event. This would be a cost-saving for contingents sending teams to the Arctic X games and the Arctic Winter Games.

The ceremonies would be comprised of a low-key opening and closing. They would not require substantial resources or organization, but would be an opportunity to bring the athletes together to start the games and end them in an appropriate and fun way. Sports may also choose to have their own sport opening and closing ceremonies at the start and end of competition.

As well, there would be a very low-key VIP program during the alternate event to recognize team VIPs and any sponsors or governments that would be involved.

Accommodations would likely be provided at schools or similar venues. Athletes would be supported by their contingents in the same way that other Arctic Winter Games athletes are supported — with team dress, pins, coaching and mission staff, et cetera.

These games are very important to the youth of Yukon, in many ways. From promoting sport as a healthy lifestyle, to the opportunity just to have our youth be able to travel and meet other youngsters, many of them with the same ideas and morals. It is quite an incredible experience.

As a person who has grown up in rural Yukon, I think this is even more important. As the Member for Klwane talked about his niece and other youth travelling, and the hours travelling back and forth to Whitehorse, and then getting to go off and play in these games and meet other kids — it is a pretty big deal.

In closing, I would just like to again thank the member from Old Crow for bringing this motion forward today. I look forward to hearing what others have to say and seeing this motion go to vote.

Ms. Moorcroft: I am pleased to rise today in support of the motion brought forward by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin to move forward with plans to host an alternate event in Whitehorse, featuring the Arctic Winter Games sports that have been left out of the 2016 Arctic Winter Games. The motion also refers to seeking commitments from other partner jurisdictions to participate in the 2016 alternate event.

The events that are not included in the 2016 Arctic Winter Games in Nuuk, Greenland are midget hockey, speed skating, curling, figure skating, gymnastics and dogmushing. All of these sports have a strong number of Yukon youth participating in them and we are supporting this motion because we want to see this opportunity provided, not only to Yukon athletes, but to all of the athletes who participate in the Arctic Winter Games.

As my colleague, the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, spoke about, the athletic competition is one component of the Arctic Winter Games. Cultural exhibition and social

interchange are the other two rings of the Arctic Winter Games — and it has a symbol of the three interlocking rings. I want to urge the government in its involvement with the plans for the alternate event to ensure that the emphasis on cultural and international and social exchange is integrated into the event.

Like many other members of this Assembly I am sure, I have participated in the Arctic Winter Games as a volunteer, as a spectator, and a supporter. As my colleague, the Member for Riverdale South mentioned, the Arctic Winter Games occurs during spring break, so the people who are working on preparations need to bear that in mind. There is a lot of work to be done with the City of Whitehorse, Sport Yukon, other partners and community groups before the winter of 2016.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will again indicate my support and the support of all members of the Official Opposition for the motion brought forward by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I too wanted to rise today in support of the motion brought forward by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin and to look at the possibility of hosting the events as described that will not be able to be a part of the Arctic Winter Games hosted in Greenland. Those are the sports of midget hockey, speedskating, curling, figure skating, gymnastics and dogmushing — which was eliminated because of the animal quarantine regulations across international borders.

There are many, many youth — and now adults in this community — who benefited from the ability to compete in the Arctic Winter Games.

When I say “compete,” I mean with the Dene sports — with the traditional sports that many people are familiar with — but also with the cultural aspect of these games.

Having been a very limited athlete in my younger days and certainly living through my kids as well, I know that anyone who is involved in athletics doesn't mind putting in the hard work and doing the training that is involved. Everybody likes to play or race or do whatever the sport is and have that opportunity to not only see how you stand up against your peers, but how you continue to better yourself and improve.

Certainly, from a lot of experience in the sport of swimming, I know it's not necessarily — when kids, especially at the lower levels that aren't as competitive to see how they race and how they stand up against their peers, but how much time did they take off their best time before and really showing that measurement of improvement.

This has been a wonderful opportunity, a gathering of circumpolar nations to get together and give these young athletes a really memorable experience. I know my son is the proud owner of a gold ulu from hockey. They won in the games that were hosted in Soldotna, Alaska a few years ago. Not only was that a great experience for my son and his teammates, but certainly all those parents, including us, who went to Soldotna and had a wonderful time, not only cheering on the hockey but going to many other venues and yelling and

screaming and supporting Yukon athletes to do their best was significant and memorable for all of us.

I think that supporting these additional sports to come here — not only does it produce the opportunity for these athletes who would otherwise not be able to participate in 2016, but there is also a benefit to this community. There's a benefit economically as we have athletes, coaches and volunteers — everybody coming into Whitehorse to be involved. But there is also, of course, a tourism potential that's generated any time you have people who come here, even if it's briefly for a few days or a week. Yukon hospitality will ensure that many of those people, because of the great experience they have, will want to come back again. I think all of us have experienced where people who have come here want to plan another, longer trip to be able to experience a greater breadth of Yukon hospitality, Yukon arts and culture and the environmental beauty that we have.

I want to take a moment, Mr. Speaker, to recognize all of the work that has gone into this from the previous minister responsible for Community Services, who is now the Minister of Education and also the current Minister of Community Services, for the great work, diligence and leadership that came from this Yukon government in being proactive on this and ensuring that we breathe life into the opportunity to ensure that those athletes in 2016 will have that opportunity.

There is always risk. If you miss one cycle, which really means that that sport would be gone from the games for four years — that there is risk that momentum is lost, and perhaps we would lose those sports in the longer term, for subsequent games as well. I think for many, many reasons, this motion and working to get the other jurisdictions to support it is very important. I think that the fact that this community has the ability to do it — we have the facilities in place, and we have the great breadth of volunteers who, I'm confident, would be willing to step up and participate. Certainly we know that there would be great support from those people who are actively involved in those sports right now. I also am confident that we would see all the other support staff needed to facilitate come forward.

I would also like to just briefly acknowledge all those people over at Sport Yukon for the work they continue to do to ensure that each one of these games that we host — or we sent our athletes out to — have the best possible experience and the most seamless transition for these athletes, which gives them the best chance to succeed. I always tell my children, when they are competing, that you can't worry about the things you can't control. If you are heading to the swimming pool for a meet and you're stuck in a traffic jam, there is no sense getting panicked about that. You can only worry about the things that you can control. I think that when we have the great organizations that we do have — that make sure that, by the time these athletes are on the ground, whether they're in Greenland or in Iqaluit or Whitehorse or Fairbanks or Soldotna, things are seamless and the kids can focus on what the task is at hand, and that is delivering their best performances. That's really what we ask from all of those athletes.

I think recognition of not only Sport Yukon — but to recognize all those countless hours that the coaches put in, the volunteers for all of these sports, for the sport governing bodies, for the sports themselves — and also acknowledge the parents because, without the commitment from parents to allow their kids these opportunities — I feel very strongly that things such as sport build character that is a foundation and helps build that foundation for who we are as people. We use some of that stuff that we learn through sports — dedication and commitment, whether it's sports, music or performing arts. When you have to work hard to be successful at something, it means you need to be able to prioritize. When you have more things on your plate and you have your homework to do and maybe you have a part-time job, you need to be able to be focused and you need to be able to prioritize your tasks. These are all traits that will benefit young individuals as they move into their adult years.

I would also like to take a moment to recognize and thank Gerry Thick. Gerry Thick has been the Yukon's long-standing member on the Arctic Winter Games International Committee for many years. As I think you are aware, Mr. Speaker, he has announced that he will soon be retiring from that position. It is his insight and foresight that certainly have helped lead the Arctic Winter Games through its evolution and through the many years of success that it has had.

I would just like to point out that there currently is an advertisement that is running as we begin the recruitment process to find somebody who would be willing to take up this position. The ad starts with, "Love the Arctic Winter Games? Apply to represent Yukon on the Arctic Winter Games International Committee. The successful applicant will perform various tasks, including attending the games every two years and at least four meetings per year." This is a volunteer position and the travel and associated costs are covered. It is a four-year term and it says that the application deadline is 5:00 p.m. on May 9, 2014. There is contact information there. I would encourage anyone listening or reading Hansard later that, if you have a passion for sports and if you have a passion for the Arctic Winter Games, you put your name forward for this important and very worthy position.

I want to thank everyone who has risen today in support of this motion on both sides of the house, and again I would like to thank and congratulate the member from Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this motion forward today.

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

Mr. Elias: I want to thank each member of the Assembly who rose to speak today on this motion for their articulation and their eloquent words in support of this important motion, as it lends support to our minister responsible for sport to go to work, basically, because there is a lot of work to accomplish.

Growing children need inspiration and physical stimulation, and sport is a great way to provide such things.

Parents can teach their children to persevere, to look adversity in the eye and smile right back, to fight the good fight and never give up, but those are lessons that really cannot be learned until they are put into practice. Sports give children the chance to work hard and achieve their goals.

Hundreds of potential athletes want to be able to achieve their goals through the sports they love to play and represent in the proposed Arctic X games in 2016.

I was looking at past photos of the Arctic Winter Games when my fellow colleagues in the Assembly were speaking, and I came across a picture of me in the 2000 Arctic Winter Games here in Whitehorse at Yukon College. I was participating in the Dene Games. I ended up making it to the final in what I consider one of the most painful sports in the Arctic Winter Games, which is the finger pull. In that sport, you lock middle fingers with your opponent and you are either on the defensive or offensive, and you try to pull each other's finger straight. At that time, in the final, the fellow from Alaska, who was twice the size of me, and I were sitting in the middle of the gymnasium and the referees hushed the crowd so there was silence in the crowd.

My nephew Dustin, at the time, was five years old — and it just so happens that one of my friends had a carpentry accident and severed his index finger right in half and it was bandaged up and so-and-so. He was sitting right beside Dustin and — I won't say any names but I texted him and told him to listen to the radio — so anyway, he was sitting beside my nephew and I'm in the middle and they hush the crowd and we're ready to pull for the gold medal in the finger-pull event and my friend looks over to my nephew and says, "Look what happened the last time I finger-pulled your uncle." Anyway, my little five year old nephew just started to shake and right in the middle of the finger-pull event, he yells out right in the gymnasium at the Yukon College, "Come on uncle, pull his finger off." That's one of the stories of the Arctic Winter Games. I actually ended up losing. I got silver.

I've told many stories over the years about Yukoners participating in the Arctic Winter Games. I was thinking last night of how I could close off this debate and what I could say that was different and valuable to today's debate. If I can speak for a moment about playing the game of hockey and what participating and coaching in that sport has taught me over the years, and about the valuable lessons that translate into my everyday life, I'll share some of those with you today.

Mr. Speaker, my first experience in the Arctic Winter Games was in 1986, I believe, in peewee hockey. I ended up being on the gold medal team for Yukon. I will always remember that, because from that first participation in the Arctic Winter Games, I've held on to a lot of fond memories and I cherish some lasting friendships that still exist today.

Hockey has taught me the strength of teamwork, about how to set goals as a team and to cooperate with your teammates to achieve those goals. In my early years in minor hockey, the game helped me with my emotional and social development and hockey helped me deal with almost anyone I encountered in life, no matter what shape or stage they were in their life.

It has taught me about dealing with pressure — for instance, the pressure of having your own teammates count on you to succeed and to do your job. That kind of pressure alone teaches responsibility and I learned that at an early stage. Hockey taught me not to be afraid; to accept and to take on challenges; to look at those challenges right in the eye because you have experienced that pressure before. I didn't really realize it at the time, obviously, Mr. Speaker, but hockey has helped me do my job as a politician and serve the people I represent.

Hockey has taught me that each and every one of us on our team has something to offer. In hockey, it is very rare that one person can be the whirlwind star and can perform every task well. Therefore, a strategy is required to reach the goals and everyone has a role to play, whether it's our captain, the Premier, or our assistant captains, the ministers of Education and Community Services leading the charge or yourself, Mr. Speaker — the referee. The same holds true in life. I don't have all the answers in this Legislature and I've never pretended to. I've looked to other MLAs to help me find those answers to achieve my goals, my constituents' goals and some of the concerns of Yukoners over the years in this Assembly.

Hockey has taught me that practice makes perfect. In my world, I see the results that come from preparation and repeating certain skills or speeches over and over again in order to try to perfect them. That has resulted in a checkmark in the "win" column many, many times over the years. For me, practice has helped me develop a more positive self-image of myself through personal achievement because I've learned through hockey that if I spend enough time practising something, I'm going to be very good at it. When you want to achieve something in life, the practice-makes-perfect life lesson translates into success in almost anything you want to achieve.

Obviously coaches have a crucial role in nurturing the achievement of a specific goal, whether it's on the power play or the penalty kill, implementing a specific system or being able to adjust to your opponent's strength and weaknesses. In that, I've learned to be able to adapt quickly to situations as they evolve. I've also learned that my coach's constructive feedback doesn't mean failure. I've had the privilege of having some very good coaches in hockey and in life. They knew how to offer constructive feedback in an uplifting way — and sometimes in an affirmative way — but in a respectful way to each of my teammates so that we would respond and be successful.

I'll tell you a quick story about when I used to travel to Alaska for the Alaska State hockey championships on Christmas Eve, which we won several times — by the way — over the years. A long story short — I got totally hacked down with a slash, and I got awarded a penalty shot in a semi-final game. It was basically a "we win if I score" scenario. I did end up scoring a totally "sick" goal, as my sons would say. My coach at the time said, "I'm proud of you, Darius". But it wasn't until years later, when I had a discussion with that coach, that I realized he wasn't proud of me for scoring alone; it was because I controlled my emotions enough to focus on

the task at hand, and that I had the discipline that he had taught me not to retaliate and lose that opportunity for my team. Believe me, Mr. Speaker, I had a wee bit of a temper back then. But you know what? I've always been known for following the Hockey Canada rule book very closely, something I'm sure the Premier and Minister of Health and Social Services and others can attest to.

In my job, that skill of control and using tact and diplomacy is crucial for success, because along with it comes confidence. A day doesn't go by that my fellow Yukoners, citizens in neighbouring jurisdictions and even close friends and family, for that matter, give me feedback. Not all that feedback is constructive, by any means — especially in this new era of social media. For the most part, I control my emotions because I know it's not going to do anyone any good for me to lose it.

Through hockey, I've also learned how to deal with the agony of loss and the exhilaration of victory in my work life. I've learned to have a positive outlook on life, as much as possible, and that anything is possible as long as you're willing to work for it.

I was asked a question a couple of times now over the years: Why do you have a drawing of Wayne Gretzky outside your office? My reply was something to the effect that, to me, Mr. Gretzky represents class, leadership and hard work. That is why I have his picture outside my office for everyone to see. More importantly, it is for me to see every day, to remind me how to conduct myself in this Assembly, or wherever it may be in the world — with some class.

On another hockey note, Mr. Speaker, this year in the 2014 Yukon Native Hockey Tournament, I would be remiss if I did not mention that the Gwitchin Braves — the team from Old Crow, from ages 10 to 13 — won the youth division this year in a shootout. Congratulations to those boys and girls. Also, the other team from Old Crow — the Gwitchin Spitfires — got a silver medal. I told them that I would mention their hard work and success in the Yukon Native Hockey Tournament this year.

We also got the tournament's most valuable player award. We also got the best goaltender award for the tournament. We got the most sportsmanlike player award. Most importantly, we got the award called the team spirit award which we got for sharing our goalie with the Fort Nelson team, because their goalie got injured in the semi-final and we had two goalies. We were playing them, so we said you can use our goalie just so that you could play and you didn't have to forfeit and travel home. So that was pretty cool.

So you see, with this motion today, I think it speaks to the value of sports, whether it is hockey, curling, figure skating, speed skating, gymnastics, dogmushing, judo, archery, freestyle skiing or shooting. To me, it is also about how our children gain life lessons that help them develop into solid, productive citizens in our society by striving for success.

We as representatives of the people can come together unanimously today and show how our territory how much we value the dividends that sports produce in the short and long term.

I will conclude with a couple of quotes. The first one is from Mr. Darrell Greer, who wrote an article for the *Kivalliq News* on April 9, 2014 in Nunavut He said — and I quote: “The last thing we need in Nunavut, is to see our athletic talent pool further drained by frustrated athletes leaving sports they've become disillusioned with due to being denied the chance to compete at the AWG. Everyone needs goals to chase and dreams to pursue.” The second famous quote is from the legend Bobby Orr, and I've used this quote in the House before. He said, “Growing up, if I hadn't had sports I don't know where I would be. God only knows what street corner I would be standing on, and God only knows what I would be doing, but instead I played hockey and went to school and stayed out of trouble.”

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that our athletes, coaches, mentors, parents and the entire Team Yukon have the opportunity to experience that spine-tingling feeling of success in those six excluded sports and possibly even more at the 2016 Arctic X games hosted here in Whitehorse, Yukon. It is also my hope that with a successful launching of the Arctic X games in 2016 we bring our circumpolar world closer together and we strengthen and once again showcase our wilderness city of Whitehorse to the world. Also, most importantly, we provide our young people an international games opportunity to participate, showcase their talent and share the joy of sport.

I want to thank each member for lending their unified voice and I hope we get unanimous support for this motion today.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

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 carried.

Motion No. 649 agreed to

Motion No. 627

Clerk: Motion No. 627, standing in the name of Mr. Elias.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the Government of Canada to co-lead a project through the Arctic Council to develop a climate change adaptation information portal that will facilitate greater access to adaptation knowledge for all northerners.

Mr. Elias: I'm honoured to rise today to debate Motion No. 627, urging the Government of Yukon to work with the Government of Canada to co-lead a project through the Arctic Council to develop a climate change adaptation information portal that will facilitate greater access to adaptation knowledge for all Yukoners.

I'll ask the question: Why advocate for a new information portal? Well, there is no portal that leverages the wealth of climate change adaptation knowledge from across the circumpolar regions that is focused on decision-makers and practitioners. Yukon's climate is changing faster than the rest of Canada's. We must be leaders and support projects that will help us undertake effective adaptation to climate change impacts.

I believe that recent extreme weather events are forcing politicians around the world to focus on the issue of climate change. I think it's quite clear that we are seeing increased incidents of extreme weather — droughts, floods, the diminishing ice cap, ozone opening and closing over the poles. Changes in the climate are now affecting physical and biological systems on every continent — it's unequivocal — with the north being the first to receive these impacts.

Science and traditional knowledge complement each other and really have an influence on how people think and view climate change. When I look at the science, which is irrefutable to me, we have changed the chemistry of the atmosphere and in turn have trapped the radiant heat energy in the atmosphere.

Average Arctic temperatures rose almost twice the global average rate in the last 100 years. As a Yukoner, I want to be able to say that we are leading this battle and be able to tell everyone in the world who will listen that we need their help, but we need to be doing something substantial ourselves to set the stage.

I want to focus on my riding for a bit with regard to climate change. The Old Crow Flats wetland — arguably the most biologically productive ecosystem in the Yukon — is a matter unto itself. Many of my constituents feel that our bank — or Vuntut, as we call it — is also in danger. This internationally recognized wetland has over 2,000 and some-odd lakes that are home to hundreds of thousands of migratory waterfowl and raptors. It's a major migration route of the

Porcupine caribou herd. Over 700 moose call the lakes home. There are thousands of muskrats, populations of mustelids and many species of carnivores that call the Old Crow Flats home.

This delicate system has been showing signs of global warming and climate change disturbance for well over 15 years now. About 15 years ago, I was walking on the clear ice in Old Crow Flats — we call it “tan ts'ih” in Gwich'in — with an elder in our community, Mr. Irwin Linklater. He was carrying a long, dry wooden pole and he would push it down into the opening of the ice in a muskrat hole until he touched the bottom with the pole and he pushed down on it. When he brought the pole back up, the mud from the bottom of the lake was measuring about a foot on the pole. I remember him saying that it never used to be like this — such a soft bottom. This entire system is permafrost dependent, and that means that the water is being held in place largely because of permafrost. Many of my constituents have witnessed the lakes and the flats draining at a rate that hasn't been seen before. I'm not talking about a little trickle here, Mr. Speaker. When these lakes drain, it is gone in a matter of hours. I witnessed with my own eyes on June 6, 2007 when the lake that my family was raised on for generations vanished — Zelma Lake we called it.

We have also witnessed the slumping and the eroding of our riverbanks and lakeshores, which lead to year-round murky waters that used to be crystal clear. When permafrost melts, it also releases methane gas and CO₂ into the atmosphere, so this has become a vicious cycle. Many people from Old Crow are worried that our environment is changing so fast that the animals that call it home won't be able to adapt quickly enough.

It's great to see that this message has been received by our government with an open heart, and our government has the courage to set politics aside and hear this important message. It is my opinion that there is no way any Yukon First Nation culture can survive in the long term without healthy lands, water and wildlife.

For the record, when we discuss adaptation, the word means both the act of coping with the negative impacts and embracing the opportunities that may arise from climate change. Yukon government departments, as outlined in the 2012 *Climate Change Action Plan* progress report, are undertaking a range of activities and research on climate change, including research and climate change impact and adaptation options, such as a study on how permafrost degradation affects transportation infrastructure, working across departments to identify, assess and develop solutions to climate change related risks to Yukon communities, and monitoring and evaluating impacts of climate change on human health in the Yukon.

A four-year program totalling \$2 million with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada was established in 2012 in Yukon, and a total of nine projects are underway.

The first one is the vulnerability of the north Alaska Highway to climate change. Highways and Public Works is working with the Northern Climate Exchange researchers to identify and characterize sensitive permafrost areas underlying

the 200-kilometre stretch of the north Alaska highway near Beaver Creek. They will estimate potential impacts and identify climate scenarios where the highway is underlain with thaw-sensitive permafrost.

The second one is the effects of melting permafrost on agriculture capacity in the Yukon. Agriculture branch researchers will identify challenges and barriers to agriculture on areas of changing permafrost conditions. Best management practices will be developed to optimize agriculture production in such areas. The project will also examine challenges to the national agriculture capability classification system as a result of changing permafrost conditions.

The third is examining forest vulnerabilities to climate change and developing resilience enhancement strategies through long-term community partnerships in Yukon. Building on previous Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development-funded research in the Teslin area, the Energy, Mines and Resources department's Forestry Management branch, in partnership with the University of Northern British Columbia, will address issues of forest-related vulnerabilities to climate change through a community-based participatory approach.

Fourth is the mountain pine beetle in novel habitats, predicting impacts to northern forests in a warming environment. The Forest Management branch researchers will look at climate change scenarios in which the mountain pine beetle could establish and spread in the lodgepole pine forests of Yukon. The study will examine the characteristics of Yukon's northern pine forests and investigate how mountain pine beetle may interact similarly or differently from other outbreak areas.

Fifth is the development of bioclimate envelopes and interpretation of climate projections to frame adaptation strategies for Yukon's boreal forest. Understanding how ecosystems will adapt to a changing climate is important, especially for Yukoners who rely on traditional food sources. In this study, Environment Yukon researchers will look at projected future distribution of ecosystem climate envelopes and explore how the mapping and projections could be used to inform ecosystem management.

Sixth is Yukon flood plain risk mapping. Yukon does not have sufficiently accurate elevation data needed to support water-level monitoring for communities bordered by rivers and lakes. Community Services' Emergency Measures Organization will conduct a light detection and ranging survey for 13 Yukon community areas to acquire digital elevation data that will support accurate flood plain mapping to determine vulnerable areas.

Seventh is sensitivity of Yukon hydrological response to climate warming, a case study for sectional climate change adaptation. Environment Yukon Water Resources branch researchers will conduct a sensitivity assessment of hydrological response to climate warming and associated permafrost thawing using the cold regions hydrological model at the Wolf Creek research station. Researchers will apply the model to other Yukon regions and communities to provide the

necessary climate-warming sensitivity information to support development of adaptation strategies.

Eighth is communicating climate change adaptation. Yukon's Beringia Interpretive Centre will provide a venue to share knowledge related to climate change adaptation research and projects in the territory.

Ninth is pan-territorial adaptation outreach. Representatives from the three territories have created a pan-territorial partnership to address shared climate change and adaptation needs. This project includes creating user-friendly fact sheets and hosting a permafrost workshop. Both activities will catalyze the work of the three territories and the collective efforts on the actions identified in the pan-territorial adaptation strategy.

The program to develop effective adaptation plans and projects for Yukon communities is being administered by the Yukon Climate Change Secretariat. For this reason, Yukon government's participation in Arctic Council discussions is important, because many of the issues — for example, intergovernmental cooperation on environmental management and economic development in the Arctic — have important implications for the future of our territory.

The Arctic Council is an intergovernmental forum to address issues that are relevant to Arctic governments and peoples. It has eight member states: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States. Six permanent participants representing Arctic indigenous organizations are the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, the Gwich'in Council International, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North and the Saami Council. There are also 12 permanent observers.

The adaptation information portal project is a priority initiative of the Canadian Arctic Council chairmanship and was endorsed by the Arctic Council ministers at the Kiruna ministerial meeting in May 2013. Canada, the U.S., Aleut International Association and the Gwich'in Council International are the project leads.

All states and permanent participant organizations supported the project at the senior Arctic officials and sustainable development working group levels. This project is based out of the Arctic Council Sustainable Development Working Group and is being spearheaded by four of its members: Canada, the U.S., the Gwich'in Council International and the Aleut International Association. The involvement of the Gwich'in Council International and the Aleut International Association ensures the voices of indigenous communities across the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Alaska are being heard.

Canada and the U.S. are the co-leads on the portal project. For Canada, Natural Resources Canada — or NRCan — and the Government of Yukon through its Climate Change Secretariat are leading the work. The University of Alaska leads the U.S. participation on this project. There is also a project advisory committee of Canadian stakeholders from various federal departments, territorial governments, community and indigenous groups and knowledge

management organizations. Community and indigenous stakeholders provide input through Canada's Senior Project Advisory Committee. Yukon must be a part of any effort to create an on-line information space that will enhance the capacity of northerners and others to understand and respond to climate change in the circumpolar north.

An information portal provides a single point of access to different types of information. A portal is a one-stop shop for a wide variety of climate change adaptation information resources specific to the circumpolar north. While there are several websites about climate change — or the Arctic — there does not appear to be a single web portal focused on climate change adaptation in the circumpolar north. A new information portal will fill this gap.

The Yukon's Climate Change Secretariat is a leader in climate change in the Arctic. Their involvement will be crucial to develop and construct any electronic infrastructure while Canada is the chair of the Arctic Council until May 2015. Decision-makers across different levels of public administration, including First Nation governments and rural communities, will benefit from the new portal. Anyone with an interest in climate change in the circumpolar north and how to adapt to its impacts will also benefit.

Enhancing our understanding of how others are addressing circumpolar climate change-related challenges and sharing our own innovation here in the Yukon helps everyone's adaptation efforts. Through this cooperation, we can develop best practices to help Yukoners adapt to climate change impacts. By making it easier to find out what is going on with northern climate change adaptation efforts and research, it will be easier for individuals and organizations to make evidence-based decisions about best practices and innovative measures.

This can provide an excellent opportunity for Yukon to build new partnerships with other Arctic states, subnational governments and indigenous and community organizations. I think this opportunity can prove valuable to Yukon and the rest of the Arctic. Our researchers can have the opportunity to lead and share our expertise across the north.

I encourage those interested parties to take a look at existing adaptation resources on-line. An Arctic Council adaptation portal will serve as an expert resource for us all. Some other portals include the Natural Resources Canada adaptation platform, the Public Health Agency of Canada preventive public health systems and adaptation to climate change program, and the Yukon government's climate change action plan progress report. Our objective should be to create an on-line adaptation information portal that will facilitate access to adaptation resources relevant to the northern context and enable the exchange of knowledge, including traditional and local experiences and best practices, such as adaptive capacity indices among the public and private sector decision makers.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing from other members on this motion and I hope to see unanimous support for this motion as well. Those are my opening comments and thank you very much.

Ms. Hanson: I'm pleased to rise to speak to the motion: "THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the Government of Canada to co-lead a project through the Arctic Council to develop a climate change adaptation information portal that will facilitate greater access to adaptation knowledge for all northerners" — a project that I note was endorsed by the senior Arctic officials in October of 2013.

The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin focused on the work that will be done by the Yukon Climate Change Secretariat and we should also note that Natural Resources Canada is the other co-lead on this project. I thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing the motion forward, as well as for outlining some of the work that will be done and is underway by the Government of Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, I want to focus a bit more in terms of the context of the work that was endorsed by the senior Arctic officials of the Arctic Council. In doing so, I thought it would be useful to set a bit of a context because Canada, the north and particularly indigenous groups in the circumpolar north have played a very important role in the Arctic Council.

When we think back to when the Arctic Council was established in Ottawa in 1996, there were very few people who were thinking about the north as a place of great or imminent wealth. Instead, the focus at that time, when Canada, Russia, the United States, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Iceland, as well as six indigenous groups from across the circumpolar north came together — and they didn't just magically come together, this was an effort that had been going on for multiple years to allow that to happen — they were really thinking about how to protect the Arctic environment.

As has been elaborated by the member from Vuntut Gwitchin, as a result of climate change, we are now seeing resource hungry nations with very little connection to the north taking a new interest in the Arctic. Potential shipping lanes have now interested countries like China, India, the European Union and Brazil to name a few. I think it's important that we go back and look at what the objectives were of the Arctic Council, and think about it in the context of the people who were involved.

In an interview with the CBC in 2012, Mary Simon, who was the first chair of the Arctic Council, an Inuit and president of the ITK, said the objective of the Arctic Council "...was to address the environmental and the sustainable development issues that are confronting the eight Arctic nations and also the indigenous peoples that are living within those countries."

One of the things that Mary Simon said at the time was that the Arctic Council is unique in that it's the only international body of its kind, of its stature, in an international setting that not only allows, but recognizes, indigenous peoples to have a seat at the table with the ministers.

She went on to talk about the importance of the inclusion of indigenous groups' voice. She said in that interview: "The inclusion was a long fought issue during the negotiations in the Arctic Council. There was a number of countries that

really didn't want indigenous peoples to participate at that level. What it means is that it allows us to participate in the discussions on issues that affect us either on a daily basis or on a more long-term basis. And that deals with environmental issues and as well it deals with development issues." She said, "It's a very important forum for indigenous people to participate and because it's the only international organization that deals specifically with the Arctic and the circumpolar area."

When she was asked about what she thought the impact had been of the Arctic Council, she went on to say: "Well it's like any international organization. You don't see the tangible effects of it immediately at the community level but the process that is in place allows us to discuss issues that affect us. For instance, on the environment, when climate change started being more obvious to nation states, the indigenous peoples..." — as the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin has already pointed out — "...had already experienced many of the effects of climate change and were able to bring their experience and their views to the table which allowed the Arctic nations to come together as a group to deal with climate change on the international level."

"In other instances, when we talk about sustainable development, sustainable development means something very different for indigenous people than it does to nation states. Nation states generally look at development in terms of developing their resources. In our case it addresses the livelihood of our people and the economic base that it brings us in terms of our hunting practices and the livelihood that we live off the land. A lot of that is related to an income that it brings to our hunters and our families." She said that the importance of the Arctic Council is: "We're able to discuss that concept and that way of living with nation states, which are the eight Arctic nations that belong to the Arctic Council."

Mr. Speaker, it's becoming clear now that the notion of the future of the Arctic is a global issue. It has been a global issue for some time in terms of climate change. It should come as no surprise that other countries outside of the circumpolar region have expressed interest in being granted observer status at the Arctic Council. France and Germany have permanent observer status. Countries such as China and Japan have an ad hoc observer status and the list grows. As it does — as the list of observers grows, the indigenous members of the Arctic Council have expressed their caution and concern.

Mary Simon put it well when she said — and during that same interview in January, I think it was, of 2012 — I quote: "We are very concerned about more observers because if you're talking about heavy energy users, building tankers, and shipping in the Arctic, these are all issues that will ultimately affect northern life. And we still live in small communities, we depend on the animals and the resources of the land for our food because the cost of living" — as we've debated many times in this Legislative Assembly — "in the Arctic is so high that most people can't afford to go and buy meat from the grocery store, if there is a grocery store. So if the only objective of these nations that are not part of the Arctic

Council is to weigh in on their interests, then these powerful nations will, I think, overtake the Arctic Council."

Going back, "When you look at the objectives of the first declaration about affirming the commitment to the well-being of the inhabitants of the Arctic, it also talks about recognizing the —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: Minister of Justice, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming a good friend of mine, Simon Ratcliffe, from simonsees.com, which is a travel adventure show based out of British Columbia and perhaps we may see episodes from Yukon. Welcome to the gallery.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: As I was saying, Mary Simon, in the interview, was talking about the importance of the declaration and the commitment to the well-being of the inhabitants of the Arctic and talking about recognizing the traditional knowledge of the indigenous peoples — that was the original commitment. "Now if all of these heavy-duty, or powerful nations come in," she said, "I think the interests of the Arctic Council is going to diminish."

She went on to say, "We have enough trouble within our own country to get our voices heard" — speaking from an indigenous perspective. "Can you imagine what it would be like to try and get our voice heard by these nations?"

Forgive me, Mr. Speaker — my notes — I was scribbling this very quickly this afternoon so I'm trying to find where I was.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, but I won't take an unlimited amount of time.

When the Arctic Council was set up in 1996, as I said, the commitment to sustainable development and working with indigenous people — the notion that indigenous voices were important was very, very important at the outset.

At the time, as Mary Simon said, the Arctic Council was seen — and we hope still today — as representing an unprecedented opportunity to influence policy and to have a role in directing research, monitoring and assessment activities in the Arctic.

The Arctic Council, as has been mentioned, is an intergovernmental forum consisting of those eight circumpolar countries. Within the council, the indigenous influences are carried out by the permanent participant organizations.

In 1996, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, RAIPON — the Russian association that the member opposite mentioned — and the Saami were the first recognized in the Ottawa declaration. Two years later the Aleuts joined, and two years after that, the final two permanent participants were included, which is the Arctic Athabaskan Council and the Gwich'in Council International. The Arctic Athabaskan Council, it's

important to note, includes the Council of Yukon First Nations.

The fact is that concerns have been expressed about the trend toward watering down the work of the Arctic Council since the *Kiruna Declaration* — or the work leading up to the *Kiruna Declaration* — at which point Canada became the chair of the Arctic Council.

In an article on the Arctic Council, the executive director of the Aleut International Association spoke about the level of international focus on the Arctic Council being at an all-time high in the lead-up to the start of the new Canadian chairmanship. That was partly, he said, because of the increased attention on the Arctic in general — that as we started to see the opening up of shipping lanes and the focus on the potential resource wealth that exists in the circumpolar north — but also, he said, because the preceding Swedish chairmanship was able to achieve significant advances despite relatively low expectations. The pressure then went on to the Canadian and the Canadian chairmanship. There was some recognition that Canada, to its credit, had come forward with some bold initiatives of its own, including a task force to examine marine oil pollution prevention and another task force to potentially produce an instrument on the reduction of the emission of short-lived climate pollutants — black carbon and methane — and the formation of a circumpolar business forum. He said that these initiatives began, as Arctic Council initiatives often do, with rather forceful language directing the council toward a specific goal.

Unfortunately, for political reasons, this language was toned down during the negotiation of the final text of the *Kiruna Declaration*, and the company again — the *Senior Arctic Officials' Report to Ministers*. The executive director of the Aleut International Council went on to express that, of the initiatives now moving forward under the Canadian chairmanship, the new task force on short-lived climate pollutants is a good example of a strong initiative that was weakened during the negotiating process. In the last two years — so four years ago — the previous task force on short-lived climate factors produced an excellent report which incorporated the very latest in scientific understanding of how black carbon, methane and tropospheric ozone affect the climate. The report recommended, among other things, that the Arctic states work toward reducing black carbon emissions, which are linked to climate impacts such as accelerated ice and snow melt and increased temperature.

Black carbon cycles out of the atmosphere very quickly, so a reduction in emissions today could have a significant impact in just a few months or years. Arctic states could contribute substantially to mitigation efforts — not adaptation, but mitigation efforts — because the effect of black carbon is largely based on the source's proximity to the Arctic.

Early drafts directed the task force to propose specific steps to achieve black carbon emission reductions. Now it says, “develop arrangements on actions to achieve enhanced black carbon and methane emissions reductions, and to report ...”

Mr. Speaker, those kinds of trends are disturbing because this delusion of the commitment to real, serious reductions in terms of black carbon emissions led the Arctic Athabaskan Council — as I said, represented in the Yukon by the Council of Yukon First Nations — to file a petition. In a news release on April 23, 2013, the Arctic Athabaskan Council — and I'll quote: “filed a petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights requesting a declaration that Canada is undermining the human rights of Athabaskan peoples by allowing emissions of black carbon to warm the Arctic. The Arctic Athabaskan Council is an international treaty organization established to defend the rights and further the interest of American and Canadian Athabaskan First Nation governments in the eight-nation Arctic Council, of which it is an authorized Permanent Participant.”

The release went on to say that the petitioners point out that, “Readily available emissions reduction measures could substantially slow Arctic warming and melting and protect Athabaskan rights.”

“Our homelands are warming. We have experienced rain in December which never happened,” said Grand Chief Ruth Massie of the Council of Yukon First Nations. “The rain is causing flooding and eroding our river banks. Our glaciers are melting. Permafrost is melting everywhere. It is no longer safe for our people to travel on the land in winter because the ice doesn't freeze solid. We have more trees dying off, and I notice the depletion of animals more and more.” She submitted that petition on April 23, 2013. She went on to say, “Our petition asks the Commission to declare that Canada is contravening the human rights of Athabaskan peoples guaranteed in the 1948 American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man by inadequately regulating emissions of black carbon, or soot, a short-lived climate pollutant that accelerates warming and melting in northern Canada — our homelands.”

The Arctic Athabaskan Council said this petition is an urgent call for action.

So when we talk about the — it has been disappointing to hear that Canada as chair — not as a participant, but as chair of the Arctic Council — decided to boycott the next scheduled meeting of the Arctic Council, a meeting where the main issue to be discussed was black carbon emissions. As chair, Canada should be demonstrating leadership. Now is not the time to bow out. Now is the time to keep pressure on as a world leader and to address not only climate change adaptation, but to deal head-on with mitigation. The goal of the black carbon emissions agreement is twofold: to reduce emissions and to show leadership on the world stage. Canada led in 1996; many fear it's not doing so in 2014.

Another Canadian initiative that was weakened in the negotiations leading up to the *Kiruna Declaration* — again, I am quoting from the Chair of the Aleut International Council when he noted that there was a task force to develop an action plan to prevent marine oil pollution and early drafts established would have directed the pursuing of international instrument on prevention.

But again as we water these things down, as we don't take a strong role, we come up with a notion that we are going to direct an action plan or other arrangement. The irony is that the Arctic Council has extensively studied and documented best practices for oil pollution prevention and there is the work in the background that is available and necessary to put in place a legally binding agreement between the Arctic states. This would provide important protection and show the leadership that is required; the leadership that the circumpolar world needs and should be demonstrating.

The Official Opposition supports this motion, and as we work together to urge the governments of Canada and Yukon to develop a climate change adaptation and information portal that will facilitate greater access to adaptation knowledge for all northerners, we urge all members of the Assembly to commit to working together to urge the federal government to make sure that indigenous groups, including the Arctic Athabaskan Council, which includes the Council for Yukon First Nations, are adequately resourced to fully participate in the Arctic Council.

We have to keep in mind that the six circumpolar indigenous groups are permanent participants on the Arctic Council. It's ironic, Mr. Speaker, that Yukon is not — the Government of Yukon is not. The Arctic Athabaskan Council is and the Gwich'in Tribal Council is. We talk about portals. We're talking about a computer portal to allow the facilitation of information around adaptation of climate change. If we as Yukoners and this government want a portal into the Arctic Council, then we need to ensure that the Athabaskan Council and the Gwich'in Council are adequately resourced to participate in the important proceedings.

It has been a perennial problem in terms of a lack of financial resources earmarked to support the work of Arctic indigenous people to fully participate. Without the resources to do the research necessary and to prepare for and participate in these various meetings or technical briefings, et cetera, indigenous participants become marginalized.

Duane Smith, president of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, said in 2011 that it's up to each of the respective permanent participants in each country to lobby and work with those countries to try to get the resources to be meaningfully involved. He also pointed out that when the topic of funding comes up, everybody gets quiet.

Mary Simon, who as I mentioned was the first chair of the Arctic Council in 1996, said, "I don't know why they continue to be marginalized because they are recognized as permanent participants in the Arctic Council. That declaration is signed by the foreign ministers of those eight countries."

Where is Canada in ensuring the Canadian indigenous groups that are permanent participants have the resources to adequately and appropriately participate?

Mary Simon said that "...a fund should be created that would better resource permanent participants, "so that they don't have to fund-raise for every activity they have." Ms. Simon went on to say, "We can't just look at the Arctic in terms of how we are going to develop resources or how are we

going to make money without damaging the environment too much. It should also be about the people that live there ..."

The point is not to be overlooked that the actual residents — the basis of the Canadian claim to sovereignty is the indigenous presence — the original claim to sovereignty. So Duane Smith, who as I mentioned was the president of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, went on to say that senior Arctic officials get these reports, perspectives, observations from researchers who periodically show up in aboriginal backyards working with them, documenting and doing the research to gather the information, but those researchers are there on a very short-term basis. The indigenous peoples are there every day, taking these observations themselves.

He went on to say that "...adequate funding for the permanent participants is "one of the lingering issues" at the council. "It's funding not just to attend the meetings but to review all of the documents that are being developed and to adequately develop our own documents for submission within those working groups."

In true bureaucratese, the website for the Arctic Council's Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat says that it creates opportunities for indigenous peoples' organizations to speak for themselves and helps provide them with necessary information and materials.

But you know what? Funding is not specifically addressed, and I believe — the Official Opposition believes — that it must be. Canada, as chair, has the opportunity to change this, and we can provide that support as members of this Legislative Assembly.

In summation, as we do move forward to support efforts to adapt to climate change, we should not lose sight of the larger objective that we must all have, which is to collectively find ways to mitigate and prevent further climate change. The metaphor of a frog in the pot of water is apt. We need — as does the frog as the pot of water warms up — to make ourselves aware of gradual change lest we suffer eventual undesirable consequences. As legislators, we owe it to future generations to not rest on adaptation to climate change. We must maintain a focus on mitigation and slowing — slowing — climate change down.

Mr. Silver: It pleases me to rise and to speak on Motion No. 627. I would like to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for putting it on the floor today.

The Arctic Council Secretariat met in Kiruna, Sweden, in May 2013. The meeting produced the *Kiruna Declaration* and part of it related to the action on climate change.

I am going to read a bit from the declaration. I am quoting here: "Recognize that adaptation to the impacts of climate change is a challenge for the Arctic, and the need for strengthened collaboration with Arctic indigenous peoples and other residents, governments and industry, welcome the reports, key findings and on-going work on the Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic initiative, and decide to continue the work on enhancing the capacity of decision-makers to manage climate risks including through an on-line information portal ..."

Mr. Speaker, fast-forward to a senior Arctic officials meeting that happened in October 2013 in Whitehorse and the Arctic Council gave final approval to the portal project. It is expected to be up and running by May 2015, when Canada's Arctic Council chairmanship comes to an end.

I understand that we are making a small in-kind contribution over a two-year period to this project and that Yukon is one of the co-leaders in the Arctic adaptation portal project. It will be the Climate Change Secretariat that is actually doing the work on this project. This is a worthwhile project and it has the support of the Liberal caucus, as does the motion here before us today.

Mr. Tredger: It gives me pleasure to rise to speak to this Motion No. 627 by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

We know that even if carbon emissions are stabilized relatively soon, climate change and its effects will last for many years. Adaptation will be necessary.

Adaptation to climate change seeks to reduce the vulnerability of biological systems to the effects of climate change. Climate change is more than just an environmental issue. This is an economic and security issue that will impact everyone from the biggest cities to the smallest towns.

Canada, we know, will continue to see more warming than the global average, and extreme weather events will be more frequent and more intense. In Canada, temperatures on average have already increased by more than 1.3 degrees Celsius between 1948 and 2007, a rate of warming that was about twice the global average. Warmer temperatures tend to produce more violent weather patterns.

The effects of climate change are amplified the closer one gets to the poles. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a group of the world's top climate scientists, released a report that outlined the impact of climate change across the globe. It reiterated that pollution from burning fossil fuels is changing the earth's climate and contributing to rising seas, stronger storms, hotter days and severe droughts. The ramifications in Canada are already being felt across the county, and scientists say the symptoms could grow worse with each passing decade.

Melting glaciers, especially in Alaska and the Arctic, have contributed to rising sea levels and will continue to do so. The rise in temperatures will be felt more in the Arctic and at higher latitudes in the provinces and territories, and that will be amplified in the winter.

Snowfall in Canada has increased in the north but there was a significant decrease in the southwest part of the country. For the Yukon, more winter precipitation along with faster melting in the spring has increased the risks of flooding.

In the Yukon each year, we see the budget taking more and more money to adapt to the effects of climate change: escalating road and building repairs due to melting permafrost; earlier melting; more and more severe storms. We've seen loss of and rapid changes to our wetlands. The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin was very eloquent in outlining some of the changes he has seen on his home territory and in his own area, and that is being replicated across the Yukon.

We've seen changing flora and fauna. New species are appearing. Moose, deer, caribou and salmon have all been affected. We heard yesterday about the Invasive Species Council and the fact that the plants are moving north. Spruce budworms and pine beetles have become part of our environment. We are becoming more and more aware of invasive plant species. We know our rivers are warming and the lakes are warming. This is affecting our freshwater fish species, our salmon species and our aquatic life.

People from around the world are already seeing the impact of extreme weather in terms of lost lives and injuries, displacement and devastation. The cost of these losses is incalculable. It is also clear that Canada is more vulnerable to some of the effects of climate change and that global warming is amplified in the north and south poles. Mr. Speaker, that's the bad news.

The good news is that the report shows that our future will not be determined by chance but by choices we make. So we have a choice to reduce carbon emissions. The report says it is still possible that we can escape the worst impacts of climate change if we make some important changes.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report is a call for action. The seven-year task undertaken by hundreds of the world's leading scientists who sifted through thousands of the latest peer-reviewed studies examining the causes, impacts and mitigation options of climate change is over. The last IPCC working group report was published recently and the take-home message is crystal clear. The high-speed mitigation train needs to leave the station very soon, and all of global society needs to get on board.

There is no time left for us to wait another seven years to hear what the next IPCC has concluded. Procrastination and delay are now our worst enemies. We must sincerely thank these scientists for their hugely important contribution to our collective understanding about climate change and the risks it presents, but we are now on our own. This is it. Our collective fate is in our hands and we must move forward with urgency and clarity of purpose.

Obstacles remain in the road ahead — most notably, vested interests, blinkered ideology, and political short-termism. But the IPCC had made it abundantly clear that the lack of available time means we must press on, regardless, and secure the rapid transition away from polluting fossil fuels and toward low-carbon, sustainable sources of energy.

The evidence for human influence on climate change is mounting and stronger with each additional year of data. The IPCC has shown that those who once doubted the science — and now fashionably claim that we should just adapt to climate change — are plain wrong. It is not an either/or choice between adaptation and mitigation. We must do both, and we must do it urgently.

Climate change is real, and we are to blame. It will get worse if we fail to act. The solutions are available and affordable, but time is short.

We know it will be cheaper to wean ourselves from fossil fuels than to pay for the damage caused by global climate change. Each nation will have its own ability, responsibility

and opportunity to act, but the direction of travel for all is clear. The transition must be urgent, but it must also be an equitable and just transition. The IPCC has helpfully unlocked the door and switched on the light for the room marked “mitigation”, which for many was too daunting a prospect to consider entering. Yes, we must work on adaptation. We must build different infrastructures, roads and bridges, and buildings. We must make adaptations in our habits and our work to protect ourselves, our children and our environment.

We must change how we deal with the flora and fauna. Our wildlife that have evolved slowly over many centuries now lose their predictability and resilience. We must look to new food sources, and for different farming methods and harvesting methods.

But, again, I will repeat — it is not an either/or choice between adaptation and mitigation. We must do both and urgently. Climate change adaptation is increasingly important over the circumpolar north, which has seen a more rapid pace of climate change than regions further south.

The member’s motion, in support of the development of a climate change adaptation information portal that will facilitate greater access to adaptation knowledge for all northerners, is a good idea. However, it is important to remember that while information is important, we cannot benefit from this knowledge if it is not backed up by political and the people’s will. Some have argued that adaptation — as the cheaper and easier way of tackling the problem of climate change — certainly attempts to reduce the world’s dependence on fossil fuel, which has proven very difficult. The development of renewable energy alternatives has been slow in coming, but we must move forward on it.

We have raised this issue many times in this House — the need to focus Yukon’s energy future on renewable energy sources as opposed to more oil and gas development. Any effort to adapt to climate change is undermined when we continue our dependence on fossil fuels. What we do know is that when it comes to climate change, whether we are focusing on efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or adapt to existing and future climate change impacts, both these efforts will be much more expensive in 10 or 20 years’ time.

The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change emphasized that climate change will inevitably cause risks across all continents and these need to be managed. The effort required to adapt to climate change is substantial in itself, requiring much more precise understanding than we have today. That is why initiatives to collect and disseminate information on climate change adaptation make sense, especially in a northern context where the impacts of climate change are being felt at an increasing speed.

I would recommend that, in developing a climate change adaptation information panel, we build on the work of the climate change adaptation community of practice — an interactive on-line community dedicated to advancing knowledge and action in the area of climate change adaptation. This on-line resource serves as a location where researchers, experts, policy makers and practitioners from

across Canada can come together to ask questions, generate ideas, share knowledge and communicate with others working in the field of climate change adaptation.

One of its main goals is to support all Canadian provinces and territories in their efforts to incorporate climate change adaptation into planning and policy. In the *Kiruna Declaration*, the Arctic Council recognized that adaptation to the impacts of climate change is a challenge for the Arctic, and that there is a need to increase the capacity of Arctic indigenous peoples and other residents, governments and industry to respond and manage climate risks.

This declaration also commits the council to continue addressing this need for capacity building, including through an on-line information portal.

One of the declarations is “Recognizing that Arctic is first and foremost an inhabited region with diverse economies, cultures and societies, further recognizing the rights of the indigenous peoples and interests of all Arctic inhabitants, and emphasizing that a fundamental strength of the Council is the unique role played by Arctic indigenous peoples.”

Mr. Speaker, it is not an either/or choice between adaptation and mitigation. We must do both and we must do them urgently. Our collective fate is in our own hands and we must move forward with urgency and clarity of purpose. Adaptations and mitigation efforts are too critical to leave in the hands of a few — in the hands of politicians, in the hands of governments, in the hands of scientists and in the hands of interest groups. It is up to all of us — all citizens of the north.

We must include local input and involvement. We must rely on science, but also on traditional knowledge, cooperation and working together. We must rely on a sharing of information. We must rely on people through trial and error to pose solutions, gather responses and pose further solutions. Local and indigenous peoples are closest to the changes.

They feel the immediate feedback in an ever more unpredictable and changing world. The IPCC served a strong warning but also a message of hope. It can be done. The longer we wait, the more expensive and less likely will our mitigation and adaption efforts succeed.

I thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing forth this motion. I support it as a beginning and I thank you for listening.

Ms. Stick: I want to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing forward this motion. The first time I read it I didn’t understand it and I had to do some research, because I certainly wasn’t sure what a climate change adaptation information portal might be. It was not language I was used to, especially around the portal bit.

In doing the research, I came across the Arctic Council Sustainable Development Working Group’s project proposal for the Arctic adaptation exchange and other members have spoken to this, the co-leads being Canada, United States, Gwitchin Council, the Aleut International Association and, under Canada, it is the Yukon Climate Change Secretariat. It is a great report to read; it was updated in March 2014. It is very recent; it is only 11 pages. It is not all science talk, but it

is very clear in laying out what the goals of this project are. For me, the important definition is: “a portal is a website that provides a single point of access to different resources, and can offer both information to users and provide user-generated content.”

At the end of the report, there are a number of links to other portals that are part of the Arctic Council. I've gone to a few of them. They're not all in English, but it was very interesting to see what information is available and how user-friendly they were. You can get reports and scientific information from around the world — circumpolar — talking about climate change and more than just adaptations, but also speaking to mitigation, prevention and results of what is going on in the circumpolar countries that are members of the Arctic Council.

I would recommend that everyone read this report, because it's very informative and it's very clear what this group is going to be doing in terms of looking at this. How do they get the information? Where are they going to manage this portal? Who will host it? Who has access to it? It's good to see that this would be something that is user-friendly and something that all people can look at. Other portals that exist now include climate change adaptation in Sweden, Finland, Norway — there's another Arctic one — Nunavut region and then other different websites and portals that look at adaptations, not just circumpolar, but from around the world.

I thank the member for bringing this forward. It is one piece of climate change, as my colleague mentioned. It's about adaptation. There is a lot of other work to be done too, but certainly under this motion with a focus on adaptation and providing that information, I think this is a good motion and will be supporting it. I thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing it forward.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to speak to the motion brought forward by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin today, urging the Government of Yukon to work with the Government of Canada to co-lead a project through the Arctic Council to develop a climate change adaptation information portal that will facilitate greater access to adaptation knowledge for all northerners.

The wording of that motion is quite a mouthful, but I can say with great confidence that climate change is having a very real effect here in the north. Earlier this afternoon, I was looking at an article, entitled “Food Security: A Basic Human Right Threatened in the North”. In doing that research, it was pointing to the fact that access to and the availability of traditional food sources are decreasing due to changing environmental conditions and they're speaking about the north.

As previous speakers have indicated, the Official Opposition will be supporting this motion. I would point out though that this project is one that has been endorsed already by senior Arctic officials in October 2013 and has since been updated.

The Member for Riverdale South just referred to the Arctic Council Sustainable Development Working Group and

their report that was just published about the Arctic adaptation exchange. The information and the knowledge economy and research are very important components of having a good understanding of climate change.

I was also looking at a report put out by the Conference Board of Canada in 2012 about assessing and building resilience in Canada's north. It says that a changing climate is also jeopardizing the very existence of certain Arctic communities that are located near the sea. Sea level rise is facilitating rapid permafrost melt, which is causing severe coastal erosion. In 2010, some areas of the Arctic lost as much as eight metres of coastline to the sea. The long-term viability of certain eastern Arctic villages is also being threatened due to the effects of climate change. Accordingly, there is a strong possibility that a number of these communities will be forced to relocate.

As my colleague, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, spoke about so eloquently this afternoon, we must not just stand here and speak about climate change and adaptation and having an information portal, but we must take the responsibility for working to reduce climate change and to be responsible in our use of fossil fuels.

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

Mr. Elias: In my closing remarks to this motion, I think it's appropriate to quote our honourable Minister of Environment, when he said that — and I quote: “Canada is assuming the Chair of the Arctic Council at a pivotal time for the Canadian North and for the entire Arctic region. International attention has never been more focused on the Circumpolar North, and the Arctic Council is a well-suited instrument for facilitating international discussions on a range of matters of great importance to all, but most importantly to Northerners. Prime Minister Stephen Harper's appointment of Minister Leona Aglukkaq as Canada's lead makes her the first Inuk person to hold the position, and was a decision that has been welcomed by Northerners in Canada and abroad.

“Under Aglukkaq's lead, Canada has identified the overarching theme of its chairmanship as *Developing for the People of the North*. Additionally, three sub-themes have been identified: Responsible Arctic Resource Development; Sustainable Circumpolar Communities; and Safe Arctic Shipping. These themes resonate with those of us who live in the North, especially with Yukoners.”

I also wanted to close by speaking about the social ramifications of climate change. It's a topic I haven't heard being spoken about very much over the years, so I'll touch on it a bit.

When we speak of climate change, the next generation must be a large component of our scope of thought. We must be cognizant of their needs in order to avoid social despair and the feeling that there is very little hope to avoid catastrophe in the next generation. Our work with monitoring the adaptation successes and challenges and communicating them to the circumpolar north — and the effects that climate change and

global warming are having on our infrastructure, our natural resources and our health — must also consider what these changes are having on us in a social context. What I mean by this is we must ask ourselves: How is the relationship of the social effects of climate change having on our ability to make decisions as a society?

Over the last decade, I'm sure everyone in this Legislature has witnessed the world's fury around all regions of the globe in the forms of floods, droughts, hurricanes, ice storms, tsunamis, melting ice caps and glaciers, reduction in sea ice of as much as 300,000 square kilometres of Arctic ice each year, drunken forests and — closer to home — tremendously deep snow years, continuously mild winters and extremely hot summers, rain in December that raises havoc in the animal world when it happens, the melting mountain ice patches, more forest fires and the intensity of those fires, early breakup in the spring and late freezing in the fall, and the list goes on and on and on.

I was told by an elder once that our Mother Earth is trying to cleanse herself from the damage humans have caused. She said, "Our Mother Earth is sick, and she is trying to tell us through weather, earthquakes and other natural disasters."

Mr. Speaker, the alarm bells of climate change have been ringing loudly for a long time. We as Yukoners are ultimately responsible for our own well-being. Therefore, we have a role to play. Our territorial government is leading the way, because by doing as much as we can to combat and adapt to climate change, it's our way of asking the rest of the world to act and to follow suit. We need to curb climate change. To do so is morally right and sets the example for our children and their children.

Mr. Speaker, Yukoners know that climate change is a real and present danger. This motion that we have debated today, in my mind, is a way of our Yukon doing our part and making our contribution to the global effort to combat and adapt to climate change.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. 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 17 yea, nil nay.

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

Motion No. 627 agreed to

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 73: Act to Amend the Environment Act — Second Reading — continued

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 73, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Dixon; adjourned debate, Ms. White.

Ms. White: This afternoon, I rise to speak to Bill No. 73, *Act to Amend the Environment Act*. I would like to thank the officials and those tasked with the undertaking of writing the amendments. I would also like to thank them for their thorough briefing of these proposed amendments.

My comments at second reading will focus around questions raised by respondents found in the summary of the public review document. In his second reading speech, the minister outlined many of the proposed changes but failed to mention the changes to the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment and the changes to the Yukon conservation strategy. The question put to respondents regarding the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment asked, "Do you have any concerns about allowing the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment to be inactive from time to time as determined by the minister?" Again, I'm taking this straight from the summary document.

The majority, 59.3 percent of respondents, were concerned about this proposal. Many thought that the YCEE should be reinstated and reinvigorated with sufficient funding and independent resources to operate effectively.

They saw the council as a venue where Yukoners could voice concerns and see issues reviewed. Many respondents said that having an active YCEE would enable proper attention to be given to issues that no one else had the capacity to look at — for example, in regions where land use planning had not yet been completed.

Most thought that the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment should not only operate at arm's length from the minister, but also have the authority to make decisions concerning the environment and the economy, instead of its current role of presenting recommendations to the minister.

Questions were raised as to how section 22 and 23 of the act would be fulfilled if the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment were allowed to be inactive from time to time. Section 22 refers to the duties of a minister upon receiving a complaint. Section 22(4) says, "The Minister shall report the results of their consideration of the complaint to the complainant and the Council and shall supply to the Council

any information concerning the complaint and the Minister's consideration of it that the Council may require." Section 23 is all about how the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment reviews those complaints and the actions to be taken by both the council and the minister.

Even a few of those respondents in support of the amendment said that the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment could be made inactive only if a council or board with the same influences as what is described in the act were to be in place. Others said that if the YCEE were to be inactive, a transparent decision framework should be used to determine when the council would be active.

I look forward to the minister's reasoning behind the changes to the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment in light of the comments made by the respondents, and his thoughts behind concerns raised in regard to sections 22 and 23 of the act during Committee of the Whole.

Again, straight from the summary document regarding the Yukon conservation strategy, this question was asked: "Do you have any concerns about allowing the Yukon Conservation Strategy to be renewed or updated from time to time as determined by the minister?"

Again, the majority of respondents — 53.8 percent — had some concerns about this proposal. Many said that the strategy should be modernized. Several said that the strategy is still as relevant today as it was when it was first developed in 1990. Numerous supported the regular renewal of the strategy as called for in the act.

As stated in section 44 of the *Environment Act*, "The purposes of the Yukon Conservation Strategy are (a) to provide a comprehensive long-term guide for the policies and practices of the Government of the Yukon in relation to the environment; and (b) to set out the commitments and recommendations of the Government of the Yukon with respect to conservation of the environment and sustainable development."

Section 45 talks about the Yukon conservation strategy being revised every three years. Several respondents said allowing ministerial discretion could undermine the timely updating of the strategy and this territory's ability to address emerging issues. Of those in support of the amendments, some said the discretion should be tempered by a clear and publicly available timeline and process. Several respondents said that they were concerned that political issues would influence whether the strategy is renewed instead of it being an impartial decision based on long-term environmental sustainability. Some respondents said that the strategy should be updated at the discretion of an independent and modernized Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment. Many respondents said that the Yukon government should work with First Nations, other governments and the public on an updated strategy that addresses broader issues such as biodiversity, hydrology, conservation, protected areas, wetlands, species at risk, and wildlife species in general. They said the strategy could address inter-related issues and be the glue that establishes Yukon's vision of environmental sustainability.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the minister's reasoning behind the changes to both the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment, as well as the changes proposed for the Yukon conservation strategy in light of the comments made from the respondents. I'll leave my other questions for Committee of the Whole.

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

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It is a pleasure to rise again to speak in second reading to this bill, Bill No. 73, entitled *Act to Amend the Environment Act*. As I covered off in my earlier discussion on this bill, this bill contemplates a number of changes to the *Environment Act* the government feels will modernize the act and provide for some options for new programming that previously had been prohibited or not enabled by the previous act.

I'm very confident that the changes are good ones that strengthen the *Environment Act* and provide the ability for new kinds of programming. Let me now review some of those, if I may.

First of all, the changes to the *Environment Act* include allowing for industry-led recycling programs. As I covered off last time we spoke on this particular topic, I think this is a notable gap in our current system with regard to solid-waste management and recycling. The restrictions that are in place as a result of the current act prohibit the use of industry-led recycling programs that have been adopted in a number of jurisdictions around the country. The last time we spoke on this subject, I listed off a few great examples from the Province of British Columbia, where that province has a number of programs that are leading-edge with regard to recycling and ensuring that a number of products stay out of the waste stream and stay within the recycling purview to allow them to be reused or properly disposed of.

Another change that is contemplated in this act is, of course, with regard to the contaminated sites. These changes would increase the likelihood that they will be redeveloped or repurposed by allowing the transfer of the liability from an owner to a third party or another party. The reason for that is simply that it encourages those who are thinking about purchasing a site that has some contamination and who have the resources to begin the cleanup efforts for that particular site can actually purchase the site.

As it stands right now, the owners of a particular site cannot sell the site until they have fully cleaned it up and removed the contaminated status of the site. So in cases where an owner of a site that is contaminated does not have the financial resources to clean up the site, the site simply sits dormant and remains contaminated perpetually. In the situation that we are envisioning here, the owner of the contaminated site could enter into an agreement for sale with another party — with the other party fully understanding that the site is contaminated — and that other party has the financial resources to clean it up.

We feel that the change here will facilitate the increased likelihood of cleaning up some of these contaminated sites.

Another important change that the act contemplates is the ability to ban hazardous substances. This is something that seems like — I'm sure many Yukoners would expect the government has this power, but in fact it does not. This is really filling a gap in terms of our toolkit to respond to environmental challenges and enact regulations to ban specific hazardous substances from being not only sold in the Yukon, but actually imported into the territory. I gave a number of examples of what those hazardous substances could include in my previous second reading speech.

When it comes to the changes around the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment and the conservation strategy, I know that there will be some questions and some debate in Committee of the Whole on this subject, so rather than go on at length currently, I would look forward to receiving some of those questions in Committee of the Whole and responding to them at that time, and having a more fulsome debate about those particular provisions.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend this bill to the House.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 73 agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, 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 5:29 p.m.

The following Sessional Paper was tabled April 23, 2014:

33-1-114

Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees 11th Report (April 17, 2014) (Hassard)

The following Written Question was tabled on April 23, 2014:

33-1-6

Re: Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges (Stick)