



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 162

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HANSARD

Tuesday, October 28, 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

CABINET MINISTERS

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Hon. Darrell Pasloski	Mountainview	Premier Minister responsible for Finance; Executive Council Office
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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Yukon Party

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Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
Patti McLeod	Watson Lake

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Jan Stick	Official Opposition House Leader Riverdale South
Kevin Barr	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes
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
Tuesday, October 28, 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 at this time with the Order Paper.

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Mental Illness Awareness Week

Mr. Elias: Today I rise to pay tribute to Mental Illness Awareness Week in Yukon from October 27 to 31. Today I ask my colleagues to join me in helping to raise awareness about mental illness.

In the past year, a concerted effort has been made to de-stigmatize mental illness. Government agencies, non-governmental organizations and private citizens have taken on the task of talking about mental illness and how it affects each and every one of us. Almost one in five Canadians will suffer from mental illness at one point in their lives. For far too long society has treated mental illness as an invisible illness, forcing sufferers to avoid seeking help for fear of stigma. It is time to bring it all out in the open and help our friends, our family members and work colleagues to obtain the help they need.

In Canada, public personalities like Rick Mercer and Clara Hughes have lent their fame and public goodwill to the cause by publicly talking about mental illness and encouraging others to talk about it too. Yukon has set aside the week of October 27 to 31 this year to focus attention on mental illness and how it affects all of us. Health and Social Services is working with the Second Opinion Society, the Mental Health Association of Yukon and Yukon College to increase awareness about mental illness. Activities include opportunities for the public to get screened for mental wellness, depression, anxiety and risky drinking. In addition, a mental health professional will be on hand to discuss the screening results. There will also be a panel discussion and a showing of the movie *It's Kind of a Funny Story* — a lighthearted movie that focuses on depression.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Yukon's mental health professionals and advocates for their dedication, compassion and determination to help improve the mental health of all Yukoners. The Mental Health Association of Yukon is a voluntary association that exists to promote the mental health of all Yukoners. In order to carry out its vision — to be an effective contributor to a positive mental health environment throughout the Yukon — the Mental Health Association of Yukon works to empower people with mental health issues to make informed choices regarding the management of their lives; to focus on community education,

awareness, advocacy and support services to reduce the stigma toward people labelled mentally ill; to increase positive attitudes toward mental health; and, to engage in partnerships and collaborative activities with other agencies and organizations concerned with mental health.

The Mental Health Association of Yukon has assisted with the delivery of educational programs like Clara's Big Ride, Not Myself Today, *Yukon State of Mind*, and most recently, Mental Illness Awareness Week. The community TV show, *Yukon State of Mind*, debuted this week with an intimate look at stigma and how it affects all of those affected by mental illness.

This was another example of the collaboration of several community organizations and businesses coming together to build on each other's strengths to educate the Yukon about the facts around mental illness. The Canadian Mental Health Association of Yukon believes in supporting the individual, the family and the community. One way of doing this is the caregiver support group, which educates, advocates for and supports the family, who are most often the primary caregiver for someone experiencing mental health challenges.

In closing, I would like to give the last word to Zelda Williams, daughter of comedian Robin Williams who suffered from depression and committed suicide earlier this year. Zelda Williams' messages paint a clear picture of how mental illness affects not only an individual but also their family. To quote her, "Mental illness is often misunderstood and misrepresented, but that's starting to change." "Mental health is as important as physical health, and whether there are visible signs or not, the suffering is real." "It is not cowardly to suffer or seek help."

Ms. Stick: I too rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to Mental Illness Awareness Week. This week is being celebrated in the Yukon. It's an annual national public education campaign to remind Canadians of the reality of mental illness. It's an opportunity to recognize the efforts of many individuals and organizations in our communities and to express support for current mental health initiatives.

Again, we are reminded of the need to talk about and discuss openly mental illness and mental health in an open and respectful way. It's not just the individual with mental illness who is impacted by their mental health difficulties or crises but, as is true for so many health concerns, families, friends, coworkers, neighbours and even our communities are impacted.

By learning more, by talking openly and by listening and educating ourselves about mental illness and mental health, we can bring this out of the shadows and encourage and call for and support a national action plan and a territorial action plan to address mental illness and mental health.

A thank you needs to be sent out to all those who promote mental health and to the many individuals, both in government departments and non-government organizations, who support individuals with mental illness and those around them. I would be remiss if I did not thank the Yukon division of the

Canadian Mental Health Association, the Second Opinion Society, Many Rivers and many mental health professionals within government departments and within our communities. They are reaching out and trying to support individuals and their families.

There are too many to name, but a thanks should be offered to them all. Mental illness impacts us all. Let's keep talking.

Mr. Silver: Today I rise on behalf of the Liberal caucus to also pay tribute to Mental Illness Awareness Week, which is an annual national public education campaign designed to help open the eyes of Canadians to the realities of mental illness. The week was established in 1992 by the Canadian Psychiatric Association and is now coordinated by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health in cooperation with all of its members, organizations and other supporters across Canada.

One of MIAW's major initiatives is the Faces of Mental Illness campaign, a national outreach campaign featuring the stories of Canadians living in recovery from mental illness. Thousands of pieces of MIAW posters, brochures and bookmarks featuring the faces are disseminated to hundreds of organizations across Canada in an effort to raise awareness and to end the stigma that's attached to mental illness.

Locally, this week is being marked with events tonight at the Beringia Centre and later this week at the Yukon College. There is also a caregiver support group open house at 4 Hospital Road on October 30 at 7:00 p.m. to support families and friends of those who live with mental illness.

Speaker: Are there any visitors to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I would request all members of the Legislature to join me in welcoming two representatives of mental health organizations here in Whitehorse: Hailey Hechtman and Kim Solonick are both here. Hailey is from the Second Opinion Society and Kim is with the Mental Health Association of Yukon. Welcome.

Applause

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Dawson teaching and working farm

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Legislative Assembly to congratulate the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and the Yukon College on signing their memorandum of understanding for the teaching and working farm in Dawson.

This memorandum of understanding builds on already great partnerships that we have seen with the Yukon College and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, which is producing great results like the one that we saw this spring with the graduates of the first class of the mobile trades training trailer program.

I would also like to acknowledge outgoing Chief Eddie Taylor and his team for their work and also executive director Jackie Olson. Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in stands as a standard bearer

of what we can achieve in the Yukon when we let our educational institutions work with many partners toward those paths of traditional knowledge. This project will help preserve and maintain indigenous plants and shrubs important to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in healing traditions, as well as preserving a way of life that is based upon an economic and a spiritual relationship with the land, providing an on-the-land working environment for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens as well as developing a secure source of fresh produce for Dawson — things that we can all be proud of, Mr. Speaker.

Yukon College is leading the way in working with Yukon's First Nations to showcase what we can achieve in the Yukon when our education system is evolved to meet the needs of its students. Dr. Karen Barnes and her team at the college have worked very hard over the last number of years to build a unique and northern educational experience for northern residents. The new research opportunities at the teaching and working farm can only help further our understanding of our unique climate and landscape.

This is a great opportunity for all of Yukon, and I wish both partners the best of luck as they move the project into the next stages of development.

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 82: *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I move that Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Public Works that Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 82 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to collect data on every sheep harvested in the territory, continue to build its unique data set and provide that information to the public through publications such as *Yukon Thinhorn Sheep: Horn Growth, Genetics and Climate Change*.

Ms. Hanson: I rise to give notice of following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to review the use of auxiliary-on-call staffing positions to ensure that auxiliary-on-call employees who are working on a full-time, ongoing basis are hired as permanent employees and receive the benefit of a full-time, permanent Government of Yukon employee.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to adequately fund Raven Recycling.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House congratulates the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and Yukon College on their recent memorandum of understanding for the Teaching and Working Farm program in Dawson.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explore new options to replace early childhood development programs no longer supported by Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services to ensure that:

(a) mothers have a safe and supportive environment to help them through postpartum depression and stresses to being a new parent; and

(b) program capacity in the territory is sufficient to match the number of children born each year.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?
Seeing none, this then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Intergovernmental relations

Ms. Hanson: This government's "my way or the highway" approach to governing has gone on for far too long. Last night the City of Whitehorse passed a unanimous resolution calling on the Premier to reassign the Minister of Community Services because of his uncooperative and disrespectful approach to, for one instance, the affordable housing file.

The City of Whitehorse has broken the cone of silence and fear that has covered the divisive tactics of this government. The call by the city to reassign a senior minister speaks volumes to the serious erosion of trust and respect that underlies the Yukon Party approach to other levels of government. Unfortunately this is another chapter in a book of broken relationships that stretches back over a decade.

What immediate action is the Premier taking to mend the Yukon Party's broken relationships with the City of Whitehorse?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This government works hard on a daily basis with all governments on many fronts. In fact, this Friday, the Minister of Community Services and the Minister of Environment, along with their officials, are meeting with the City of Whitehorse to talk about many different topics on an agenda that was fully agreed upon by both parties. Some

things, such as the new sports complex that this government will build for the citizens of Yukon, and specifically for the citizens of Whitehorse — they're going to be talking about recycling; they're going to be talking about the *Municipal Act* review; they're going to be talking about the Arctic X Games and they're going to be talking about building consolidation, because we know that this is a priority for the city as well and of course we'll be talking about land devolution as well.

We continue to work on a daily basis with all levels of government.

Ms. Hanson: The track record of this government is clear. They have broken or undermined almost every important relationship with their partners. This government alienated its government partners and the Yukon public in the land use planning process to a point where it has ground to a halt. It has broken its relationship with teachers by muzzling them. It has broken the trust of the public service by delaying the passage of whistler-blower legislation and it continues to try to undercut land claims agreements at the expense of its relationship with First Nation governments.

The first step toward fixing relationships is admitting you have a problem. When will the Premier acknowledge that his divisive approach isn't working and what concrete steps will he take as leader of his caucus and as Premier to turn his sinking ship around?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It's disappointing to listen to the Leader of the Official Opposition — and in fact on a regular basis, the Leader of the Liberal Party as well — as they condemn and criticize the actions of the public servants. I started making a list a while ago, but essentially all departments have been impacted or criticized by opposition members from both parties criticizing the work they do. This government will continue to stand up for the professional work for our professional public service and will continue to work with governments — all levels of governments — throughout the territory. We don't live in a fairy tale world though. We will disagree on some issues sometimes, but that's how it is in the real world.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, the first step is acknowledging you have a problem. Clearly, the Premier cannot do that.

Nowhere is this government's inability to maintain a relationship with its Yukon partners more apparent than its treatment of First Nations. I don't need to remind Yukoners that this government is in court with several First Nation governments over its inability or unwillingness to adequately consult with them.

Now the Premier is in lockstep with the federal Conservatives on the proposed YESAA, which are fundamentally a back-door approach to undermine the final agreements that undermine the certainty necessary for a vibrant economy. I don't know if the Premier doesn't understand the importance of the final agreements and Yukon's relationship with First Nations or if he doesn't care. The result is the same: broken trust and broken relationships.

Why is the Premier taking a page out of the federal Conservative playbook by alienating its partners? Is he truly trying to run his sinking ship into the ground?

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

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I already articulated, both in this House and in fact, in the media, through a five-year review of YESAA, there were 76 recommendations that went forward. Seventy-three of 76 recommendations were agreed upon by everybody. That is outstanding.

Throughout those processes of almost seven years of consultation, Yukon government shared all of its comments with all of the parties that were involved in the consultation process. Bottom line for this government is that we are committed to ensuring that all assessment processes are consistent with other jurisdictions across this country. It allows us to remain competitive so that we can bid for and see that projects come to this jurisdiction, because that means good jobs for Yukoners and that means good jobs for Yukon families.

Question re: Affordable housing strategy

Ms. White: On the very first opposition day after the 2011 election, the NDP called on the government to develop an affordable housing strategy for Yukon. That call to action was rejected until two years later, when the government seemed to come to its senses.

The previous minister of housing, the Member for Riverdale North, promised to work with private developers to build affordable rental housing on Lot 262. The promise was broken and the project was cancelled. When the Member for Lake Laberge took over the housing file, he too promised to work with private developers to build affordable rental housing for Yukoners. That promise was again broken after the 75 units promised to Whitehorse were cancelled. Even before these two ministers dropped the affordable housing ball, the previous Yukon Party government couldn't even set aside lots for development in the midst of an affordable housing crisis.

This government's track record on affordable housing is nothing short of shameful. Mr. Speaker, when will this government recognize that history is repeating itself yet again and create the affordable rental housing that Yukoners desperately need?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I should note first of all to the members is that it is unfortunate the member chooses to frame things the way she does. The government has invested since 2007 well in excess of \$100 million — not even counting investments in this current fiscal year in 207 Alexander Street and in the 48-unit seniors complex that \$12 million was allocated for in this budget.

In fact, contrary to the member's assertions, the RFQ/RFP process developed by the Yukon Housing Corporation did not target any specific number of units in any municipality, including Whitehorse. Government, as I noted, because of a significant shift in the market, did recognize that the situation had changed and that, when the vacancy rate in rentals has jumped from 1.5 percent to 7.1 percent, and 13.9

percent in duplexes, we have to be very mindful that government action does not undermine people's investments in what is for most people their largest single investment — their home.

Ms. White: Again we hear the minister's lack of understanding between social housing and affordable rental housing. The minister likes to wax poetic about his accomplishments on housing, but what he isn't telling us is that he's actually comparing very different numbers on vacancy rates. The minister is on record, just right now, stating that vacancy rates in the territory have increased since 2013 from 1.5 percent to 7.1 percent. What he fails to tell us is that during that time, the kind of buildings included in the survey also increased astronomically. He continues to compare two very different sets of numbers. What the minister also fails to mention is that the cost of rent has increased significantly by 5.1 percent, which is much, much higher than the rate of inflation.

How can Yukoners trust a minister who takes such a selective view of government statistics?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In fact, the question the member should be asking is how can the public trust an opposition that takes such a selective and uninformed view of statistics? What the member is referring to — the vacancy rate — prior to this year when statistics captured all units, used to only count buildings with three or more units, missing over half of the rental market. We changed that through better data collection. On three units and above, the vacancy rate in those units has more than tripled to 4.7 percent when one considers the little landlords — the people with one and two rental units who make up most of the market and depend on the income from those rental units to pay their mortgage in many cases. The vacancy rate climbs to 7.1 percent and 13.9 percent for people who own duplexes.

This government will continue to invest in Housing and targeting those areas most in need, but we will also recognize the importance of not undermining people's largest investment — their home — through multi-million-dollar grants to large developers.

Ms. White: I believe that the numbers will stand on their own two feet.

The minister is speaking winners and losers when it comes to housing and he doesn't understand that affordable rental housing is a tenant's issue. This government's poor track record on affordable rental housing predates the minister. As we sit here and listen to his excuses again and again for his government's inactions past and present, Yukoners who are struggling to make ends meet are paying the price. Imagine having to set aside 50 percent or 60 percent of your paycheck for rent, Mr. Speaker. These are people who can't afford the \$1,500-a-month duplex that the minister suggests that they rent.

When will the government's minister of housing — whoever it may be tomorrow — commit to creating the affordable rental units that Yukoners need?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: This minister — tomorrow — will continue to do the same thing that I and my caucus colleagues

have done, which is to work with partners in these areas and to work with and invest in NGOs.

I would remind the member that our track record in investing and increasing support for NGOs that provide services to those most in need is a record second to none in which the NDP's record when in government is — well, frankly, they should be ashamed of their lack of support for NGOs. We have continued to work with NGOs.

We will continue to work with all levels of government and in fact, through the *Housing Action Plan*, we have involved multiple stakeholders and have had a series of meetings that has led to the draft *Housing Action Plan* which will identify next steps, not just for government, but identifying the needs and opportunities that everyone — from private sector businesses to individuals, First Nation governments, development corporations and municipalities — could all use to help guide our work together.

We again will continue to do what we have done, which is to take the next steps while working and engaging with partners at all levels of government.

Question re: Raven Recycling Centre funding

Mr. Silver: I would like to go back to this government's commitments on recycling that were clearly outlined in their election platform. The Premier told Yukoners before this session started that the government has fulfilled many of its commitments it has made to Yukoners. I would like to remind the Premier that there is still more work to be done.

Let's go to page 15 of his platform and see what was promised for recycling: "...develop a goal of zero waste with a target of 50% waste diversion by 2015." It has become clear that the minister responsible doesn't even support that goal. He told Yukoners on October 1 that recycling was a personal responsibility and really had nothing to do with his government.

Will the Premier admit that his government's commitment to 50-percent waste diversion by 2015 will not be met, especially now that our largest recycler has been seriously marginalized by a lack of funding?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Whether intentionally or unintentionally, the Member for Klondike, the Liberal leader, is not accurately representing my comments on October 1. In fact, what I was attempting to convey at that point in the interview was the fact that recycling requires not just government investment, which it does require, but it also requires people making a personal commitment to changing their own behaviours, to choose not to throw recyclables in the trash but, instead, to separate them out.

Again, we have continued to work in this area. When it comes to Raven Recycling, we are working with partners, including the City of Whitehorse, to identify sustainable, long-term and cost-effective solutions for processing recyclables.

With Raven, specifically — last month they requested that the diversion credit we implemented last year at their request be more than doubled to \$330 per tonne. We've asked them to give us a cost breakdown on that, and we're still

waiting for that. In fact, I asked my deputy minister this morning to send Raven a reminder that we are looking forward to receiving that information.

Mr. Silver: What he says and what he means — we've heard this before from the minister responsible. Given the minister's attitude, it's no wonder that Yukoners don't trust the government on when they are going to make good on this commitment or not. The minister believes that recycling is a personal responsibility, as cited from his words in the paper, and that's — I'll let those words speak for themselves.

Let's go to the actual issue. The government is sitting on the sidelines and is letting Raven Recycling stay closed to all but refundables, so it's clear that a cash injection is needed for this reopening immediately while some longer-term issues get resolved.

The question would be: How does the minister plan to meet his own target of 50-percent waste diversion by 2015 when Raven Recycling is all but closed?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, what I should point out to the member is that last year Raven Recycling and the other processor jointly approached government and asked us to implement a diversion credit matching the \$75 per tonne the city pays for a combined credit of \$150 per tonne, and we did exactly that.

Last month Raven requested the combined diversion credit be more than doubled to \$330 a tonne. We've asked them for more information and, as I noted in my previous response, I asked my deputy minister this morning to remind them that we are still waiting for that information. We are continuing to work with the city on identifying sustainable long-term and cost-effective solutions for processing recyclables in the Yukon. We have jointly funded a consultant's study that they have commissioned. Officials have been in discussion and the Minister of Environment and I are scheduled to meet with the mayor and city council on Friday of this week, along with our senior officials, to talk about issues including recycling, and to talk about next steps for both the City of Whitehorse and the Yukon government.

Mr. Silver: We're looking for a leadership role here from a senior level of government. It's very clear that this government is not going to meet its commitment of 50-percent waste diversion by 2015 without Raven being completely open. It seems there has been a complete 180-degree turn in policy here and it begs the question: Does the Yukon Party no longer support the previous environmental and social principles that led to the original investments into a public good? If the government no longer supports a 50-percent target, or Raven, then what is the new policy objective that is being sought here? You don't take away an integral service or public good without an alternative plan or objective. So, what are these? Or, are we witnessing here just a complete absence of forethought on this particular file?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, as I noted to the member, in fact we are continuing to work on this issue jointly with the City of Whitehorse. They are in fact a larger player in waste management than we are, because most of the Yukon population is within the City.

We made it clear that the Yukon government is committed to continuing to do more in this area. In fact, when it comes to Raven Recycling, it was just last month that they asked us to more than double the combined diversion credit to \$330 per tonne from the \$150 per tonne it was put at, at their request, last year. We've asked them for more information to clarify what those increased costs are made up of. We have yet to receive it. We are working jointly with the city in considering options and identifying long-term solutions to ensure that Yukoners continue to have access to the recycling processes and capacity that they need. That includes a meeting that the Minister of Environment and I have scheduled this Friday with the mayor and city council, as well as work that has been going on, on a weekly basis at the officials' level.

Again, we will work jointly with the city on this and identify what needs to be done to ensure that Yukoners have access to the recycling services they need.

Question re: Coroner's report re death at Watson Lake Hospital

Ms. Stick: The two recent coroner's inquests into deaths at the Watson Lake Hospital have shaken public confidence in the Hospital Corporation's ability to manage patient safety. Major gaps in patient safety and oversight were identified through the inquests and many recommendations were made.

Last week, I asked the minister if he would publicly report on the implementation of the coroner's recommendations and the minister said — and I quote: "I don't know which parts of the assessment that will be conducted by the Hospital Corporation will be confidential ..." But these recommendations, Mr. Speaker, are about policies and procedures of the Hospital Corporation — not about individuals. Can the minister commit to providing a public report on the implementation of the coroner's recommendations on behalf of the Yukon Hospital Corporation?

Hon. Mr. Graham: This morning the chair of the Yukon Hospital Corporation and I had a long discussion on this very subject. What we will be doing, once the hospital has completed their review, is providing to the Yukon public and to this Legislature a list of all of the recommendations — or a list of all of the actions — being taken by the Yukon Hospital Corporation in relation to improving their services at the various facilities in the territory. That I will commit to. We will be making those actions public once the Hospital Corporation's review has been completed.

Ms. Stick: I would thank the minister for that information. We are pleased to hear there's a commitment to a public report on the progress made on these coroner's recommendations that are so important to so many people. My only question left then would be: Can the minister indicate how soon that report might be made available, both to the public and to this Legislature?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Not at this time.

Question re: Alaska Highway corridor functional plan

Ms. Moorcroft: For years, I've been asking the Highways and Public Works minister about the Alaska Highway corridor functional plan. Each time, my questions have been deflected with assurances that the Yukon government intended to make the plan public. The months and years continue to pass and the accident rate along this corridor remains tragically high. The number of accidents and traffic fatalities in recent years demonstrate how critical this issue is.

My question today is simple: Will the minister tell the House when the draft Alaska Highway corridor report will be made available to the public?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I do thank the member opposite for the question. My ADM of Transportation spoke this morning on the radio and articulated quite clearly exactly what we are doing. By spending tax dollars on improving our roads, this government is making sure that Yukoners get to work each day. That's our school buses; that's our emergency personnel; and that's the food and fuel and everything else we require in the Yukon.

The Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway is one of the most important roads, of course — I've said this in this House over and over and over — and it's used by just about everyone who lives or visits Whitehorse and the Yukon. Up front, we've put a lot of time and effort into working with the City of Whitehorse, working with our local First Nations at the first level of consultation, because the City of Whitehorse is a key player in this, with accesses.

Right now, we're out looking at the high level and — you know what? We'll have the functional plan come forward and this government will look at what we're going to do for next steps, moving forward.

Ms. Moorcroft: I'm glad the minister thinks it's important. It's important enough that he should answer the question. In the Highways and Public Works debate last spring, the Minister of Highways and Public Works told this House — and I quote: "A public participation component will be used to refine the plan once we've decided which construction will be moving forward." It's hard to refine a document that the government refuses to let you see.

This continues to be a textbook example of the Yukon Party's approach to consultation. They do the planning, make the decisions, and then invite the public to participate in a so-called public consultation phase. Will the public input during the consultation phase be used to guide and prioritize the upgrades and construction along the Alaska Highway corridor? Or is it simply an exercise to make the public feel included?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Yes.

Ms. Moorcroft: Well, I'm not sure if it's yes, the public input will be used, or the public will just be made to feel included, Mr. Speaker.

The fact is — and the minister should be seriously concerned about this — that many of the intersections along the Alaska Highway corridor are not designed to modern-day standards that can safely accommodate the amount and type of

traffic now using this route. Most of the people living in the country residential subdivisions surrounding Whitehorse drive this road every day. They are reminded of the safety issues by the number of memorials and crosses visible along the route.

This morning, a Highways and Public Works official said that the corridor might be four lanes if not necessary but not necessarily four lanes, yet the minister has not provided the House or the public with any updates.

What is the minister waiting for before sharing the draft report with the public? Will he release the draft Alaska Highway report?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: When I answered my last question, it was, yes, we're going to take into consideration the consultation. I've actually been out there talking to local businesses myself, looking at this.

The long-term vision of this government — the reason that we're doing this is because this government does have a long-term vision. We have to address the fact that the Yukon is growing. Good economic development, sustainable economic development, diversified economic development still grows. We saw with the washouts how important the stretch of road is in getting goods and services to the community. We're doing our due diligence. We're out there at the high-range level of consultation and, again, when we identify each individual project, we will go and consult with those directly affected. Basically, we've already consulted with the First Nations and the City of Whitehorse. We're going to continue doing that. We're at a high-level consultation right now, looking at listening to some of the industry players and everybody else who uses the road — bus drivers and so on and so on — and then, when we identify a location where we will do work, we'll consult again with the immediate residents and those people around there. We're doing our due diligence. This stuff takes time, and I'm proud to say that we're working hard on this.

Question re: Family education programs

Ms. Stick: Yesterday the minister spoke to this Assembly about what he incorrectly characterized as the mother and babies program formally run by Many Rivers. These were part of a long-standing continuum of family education programs delivered by Many Rivers for the past 10 to 20 years.

He also stated that he did not receive a request to jump in and fund that program. I wonder when the minister stopped considering the call of Yukoners a request. As of this morning, 118 Yukoners have signed a petition calling on the minister to include family education as part of the core funding agreement and to reinstate the position of family educator and to continue to offer family education programs.

This is a clear request for funding from Yukoners. Will the minister commit to reopening its 2012 contribution agreement and offering core funding for family education programs and staff?

Hon. Mr. Graham: What the member opposite seems to not realize is that Many Rivers is a non-government organization with an independent board of governors who are

fully capable of approaching and requesting additional funding from this government, if they so desire. Many Rivers, to date, has not come forward and said, "We wish to continue running this program and we don't have enough funding, so we would appreciate some funding from the territorial government."

I haven't received that request, Mr. Speaker. Even if they did, there is a process that has to be followed and we would follow that process. We don't necessarily just hand out money because 108 people have requested it. We will consider it carefully and we will look at the pros and cons, but we don't jump into things without first of all considering the ramifications.

Ms. Stick: "Getting a good start" is one of three pathways set out in the Yukon government's 2014 *Wellness Plan for Yukon's Children and Family*. It states that: "All parents and caregivers benefit from information on healthy child development and good parenting practices."

In fact, research shows effective ways to improve child well-being include quality early learning and care programs in places where families can meet, socialize, swap ideas, support each other, play and have fun.

Sound familiar? It should. The *Wellness Plan* clearly states that Many Rivers offers services and programs to increase parents' knowledge, skill and confidence. It's in the *Wellness Plan*.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain to Yukoners why Many Rivers' long-standing commitment to family education doesn't merit this core funding when it's in the *Wellness Plan*?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I'm perhaps a little slow, but I don't understand what part of the first answer the member opposite didn't understand. Many Rivers is an independent organization. We negotiate a three-year agreement with them, which we did last year, and we will follow that three-year agreement. If they request a change to that agreement, we would follow the same process. We would sit down, consult with them, and determine if the programs and services that they wish to offer — first of all, whether or not they are offered by another organization or by the government itself — were cost-effective. We would look at a number of different areas. If we didn't do our due diligence in this area, the member opposite would be the first one who would stand up and yell at me and say — I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, that may be inappropriate language. The member opposite would be the first one to point out to me that we didn't do due diligence before we went ahead and spent a lot of money.

There's a process in place and we'll follow that process. If I receive a request for funding, that will be considered and shared with my Cabinet colleagues.

Ms. Stick: When this wellness plan was written and presented to this government, I assumed that those evaluations would have taken place. They just didn't pick this information out of the air. They just didn't talk about Many Rivers providing these programs. It's in the wellness report that this government, this department, has presented as a way of

improving wellness for all Yukoners in Whitehorse and communities. The government acknowledged that this was a good program being offered at Many Rivers, so I don't understand when the minister says that they had the negotiations and they didn't bring it up. They didn't bring it up and they said they didn't want to do it anymore. It's unclear.

Can the minister explain why he would not include core funding to a program that clearly meets objectives set out by his department, presumably with good information?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I wasn't there at the negotiations; however, what I will tell you is that obviously the funding of these programs did not come up during the signing of a new contribution agreement with Many Rivers. Had the subject come up, I'm sure my department would have brought that back to me and said that X number of dollars is being requested for core funding for a specific program. I would have asked the department to evaluate that request, give me an opinion about whether or not the request was legitimate and real, and I would have brought that information back to my Cabinet and said that I would like to add X number of dollars to my budget in order to continue running this program.

None of that occurred. So hopefully, at some point in the future, it will occur but, until it does, I'm afraid that what could have happened or what did happen is of no consequence, because it didn't happen.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. White: I ask the House to join me in welcoming a not-unfamiliar face to this House, a fellow bicycle enthusiast, Mr. Darren Parsons. We had a fantastic chat on the weekend about bicycles, so thank you for coming.

Applause

Notice of government private members' business

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the government private members to be called for debate on Wednesday, October 29, 2014. They are: Motion No. 724, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake and Motion No. 723, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 710

Clerk: Motion No. 710, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Speaker: It is moved by the Hon. Premier THAT this House:

(1) urges the Government of Yukon to show national unity and Yukon's support for the Government of Canada's decision to participate in the broad international coalition of nations working together to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and to provide humanitarian aid to innocent people suffering from ISIL's atrocities;

(2) recognizes the personal contribution of Canadians serving in the Armed Forces and that the experience of war has profound and ongoing consequences for veterans by supporting our troops during combat missions, and after they return home; and

THAT the Speaker of the Yukon Legislative Assembly transmit the decision of this House to the Parliament of Canada and to the provincial and territorial assemblies of Canada.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: My caucus colleagues and I have brought this motion forward because we believe that it is important that we show national unity and Yukon support for the Government of Canada's decision to participate in the broad international coalition of nations working together to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL. We also believe it is important to provide humanitarian aid to innocent people suffering from ISIL's atrocities.

In Canada we enjoy tremendous rights and freedoms. Canada has a long tradition of standing with our allies and of standing up to tyranny and violence. Our forces participated in the Afghanistan mission because we were asked to do so. Canada has alliances and with these come benefits and responsibilities.

I was impressed by a recent letter to the editor that makes an important point about honouring our commitments to our allies. The author stated the following: "Canada is not, and never has been, a neutral country. We have interests abroad, and alliances to maintain. We desire peace and stability in the world, but the world is a dangerous place. We must be prepared to defend our country and our way of life. These alliances, which have kept us safe for many years, come with obligations." The author of that is Darcy Grossinger, who is a veteran of our country and the current president of the Royal Canadian Legion No. 254 in the *Whitehorse Star* on October 20, 2014.

Over the course of the summer, each one of us was appalled by the media reports of barbarism that emerged from this conflict. It seemed as if each week contained a fresh report of a new level of savagery. We have seen the brutal murders of aid workers and journalists, professional women, doctors, lawyers and politicians singled out to be executed. There are well-documented reports of crucifying, beheading and the chopping off of arms and legs.

We know the names of James Foley, Steven Sotloff, Alan Henning and David Haines, two American journalists and two UK aid workers who were captured, imprisoned and murdered by ISIL. Although the names of slaughtered western hostages are well-known, at least 17 Iraqi journalists have been executed by ISIS. Many more have been abducted. On

October 10, an Iraqi cameraman — a 37-year old father of three — was publicly beheaded.

All minorities are targeted by ISIL. Yazidi men have been slaughtered and the women used as slaves by the thousands. They claim that their religion justifies this. The harrowing tales recounted to us by fortunate survivors demonstrate the evils being perpetrated by ISIL.

One of the UK aid workers is reported to have believed that he was going home because he had done nothing wrong. He was simply helping Syrian children and refugees. He cried for his fellow captives when ISIL took him away because he thought he was being freed. Instead, he was taken deeper into the ISIL prison network and beheaded. These and other atrocities, committed by ISIL, offend the whole world from north to south, from east to west. The UN Special Representative of the Secretary General in Iraq, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, is a Bulgarian and Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the High Commissioner for Human Rights is a Jordanian and a Muslim.

I mention their nationalities because this is not a West-against-Middle-East battle, nor is it a modern-day crusade against Muslims, as some have suggested. They jointly issued a report on protection of civilians in armed conflict in Iraq, July 6 to September 10, 2014. The report found corroborated evidence of rapes and sexual violence against women and children; forced conversions or death; the complete repudiation of basic human rights, and systematic genocide. We have seen their brutality and their violence overseas and we see it very close to home. Two main attacks — one on Monday in Quebec and the other on Tuesday in Ottawa — claimed the life of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo.

Canada has joined the international community in saying that this tyranny, this oppression, this bondage cannot be tolerated. Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has determined that the cause of freedom is once again in peril. Just as we stood with our allies in France a century ago, the Government of Canada has declared that we will stand with our allies. We will stand for our principles, and that means that we will stand up to this tyranny.

As our Prime Minister stated in his address to the nation on Wednesday evening following the attack on our nation, we are also reminded that attacks on our security personnel and our institutions of governance are, by their very nature, attacks on our country, on our values, on our society, and on us, Canadians, as a free and democratic people who embrace human dignity for all, just as it will lead us to strengthen our resolve and redouble our efforts to work with our allies around the world and fight against the terrorist organizations that brutalize those in other countries with the hope of bringing their savagery to our shores. This motion represents an opportunity for Yukon to express our support for the Government of Canada's decision to participate in the broad international coalition of nations working together to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIL, and to provide humanitarian aid to innocent people suffering from ISIL's atrocities.

Of course, as a compassionate and a democratic society, Canada sees suffering and wants to alleviate it. Our intent is to deliver humanitarian aid. As we have learned time and time again, there can be no delivery of humanitarian aid without security. We want to help heal the wounds, feed the hungry, and give shelter and sanctuary to those who are suffering. We cannot deliver this aid without safe passage, and the perpetrators here have shown no indication of providing safe passage. To the contrary, they have no regard for civilians. They make no such distinctions for ISIL — either to convert to their way or you are executed as a non-believer. We will deliver aid, but first we must take the knives from the throats of those who are currently being threatened.

Having been a long-time member of the Legion, I have spent many years listening to members of the armed services and their families relate their experiences of the reception they received when they returned from duty. In speaking with members of this Assembly, such as yourself, and with Yukoners who have served, I understand the importance of supporting our forces. We can recognize the personal contribution of Canadians by showing respect and recognizing that military service is a difficult and challenging job. Not everyone wants or is willing to perform the tasks and to undertake the missions that governments ask of their military. Indeed, some countries compel their citizens to participate in military service.

Canada's Armed Forces are entirely voluntary. These women and men have willingly agreed to serve their nation. If for no other reason, that alone is reason enough to deserve our respect. Many have shared with me the feeling that, having done what our nation asked of them, their contributions be recognized as valuable and important. This is something that we need to do, not just when they return or for a week or during November — we need to support them throughout the year and in the years following.

The experience of war has profound and ongoing consequences for veterans. Some veterans return with injuries — some visible, some invisible. Our society is developing a better understanding of responding to the invisible wounds. Decisions to deploy domestically or internationally are not taken lightly. We recognize the importance of understanding the dangers involved, not just to life and limb, but to each soldier's spirit and their moral compass. In his book, *What It Is Like to Go to War*, Karl Marlantes writes in his preface the following: "The violence of combat assaults psyches, confuses ethics and tests souls. This is not only a result of the violence suffered. It is also a result of the violence inflicted. Warriors suffer from wounds to their bodies, to be sure, but because they were involved in killing people, they also suffer from their compromises with, or outright violations of, the moral norms of society and religion."

We understand that injuries, seen and unseen, caused by conflicts can have long-lasting effects on members, their families and their friends. Some organizations provide a place for members to discuss their challenges with others having similar experiences. Through sharing experiences, they find healing. Each one of us can play a role in supporting our

troops. They deserve our respect and our honour. We believe that it is important that we recognize the personal contribution of Canadians serving in the Armed Forces and that the experience of war has profound and ongoing consequences to veterans by supporting our troops during combat missions and after they return home.

In his address to the nation, the Prime Minister reaffirmed that we will not be intimidated. Canada will never be intimidated.

The third point of this motion requests that the Speaker of the Yukon Legislative Assembly communicate to other assemblies in Canada the decision of this House. Canadians enjoy tremendous rights and freedoms, including the right to free speech. It is my hope that other assemblies across Canada will join us in expressing their solidarity with Canada.

Now that the decision to engage has been made, I believe we need to voice our support and encourage others to do the same. In response to the assault on our nation, the Prime Minister has stated that he has every confidence that Canadians will pull together with the kind of firm solidarity that we have seen our country through many challenges.

By endorsing this motion today, we can express Yukon's solidarity with Canada. As I stated in this Assembly on Thursday, Canada is a free and democratic country where we agree to disagree civilly. We can protect our democracy by diligently carrying on with the daily work of democracy.

Our democratically elected Assembly using the tools of democracy to pass a motion that affirms our support for the Government of Canada and affirms our support for our forces and their families and shares that support with other democratically elected assemblies across our nation is a great way to show that our democratic institutions continue to function.

Mr. Speaker, let us show the contrast between ISIL's wanton disregard for democratic rights by using the tools of democracy in our response.

In light of the tragic events that have unfolded in the Levant, in Canada and, indeed, in our nation's capital, let us be clear with the symbolism — that was an attack on our entire nation.

We face choices on how to respond. It can be said that we are being attacked because we choose to stand with our allies against oppression and against violence. As I contemplated the situation in the Middle East that precipitated our motion and the events that have unfolded on our soil since then, I am reminded that what matters is our values. We remain committed to our fundamental freedoms. We remain committed to our democratic rights and responsibilities. We remain committed to human rights. We remain committed to the rule of law. We have stood up for those values time and time again. We have a duty to defend what we cherish. I urge all members of this Assembly to support this motion.

Ms. Hanson: At the outset, I want to be clear that the Yukon New Democratic Party unequivocally condemns the murder of Canadian soldiers. I spoke at length on the first day

of this session with respect to the sadness that I and the rest of my caucus felt on hearing of their deaths.

I'm sorry Mr. Speaker. I have to leave for a second.

Speaker: We will take a five-minute recess while the member retires for a second.

Recess

Ms. Hanson: It's a good lesson on keeping your head up. I will endeavour to do that for the balance.

As I was saying, the Official Opposition, the NDP, has been clear in our unequivocal condemnation of the murder of Canadian soldiers. I spoke on the opening day of this Fall Session about the sadness that we felt, that Canadians felt, on hearing about the deaths of the soldiers in Quebec and in Ottawa.

In approaching and discussing the motion that is before us this afternoon, we gave careful thought to what is being proposed and what is being put before us. As it is with all matters that come before the Legislative Assembly, we feel it is important to ask: what is the outcome that we're seeking, and does the motion that is being put forward do anything? There have been and there will be many, many words spoken over the last number of days about issues associated with the notions of terrorism, the reality of terrorism, with the horrors of war, with the evil that comes from hate.

Mr. Speaker, the challenge that we face is being able to separate out the importance of the day-to-day reality of those people who are living and have been living with the horrors of either state terrorism or individually based terrorism for many, many years, in particular in the regions from Afghanistan across the Middle East. We need to ask ourselves what the government's motion will actually accomplish.

The federal government in Ottawa has already committed elements of the Canadian Armed Forces to the latest conflict in the Middle East. That is a done deal. Where Canada has fallen short is really on the humanitarian front. Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced by state terrorism, and our government watched thousands fleeing, watched thousands having their homes destroyed and children being murdered. We've watched and we've not responded with the openness and the compassion that we speak about as one of the underlying values of Canadian society. We have not opened our doors to allow refugees in here. We sit as observers on the sidelines as countries like Turkey, which can ill afford it, take in a million refugees.

There has been a lot of emphasis and heightened rhetoric, I would suggest, over the last week in particular about military action. We are about so much more.

I want to speak a little bit about what it means when you take on and engage, and we ask — and yet again invoke that sacred covenant that Canada speaks of when it speaks of its military, and we call upon them to act and to serve on our behalf in lands far away. I want to speak to that a bit. I want to speak to some of the issues that are associated with the fundamental values and principles that we talk about as we

ask these troops — when we talk about them defending and we ask them to go forward.

I want to spend a brief time on that, Mr. Speaker, because, at the core of this is our resolve and our belief that, as a Legislative Assembly, we have a very limited amount of time during each session to debate matters of great importance to Yukon. I, as Leader of the Official Opposition, question that this is the Premier's top priority, and we need to ask ourselves whether this is a government that has any vision left for the territory or if this is simply an attempt to run the clock.

At times when there are many issues — humanitarian issues in our own neighbourhood, issues that affect our relationships and really speak to how we treat each other with respect — it's one thing to talk about the horrors and the lack of respect elsewhere, but we have a lack of respect in this country, in this territory.

One of the things that strikes poorest in the reaction to the events and the issues that have gone on — not just last week, Mr. Speaker, but have been going on for years where we played small parts and larger parts — there is a very serious temptation at times to rise to a level of rhetoric as opposed to reflecting on what the core values and core issues are here.

As I was thinking about how we would address this issue, I was reminded that we were called upon in your opening prayer to conduct ourselves with dignity, temperance and honour and, in my view, that means that government needs to make sure that it takes the time to reflect and not react. There is an element of both the actions that have been taken at the federal level and that are being echoed here that are reacting and not reacting in terms of what will be a substantive effort — what will be the substantive effect of what we do on a lasting basis as a nation, as a territory.

It reaffirms the importance of reaffirming our belief in our common values and the foundations of our identity, our democracy and our compassion. In times of crisis, we are often tempted to sacrifice our civil liberties for the benefit of an abstract sense of security offered by higher security, more restrictions and greater access to our lives. I don't think it has to be that way.

You know, Mr. Speaker, there has been reference to the shootings in Ottawa last week. We know that that shooter was not on the RCMP's radar. We need to reflect and to remember the struggles that we as a country have fought to ensure — that our civil liberties are as strong as they are today — and we have to work to ensure that we do not sacrifice the now in panic.

We as a country, as part of our Constitution, have reaffirmed certain values, rights and freedoms in our *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Who among us would be the first to deny that everyone has the fundamental freedom of conscience and religion? Who among us would suggest that there are those in our society who don't have the freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression? Who among us would suggest that somebody else — not you — does not have the freedom of peaceful assembly or the freedom of association? Those are fundamental values that we as Canadians have affirmed and reaffirmed.

We also have affirmed that everyone as a Canadian has the right to life, liberty and security of person. Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search procedures. As we react and as we think about what we're going to do as a society in response to our natural reactions of horror to the immediate events — because they touched us personally, because it's on our soil — we can't distance that from the reality that that is the everyday existence of so many people in so many parts of this world.

We, as a Canadian society, have chosen to try to do things differently. We reaffirm it on a daily basis in our law.

The truth is that terror attacks cannot always be prevented, especially when individuals act alone. Sometimes there just aren't any clues that somebody's going to act. They call them a lone wolf. The path from joining, supporting and embracing radical ideas to actually committing terrorist violence is not a path that can be easily charted, which is why it's so important to remember to respect — that respect that we have for our *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

I, like the speaker before me, have also spent time reflecting and reading, because when we're in a perplexed state about what's going on, we try to look for ideas and understanding from those who have expertise in these areas. Wesley Wark, who's an expert and a visiting scholar in Toronto, said it quite clearly when he talked about terrorism. He said there is no standard profile for a terrorist. What we need to remember is that there's no such thing as perfect security and there is no such thing as easy prevention, at least in a democracy.

We have to avoid what has been called the fog of historical and cultural amnesia that prevents us from learning from the mistakes of the past. It's not me who is saying that. Yesterday, I tuned in and watched parts of the Senate hearing on security, chaired by our senator. At that Senate hearing, the RCMP Commissioner, Bob Paulson, was speaking. He told the assembled lawmakers that the best way to prevent terrorism is to prevent radicalization in the first place. That is a much more profound challenge than simply saying, oh yes, we'll wave the flag and we'll send troops over there. We don't know what we're dealing with. What he is suggesting to us is that we need to spend the time finding out, Mr. Speaker.

We can't afford another round of wars justifying — categorizing — simply by saying it's a war on terror. As I said, there is a tendency to forget history and there is cultural amnesia. We have been in a war on terror. There is something that needs to suggest to us we have failed. As we consider — and as we have already sent Canadian pilots and ground troops into yet another arena, an undefined arena with an undefined objective — we need to consider and we need to recognize that terrorism is not new. For many years, centuries even, terrorism was largely something that happened within a country. You know, we haven't been immune from these domestic crimes of terrorism. Most of us have been in Ottawa. We have seen the placard where D'Arcy McGee, a Member of Parliament, was assassinated on Sparks Street. Some of us are old enough to have been around during the Front de libération du Québec. Some of us — and it's recently, this is not going

back in history, but in recent times — the Ku Klux Klan re-emerged in the Prairies and domestic terrorism that included the bombing of abortion clinics and doctors in their homes by anti-choice activists.

These are sad examples of Canadians who resorted to violence when they could not persuade others to join their cause, and they couldn't overpower them, so they blew themselves up in washrooms in the Parliament buildings or killed unarmed hostages like Pierre Laporte and James Cross. The fact of the matter is that we know that while we have much conjecture, we have little to go on in terms of the assailants over the last week and a half. Regardless of how we feel about the terrorist regime and the terrorists within ISIL — and I expect that we all react with abhorrence to what they have done — the decision has already been made in Parliament. The mission will go ahead as planned whether or not we pass the motion in this place. We have many pressing issues in our democracy to discuss. A decision has been made.

We believe that Canada's contribution to this mission would be best served with a focus on a humanitarian crisis that is rapidly unfolding. The rise of ISIL, just like many conflicts in the Middle East, is an extremely complex geopolitical phenomenon, decades in the making. It is not going to be simply or quickly solved by boots and bombs.

We learned as much over the past decade-plus of war in that region. What we can do immediately is try to help the tens of thousands of displaced people who have the upcoming winter to worry about — a serious worry in an area where winter is brutal — and support the logistical machine that will be needed to transport goods and relief workers to the region. Our foreign policy has to be deeper and more thoughtful than reacting to the spectre, as awful as it is, of westerners being beheaded. In many ways, our refusal to acknowledge the history of the Middle East blinds us to the current troubles.

I will remind you — as I said earlier — we have a tendency for cultural and historical amnesia. In the late stages of the Cold War the west funded, armed and advised the Afghan mujahideen to drive the Russians from Afghanistan. In many ways, the history of Afghanistan over the past 25 years represents a political Frankenstein, one the west lost control over long ago and we've seen it spread and the residual impact. The hate of the outside, of us, is a result of those interventions.

The ISIL is, like al-Qaeda, an international collection of fighters on the fringe of right-wing Islam who have exploited the political instability in Iraq and Syria in order to advance their own agenda. The situation is so complex that we now see old enemies like Iraq and Iran banding together in common cause.

How can we begin to make sense of such a situation without a strong historical context? How can we begin to suggest that a knee-jerk reaction is going to do anything but exacerbate the situation? We need to learn from our history and intervene in the most appropriate way and in a way that will produce an effective result.

The other aspect of this motion is something that we spoke to many times in this Legislative Assembly. My

colleague for Takhini-Kopper King, will, in fact, speak to it more, I'm sure, because she has been such a passionate advocate for the issues of how we deal with veterans.

Just as an aside, Mr. Speaker, I spent the weekend with relatives. On many parts it was a very happy occasion, but part of it was reviewing with my 90-year-old aunt photos of my father, her husband and her brother-in-law during the Second World War before they went off to serve Canada. Before and after, the pride was there and the difficulties were there after as well.

Canada's veterans deserve our full support and we have tabled motions to that effect in this House.

We have tabled motions to that effect in this House. It will be interesting to see, in terms of the actions and the resolve of my colleagues across the way — the Yukon Party — and in terms of how they will actually give effect to the second part of this motion. As we've said before, we believe that this party, this government, should call upon the federal Conservatives to stand behind and with our veterans. That means that the federal government needs to reopen the Veterans Affairs offices it closed this summer, invest in mental health professionals who can help veterans through the traumatic experiences of armed conflict, and reopen discussion on the controversial *New Veterans Charter* to deal with a number of problems — the biggest one being the lump sum payments for injured veterans. We haven't seen from this government until today — and I'm pleased to see that part of the motion is at least there. But when we called upon this government to support the Public Service Alliance, the Legion and others — I guess actions speak better than words.

So where do we find ourselves? The federal government has committed the Canadian Armed Forces to an open-end combat mission against a non-state actor that is conducting operations in Iraq. The territorial government has tabled a motion in support of that mission, the motion that we are debating today, on the third day of the new Legislative Assembly, instead of issues that we can do something about.

We can deal with affordable housing. We can deal with repairing the relationships among and between governments in this territory. We can deal with the really serious issues of health care and climate change. Those are things that this government can do. The message is that the Premier doesn't agree that he can do anything about climate change but, in fact, his refusal to deal with the recycling issues and the diversion programs — that's a tangible effort that this government could do.

We cannot support a motion that is, in effect, structured as a cheerleading note, a commitment to combat. We cannot stand by while humanitarian support is critically needed to help displaced civilians in Iraq. We cannot allow this discussion to take place without calling for the federal government to change course — not just nice words about how we need to be good to veterans, but to change course from the cutbacks and the refusal to work with veterans, the shameful actions of a government that will dismiss somebody within months of their 10 years of service so that they don't have to pay their benefits, to change course in its treatment of

veterans at a time when a new generation have just come from a decade-long war, and we cannot allow ourselves to be goaded into surrendering hard-earned civil liberties due to an act of domestic terrorism, no matter how tragic or how awful the most recent act was.

We cannot support this motion.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I am pleased to rise in the House today to give a veteran's perspective — me being a veteran — to this motion. I don't have a whole bunch to say but I definitely do support this motion, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about the priorities that the member opposite talked about — I think about unity for our country — we need to look at the photo of Marcus, the son of Corporal Nathan Cirillo today and how the country came together.

This does hit close to home, and I do think and I wonder, if this had happened in Whitehorse or one of the communities that we represent, what our thoughts would be. The day that it happened in Ottawa — I do want to acknowledge our first responders, our security people in the building, all the staff who came together to make sure that we here, in the event of an issue, would be safe.

Unity for our country hits close to home and — in the motion, the Premier spoke to it but I'm hearing a lot about the humanitarian aid. At our Remembrance Day parade every year, we play a tribute video at the end of it and it is usually a soldier who has compiled a bunch of footage from World War I, World War II — not much from the Boer War — but also from Afghanistan and some of the other conflicts that Canada has been a part of. You need only to watch the videos, and in the videos it shows the Canadian soldiers rebuilding streets, helping with schools, a Canadian soldier with his hand out to a young Afghan boy, passing him a teddy bear — the humanitarian aid is there and it comes from this country.

As a service member, I appreciate how I am recognized as a veteran in the Yukon and in Canada. I have a veterans plate. I was very pleased when the first discussion with my fellow colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, brought forward — we had the opportunity to dedicate the Alaska Highway to our veterans.

As a Canadian Ranger, I'm pleased to see how the federal government, with the Canadian Rangers across the north — which are sovereignty and security. We wear our red sweatshirts so we can be seen, to show that the north is ours. The support from the federal government is great. Not only do we have to just look at how many times our Prime Minister has been here and how many times I've gotten to meet the Prime Minister and my fellow Rangers across the north — over 1,500 have had the chance to see the Prime Minister. Canadian soil, taking care of our Canadian soil — and supporting our troops and supporting our nation, moving forward with our allies in the combat mission is integral. I think it's very important, along with the humanitarian aid.

One of the things that I remember, as a soldier when I was released from the military, is the support I got. When I signed out of the base at Comox, they had fixed my teeth and made sure I had a heartbeat, and I was gone. Is there more to

be done? There's always more to be done. There's a lot that changes when you're released from the military now.

Do I believe that supporting our veterans is of the upmost importance? I think that's the primary importance. One thing that I thought about — and we've had this conversation in the House, and I'm pleased to be able to get up and speak in the House about this, because you know what? I think this is a priority for all Canadians.

I think other jurisdictions, other governments and other municipalities have had this conversation at a municipal level or at a federal or provincial level. I think it's important that we stick together as Canadians.

But, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to taking care of those veterans when they come home — you know, not only is it in Veterans Affairs. I have noticed something in my conversations with a lot of veterans, a lot of Afghan vets who have come back — that they also rely on our infrastructure, which is our nurses, our doctors and our mental health care workers, and that conversation comes up. A few weeks ago, when the Minister of Health and Social Services was in my riding talking to the nurses and some of the health care providers out there — mental health is a huge issue, and this government is committed and working to that.

In the big picture, we definitely need to support Canada, especially when it hits close to home and hits on our soil. I am just remembering a couple of things that happened on the weekend. Corporal Chris Cassia from the Carcross patrol decided he thought it would be good to go stand at the memorial, and there were a lot of people who stopped by and gave him words of encouragement. Mr. Speaker, some people brought him a coffee and showed support. Yesterday, I was there with you, Mr. Speaker, and others at the turnout for the first poppy. It was great to see those people there, but you know what? We need to be vigilant. That is the motto of the Canadian Rangers. We have to be vigilant. We have to be the watchers, but we also must remember them.

Mr. Silver: Nobody in this Legislature is opposed to supporting Canadian troops. ISIL is obviously a threat to global security — that is a known. They are responsible for countless murders and beheadings — also known.

Canada has never been a country that has ever sat on the sidelines. We are a great nation that has always risen to the challenge to protect the freedoms and the democracy that we cherish and we've earned and there is no doubt that this crisis will require our Canadian participation — absolutely.

However, I have spoken with several veterans who are confused by this motion. Furthermore, in a letter to the editor published on October 20, a local veteran who I will not name criticized all parties by trying to politicize debate and score easy points. We had an opportunity to avoid that here. Last week, it was requested to the Premier, given the circumstances in Ottawa the day prior, in an effort of good faith, to have the three different chiefs of staff of all parties to sit down and construct a motion that everybody would be able to comfortably agree upon. That request was ignored.

There are more vital issues that this level of government is tasked to deal with in this Legislative Assembly — mental health, education, infrastructure, resources. The budget that we are supposed to be debating has no line items for this debate. We don't have a Department of Defence nor of Foreign Affairs in the Yukon Legislative Assembly. The Yukon Legislative Assembly and the Yukon government do not decide whether Canada takes on missions overseas. There are, however, a large number of issues for which we have authority that are much more urgent to Yukoners' daily lives than focusing on a federal government foreign policy, which is currently being debated and which is currently moving forward.

I had some lists of local issues that we should be talking about, but if the Yukon government really feels the need to get involved with federal affairs, well there are a lot more pressing issues that we could be bringing forward right now. The federal government's cuts have hurt Yukoners, but the government does not want to get involved with these federal issues.

Many other topics could have been discussed here today that in my opinion are more valuable. Changes to YESAA are among issues that are very relevant to Yukoners, and the Premier has washed his hands of this, claiming it to be a federal issue. Tabling amendments here in the Legislature here for review would have been much more beneficial to Yukoners than blocking them out of the process before taking it to Ottawa. In the spring, I warned the Yukon government that its unilateral approach to amending this legislation would further strain the relationships between the territory's public and the First Nation governments. Now its failure to cooperate with others brings the potential threat of more legal action. I will be calling on the Yukon government to wield its influence in Ottawa to see that these legislative changes are withdrawn and have more discussion with both the Yukon public and the Yukon First Nations. We could be talking about that today, but we're not.

Yukon stands to lose \$4.2 million a year because of changes to the employment insurance program. Where is the Yukon government's position on these cuts? \$4.2 million is a large amount of personal income to be taken out of the territory. We could be talking about that here today, but we are not.

Up until September of 2012, Whitehorse had a Canada Revenue Agency office. When the federal government announced that it would close it, the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce spoke out about it. This cut was seen as a huge loss to the territory's small business community. We could be talking about the cuts to the CRA office today, but we are not.

There have been a number of opportunities to get involved in federal issues, ones where the Premier could have used his voice to directly benefit Yukoners. Now let's get to the motion on the floor today.

I as a Liberal, and as a Canadian, unequivocally support the Canadian troops, especially our veterans. I attended yesterday's presentation for the first poppy. On November 11, I will once again have the honour and the privilege to present

a wreath in Dawson. I recognize the personal sacrifices that our military has made.

I also feel Canada has an important role to play in world affairs, as we have since World War I. Our troops are headed overseas and today's debate will have no impact on that conclusion. But if the Premier wants to know where I stand on this issue, it's very simple: Canada should take on a clearly mandated, non-combat role, focusing in on humanitarian efforts. I do not think the Prime Minister has made the case to Canadians that stepping into a combat role is necessary for our country.

Now, I do support the motion's intention — and I quote, “to provide humanitarian aid to innocent people suffering from ISIL's atrocities” — absolutely, Mr. Speaker. I will support recognizing — and I quote, “personal contribution of Canadians serving in the Armed Forces and that the experience of war has profound and ongoing consequences for veterans by supporting our troops during combat missions, and after they return home” — absolutely.

But as the motion is worded in full, I cannot in good conscience support it. As we hear more details of the events that occurred last week it is important to keep things in perspective. The shooter in Ottawa was radicalized. He was a terrorist. But so far there is no evidence to support that he was an active member of ISIL. Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs has confirmed that.

We have a responsibility as legislators to stick to the truth and to not draw false links to justify outcomes. Canadians deserve more. Again, I am disappointed that the government chose not to work with the opposition parties today to bring forth a motion that we could all support. That was a very conscious decision.

I will continue to support our troops. I am very proud of our military, I am very proud of my family's legacy and association with the Armed Forces and I am not proud of what we are doing here today in the territory Legislative Assembly and I will not be supporting this motion.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would like to begin by making some general comments and then address the elements of this motion.

There is a clear philosophical difference here that I think we need to fully understand. In some parts of the world, the belief is that individual freedoms have to be sacrificed for the collective good. In other parts of the world, the belief is that the collective good is achieved through enabling individual success and accomplishment. We place a priority on individual rights and freedoms because we understand that our collective rights are ensured at an individual level.

One of the hallmarks of Canada is that we have a sophisticated and modern human rights regime. It is part of what makes Canada a great place to live. We have the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, but I'll come back to that in a moment.

As I prepared for today, I thought of our national anthem which speaks about “the True North strong and free.” Canada is an incredible country in which to live because we have

certain fundamental freedoms: the freedom of conscience and religion; the freedom of thought; the freedom of the press; the freedom of peaceful assembly; and the freedom of association. These are our values and Canada has stood firm for them and has committed to defend them no matter the cost, even when that meant going to war.

Mr. Speaker, I know that both you and the Member for Kluane have served in our nation's Armed Forces because you believe these values are worth defending and I thank you both for your years of service. As members of this Assembly know, Canadians and Yukoners have been at the forefront of promoting and addressing human rights. Our legacy as a place of refuge has garnered Canada a worldwide reputation as being the best country in which to live. Whether slaves from the southern States seeking personal freedom, religious groups like the Mennonites from Europe fleeing persecution, or immigrants from Asia pursuing economic and personal success — Canada was and is known as a place of safety and a place of opportunity. Personal freedoms are what allow us to achieve our personal success and in turn contribute to our national success. Sadly, there are parts of the world where people do not enjoy the benefits of basic human rights.

I can think of examples where people are discriminated against because of their gender, their skin colour, their religion or their physical disabilities. We live in a free and open democratic society. We live in a peaceful and prosperous society. Canada has partnered with others who are committed to freedom. We did it in World War I, in World War II, in Korea and Afghanistan. Today I stand in support of our nation joining the partnership to defend our values in Iraq. Canada has supported every UN peacekeeping mission because we want to ensure that oppression never finds a home, especially here in Canada. As I thought about the consequence of previous wars like World War I and World War II, I am pleased that our opponents in these wars are now friends and allies. Our countries are at peace because each one enjoys liberty.

I was in Germany this summer and I had the privilege of touring the German Naval Academy in Flensburg with Commanding Officer Admiral Carsten Stawitzki. I can assure you that our German friends hold Canada in general and Yukon in particular in very high esteem.

Early next year I will be heading to Asia to promote Yukon tourism there. Our nation and our territory is an attractive place to live and to visit, in large part because of the liberty and the security we enjoy. To me it is obvious that liberty — that freedom — is a necessity for success and prosperity for individuals, for communities and for nations. I mention this because some believe that war just generates more war. I don't believe that this is the case. I believe apathy causes violence and oppression needs to be confronted. I believe the best way for us to improve the future is to learn from our past.

Just a few moments ago I mentioned Germany. On September 30, 1938, at the Heston Aerodrome, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain spoke about the peace for our time. He was explaining the Munich agreement, in which

Britain and France abandoned their pact with Czechoslovakia and carved it up as part of their policy of appeasement toward Germany. He wanted peace; he thought appeasement was the path to peace. It wasn't. Pursuing peace by abandoning allies and breaking treaty obligations didn't work then, and I don't believe that it'll work now.

Canadians understand the difference between peace and appeasement. One is strength and the other is servitude. Millions of people around the world live in servitude. They do not enjoy any of the democratic freedoms we have. We enjoy those rights because of the nearly 115,000 Canadians who laid down their lives to secure and preserve our freedom. Canadians before us declared that oppression needed to be confronted and confront it they did — at a terrible cost. Given the horrors of World War I were still fresh in many people's minds, the decision to go to war in 1939 was not taken lightly, but the decision was made because oppression needs to be confronted.

We have seen how extremists oppress people and their response to those who stand up against them. I think of women like Malala Yusufzai, who has continued to show bravery and courage in spite of the violence done to her, because she thought girls should have an education too.

I have talked in general terms about the need to confront oppression, but let's look at the evidence before us as it relates to Iraq.

Earlier today, the Premier referenced the October 2 report by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq Human Rights Office. It detailed the staggering array of human rights abuses in northern Iraq from July 6 to September 10. As of October 1, at least 9,347 civilians have been killed so far in 2014, and 17,386 have been wounded, well over half of them since ISIL began over-running large parts of the north in early June.

The report enumerates a litany of serious violations of international humanitarian law and gross abuses of human rights that have been perpetrated by ISIL and associated with armed groups with an apparent systematic and widespread character: attacks directly targeting civilians; executions of civilians; abductions; rape; sexual and physical violence against women and children; forced recruitment of children; destruction of religious sites; malicious destruction; looting of property and the denial of fundamental freedoms. Women and ethnic and religious minorities have all been intentionally and systematically targeted by ISIL.

As the Premier has already noted, Nickolay Mladenov of Bulgaria has called the report terrifying. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, who is a Jordanian Muslim and Arab, has stated that, "The array of violations and abuses perpetrated by ISIL and associated armed groups is staggering, and many of their acts may amount to war crimes, or crimes against humanity."

That tells me that the global community — not just the western world — is outraged by what is happening. As I read the reports, the Internet, the papers and watch the news, I am profoundly disgusted by what I see from Levant. Reporters and aid workers are being kidnapped and killed in barbaric ways. I see women being treated as property rather than

people; being raped and enslaved; others killed. I see people being forced to convert or be killed. I see innocent people being kidnapped and killed. I believe that oppression needs to be confronted.

We are faced with the same choice as Prime Minister Chamberlain: Do we pursue peace through strength or do we pursue it through servitude? I know these are weighty decisions and ones that have very real, very permanent, and sometimes very painful consequences. We on this side of the House have made our position clear. Oppression needs to be confronted.

I think we need to do more than feel outraged by what we saw on the TV news. Governments in the region are requesting our assistance — our armed assistance. Allies are requesting our assistance — our armed assistance. I think we need to act. We need to confront oppression. Some may view this along the partisan lines; however, I do not.

I would like to share with this Assembly comments from some prominent Canadians. I read Bob Rae's opinion piece of October 1 in the *Globe and Mail*. Bob Rae is a former NDP Premier of Ontario and a former interim leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. He stated, "It is now apparent that the forces of radical violence have metastasized, and that Islamic State represents a clear and present danger to the people over whom it rules, to any minorities around the area, to the region and potentially to the world." He notes that both the Government of Iraq and the regional government of Iraqi Kurdistan have asked for military assistance. He writes, "This is about understanding the long term, enduring interest of our country in peace, order, and good government, for ourselves and for the world as well."

I would also note that Bruce Hyer, currently of the Green Party and previously of the New Democratic Party, supported the motion. In comments reported on October 7, 2014, on the netnewsledger.com, Mr. Hyer states that he is generally against "foreign military intervention, unless the atrocities are so terrible as to merit it." He states that "people on the ground are calling for our help So are our friends in the international communities. Canada must not refuse that call."

Then he goes on to state, "We've watched in horror as this group has slaughtered anyone that stands in their way, including innocent women and children, has beheaded journalists and humanitarian workers, has committed horrendous acts of sexual violence, and has persecuted religious minorities. ISIL will not respond to anything but force."

Mr. Hyer concludes that "Canada should not stand on the sidelines in this, and has a moral duty to save lives when it can. I think the plusses of this mission outweigh the risks. ISIL must be stopped."

As a proud Canadian and as a proud Yukoner, I am pleased that Canada has taken a stand against this discrimination. I applaud those bringing the Canadian ideals of peace, order and good government to that region.

I mentioned at the start that I had spent some time thinking about what it means to be Canadian. As I prepared for today's motion, I thought about what responsibilities we

have as Canadians to our world. As Yukoners, we live in the best part of the best country in the world. I thought about the contrast between Canada and Iraq. As I said earlier, just reading the Internet, watching TV and feeling upset really doesn't accomplish anything. Oppression needs to be confronted.

I've asked myself, what can I do to influence the situation in Iraq? As I said at the beginning, I thought about the words of our national anthem — "we stand on guard for thee". I thought to myself, there's definitely something I can do. I can stand shoulder to shoulder in determined support for our military and RCMP members in all the tasks they undertake, but right now, here in this Assembly, I can stand in support of this motion. Today I can stand in support of our nation joining the partnership to defend our values in Iraq.

I stand on guard for our women and children; I stand on guard for victims of genocide; I stand on guard for freedom of association. I am in full support of this motion and I thank the leader of our great territory, the Premier, for bringing such an important motion forward at such a crucial time in our lives. I encourage all members to support this motion.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank and acknowledge the service and sacrifices made by both you and the Member for Kluane in the service of our country. I thank the Leader of the Third Party for reminding the Premier and this House that the Official Opposition sent out a laurel leaf to work together with the opposition parties to craft a motion based on the one the Premier tabled that would be non-partisan and meaningful that we could all endorse. Sadly, that call was ignored and here we are divided.

I've spoken at length in this House of the challenges facing Canadian veterans, challenges that most of us in this House can't fully understand, because we haven't taken the oath of service and because we don't have the experiences of a service member. The oath reads as follows: "I do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second, Queen of Canada, Her heirs and successors, according to law, and the Canadian Forces until lawfully released, that I will resist Her Majesty's enemies and cause Her Majesty's peace be kept and maintained and that I will, in all manners pertaining to my service, faithfully discharge my duty, so help me God."

This oath of service is never taken lightly by members of the Canadian Forces. They know that it not only affects their careers, but it also sets the standards for the rest of their lives. Can a layperson truly understand that to serve others for the greater good of all, you must be prepared to sacrifice? Can we understand that the mission, above all else, comes first? Do we understand that service members in the course of their duties are often called upon to make significant personal sacrifices?

Do we understand the emotional impact that service members face when confronting known and unknown dangers and countless hardships? Do we fully understand the impacts of being separated from the families that they love; missing the birth of children; the death of loved ones and the everyday

nuances that we at home take for granted? Can we begin to understand the stress caused by facing the daily threat of permanent or life-altering injuries? Do we understand that these brave men and women, through their oath of service, will on occasion make the ultimate sacrifice and give their own lives for a mission that is beyond themselves?

Aware of this, they still choose to take this oath — they still choose to serve — the ultimate public service. The faces of today's veterans are very different from the stereotypes of old. Youthful faces now outnumber those formerly graced by older generations. In Canada, recent stats tell us that one person out of 35 is a veteran — one out of 35. It is currently estimated that 15 to 30 percent of returning soldiers develop PTSD. This means that 4,000 to 6,000 soldiers returning home need support and services to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder.

With its changes to the veterans charter, the federal Government of Canada has created a two-tiered support system for veterans. This *New Veterans Charter* places the most severely wounded newly-returned veterans at risk of hardship and poverty. It was never easy to be a veteran, but never before have we seen the number of veterans suing the Canadian government like we do today. Never before have we seen this happen in Canada.

For years, veterans have raised concerns about the programs and compensation under their veterans charter. Under this new legislation, ex-soldiers saw the decades-old pension-for-life system replaced with a workers' compensation style approach of lump-sum awards and allowances. Imagine being told, upon your return home, that the life sacrifice you made for your country is only worth a one-time payout. I can't even begin to imagine how betrayed I would feel.

Worse yet, since February of this year, nine Veterans Affairs offices have closed their doors to veterans. This means that those veterans in those nine Canadian jurisdictions no longer have the face-to-face access with the staff that understood their needs and histories. These veterans now have access to phone services, or these veterans can now stand in the lines at Service Canada counters. That is the very same lines where you would go to get your passport.

These cuts in service not only add to the current environment Canada's veterans are finding themselves in — this environment that can only be categorized as demoralizing. Today it still continues to be a daunting process for veterans and their families to navigate through various departmental layers. Once in the system, trying to seek benefits, the amount of paperwork and the processes involved to obtain benefits is extremely complex and often overwhelming for the people who need the help the most.

There are two federal government departments involved, two rehabilitation programs and an application process that is 18 pages long. This is not like applying for a passport. This paperwork decides your future; it decides your fate.

Many veterans left struggling in this new system feel betrayed by the very country to which they swore the oath of

service — the same country to which they swore the oath of service.

Those feeling betrayed are the very men and women who chose to serve and protect us, our communities, our country and our values. These are the men and women who are sent to foreign lands and upon their return home, are often forgotten and ignored by the very country, by the very government, whose values they went to defend. Given the daily reporting of their concerns about these sweeping changes and challenges, how can every Canadian politician and how can every Canadian citizen not be aware of issues facing our veterans when they arrive home? How can we not be aware of their reality? How can we not be up in arms for their defence when they come back and they need our help?

Whether or not you are for or against Canada's involvement in the fight against ISIL, let one thing be clear in this discussion: active members, veterans and their families deserve our full and complete support. They deserve more than words because words are just that — they're just words. Let us show our support in meaningful actions. Let's encourage the Canadian government to show their support in meaningful actions.

Wearing a poppy is not enough. I ask you to ponder: Has the Canadian government lived up to this promise it made in 1917, just prior to the Battle of Vimy Ridge, when the then Conservative Prime Minister of Canada Robert Borden said this to servicemen ready to be deployed: "You can go into this action feeling assured of this, and as the head of the government I give you this assurance: That you need not fear that the government and the country will fail to show just appreciation of your service to the country and Empire in what you are about to do and what you have already done. The government and the country will consider it their first duty to see that a proper appreciation of your effort and of your courage is brought to the notice of the people at home, that no man, whether he goes back or whether he remains in Flanders will have just cause to reproach the government for having broken faith with the men who won and the men who died. Lest we forget."

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

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I was proud last Thursday to rise and to table this motion and to lead the debate on it today: "THAT this House:

"(1) urges the Government of Yukon to show national unity and Yukon's support for the Government of Canada's decision to participate in the broad international coalition of nations working together to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and to provide humanitarian aid to innocent people suffering from ISIL's atrocities;

"(2) recognizes the personal contribution of Canadians serving in the Armed Forces and that the experience of war has profound and ongoing consequences for veterans by supporting our troops during combat missions, and after they return home; and

“THAT the Speaker of the Yukon Legislative Assembly transmit the decision of this House to the Parliament of Canada and to the provincial and territorial assemblies of Canada.”

Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the debate today. I want to acknowledge the comments that were made. I want to thank, for their comments, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Tourism and Minister of Highways and Public Works, who himself is a proud veteran.

The core value — what are the core values? Are we willing to defend those core values that we cherish, and which most of us take for granted on a daily basis? I believe, and history has shown us, that we have a responsibility as global citizens, because we have seen that peace through servitude has not worked in the past. There are many sad atrocities and aggressions that have shown us that.

It is disappointing to think that we could sit back and ponder what our role should be and what the role for Canada should be. What I heard was support for humanitarian efforts; however, as I spoke to in the debate, you cannot provide humanitarian efforts without security. Without security, you cannot have people on the ground providing those efforts — food, medicine — to people in need. There needs to be security in place.

We have an obligation. We live in the greatest country of this world and we are thankful for that. For us to say, well, you know what? We'll let somebody else worry about that — that's not our problem. I believe that's not the role of this country. We have a very proud role of peacekeeping. We have a very proud role of our military action in defence of those rights, freedoms and values that all of us cherish every day.

I think it's also very important to note that this coalition of countries includes a number of Middle East Arab nations. This is not the west against the Middle East; this is into north, south, east and west as I had articulated. This has been identified by the United Nations. This has been identified as being so atrocious that we have all of these countries doing what they can to provide their efforts. I think, again to state Darcy Grossinger's article just recently in the paper where he said that we have responsibilities — we have freedoms, but we have responsibilities, and we have responsibilities to these alliances as well.

I do believe that it's not the role of the rest of the world to defend those rights and freedoms that we enjoy ourselves. We believe that all citizens of this world should be able to agree and to achieve and to be able to live under them on a daily basis.

Certainly for the record, when we were notifying you, Mr. Speaker, of the House going back into session, at that point we also notified everyone — the parties opposite and the public — that we intended to move forward with a motion to support the Government of Canada's decision. Since that time, we had the tragic events that did occur in Quebec and in Ottawa, Ontario — in our nation's capital.

As for the motion itself, we did share that motion with the House Leaders. We asked and solicited important support in terms of possible amendments for that motion. We did receive

comments and feedback from the New Democratic Party, some of which we incorporated, but also the Liberal Party and the Liberal leader refused to provide any comment to that motion, for the record.

Again, I would like to thank those members who have supported this motion. We believe that we have a duty to support our nation's troops. We have a duty and a responsibility as global citizens to allow people the same basic human rights that should be achieved across this entire world, and I urge all members of this House to show the unity that is required, to show the support that we are seeing from countries across this world from many different ethnic and religious backgrounds, who have all united in the stand against ISIL.

At this point, I will sit down and hopefully the members opposite will reconsider their position on this important issue that I believe is important to Yukoners. I have heard many conversations on street corners and stores about what is going on in this world, and I believe that Canadians stand tall and proud with their military and with the government's support of something that we know is necessary because we will not achieve peace through servitude.

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: Disagree.

Ms. Stick: Disagree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Mr. Tredger: Disagree.

Mr. Barr: Disagree.

Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 11 yea, seven nay.

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

Motion No. 710 agreed to

GOVERNMENT BILLS**Bill No. 78: Act to Amend the Marriage Act — Second Reading**

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 78, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Graham.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I move that Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Health and Social Services that that Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I am very pleased to speak to these amendments to the *Marriage Act* today. As you know, marriage is a vital institution here in the Yukon and elsewhere around the world. Like most institutions, it's adapting to our times. Our *Marriage Act* was passed in 2002 and was not amended since then. We are now introducing amendments that will streamline administration of the act and modernize the language.

Civil marriage ceremonies in Yukon are solemnized by our marriage commissioners. These people perform a very valuable function in our society and should be recognized for it, but the system of appointing marriage commissioners needs modernizing. Marriage commissioners are appointed by the Cabinet and the number of these appointments increases every year. Because of this, we are introducing an amendment that will allow the Minister of Health and Social Services, rather than the Cabinet, to appoint marriage commissioners by ministerial order.

This will enable Cabinet to spend more of its valuable time on other matters, while still ensuring public transparency. Appointments by ministerial order will continue to be listed in the Yukon Gazette. This change aligns Yukon with the general practice in other provinces and territories across the country.

We're also modernizing the application process and eligibility criteria for marriage commissioners. Right now, candidates do not need any qualifications to perform civil marriages. With the new criteria proposed, marriage commissioner applicants will have to meet minimum standards. Specifically, marriage commissioners will have to be at least 19 years of age; they'll have to be a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident; and they will have to be proficient in English or French. Having such minimum standards is consistent with the fact that marriage commissioners perform a very significant legal function.

We've also introduced term limits with expiry dates for the appointments. Currently, the *Marriage Act* is silent on time frames associated with marriage commissioner appointments. By implementing either a one-day or a three-year term with a set expiry date, both the public and the department will know clearly who Yukon's active appointees are. This will also assist us with maintaining accurate administration of records.

As part of the modernization of the appointment of marriage commissioners, we will also be introducing an application fee. The fee schedule will be set out in regulation

currently under development and the fee schedule will be set out in its design to encourage serious applications for appointments and will provide revenues to cover the increased administrative cost of processing and administering appointments. The fees charged will differentiate between individuals applying for one day or a three-year appointment. The renewal fee for marriage commissioners will also be less than a new appointment. Fees will be in line or smaller than many of the other jurisdictions in Canada.

Under the proposed amendments, marriage commissioners appointed under the current legislation will be grandfathered in for a set period of time determined under the act. The minimum will be three years for marriage commissioners appointed under the current act. Allowing existing marriage commissioners to continue their appointments for a set period of time creates certainty for them and it also recognizes that they were appointed in good faith under the existing legislation.

In short, all these proposed changes will streamline appointments while creating mechanisms to ensure eligibility, modest administrative remuneration and accurate listing of marriage commissioners in the Yukon Gazette.

Finally, we've updated the *Marriage Act* to include gender-neutral language. Since the act was proclaimed 12 years ago, the definition of marriage has changed in Canada to include same-sex marriages. Because of this, the act's language needed to be modernized. In several provisions, references to husband and wife will be changed to spouse or spouses, and this proposed language change promotes the Yukon government's stated aim to introduce gender-neutral language into legislation whenever possible. The times have changed and the language in our laws must change along with them.

In summary, the changes to the *Marriage Act* are primarily administrative in nature, but they are important. By modernizing the appointment of marriage commissioners and changing some outdated language in the act, we ensure that we are meeting our government's stated goal of practising open, accountable and fiscally responsible government. I look forward to taking members through this new bill in detail during Committee of the Whole, and I look forward to any questions that may be asked in response to this bill.

Ms. Stick: I was pleased to see this bill come forward and, in particular, the assurance that there is gender neutrality when we use language in our legislation. This is a beginning. There is more legislation to follow, I'm hoping, and there are still a few more days to bring bills forward, but I am aware of the *Spousal Compensation Act*, the *Married Women's Property Act*, and the *Land Titles Act*, which all require that gender-neutral language to be inserted.

It's encouraging to see this updated legislation with regard to marriage commissioners. The legislation appears to be clear and straightforward, but I have some questions, which I will save for Committee of the Whole and look for answers at that time — but we are pleased to see this come forward.

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

Hon. Mr. Graham: I look forward to answering any of the questions that I possibly can. In addition, while reading through the bill, I noticed one part that may require a correction as we go through, but we can discuss that in Committee of the Whole.

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 for second reading of Bill No. 78 agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): I now call Committee of the Whole to order.

We will be discussing Bill No. 78, *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: We will take a 15-minute break.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 78: *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate in Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I think I said most of what I wanted to say in my second reading speech. However, it has come to my attention via the good graces of a couple of opposition members that there was a small error, so we will be proceeding to make or to suggest an amendment, with your indulgence, at some point in the future.

Chair: Mr. Graham, I am going to suggest that you make that amendment at the appropriate time while we are in clause-by-clause debate and after clause 2. Does any other member wish to speak?

Ms. Stick: As I mentioned earlier, we are in support of this. I do have a few questions I just would like to have clarified for the House and for me. I just wanted to make one correction on something I had said earlier about it being gender-neutral language. In fact I think it is better to describe it as “gender inclusive” in that it makes sure that when we are looking at marriage it’s not husband/wife, but it can be spouse — husband/spouse, wife/spouse, et cetera, so that it is inclusive language rather than just neutral language.

The questions I have are just more technical and certainly ones I expect to show up in the regulations. The first one would be about the prescribed application fee and whether the minister could inform us what that would be for a person applying for one day or a person applying for the three-year term as a marriage commissioner.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The dollar values that we are going to suggest in regulation is a \$50 fee for a one-day licence and \$350 for a three-year permit and, after that three-year permit licence is completed, only a \$50 renewal fee for each three years after that. Those would be the fees.

Ms. Stick: In this case, from what I understand in looking at this legislation is that any person who is currently a marriage commissioner not just for one day, but regular, when this legislation is enacted, they then have three more years before they need to reapply. So when individuals who are already marriage commissioners reapply, will that fee for them to reapply be only \$50?

Hon. Mr. Graham: That’s correct. The reason behind that is quite simple. Folks who are current marriage commissioners have already gone through the process so the administrative fee shouldn’t apply. Therefore anyone who is currently a marriage commissioner for longer than one day will not be required to pay the \$350 and their fee for every three-year period after this will be \$50.

Ms. Stick: The other piece in the act or in the amendments that someone was looking at with me and asked

for clarification had to do with the transitional piece and for “the appointment of a person as a marriage commissioner before the coming into force of this Act expires on the earliest of ...” — and then there are three examples there.

I wonder if the minister can just give an example for each one so that it is clear. The person I was working with found that it wasn't said in the simplest terms, or it was not clear, especially the first person. The day on which the person is appointed under section 5(1) of the *Marriage Act*, as amended by this act — I'll ask the minister to explain who that would be.

Hon. Mr. Graham: That would be people who were signing up after this act has been proclaimed. So they would be paying the \$350 fee. Under (b) “the day on which the appointment would, but for this Act, have expired” — would only be those persons who actually had a marriage certificate for the day that this act, the current act, expires.

The third anniversary would be people who are current marriage commissioners for longer than one day and theirs will expire in three years.

Ms. Stick: Those are basically the questions I had. As I said, it is very straightforward and I want to thank the officials for the briefing we received yesterday on this.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate?

We are going to move forward then with clause by clause.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Amendment proposed

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, I move:

THAT Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, be amended at page 2 by inserting the following clause:

“Section 6 repealed

3. Section 6 of the Act is repealed.”

And by renumbering the remaining clauses accordingly.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Graham:

THAT Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, be amended at page 2 by inserting the following clause:

“Section 6 repealed

3. Section 6 of the Act is repealed.”

And by renumbering the remaining clauses accordingly.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The amendment is quite simple. Section 6 sets a maximum price that marriage commissioners may charge for performing a marriage ceremony. We had no intention of leaving that in and, through my own negligence, it stayed and I really appreciate the assistance of the Clerk in assisting me to correct my error.

Ms. Stick: Just to clarify, by removing this, does this leave this open to marriage commissioners being able to do a marriage for free or for any amount of money?

Hon. Mr. Graham: We know at the present time that many marriage commissioners do perform ceremonies for free, but we also realize that because we are upping the fee

substantially — in fact, they were zero before. So because we are implementing a fee schedule, we should also allow marriage commissioners to at least be able to charge the cost of their licence, and that's what is intended. There will be no minimum, no maximum. It won't be regulated at all.

We still would encourage marriage commissioners to do it for free, of course.

Chair: Is there any further debate on the amendment — inclusion of section 3?

Amendment to Clause 3 agreed to

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to

Chair: The remaining sections of course are going to be renumbered but I'm going to carry on in the numbering that is in the bill at the time.

On Clause 3

Clause 3 agreed to

On Clause 4

Clause 4 agreed to

On Clause 5

Clause 5 agreed to

On Clause 6

Clause 6 agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, I move that Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, be reported with amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Graham that Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, be reported with amendment.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

May the House have a report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, and directed me to report the bill with amendment.

Speaker: You have heard the report from the Chair of the Committee of the Whole. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

GOVERNMENT BILLS**Bill No. 79: Pioneer Utility Grant Act — Second Reading**

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 79, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Graham.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I move that Bill No. 79, entitled *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Health and Social Services that Bill No. 79, entitled *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I am very pleased to speak to this new bill and I am very proud also of the work that is being done to bring us to this point here today.

I asked the department some time ago to begin a review of the act with a view to increase the flexibility, fairness and — very importantly — the sustainability of the pioneer utility grant. After careful consideration of various approaches and the scope of the changes that were involved, we decided that a replacement would be more appropriate than an amended act.

The act was silent in many different areas, such as providing clarity on what is required to apply and become eligible for the pioneer utility grant, including authority for the administrators to approve applications, request documentations and, where appropriate, deny the benefit to those applicants who did not meet the eligibility requirements.

The pioneer utility grant was first introduced in Yukon in 1978 and I think, Mr. Speaker, if we look back, you will find that I was a member of that Legislature; in fact, I may have even introduced the bill in 1978. It was in response to recommendations from the Yukon Council on Aging. The grant was intended to provide financial assistance to seniors to assist or to partially offset higher home heating costs during the winter months. Eligibility was restricted to those seniors who can establish that they lived in the Yukon for 183 days of each year, of which 90 days were in the winter months defined as January to March and October to December.

The pioneer utility grant was initially introduced at a rate of \$300 per year and has been increased a number of times over the past several years. In 2003, the grant was increased by 25 percent, rising from the then grant of \$600 to \$750 with future increases indexed to the annual rate of inflation thereafter. In 2005, it was once again raised by another 10 percent in addition to the annual indexed increases. In 2014 — this year — the pioneer utility grant rate is \$1,030 per year and we expect that approximately 2,100 seniors will apply and receive the pioneer utility grant, totalling approximately \$2.163 million.

The pioneer utility grant was introduced as a universal benefit that was provided to all eligible applicants at a flat rate, regardless of their income or the geographic location of their principal residence. The grant was provided directly to the applicant, and there were no other requirements to remit receipts or otherwise demonstrate proof of fuel or utility payments. The administration of the pioneer utility grant is directed by the act and related regulations. The act outlines provisions regarding eligibility, time of application and

benefit restrictions among others, and the regulations outline provisions regarding the benefit amount.

Yukon is one of three jurisdictions that provide heating subsidies to senior residents. Both Northwest Territories and Nunavut have programs, but that is where the similarities end. Our pioneer utility grant is provided to homeowners as well as those seniors who rent and it is a universal benefit. The other two jurisdictions only provide the benefit to homeowners and both are income-tested programs. Yukon's program is provided to a significantly greater number of people, both because it is a universal benefit and also because of the higher number of seniors who remain living in the Yukon.

Over the next few years, it's expected that the number of seniors in Yukon aged 65 or older will increase substantially as the baby-boomer generation ages. This demographic shift will have several service delivery and cost implications.

Population projections developed by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics estimate that the number of seniors will increase from approximately 3,500 in 2011 to well over 6,000 by 2031. It is further estimated that based on these projections, the pioneer utility grant expenditures would more than double, rising from the current or what it was in 2011 — \$1.6 million — to over \$3.7 million in 2021. I'm sorry; I may have misstated the previous date. It's 3,500 in 2011 to well over 6,000 by 2021. I should have said that instead of 2031.

In any event, this will place increasing pressure on the sustainability of the program. The majority of this future generation of seniors will have higher incomes, more retirement benefits, and/or savings and assets than previous seniors. Those seniors are not a homogeneous group and many older seniors are and will likely still be less financially well off. They will represent a minority among all seniors over the age of 65. Given the future increase and the number of seniors over the age of 65, the higher relative income and wealth among this cohort and the anticipated cost increases due to the pioneer utility grant being a universal benefit, it was time to assess whether the program was financially sustainable in the medium- and long-term. It was also time to review the act with a view to identify gaps in the administration of the program and enhancements that could be made to ensure that the pioneer utility grant remained a program that assisted seniors, while being fiscally and administratively responsible.

There were several different ways to deliver on the government's commitment to increase the flexibility of the pioneer utility grant while also addressing issues of fairness and sustainability. We have arrived at an approach we believe is straightforward and will reflect the original intent of the program, which is to help low-income seniors who require it with the cost of increasingly expensive fuel and utility cost.

To begin with, the act expands on the requirements that a person must meet in order to be eligible for a grant including a new requirement to declare net income and the responsibility for payment of utilities. The act also provides for the ability to waive the eligibility criteria in the case of exceptional medical circumstances, understanding that there may be occasions when seniors are not able to meet the residence requirements due to exceptional medical circumstances.

Changing the application date to July from October was also something requested by seniors groups, which will provide for additional time for seniors to complete their application and if all documentation is provided, to receive the grant at an earlier time in the year.

All applicants must now be 65 years or older to be considered to be eligible for the grant. Those applicants who received a pioneer utility grant in 2014 who are under the age of 65, but qualified under the old act, will be grandfathered into the program. In other words, nobody will be left out of the program. Those people between 55 and 65 who are currently receiving their pioneer utility grant will not lose their pioneer utility grant. We will continue to pay it even though they are under the age of 65. It has been determined that there will be approximately 11 applicants who fall into that category. All 11 will continue to receive the grant.

Establishing a 12-month residency requirement before applying for the pioneer utility grant will provide consistency with other programs. It will reinforce the intention of the benefit to assist those seniors who have made Yukon their home and who may require help in the winter to meet the high cost of heating their home.

Income testing is a process that allows for the adjustment of the benefit based on the net income of an individual or of a family. This means that as the income of the individual or the family increases, the amount of the benefit paid out by the government decreases. Income testing can help ensure that the benefits are received by those who have the greatest need. Income testing can also increase the sustainability of a program as benefits are reduced or no longer provided to those with sufficient incomes.

Health and Social Services has other programs that are income tested, including the childcare subsidy program, child drug and optical program and social assistance. The income-test model for the pioneer utility grant has been developed and is based on a middle-income range for testing. The middle-income range is based on the estimated middle 60 percent of incomes among all Yukon couple families, and then the middle range has been applied to senior couples and converted to apply to individuals. Individuals and couples with incomes below the middle range will receive the full amount of the grant, while those with incomes above the middle range will receive no grant.

Individuals and couples with net incomes in the middle range will receive some of the grant, but less than the full amount. Very few seniors will be cut off altogether. The detail of the income test will come later in regulation, but I would be happy to discuss it during the discussions about the bill.

Given that the number of applicants has increased — and we believe it will continue to increase as the population ages — it was determined that the administration of the program required some modernization. This is best described under the act and will increase transparency to the applicants on the application and eligibility requirements, and also clearly spells out the roles and responsibility of the program administrator, the circumstances where a grant may not be paid and the ability to recover money where appropriate.

Most modern acts that support financial programming include a section on offences and penalties. The pioneer utility grant is no different and it identifies that a person who applies for a grant that they know they are not eligible to receive, or who includes false information in an application, can be subject to a fine.

Ideally, the package of regulations would come forward at the same time as the new act. The department has fast-tracked the final review of the *Pioneer Utility Grant Act* and regulations, along with Justice, and have ensured that the new act was ready for tabling this fall. The regulations will follow shortly, but I can tell you that the new act provides much of the needed clarity on the administration of the pioneer utility grant.

I can speak generally about the regulations that will follow. The regulation-making powers have expanded to support the implementation of the act. The current regulation is silent in many different areas that provide the seniors who apply for the pioneer utility grant with the clarity to know what is required to apply and be deemed eligible for the pioneer utility grant.

The regulation is also silent on the review procedure for applications undertaken by the administrators and the process necessary to determine eligibility. The regulation will also identify roles and responsibilities of both the applicant and the administrator, and clearly defines the timing that will be required to determine eligibility and authorize payments.

During our review, it was found that the cost of fuel and utilities in rural areas — to no one's surprise — was much higher than it is in Whitehorse. So implementing a rural rate in the regulation for those seniors who live outside the City of Whitehorse acknowledges that the cost of heating homes and utilities — or heating and utility costs — in rural Yukon is more expensive than in Whitehorse. Details on the amount of the increase will also be found in the new regulation, but I'll be happy to share it with members at that point in the act. The details of the income test and the formula will also be included in the regulation.

During our meetings with organizations that provide support and assistance to seniors in the Yukon, an example of the income test was provided — without the details, as this had yet to be approved by Cabinet. Understandably, Mr. Speaker, a new application form is under development for the 2015 year, and the form will definitely include the applicant and, where appropriate, spousal information on net income, primary residence and requirement to pay utilities in that residence.

Signatures from the applicant and, in the case of a couple, the applicant's spouse, will be required. Applications will continue to be mailed out to seniors who received the grant in the previous year and will be included in other communications to seniors throughout the year.

We know that these are significant changes to the pioneer utility grant. Our administrators already provide support to many seniors who require extra help to complete the application process for the pioneer utility grant. The changes to the act place additional requirements on these seniors and

my department will continue to work with them to provide the help they need. However, we are pleased to modernize the pioneer utility grant and to ensure its sustainability as we move forward.

Once our consultations were completed and the draft act had received tentative approval from Cabinet, I had the opportunity to gather together many of these groups and talk with them about the changes to the act. Once the seniors gathered there truly understood the act and what we intended to do, they universally supported it.

We think it's a good replacement. We look forward to debating it here in the House. As I said, even though we tried to get the regulations ready for the Legislature, they are not yet, but I'll be happy to share whatever information I can.

Ms. Stick: I thank the minister for his information on this new pioneer utility grant. Many of the changes are needed. The last act was thin on details and regulations. Our concern, however, is the fact that we have not seen the regulations yet, but I'm hoping the minister will be able to answer many of the questions that I have that would be covered in the regulations. Without those regulations, it feels like we are agreeing to something without knowing the details. I'm hoping that those details will come out in the questions, and that I'm clear enough with my questions.

This is different from the last bill that we passed, in terms of regulations, because this does impact many individuals and seniors throughout the Yukon. To me, that is important. I'm pleased that the minister met with various groups. I've talked to some of them and heard their opinions on it, and many of them are in support of this.

At the same time, I've also started to receive phone calls from individuals who do not belong to the Golden Age Society or the Yukon Council on Aging — and there are many who don't. They are hearing information second-hand, and they have many questions and concerns. Many of these people are ones who feel, because they don't know what is going on, that possibly they are going to not receive as much or not be eligible. So there is still a lot of communication that needs to be done around this pioneer utility grant with individuals who are not aware of what these changes are.

The minister mentioned that they'll be sending out the new applications to people who have applied before. Maybe they could use that same mailing list to send out information to individuals, saying that these are what the changes are, before July of next year when it's time to apply.

If the minister could send out enough information to individuals already receiving it, that might appease some of their worries and concerns. Like I said, already the phone calls and the emails are coming in. Some of it is misinformation, some of them think they're going to have to go in every month and show what their income in. I'm trying to say that that's not what is intended here, but I do believe that a better communication plan needs to happen for seniors around the territory, especially in the communities where they might not have contact with the Yukon Council on Aging or the Golden Age Society.

I am looking forward to discussing this in Committee of the Whole and I do have a number of questions. A lot of it will pertain to the regulations. I'm looking forward to hearing from the minister and from his officials on this information.

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

Hon. Mr. Graham: I did make a commitment to provide as much information as I possibly can on the regulations that will be coming forward.

I guess one of the difficulties we always face in these circumstances is that I can't send out application forms and information to seniors around the territory until the bill actually goes through the Legislature. That's one of the things.

What we did ask all of the groups — and, by the way, we did have groups from outside of Whitehorse. I think the seniors association in Haines Junction was on-line, ElderActive was there and I believe the Watson Lake seniors group was consulted as well. We did have a fairly good cross-section of seniors there.

We asked all of them to make sure that they sent out this information with respect to the new pioneer utility grant in their newsletters. Many of them have monthly or quarterly newsletters, and we provided as much information at those consultation meetings as we could and asked them to then pass on that information. All of them did. My group in Health and Social Services — the folks in the seniors area are only too happy to assist. I know that when we talked with all of the people in Continuing Care some time ago about the pensions that they were receiving, we were astounded at how many were eligible for pensions who had never applied for them. We'll make sure that we continue that work in terms of the pioneer utility grant. We think that, in the long run, this will be a real benefit to seniors, especially those seniors in lower income brackets all around the territory.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 79 agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 79, *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*. Do members wish a brief recess for about 10 minutes?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 79: Pioneer Utility Grant Act

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 79, *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I think most of what I had to say about this act was covered in my second reading, but I think it's really important that people understand where we've come with the pioneer utility grant.

Introduced in 1978 at a rate of \$300 a year, in 2003 it was increased up to \$750 — at that time it was indexed as well. In 2005, it was raised by another 10 percent, in addition to the annual indexed increase, so it resulted in this year, 2014 — the pioneer utility grant is \$1,030 per year. As I said, we expect 2,100 seniors will apply for and receive the pioneer utility grant — approximately \$2.163 million.

We expect that, by the year 2021, we will have over 6,000 seniors in this territory, and we expect that the pioneer utility grant would more than double at that point. It could put huge pressure on the sustainability of the program. It was interesting too that, in 1978, we never anticipated the number of seniors who would remain in the territory, as is happening at this time. You will probably remember — no, you won't remember back in 1970; a lot of members won't. In fact, I think one over there wasn't even born. In 1978, we really didn't anticipate — people in 1978 either moved to Vancouver Island, Kelowna, Westbank or southern Alberta. The vast majority did not stay in the territory. That has been a huge change and that has been a real positive change that people see the benefit of remaining in this territory.

I will run through a few of the things that I know will come up in questions.

We anticipate, with the modelling that we have done in terms of income testing, that the benefit will — seniors below \$39,000 — and we're talking net income. It's line 236 on your income tax form. It's not gross income; it's net income. Individuals with income of around \$39,000 to \$40,000 will receive a full pioneer utility grant. Senior couples with income in the \$55,000 to \$56,000 range would also receive the full income. Anything between those numbers and individuals with incomes — this is a single individual with a net income around \$110,000 to \$115,000 and couples with a combined net income of around \$165,000 — would receive no grant. The people between the \$39,000 to \$40,000 low income and \$114,000 high income would receive a graduated pioneer utility grant, decreasing as you approach the \$114,000.

From my experience, speaking as someone who does income tax for a number of seniors and knowing what my income would be as a senior, those numbers are actually quite good. I have a number of siblings who are also in the seniors category and I checked with them and found that the numbers do apply. If you're making \$39,000 as a single income senior, you need the pioneer utility grant. We're really looking

forward. The high-income threshold is exactly that. Truly it's a high-income threshold. If you are making, as a couple, \$165,000 a year, you probably don't need a thousand-dollar pioneer utility grant.

It gives you a rough idea anyway of our numbers and, as I said, we intend to increase the grant for people living outside the Whitehorse area immediately for the 2015 year.

There was something else I was going to add, and I cannot for the life of me remember — oh, what we also have decided as a matter of policy, and this I told to my Cabinet as well, is that what we intend to do is ensure that there will not be a reduction in the overall package of funding for the pioneer utility grant. So if the applications for the pioneer utility grant in 2015 are lower than the budgeted amount, what we would intend to do is use that surplus amount to add to the pot and therefore be able to bring up the base amount of the pioneer utility grant for all seniors.

The intent is not to save money. I think it's really important, and I made sure that I emphasized that part with the seniors groups when we met. The intent is not for the government to save money on the backs of seniors; it's to redistribute the money so those who need it most will receive it.

I think that's all I have to say, Madam Chair. Thank you for your indulgence.

Ms. Stick: I just want to be sure that I'm really clear on this so that I can pass information back to constituents and citizens who are contacting our office. As a matter of fact, even in the 10-minute break we had there, somebody called who was listening and had some questions too, so I want to be sure that I'm clear when I'm giving information back to people.

I'm going to start right where the minister started in talking about income testing. I'm glad he clarified that it's net income, because that was not clear in the act itself. It talks about income but it did not say "gross" or "net" and so that was a good thing to hear. My understanding — and I'm just looking for clarification on this — if an individual — a single person — earns a net income which is on their income tax of \$39,000 or less, they will receive the full pioneer utility grant. Their next-door neighbour is another single person. They are at \$114,000 and \$115,000 would be the cut-off where they do not receive it. The person receiving \$114,000 will still receive something, but certainly not the full amount so there will be a sliding scale between the \$39,000 and the \$115,000.

Anything under \$39,000 — they are guaranteed the full amount. The same goes for couples and I wasn't sure if you said \$55,000 or \$56,000 — anything under that would receive the full pioneer utility grant for one person. I mean, they are a couple, but for the household they would receive one pioneer utility grant. Next door there is a couple and they make \$165,000 or more, so they receive nothing. If they make less than that, it will again be on the sliding scale for the household.

So if I can just get confirmation from the minister that that is correct.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, that is correct. Don't hold me to those exact numbers, because they haven't been established yet, but they are very, very close. The \$39,000 to \$40,000; the \$55,000 to \$56,000; the \$114,000 — all of those numbers are rough. What we have to remember is that it would be graduated. So if a person made \$112,000 net — remember it is always net because that is a real important distinction — but if they made \$112,000 net income as an individual, their grant would be almost nothing. Again, it would be on a graduated scale.

Ms. Stick: I thank the minister for that confirmation. He discussed that there would be a different rate of the pioneer utility grant for individuals living in the communities. I think everyone would appreciate that outside of Whitehorse those costs are more. But those costs also vary from community to community and, currently under our social assistance regulations, there are different areas within the Yukon that receive different rates recognizing that the heating costs for Old Crow may be different from Watson Lake, which may be different from Keno. I would like to hear from the minister with regard to how those differences will be for the communities and if he knows how much of a difference it would be between the pioneer utility grant. When I ask that, I'm going on the assumption that people living in Whitehorse who would be eligible for the grant would receive the same amount that they had the previous year as well as being indexed.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The rate for seniors outside of the Whitehorse area has not yet been set, but it will be higher. We set one rate for all rural areas in the Yukon because what we've also committed to do is to have no administrative increase for the administration of this new act. That means that the people who are currently working in Health and Social Services will be handling this new act. To do it by community and vary it all over the territory, we thought at this time simply was not something that we really wanted to do. We expect that the grant for rural communities will be approximately eight percent of whatever the grant is. We see eight percent to as much as nine or 10, but eight percent is the generally accepted range for utility costs outside of the City of Whitehorse. That's what we'll try to do but we will make it a one-cost thing for all rural communities.

Ms. Stick: I thank the minister for those answers. The minister made an interesting comment with regard to the pioneer utility grant and if, after all the applications are in and the cheques are sent out and there is money left over, then that money would be rolled over and put into next year's budget line as extra monies for the pioneer utility grant. My question is a simple one. If we spend more than what is budgeted for, what would the consequence of that be? Would we see pioneer utility grants go down, up or stay the same?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Because the grant is legislated, we pay it. The government sucks it up and puts it into the supplementaries. At this time of year, if we go over in pioneer utility grant, that's what would happen. What we anticipate is that we will roughly break even because there are a few seniors who won't get the total amount, but there are even

more who will see an increase, not only because of the cost of living but because of the increase in rural communities. Those will be funded by the folks, the very few folks who will be seeing their pioneer utility grant reduced.

Ms. Stick: Just a comment on something the minister said — that by 2021, we're expecting a large increase in seniors. But he also said we expect that we will more than double the amount spent on the pioneer utility grants. My question to that was: Would we double it with this new legislation or would we double it if we just stayed the course of what we're doing now?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, if we stayed the course where we are now, by 2021 the increase will double. I gave one number of approximately 6,000 seniors in the territory. The actual numbers given to us by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, when they look at high, medium and low ranges, was that the number of seniors in Yukon will be between 6,170 and 6,460 within the next 10 years. That's a fairly substantial boost. Again, we're not trying to save a whole lot of money by doing this. What we're trying to do is make sure that it's sustainable for the longer term and that the lower income seniors get what they need to survive here in the territory.

Ms. Stick: Some of the questions that I've heard from individuals — and I have lots more on the legislation as well, but this was just a very simple one. When a person applies and fills out the application, they give their residency. They say they've lived here a year. They put down their net income into the correct box from their income tax.

Will they require proof of payment — electric bill or their fuel bill or propane bill — when making the application? The reason I ask that is because sometimes there are many renters for whom those costs are included in their rent. It doesn't mean that their rent is cheaper or more expensive, but it's included. So those individuals do not pay directly for their electricity or fuel — their landlord does — but it's included, so they are still paying those costs but they do not have that "I paid it myself — my landlord did, obviously. I'm living somewhere where I've got power and heat."

Will those people who are still paying rent and still paying utilities and fuel indirectly be eligible for the pioneer utility grant?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The way the system is intended to work is that we will receive an application, and attached to that application will be an income tax return with the name, address and box 236 — everything else can be redacted — because we're really not interested in anything else except that number.

As a part of their statutory declaration, they will sign that they did pay utilities. We're going to take them at their word for it. It's an honour system. It has been an honour system for years. We know there have been a few abuses, but not that many. What we will do is continue to make spot checks over the year to ensure — and we find too many times that people will phone us and say that, if such-and-such a person is getting a pioneer utility grant, they shouldn't be because they don't live in the Yukon over the winter at all.

We will continue to do spot checks, but basically it is an honour system but we will require a copy of their return with the box 236 highlighted and proof that they actually are living in the territory — that's for sure.

Ms. Stick: Another question someone asked of me was about the one-year residency requirement. Their question was: Well, I'm considered a Yukon resident once I have my medical health care card, which has a three-month waiting period if I've moved here from somewhere else. I can get my licence right away. I could even do my taxes and it shows I've paid Yukon income tax, but I might not have lived here yet for 365 days. Their question simply was: If this is a payment for the coming season, the coming winter, why is it so necessary that I have lived here from July to July the previous year?

Hon. Mr. Graham: This is one of those issues that seniors were a bit concerned about. As a couple of the groups put it — you mean to tell me that somebody who just moves into the Yukon should be eligible for the money even though they might not stay the whole year. They might stay 183 days and that 183 days included some winter months and they're going to get that money, and I've lived here most of my life and I get the exact same amount?

We agreed that a person should indicate — or should show — that they intend to live in the Yukon by living here one year prior to receiving a pioneer utility grant. That was something that I took to my caucus and they agreed with me. The seniors' organizations — this was a fairly important part of the proposal that we made to the seniors' organizations. As for the health care card, that is something that is across Canada. Everybody in Canada has agreed to the three-month period. That is why we do three months on the health care card, or we might want to do a year on that too — but that is beside the point. As for paying income tax, of course they come up here to pay their income tax because it is the lowest in Canada.

The way I look at it is the one year was something that was of concern to the seniors. I agreed with them — our caucus agreed with them — so to us, it is a principle that we are willing to debate. If you disagree, that's okay too. That is a principle that we believe in.

Ms. Stick: It's just a question that was asked of me — why the year, why not three months? On those same lines of a year, one of the questions that I come up against — or I often wonder about — is the — oh, wait a minute, that might have been the *Marriage Act* — no, it is under this — is what is considered a spouse. In this instance, under the pioneer utility grant, we again are talking about a spouse as someone who you have shared a home with as your spouse for a year. We know that in other regulations, such as social assistance, it is much shorter. You are considered common law — or the person living with you is considered your spouse — I believe after three months.

Again, the question is: Why a year? Why not something that would mirror other legislation?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'm not sure I understand the question. You have to be in the Yukon for a year and the spouse part would be a spouse under the *Marriage Act*. If it's

common-law, it would have to be a year. We don't want to get too complicated on this because, as I said, we want to keep the administration as simple as we possibly can. It's one of the reasons that we just want one line — net income. We're not going to request receipts for utility bills. That kind of stuff we're not going to do. We're going to trust people to tell us the truth, but we will carry out spot checks too, to ensure that they're at least aware that we're watching.

Ms. Stick: This is a matter that comes under the part of the act where we talk about interpretation and eligible persons. In this case, it talks about who is eligible, and then it identifies government, meaning the Government of Canada, the Government of Yukon or a municipality. When speaking about this, what we are talking about in this act is that, if an individual is receiving a housing grant or social assistance or some kind of grant from their municipality or the Government of Canada or the Yukon, and it's toward fuel, electricity — I believe it covered payment or benefit provided, costs of water, sewer, garbage services — anyway, housing subsidies.

My question is: Where do First Nation governments fit into this, and where do First Nation seniors and elders fit into this? Because, certainly, many elders could receive a housing subsidy, but we're not hearing about that level of government in this document.

Hon. Mr. Graham: This was a hotly debated subject because many self-governing First Nations, if we had included the original wording in our draft, felt that their seniors were being unfairly targeted because, in some First Nations, the First Nation provides not only the home, but they provide the firewood — shall we say — and electricity as well.

We also realize that, in Whitehorse, there is a grant paid to seniors and also in Dawson City. We didn't want to exclude those folks because they've received it since 1978, so we specifically took out the wording that we had originally put in that said, if you receive a grant such as you do at the City of Whitehorse, we would deduct that from the total. We won't do that. We have no intentions of excluding anyone who was formerly eligible for the grant. That means that First Nation elders or seniors will be eligible for the grant in the same manner that it was previous to this new act. The only ones we're taking out are people where we're paying the full cost, or the Government of Canada is paying for the cost of their housing and utilities.

Ms. Stick: So my understanding then is that it will not change, because it's the way it is now with First Nation elders. That will continue with this new act and the same with our tax grant that we get with the city and, apparently, Dawson. Those will not be deducted and people on social assistance still don't get this grant. Just say yes again or clarify that for me.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The member opposite was correct on all accounts. I have to tell you that it's surprising how much difference it makes. For the very first year, I received the tax grant from the Government of Yukon for a senior — it was only an extra \$50, but it felt really good.

Ms. Stick: One of the clauses is with regard to couples — so one person is 65 and the other is 60. Do we include both their incomes when making the application? Even though the

one person is not eligible for the grant, do we still include both incomes and consider them a couple?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Yes, we would. It's the household income, so it's both spouses. Even though one may be ineligible for the grant, we consider the household income for this revised PUG.

Ms. Stick: For those individuals who are under 65 but their spouse, who was over 65, has died, those people will be grandfathered on until 65 — they need to keep applying, but they will be grandfathered and then, at 65, they carry on applying as before?

Hon. Mr. Graham: That's correct. There are 11 individuals in that circumstance. Those 11 individuals will continue to receive their pioneer utility grant, as they have, until they are 65 and eligible under their own. No one will be cut off.

It was one of the things we really tried to do — make sure that anyone who needed the grant continues to receive it. What we're trying to do is increase it a little bit for the people at the bottom and in rural communities, at the expense of the people at the higher income level. As you know, under the current regulation, I would be eligible for the pioneer utility grant, but once this one is in place and I remain in my current position, I would not be. I think that's only fair because I think that, at the salaries we're talking about here, you don't need that extra \$1,000 a year that is provided through this system.

Ms. Stick: I'm just clarifying for one of my colleagues here that, with the new act, if there was a couple — one 65 and one under 65, and the 65-year-old dies, the 55-year-old will no longer be eligible for the pioneer utility grant until they reach the age of 65. But until this act comes in, the rules apply as before.

Hon. Mr. Graham: That's correct.

Ms. Stick: I thank the minister for these questions. I had a lot of them because a lot of people asked me questions about this.

One of the questions was about residency again, and the 90 days that you have to be here in the winter. It was a simple question from someone on whether it has to be consecutive. Could it be that they are here for October, gone in November and back in December — you get the idea? They are away for 90 days but it's not consecutive, and they are not here for 90 consecutive days either.

Hon. Mr. Graham: As long as they're in the territory for 183 days, and during that time frame — October to December, January to March — they live in the territory for at least 90 days, they're eligible. That part hasn't changed as well. We realize that people aren't going to live here for 90 days over the winter exactly and then go for a holiday, so that's perfectly okay with us.

Ms. Stick: This pioneer utility grant gives the minister the ability to make exceptions. One is with regard to when they apply for the grant and the other one has to do with meeting the new requirements with respect — oh no, sorry — it has to do with the eligibility requirements and that the minister can waive certain requirements. In both these cases, the exception is medical circumstances. I just wondered if

there is a reason for only medical circumstances and could the minister give a couple of examples of that please.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, we know that as citizens age, stuff happens. We wanted to make sure that we had an out if somebody got hung up outside of the territory for medical reasons. As we sat here talking about it, I can think of a couple of other instances where there is a possibility that a minister may wish to make an exception. I was just thinking about when the Alaska Highway went out and if somebody was trying to get back into the territory — and if the highway was out for two weeks and they are a week and a half late. You know, something like that — maybe. What we really wanted to make sure of is that if people were out of the territory for medical reasons, that was definitely an exception. You know, other things could be looked at, I guess, under the legislation, but it would have to be truly exceptional.

Maybe another short one and then we report progress?

Ms. Stick: I can think of one example and I would just like a comment back from the minister on this. As we're aging, so are our parents. For many of us, our parents do not live here in the Yukon. A good example might be a 65-year-old having to go back to Ontario to take care of their 85-year-old parent for an extended period of time. They're trying to move them into care — whatever. That would be an example to me that could be exceptional. You never know how long these things are going to take or what's going to be involved. I would just wonder if there is going to be room for other things besides medical.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I guess the simple answer is that we would like to keep it as limited as we possibly can because there is really no way to check on many of these issues. It will be extremely limited when the regulations come out.

Madam Chair, seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Graham that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

May the House have a report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 79, entitled *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*, and directed me to report progress.

Speaker: You have heard the report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.