



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 163

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, October 29, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

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Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Community Services; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation; Yukon Lottery Commission Government House Leader
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Liberal Party

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, October 29, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will proceed with the Order Paper. Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Women's History Month

Hon. Ms. Taylor: October is Women's History Month in Canada. Every October the Women's Directorate honours notable achievements, accomplishments and important contributions of women and girls here in the territory.

Across Canada and the north we celebrate a number of special events, such as International Day of the Girl Child on October 11 and Persons Day on October 18, to publicly acknowledge the diversity of women's and girls' contributions to Yukon. In doing so, we continue to learn from those women and girls who inspire and challenge us to be more inclusive within all spheres of Yukon society.

This year we are honouring contributions made by women living with disabilities and those working in the field of disability. This year's poster, which will be officially unveiled tomorrow evening, features women such as former Yukon Health and Social Services minister Joyce Hayden, who has been legally blind since 1983. The poster also depicts other women, including Judi Johnny, who helped establish advocacy organizations such as the highly regarded national DisAbled Women's Network along with our Yukon's very own Women on Wings.

Seven-time Paralympic champion Stephanie Dixon is also featured. Stephanie represented Canada at three Paralympic Games in Sydney, Athens and Beijing — medalled at all three games and set world records. Since retiring from swimming, she moved to the Yukon, initially to coach swimming. She is presently an official ambassador for the Canadian Paralympic Committee and, on October 21 of this year, Stephanie was named Team Canada's assistant chef de mission for the Toronto 2015 Parapan American Games. Team Canada, Mr. Speaker, is expected to send a team of approximately 200 athletes and has set a goal of finishing in the top three nations in the total medal count. As part of Women's History Month, Stephanie has been doing a number of public and school-based presentations, sharing her approach to turning physical limitations into opportunities to excel.

This year's poster also features a number of members of the Ynklude Arts Society, who will be performing tomorrow evening in a presentation entitled, *If You are Ready to Listen* — a night of original film and song. Ynklude of course has about 60 people that do performance, music and literary

creations. Along with a variety of community members, professional artists and emerging artists, the troupe is made up of women with disabilities; mothers with children with disabilities; and siblings who have either a brother or a sister with a disability. Many of the founding members are still involved from 2005, coming up on their 10-year anniversary. According to Julie Robinson, who has also joined us here in the gallery today, this time 10 years ago, we were just starting to dream about the concept of being on the stage instead of in the audience. We have realized that dream.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize at this time that we do in fact have a number of members of Ynklude who have joined us here in the gallery today. I just wanted to personally thank them for their ongoing work and their contributions on behalf of Yukon women. I wanted to point out a number of them: Aimee Lien, Breda McIntyre, Caron Ross, Cheri Wilson, Julie Robinson, Kyle Nixon, Nicole Gauvin, Rachel Dawson, Rebecca Dacko-Brink, Sam Christopherson among many others who have also joined us here this afternoon. I want to thank them for taking the time out of their busy days to be here with us in celebration of Women's History Month.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Ynklude has been fostered by the Yukon Association for Community Living. The association has been a very important facet in the development of new approaches and ideas and has fostered in some way the development of many groups such as FASSY, Challenge and now, more recently, Ynklude.

The Association is an integral part of the disability community and it works with other groups, government services and the private sector to help improve the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. The approach of community living has indeed led to people living happier, healthier and longer lives, wherein this is in fact the first generation to outlive their parents and their caregivers.

Last year, the United Nations declared October 11 to be the International Day of the Girl Child and I want to acknowledge a number of young Yukoners and their work; in particular: Madison Dixon, Julia Frasher, Emma Blair, Kathleen Limpio, Selina Heylingers-Hare, Emily Ross and Sarah Ott who put on a concert performance that very day earlier this month at the Arts Centre. The purpose of the concert was really to promote awareness of the discrimination and the lack of basic human rights millions of girls face in more than 50 developing countries.

Proceeds from admission and refreshments went toward an international campaign, "Because I am a Girl", which was first established in 2007 by the British-based children's development organization, Plan. According to Plan, 66 million girls and counting do not have access to primary or secondary school education. Plan is working to help raise awareness of the very importance of girls' education, why it counts, why it matters and provides funding in support of their education.

Women around the world have fought hard for basic rights and freedoms and now we are seeing the spread of an ideology that would undo the many gains we have made and

force back the hands of time. While we celebrate the many accomplishments of girls and women here in the Yukon, let us keep in mind that women and girls are being robbed of their human rights, dignity and futures by assailants who would surely do the same to all of us if they could.

While we celebrate women's history, let us also imagine women's future — a future where women and girls are free to walk, free to dress as they like, free to educate themselves, free to develop their talents and abilities and free to use those talents and abilities to make the world a better place.

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to pay tribute to Women's History Month, and I would like to thank the minister for her moving conclusion. We acknowledge and celebrate the strong women in our community living with disabilities and thank them for their ongoing contributions; but today, I would like to focus on a different group of strong women.

Yukon has a history that reaches farther back in time than there are words to express, and it has a yet-to-be-written history that stretches long into the channels of our collective future. Weaving in and out of this continuum are the stories — stories of the land, wildlife and the people; stories of home and community, of life and loss. Some of these stories link us to other territories through winding rivers and shared voices and experiences, and others mark Yukon as distinct and unique. Interwoven throughout this continuum of history are stories of Yukon aboriginal women. Some are shared with us through oral history, others in the written word, and still more have yet to reach our ears or our eyes.

Here are but a few glances at these rich stories. Kate Carmack, a Tagish woman born near Bennett Lake, discovered gold in Rabbit Creek alongside her husband, brother and nephews. This discovery ushered in the era of the Klondike Gold Rush and forever changed the history of the north.

Eliza Shorty Van Bibber, a Tlingit woman from Aishihik, raised 14 children on Mica Creek, gardening, fishing and trapping on the Pelly River. Eliza served as matriarch of one of Yukon's largest families, welcoming 34 grandchildren and 51 great-grandchildren into the world during her lifetime.

Angela Sidney, a Tagish woman renowned for being a great storyteller, teacher and linguist — one of the last speakers of the Tagish language, Angela received an Order of Canada for her significant contributions to preserving Yukon First Nation cultural heritage. She is the first Yukon aboriginal woman to be honoured with this award, though certainly not the last.

Edith Josie, a Gwich'in woman and writer, is known for her long-time column about life in Old Crow, entitled *Here Are the News*. It was syndicated to newspapers across the world. Edith was appointed a justice of the peace in Old Crow and she too received the Order of Canada.

Alice McGuire, a member of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, was the first aboriginal woman elected to the Yukon Legislative Assembly. Kaushee Harris, a Tlingit woman originally from Atlin, B.C., is said to have always acted with

empathy and compassion toward others. Kaushee introduced the concept of a safe home for women in the territory, leading to the foundation of the Yukon women's transition home.

Judy Gingell, a Kwanlin Dun First Nation elder and aboriginal rights activist, travelled to Ottawa to deliver the report *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, which would become the basis for Yukon land claim negotiations. Judy has done it all: chair of the Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon's first aboriginal commissioner, founding director of Northern Native Broadcasting, president and CEO of the Kwanlin Dun Development Corporation and recipient of the Order of Canada.

Norma Kassi, a Vuntut Gwitchin woman, said she gained the depth of her traditional, scientific and ecological knowledge from the Old Crow Flats. She was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize for her conservation work protecting the Porcupine caribou herd in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from industrial development. Norma also co-founded the Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research and served as a Yukon MLA.

Mary Caesar, a Kaska Dena woman and lifelong resident of Upper Liard — Mary is an artist, writer and poet, bringing traditional and contemporary Kaska people and lifestyles to life through her words, her art and her garment-making. Her pieces educate society on the social and political issues impacting Yukon First Nations, including residential schools and violence. Mr. Speaker, the list goes on.

Today, positive stories continue to be woven. Yukon First Nation women are becoming lawyers, founding businesses and implementing self-governing agreements. They are raising children, sharing traditional stories, songs and dance, caring for elders and leading sewing circles. Yukon aboriginal women are teaching and providing health care. They are going out on the land, advocating for environmental and social justice, and creating healthy communities. Yukon First Nation women are leaders in our communities and in our territory.

When we reach out and pull on the thread of aboriginal women in our territory's history, you hear stories of strong, intelligent and loving aboriginal women, yet we have dropped stitches. We have founded and enabled a history where First Nation women face the dark legacies of colonization and the residential school system, where Yukon aboriginal women are subject to systemic racism, discrimination and abuse.

We have a written history of 35 missing and murdered Yukon aboriginal women. These are stories in which we have a hand and a responsibility. If we do not take action, we risk losing more aboriginal women to these dark annals of history. In the face of deep, historic wrongs, aboriginal women have resisted and they continue to resist. They are strong and resilient. They are supported by the passionate dedication of Yukon aboriginal women's groups, by allied First Nation and non-First Nation groups, organizations, families and communities.

The story of now is not yet fully written. We are, each of us, the author. We write with our daily actions and our words, our thoughts and our gestures, our policies and our practices. We can work together to create a different history for the

future generations, one where the lives and contributions of Yukon aboriginal women are fully honoured, fully valued and considered.

I rise today in honour of the Yukon aboriginal women who have come before me and those who will come after me. I rise today in hopes of a better history and a better tomorrow. Finally, I rise today in solidarity and support of a national inquiry on missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada.

Mr. Silver: I would like to also rise today and I am going to rise on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to Women's History Month. Women have played a huge role in shaping the Yukon's history — from First Nation women being matriarchal societies to Martha Black being a pioneer in more than one way during the Klondike Gold Rush in making history as the second female ever to be elected to the House of Commons and, more recently, Yukon's first female Premier — Pat Duncan — who was only the second female Premier in Canada's history to become the leader of a province or a territory in a general election.

There are countless other great leaders who have shaped the history of the territory that we know and love today — too many to list.

I would also like to take the opportunity to recognize the great contributions that women with disabilities have made, and continue to make, in our community. Yukon will never be for the faint of heart, Mr. Speaker, and Yukon women with disabilities take on an even greater challenge than most of us in this often harsh corner of the world. I would like to echo the words from our minister responsible for the Women's Directorate for women like: Joyce Hayden, whose disabilities never deterred her from her political role within this Chamber; Judy Johnny as well for her tireless work advocating for women with disabilities; and, of course, the incredible Stephanie Dixon, seven-time Paralympian, who, as was mentioned, was named the assistant chef de mission for the 2015 Parapan American Games.

These women are absolutely an inspiration to us all.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be celebrating Women's History Month with the ability to look back on all that women have accomplished in this territory. I commend the Women's Directorate for all the hard work that they do year after year to address the challenges that women face in a world and in a country where we still have a long way to go toward moving toward equality.

That being said, I urge the House and all Yukoners to further support and enable the work of the Women's Directorate and important organizations like the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, the Yukon Status of Women Council and many more. By continuing on this trajectory toward a more inclusive Yukon for all women, we will make it better for all of us and we will have a much more inclusive and democratic society with much more to celebrate next October.

In recognition of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in application for UNESCO World Heritage Site designation for Dawson City

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise today to pay tribute to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and their application for UNESCO World Heritage Site designation for Dawson City.

The Yukon government continues to support the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in application for this important status. The World Heritage Site program was adopted by UNESCO in 1972 and aims to protect the world's cultural and natural heritage sites. World Heritage status would provide international recognition and understanding of the shared heritage of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in culture and the story of the Klondike Gold Rush.

World Heritage status would also further enrich the social fabric of Yukon in highlighting the area's fascinating culture and its history. The world's fascination with this area is summed up best by the advisory committee, which calls the Tr'ondëk Klondike one of the most legendary places on Earth.

This area has been home to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in for thousands of years. Of course, at the end of the 19th century, it was the epicentre of the Klondike Gold Rush, an international event that changed the land and people of the north forever and echoed around the world. Today this area continues to resonate with its challenging environment, dramatic historical changes and the bringing together of cultures. From rich, archeological landscapes to thriving arts communities, Dawson City and the Klondike are like nowhere else in the world.

The Yukon government contributes to the research of the advisory committee that was set up to explore the impact of gaining status for this area. This committee, formed in August 2013, includes representation from the Yukon government's Department of Tourism and Culture.

In April I was pleased to receive an update from the committee that aims to have a nomination proposal submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 2017. Earning this designation would provide a significant benefit to Yukon's tourism industry and has potential to increase the number of visitors to the territory both from Canada and internationally. An economic impact study has already been completed and predicts benefits to the region and Yukon generally through increased visitation and associated visitor spending.

There has been much talk over a number of years about the status for Dawson City. The Klondike region was placed on Canada's tentative list of potential World Heritage sites in 2004. There are 17 World Heritage sites in Canada. Out of 978 in the world, Yukon currently has one UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Kluane/Tatshenshini/Alsek park system. It would indeed be an honour and very fitting to see the Klondike receive this status. The Department of Tourism and Culture will continue to assist the community of Dawson and Parks Canada as they move toward this goal.

In closing, I reiterate the government's support for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and their application for the World Heritage status for Dawson City.

Mr. Silver: I rise on behalf of the Liberal Party and the Official Opposition to also pay tribute to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and its ongoing leadership in working toward a UNESCO World Heritage designation for the Klondike.

A diverse community-based advisory committee was assembled for this project and is reflective of the significant economic opportunity that a UNESCO designation would present at a local and territorial level.

A UNESCO World Heritage Site is defined as, and I quote: "places on Earth that are of outstanding universal value to humanity and as such, have been inscribed on the World Heritage List to be protected for future generations to appreciate and enjoy." I think we can all agree that the Klondike fits into this description alongside Kluane.

A UNESCO designation is a very rare opportunity, and even being considered is a tremendous honour. The Klondike has been on Canada's tentative list since 2004. Mr. Speaker, 150 were also reviewed and whittled down to a mere 11. Four of these have subsequently gained UNESCO status. A designation would put the Klondike among such great icon locations as the pyramids in Egypt and the Grand Canyon. The interesting thing about this designation is it is a tribute to a thriving First Nation community existing and mutually benefitting with a thriving and proud placer miner community.

Having the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in take the lead on this project is a tremendous boost and shows just how significant this designation would be. The support that Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has received comes from both our major private-sector industry associations, the Klondike Placer Miners' Association and the Klondike Visitors Association, showing just how broad this support is.

This designation was identified as a key component as part of the regional planning and the implementation of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's Final Agreement and I offer my personal support to their efforts. This designation, Mr. Speaker, would spur economic development and would help bolster tourism in our region and add to our already-strong community pride. The benefits of this designation are clear and the community support for this has never been stronger.

Speaker: Are there any visitors to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Stick: I would just like to take the opportunity and ask the House to join me in also welcoming Haley Halushka and Vicki Wilson to the House this afternoon.

Applause

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. 76: *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act — Introduction and First Reading*

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 76 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced?

Bill No. 77: *Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act and Other Enactments — Introduction and First Reading*

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 77, entitled *Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act and Other Enactments*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 77, entitled *Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act and Other Enactments*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 77 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced? Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Ms. White: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to keep its commitment to Trails Only Yukon Association and create the necessary regulations for the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* to allow them to protect sensitive areas that are vulnerable to the current levels of unrestricted off-road vehicle usage.

Ms. Stick: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House calls on the Government of Yukon to oppose federal changes to the employment insurance program, which took effect on Sunday, October 12, 2014;

THAT this House communicates to the federal government that reducing employment insurance access for precariously employed and unemployed Yukoners will place undue demand on the social and community program resources of the Yukon government, NGOs and community organizations; and

THAT this House requests the federal government to protect workers' contributions to the EI program and respects the EI account as a dedicated resource for the EI program.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House calls on the Government of Canada to establish a national pharmacare program and national pharmaceutical formulary to ensure the availability, affordability and accessibility of essential medications, and recognize that:

- (1) one in 10 Canadians have failed to fill a prescription or have skipped a dose due to the cost of their medication;
- (2) barriers to essential medications lead to poor health outcomes and increased costs elsewhere;
- (3) Canada has the second-highest per capita spending on prescription drugs in the OECD;
- (4) a national strategy on bulk purchasing of prescription drugs will help increase buying power and the negotiation of lower pharmaceutical drug prices;
- (5) Canada is the only industrialized nation that has universal health care without public coverage of prescription drugs; and
- (6) failing to ensure access to essential medications undermines public health care in Canada.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support efforts to have the Klondike designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explain how it intends to meet its goal of zero waste with a target of 50-percent waste diversion by 2015 with Raven Recycling shut down because of lack of funding.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Whistle-blower legislation

Ms. Hanson: This government committed to bringing forward whistle-blower legislation to protect Yukon civil servants. Like most of their commitments to Yukoners, this one has fallen into the ever-growing moving target category.

The minister responsible for the Public Service Commission has skirted this issue. Last spring, he said he would table the whistle-blower legislation this fall, but he has changed his script and is now talking of presenting it at some point in their mandate, or in due course.

At the same time, the minister talks about his respect for public servants, but actions speak louder than words. Will the minister confirm that he is ready to move from words to action, and will he confirm that he is tabling whistle-blower legislation this sitting?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Obviously a variety of members of this House have participated on select committees in the past on this very subject and have done a lot of hard work to the end of advancing a piece of legislation that this House will

consider ultimately. The Yukon government appreciates that hard work and the recommendations of the Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection. Our government is committed to establishing a process for disclosing serious wrongdoings within the public service and to legally protecting those who make such disclosures.

Following consideration of the committee's recommendations and feedback we received earlier this year on a variety of legislative concepts, we have prepared practical, efficient and effective concepts for the Yukon. I think that the work that we have done through our public consultation has strengthened the work that we have done so far on this. I look forward to tabling legislation in due course at some point within our mandate, as we committed in the last election.

Ms. Hanson: It is really amazing that the minister can turn a simple yes or no into a minute of rambling about consultation without going anywhere near a yes or a no. In the government's own words, whistle-blower legislation has two critical functions: (1) upholding the integrity of the public service by ensuring a transparent and effective process for disclosure of wrongdoing; and (2) ensuring those who in good faith access the process are protected from acts of reprisal. Respect for public servants is a critically important element of a healthy and well-functioning public service. Until this government actually tables and passes effective whistle-blower legislation, there is no protection for Yukon public servants who, in good faith, raise issues of wrongdoing. The question can be satisfied with a simple yes or no answer.

Will the minister table the whistle-blower legislation this sitting?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Crafting legislation is not an easy task. It's something that requires a lot of hard work and a lot of consideration.

I know the member opposite is quick to dismiss consultations as rambling, but I think public consultations are important. It's important that we hear from Yukoners. It's important that we hear from stakeholders. In this particular case, it's important that we hear from people like the Ombudsman who have some very important input to give on this subject.

There have been a number of back-and-forth discussions between the Office of the Ombudsman and the Public Service Commission to date in the development of this legislation. I'm very pleased to report that much of the input that the Ombudsman has provided will be incorporated into a bill ultimately. I look forward to tabling that legislation at some point in our mandate. We have until tomorrow to table legislation for this sitting and we will see whether or not a bill will be tabled. If not, as we committed in the last election, we will do this in this term.

Ms. Hanson: It shouldn't be a matter of hide and seek. This government is quite prepared to make announcements in the media about other legislation. Governments are elected to do the hard work. This government promised to introduce whistle-blower legislation to protect public servants who reveal wrongdoing. There have

been reports by two select committees of the Legislative Assembly representing extensive consultation. If this issue is really important to both this minister and the Yukon Party government, why is it that after 12 years they still refuse to act?

It would appear this government is hesitant to have strong whistle-blower legislation in place. I'm not alone in wondering why. What is the government afraid of? While the government delays, can the minister explain what protection he will provide to public servants who in good conscience raise issues of wrongdoing in the absence of whistle-blower legislation?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Again, I would note that we did commit to doing this type of legislation. We have had a select committee look at this issue. All parties in this Legislature participated in that process — that select committee process — and provided an excellent report to the Legislature that we have incorporated into the work we have done today in drafting legislation. I look forward to bringing forward that work as soon as possible, and I look forward to having the consideration of the House on whistle-blower legislation in due course.

Question re: Raven Recycling Centre funding

Mr. Barr: Yesterday Raven Recycling and Zero Waste Yukon held an open house to discuss the way forward for recycling in the territory. While Raven continues to mobilize Yukoners in support of recycling, as they have for over 20 years, the government stands by wringing its hands. The largest recycling organization in the territory just shut down a key part of its activities due to a lack of public funding, and the government has pledged to divert 50 percent of Yukon's waste by next year.

Can the minister tell Yukoners what concrete steps he is taking to ensure that the government will meet its pledge to divert half of our waste without Raven Recycling in the picture?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As I noted to the member opposite, in fact the Yukon government is continuing to work on this issue with the City of Whitehorse. We are waiting as well for a consultant's report that the city is waiting for to help inform their next steps. Our focus is on working with the city and other partners to identify sustainable, long-term, cost-effective solutions for processing recyclables in the Yukon.

As I noted to the member yesterday, in fact Raven requested that we more than double the combined diversion credit from \$150 per tonne, which is what they asked for and received last year, to \$330 per tonne this year. We have asked them for a breakdown of those costs. They have committed to provide it. We are still waiting for that information as of the last time I checked with my deputy minister.

Mr. Barr: The minister keeps dodging questions about recycling. This isn't a question about Yukoners' personal responsibility to recycle; this isn't a question about the City of Whitehorse's role in waste diversion; this isn't a question about Raven or P&M's operations. This is a question about a commitment by this government to divert 50 percent of

Yukon's waste by 2015, a platform promise by this government. It's about the minister's responsibility to live up to his and his party's commitments.

Can the minister give us a straight answer: Will the government fulfill its commitment to divert 50 percent of Yukon's waste by 2015? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, again what I would remind the member — I know the NDP is opposed to the concept of personal responsibility. We believe that there is both personal and government responsibility when it comes to recyclables. It's unfortunate that the members do not recognize that.

If the NDP is interested in the answer instead of heckling, we are committed to taking additional steps to working with partners, including and especially the city, in identifying long-term options for processing recycling. We have also indicated — I have personally indicated to Raven — that we are prepared to consider, as one of the potential options, increasing the diversion credits, but we've asked them for information to demonstrate why the costs have more than doubled from what they requested and received last year — \$150 a tonne for diverted material — to their current request asked for in September of \$330 a tonne. They have committed to providing that information. We have yet to receive it.

Mr. Barr: The recycling bins at the landfill are overflowing. Yukoners already understand the benefits of waste diversion. It's the minister's thinking that needs to change.

The government's diversion credit top-ups only go so far. The current diversion credit program implemented last year was set to expire in December 2014. That's just over a month from now. So what's the plan? Before we even knew Raven would close its non-refundable drop-off services, we knew the diversion credits program would expire in December. Hopefully the minister had a plan to reach his and his party's diversion commitment plan past then.

Will the minister increase the diversion credits now in the interim, or will he keep passing the buck to the public, the city and the recyclers?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I think the public sees through what the member is saying and recognizes that any department, any NGO or any entity funded by government does have an expectation that they demonstrate their needs and they account for their costs. No matter how worthy the work being done by government departments, by any NGO, by the Hospital Corporation — every one of them has to demonstrate their need, and when they are coming in with a request for significantly increased funding, they do have to demonstrate and account for what that is based on.

Raven Recycling, last year, asked for and received a diversion credit of \$150 per tonne. That, contrary to what the member said, is not scheduled to be phased out in December. It was a commitment put in place to evaluate how well that was working, and with the option of increasing that diversion credit at the end of that period. Again, the request that was received from Raven in September for \$330 a tonne —

they've committed to providing me with a breakdown; they have yet to provide that information.

We are committed to working with the City of Whitehorse and other partners in this area to identify the best solutions for Yukoners and Yukon citizens, and our focus is on solutions for recycling processing that are cost-effective, sustainable and provide Yukoners the services they need.

Question re: Klondike region, application as UNESCO World Heritage Site

Mr. Silver: The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has been spearheading a project in Dawson that would see the Klondike region be designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Klondike was placed on Canada's tentative list for consideration as a World Heritage Site in 2004. More than 150 sites were reviewed by experts, and 11 sites were selected. Very few places in the world are shortlisted, so the region is already in a very advantageous position compared to hundreds of other places that are interested in this prestigious honour.

I will start with an extremely simple question: Does the Government of Yukon support the Klondike becoming a World Heritage Site?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for his question. The Yukon government Department of Tourism and Culture has worked with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, with Dawson, on this application and this important status, and we will continue on with that good work.

Mr. Silver: I'll come back to that minister.

This project is certainly a priority for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and has received support from the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon, the City of Dawson and the Klondike Visitors Association, among others. It has also been identified as the number one private business opportunity in Dawson through regional planning resulting from implementation of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in final agreement.

The regional tourism industry sees UNESCO status as a key opportunity for growth with potentially far-reaching benefits for the whole community. The project has reached a critical stage and is now awaiting word on funding application to this government so that work can proceed from the Minister of Economic Development.

We know that the Premier did receive a letter from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in some time ago, and we are wondering: Will the government be funding this application?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I thank the member opposite for his question. It is something that I've discussed both with him and the Mayor of Dawson recently. I am aware that there is a funding application before the Department of Economic Development from the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's development corporation. That funding application is in the process that is undertaken by the department to review such applications. These processes are important, and they are in place for a reason. That is to ensure that the generous funding opportunities that the department provides are distributed fairly and for the purposes for which they are intended.

The application currently is labelled for the strategic industries fund. That may be the way we want to move forward, or there may be another fund that may be more appropriate and better suited for funding this particular project. Either way, I am confident we will find a solution and am confident that, between my department and the Department of Tourism and Culture, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the City of Dawson, we'll be able to find a way to move forward on this project.

Mr. Silver: Thank you to the minister for his time on this topic. We did sit and speak about this very candidly. I do respect that project funding happens at a certain time, but this is of the essence right now.

We will move to the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

I mentioned that the tourism industry is strongly behind the World Heritage designation and to see the great potential of the Klondike region — if this application of UNESCO is successful, there would certainly be benefits to the rest of the Yukon from a tourism perspective as well. To the Minister of Tourism and Culture specifically: What is his Department of Tourism and Culture doing to ensure that this project is successful?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: In addressing the member opposite, the Department of Tourism and Culture continues to work with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. Yukon government contributes to the research of the advisory committee that was set up to explore the impact of gaining status for this area. This committee, formed in August of 2013, includes representation from the Yukon government's Department of Tourism and Culture. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Tourism and Culture will continue to assist the community of Dawson and Parks Canada as they move toward this goal.

Question re: Teacher staffing

Mr. Tredger: On Monday, the Minister of Education's answers were less than forthcoming when it came to her government's treatment of temporary teachers. This government's dismissive approach to the concerns raised by the Yukon Teachers Association regarding long-term temporary teachers and the overuse of the exceptional circumstances clause has forced them into multiple grievances.

Recently, a grievance on behalf of a temporary teacher who wasn't granted permanent status after several years made it all the way to the Supreme Court. Unsurprisingly, the Yukon government lost a case and had to reinstate and compensate the teacher for his years of work.

What were the legal costs during the adjudication and multiple appeals in this government's attempt to prevent long-term, temporary teachers from getting the certainty that they deserve?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As I also spoke to the member opposite's question the other day, I don't have those specific facts when it comes to specific legal costs associated with any given case before the Government of Yukon, for very good reason, but what I can say on the floor of the Legislature is that in fact we are discussing issues such as these with the

Yukon Teachers Association to resolve them in a mutually beneficial way.

We recognize the importance of temporary teachers, as I mentioned. They are hired for defined periods to meet temporary programming needs in all of our schools or to replace permanent teachers who are on long-term leave. That leave includes maternity, paternity, parent leave, parenthood leave, educational leave, differed salary leave, long-term sick leave, personal leave without pay and temporary assignments to other positions.

Again, our temporary employees are very valued citizens of our community. They play a very important role in all of our education in the territory. We'll continue to work with YTA on this and on many other issues of importance.

Mr. Tredger: The Yukon Teachers Association has requested and waits for involvement from this government on this issue. This government has shown their disdain for teachers by attempting to muzzle them. They continue to keep many temporary teachers in difficult limbo situations despite a legal obligation to the contrary.

The NDP has raised the temporary employee issue for the last three years. It is not a new one. More grievances continue to be filed on this matter. Last year, 30 grievances were filed on behalf of temporary teachers who had been employed for more than two years, with 13 more so far this year.

How much money has the minister budgeted for legal costs to continue her fight with the Yukon Teachers Association and our temporary teachers?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: This government has actually budgeted — in this fiscal year — over \$81 million in support of personnel — in support of teachers, remedial tutors, educational assistants, school secretaries, school librarians, aboriginal language instructors, school council support, school growth planning, superintendents — and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

This government values the very importance of education in this territory and continues to enhance resources throughout the Education department in support of public schools; in support of early learning; in support of advanced education; the Yukon College; certainly in support of labour market programs; and in support of employment and training opportunities for Yukoners to take advantage of those job employment opportunities of today.

It is unfortunate that the member opposite continues to vote against every single one of those line items when it comes to that. We will, in fact, continue to work with our partners in education, and that includes YTA.

Mr. Tredger: What is needed is to treat out employees with dignity and respect and sit down and talk with their association.

In the legal decision in favour of one of Yukon's temporary teachers, the judge said — and I quote: "Teachers and other ordinary employees may be employed on a term or temporary basis, but only for a limited time. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, they must become permanent employees after two consecutive years."

Exceptional circumstances mean exactly that — exceptional — not whatever justification the minister can provide to avoid making these temporary teachers permanent. It is time to treat our temporary teachers with the dignity and respect that they deserve. Will the minister commit to working with the Yukon teachers and the Yukon Teachers Association to avoid more costly arbitration?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Again, as I mentioned, we are very much committed to working with YTA to come to the table and resolve these issues and other issues in a mutually convenient and also beneficial way for all Yukoners.

As I mentioned, temporary teachers are hired for defined periods of time to meet those temporary programming needs required throughout the territory. Under the staffing protocol — we have adjusted that particular protocol as well so they have priority hiring status over everyone except permanent teachers within three years' service in the same school.

I would remind the member opposite that temporary employees are also members of the YTA, they're covered by all the benefits of the YTA collective agreement, they're paid at the same rate and they have the same benefits they would if their jobs were permanent — and also as part of the staffing protocol, as I mentioned.

We do remain committed to working with YTA to address this particular issue, but also other issues of importance to Yukon educators.

Question re: Transportation of dangerous goods

Ms. Moorcroft: The Town of Inuvik is now using LNG as its primary energy source. The opening of Inuvik's LNG facility means increased numbers of transport trucks hauling LNG up the Alaska Highway to the north Klondike Highway, then on to the Dempster Highway. The recent accident in Dawson City reminded us of the impact this can have on Yukoners.

The transportation of dangerous goods such as LNG is regulated by Canada's *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act*. Drivers must carry a pre-approved emergency response assistance plan that outlines what is to be done to respond to an accident that could endanger public safety.

How are these emergency response plans shared with Yukon emergency response teams who many need to attend an accident involving a vehicle transporting dangerous goods?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I think that part and parcel of that question — a lot of that is operational stuff.

Yukoners do rely on their roads and bridges to be safe so they can get where they are going to whatever they are doing, and we meet these challenges on a daily basis. When it comes to the transportation of dangerous goods, the member opposite already alluded to some of the information that they need and some of the training that they need. I know our department — in the Department of Highways and Public Works — and our scales guys enforce that and look at every vehicle that travels on those roads.

Last year we did see an increase in traffic. We saw that with the infrastructure of our roads taking a hit there in the spring, but the department did good work in getting the roads

back up and operational again, and we look forward to another busy season and great economic boost to the economy of the north.

Ms. Moorcroft: The transport of dangerous goods might be under federal jurisdiction, but when there is an incident, the dangerous goods are no longer being transported, and it is up to Yukon crews to manage and contain the event. The responders in Dawson did a stellar job at containing the situation a few weeks ago and safeguarding public safety when an LNG trailer tipped. We are concerned about the safety of the personnel who respond to these incidents. For instance, in an isolated area, the first people on-site might be Highways and Public Works personnel. EMS crews may also attend. It is essential that these first responders have the equipment and training that enable them to look after their own health and safety as well as contain the dangerous goods that may be threatening public safety.

What specialized training is given to these Yukon crews to help ensure their response is appropriate for the situation and does not put their own safety and well-being at risk?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: When it comes to dangerous goods or dangerous-goods spills — I was a part of the Department of Highways and Public Works for a few years and did come across a spill site. When it comes to the department and our employees, we have spill kits. I know the local EMS and the local ambulance stations are trained in what they're supposed to do. I know the local fire departments are trained and they have the gear and equipment that's needed to go to these incidents.

We applaud them — and I watched that whole file when the LNG truck had rolled over on its side. I do applaud the Emergency Services folks in Dawson City for their work and being there right away. But then again, this is something that our Department of Highways and Public Works — the weigh scales and dangerous goods people — are looking at this file to see if there is anything that was missed or anything we can learn from it.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, a driver transporting any dangerous goods must carry the emergency response plan as part of the paperwork for the load. This paperwork may be reviewed by the carrier compliance personnel with Highways and Public Works when the truck reports to a weigh scale in Yukon. However, in an accident, the driver may be unable to share the emergency response plan. First responders will know what the dangerous goods are by the safety marks on the vehicle but will not know what the preapproved response plan is. There is no requirement to deposit a copy of the plan at the weigh scales.

Will the minister commit to developing a process whereby emergency response plans are registered and shared with first responders?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I do thank the member opposite for the question. I will commit to the member opposite that I will look into this.

I want to speak a little bit about our dedicated department or dedicated volunteers and competent people who do a lot of training. There are training courses constantly going on — and

I'm not exactly sure which exact training course they do on which regular day, but they asked for this training and this government is committed to make sure that they have the opportunity to get what they ask for and to have that level of training. I have confidence in them and confidence in our staff, and I will look into this matter for the member opposite and get back to her.

Question re: YESAA process

Mr. Tredger: The Premier has stated on a number of occasions these controversial amendments to YESAA in Bill S-6 are okay because they would make Yukon consistent with other jurisdictions. But the Yukon public and Yukon First Nations have no interest in having Yukon be consistent with other environmental legislation that has already been gutted by the federal government. What the Premier is essentially saying is that the bad amendments to YESAA that he supports are okay because it will make us consistent with other bad legislation across Canada.

Why does the Premier want the Yukon's environmental protection legislation to be consistent with legislation across Canada that Yukoners know has already been gutted by the Harper Conservatives?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I guess I could say I'm speechless at that question. I guess it would come from a party that, the last time they were in power, saw the massive exodus of people and the significant decline in any economy here, and I guess that's obvious.

The concern here for this government is for families — it's for jobs for Yukoners, and ensuring that our processes and our assessments are consistent across the country, including Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. This allows us to be competitive; it creates opportunities for us with the hard work we do in partnership with industry to create investment opportunities that allow projects to go forward that enrich the lives of Yukoners. We will stand up for that all day long, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Tredger: So our environment is subject to the lowest common denominator.

If we wanted YESAA to be like other environmental legislation in Canada, then we wouldn't have negotiated chapter 12 in the final agreements in the first place. The Premier has consistently stated that the First Nations have no reason to fear YESAA amendments because, if the changes are inconsistent with the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, the UFA will supersede them.

This Premier is essentially telling Yukoners, "Don't worry. If the federal ministers' binding policy direction to YESAA doesn't respect the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, the courts will deal with it." What kind of leadership is this? Why is the Premier supporting legislation that will only trigger more lawsuits?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The tabled amendments to YESAA that are now in front of the House of Commons increase the environmental protection that exists here in the territory by ensuring that potential effects of likely future

projects — cumulative effects — can now be considered in part of the assessment.

Along with ensuring that we remain competitive, we are also ensuring that we continue to reassess and enhance the environmental protection because everybody in this Chamber and everybody who lives in this territory is concerned about ensuring that we leave for our future generations the great place that exists today. We also know that those people are also interested in ensuring that their kids have jobs and an opportunity for a future here in Yukon.

Mr. Tredger: The Premier has shown before that he doesn't understand what the meaning of the word "certainty" is. It means "without a doubt." Before these amendments, there were no doubts in the YESAA process. The only thing that Bill S-6 will create without a doubt is more lawsuits. However, industry is certainly going to think twice when they look at the Yukon's political climate and see a government that has alienated almost every single Yukon First Nation.

You would think that the Premier would have caught on considering that not a single major mine is currently operating at full capacity in the Yukon.

Why does the premier fail to realize that as court cases pile up, investors begin to look elsewhere?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, there was almost seven years of consultation that occurred before the tabling of the amendments that are now in front of the House of Commons. On the five-year review, out of 76 recommendations, 73 of those recommendations received unanimous support of all the parties.

Yukon First Nations are guaranteed their participation in the YESAA process. First Nations have three appointments out of seven positions on YESAB. Yukon government has only two, as does the Government of Canada.

If there is ever any conflict between YESAA and the final agreements, it is very clear through section 4 that the final agreements will prevail. This is a good amendment to YESAA legislation. This is a good opportunity for us to ensure that we have chances for our Yukon citizens and for their children to be able to have good, high-paying jobs and create a life for themselves here in the Yukon.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 724

Clerk: Motion No. 724, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round destination by:

- (1) promoting local tourism and increasing economic opportunities for northerners;
- (2) increasing Yukon's funding for overseas marketing initiatives by \$590,000;
- (3) developing new tourism products such as the Millhaven Bay project;
- (4) enhancing Yukon's cultural products;
- (5) supporting Yukon museums and cultural organizations;
- (6) promoting events; and
- (7) fostering new and emerging events.

Ms. McLeod: I was honoured to bring forward this motion to the Legislature, Motion No. 724. It is a great pleasure to speak to this motion today, because this government has been committed to growing and investing in the Yukon tourism industry.

I would like to recognize the hard work of the industry partners who provide expertise and insight into marketing decisions by the Yukon government and thank those partners. It is truly an industry that processes tourism marketing here in the territory.

I would also like to recognize the hard work done by the minister and his staff on behalf of Yukon's tourism industry. He always mentions how great the staff are and how they continue to advance our interests on the national stage of tourism marketing.

Over the past decade, we have seen continued investment and enhancement of our marketing efforts and we have been responsive to requests from the industry. The government enhanced the highly successful tourism cooperative marketing fund that allows Yukon companies to match marketing investments dollar-for-dollar and improve their marketing reach.

After developing and demonstrating campaign success, the government merged the Destination: Yukon marketing campaign into the main funding to allow annual marketing in our gateway markets of Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and Toronto. Visitor statistics have shown that these gateway markets have the best demonstrated growth. In 2013, we saw a 17-percent increase in tourists visiting from other areas of Canada.

These strategic investments are a small sample of what is achieved through the research-based and industry-led approach to marketing taken by the Department of Tourism and Culture.

In speaking to the motion itself, investing in tourism marketing to grow visitation to the territory is crucial to enhancing a diverse and strong economy. The tourism industry continues to be one of the largest employers in the territory and generated \$250 million in 2013.

A strong tourism industry requires marketing in our key markets so that the industry can continue to create many economic opportunities for Yukoners. The 2014 budget saw

the introduction of a \$590,000 overseas marketing budget to enhance overseas marketing from the department. This investment by the Yukon government was in response to the demonstrated success of the CanNor funds that ended last year. It will allow the industry to strategically reach into key markets internationally.

The government is also working with First Nations and the private sector to develop high-end tourism attractions like Millhaven Bay. This development has the potential to be a marquee attraction and builds on the vibrant tourism sector developing in Carcross. The Destination: Carcross project that was started back in 2005 has been successful and an inspiring demonstration of what can be accomplished by successful partnerships between First Nations and the Yukon government. It has led to great achievements in the region and the government continues to invest in this region.

That the Carcross Commons has been developed by the Carcross-Tagish First Nation is another tourism anchor that provides a great experience to visitors. It builds on the new visitor information centre, the carving shed and the return of the train to Carcross. These projects have all come about over the last decade, due to work by the tourism department and the community. Hopefully Millhaven Bay can be the next step in this great Yukon success story.

We have a vibrant arts and culture scene in Yukon, and its continued development is crucial to developing product on the ground for visitors. By enhancing our cultural product, we provide a great experience and share what it means to be a Yukoner with our many visitors.

Over the past decade, the Yukon government has expanded and enhanced arts funding in the territory. We now have some of the highest arts contribution levels per capita in the country. Our arts funds support artists who travel and tell our Yukon stories. They are provided support to create our Yukon cultural products, and they're able to visit schools and teach the next generation of Yukon artists.

We have enhanced the funding for museums and cultural centres that serve as hosting institutions for all our Yukon visitors. These are often the first places they visit to learn more about us. The development of First Nation cultural centres and the development of our museum community increase demands on government funding. This government has built-in programs that continue to meet the growing pressures of these important landmarks.

The Tourism and Culture minister has done great work to support the events in the territory, including new ones. We have key events that service cornerstones of the tourism industry, such as the Adäka Cultural Festival, the Yukon River Quest, the Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous and the Yukon Quest. They serve as marquee attractions during the winter and summer months.

Other events that promote visitation include the Klondike Road Relay, Dustball, the Sheep and Crane Festival in Faro, the Dawson City Music Festival and our many other music festivals across the territory.

Nurturing new festivals for the territory is an important focus of this government. A fine example of this work is the

New Canadian Events fund that was launched with this year's budget. It's great to hear that three groups, so far at least, have accessed this fund to help host multicultural events that celebrate our diversity in this modern Yukon.

I know that Watson Lake is looking forward to increasing our presence in the tourism market. The Town of Watson Lake is working with the Watson Lake Historical Society in the establishment of a museum and I'm quite sure that the Department of Tourism and Culture will be involved in some way.

I thank the Minister of Tourism and Culture for his insights and support in moving forward with our community.

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on behalf of the New Democrat Official Opposition in support of Motion No. 724 brought forward by the Member for Watson Lake.

Tourism is a sustainable economic driver for the Yukon. Promoting tourism will continue to benefit the industry and guarantee future strengthening of the Yukon. It is satisfying to see this government finally taking tourism seriously and supporting the hard work of the staff in the department.

I also want to acknowledge the fine work of people across the spectrum of the tourism industry. Last week, I attended the Tourism Industry Association's fall roundup at the Beringia Interpretive Centre.

This dedicated group of people continues to work exceptionally hard, advocating on behalf of Yukon's tourism professionals. In some way, every person in the Yukon has been touched by the work of the TIAY. The association deserves a big pat on the back for their diligence and perseverance.

Through the promotion of the Yukon tourism brand, more people will learn about the depth of the beauty that our Yukon has to offer. Whether our visitors are flying, driving, cycling or walking, they need places to stay, food to eat, events to entertain and wilderness to explore. More people want to experience the Yukon in all seasons. This means more year-round employment for Yukoners.

Promoting local tourism and economic development for northerners is an important part of this motion. I sincerely hope this will include enhancing economic opportunities for First Nation governments, municipalities and incorporated communities through their LACs. I shout out to the Caribou Commons in Carcross for their ongoing efforts and moving forward with a vision for that community.

I would also define success as enabling these entities to flourish through networking with each other and providing each other support as they strive to reach or exceed their tourism goals. Increasing Yukon's funding for overseas marketing is one small step toward success. At a time when other jurisdictions are investing significantly more to attract visitors, it would have been satisfying to see a larger amount allocated toward marketing.

There is fierce competition around the world for the tourism dollar. To be successful, we must support the tourism industry as much as we can, not as minimally as we can.

In regard to developing the new iconic tourism products, such as the high-end experience that would be available at Millhaven Bay, and noting that it will attract more visitors, this type of project has the potential to strengthen local economies, which will in turn help develop more viable communities. I must say, though, that the wording in the motion — that this government helped in developing that specific endeavour at Millhaven Bay — it is the view of this member of the House that the Yukon Party government did more to hinder the development of that particular project.

I would say that, if we are going to be doing more of these things in the future, the government be able to address what the community is speaking to — and the developers, actually — and I will have other colleagues expand on that a little further.

Even so, it is important to keep in mind that many already feel a deep connection to Yukon's lands. They are the long-ago people and they are descendants of the first newcomers who came to the territory in the 19th century, plus many more recent arrivals. We have a vibrant, diverse population who treasure the beauty of Yukon and actively all it has to offer.

When developing any project, we must take time to understand how the land is used and enjoyed by the people who live there. It is essential to foster the social licence to use the land, which will help ensure that these new tourism products are successful.

It is also encouraging to see the intent to enhance Yukon's cultural products. Visitor surveys confirm that there is a demand for authentic cultural experiences. Visitors want a unique made-in-Yukon experience, whether that is experiencing traditional ceremonies, gingerly tiptoeing across a glacier, feeling the movement of a herd of caribou, climbing with Dall sheep or staying awake to see the northern lights.

I strongly encourage the government to develop the partnerships that will strengthen the quality of these tourism products. To best understand how this can be done without diluting the experience, we need to hear from the people who are already offering quality services and products, such as Northern Cultural Expressions Society, the Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Dänojä'ä Zhö Cultural Centre.

Product development can also include workshops for skills development, mentorship and business training. Workshops can also identify gaps that inhibit successful business relationships such as cultural awareness and sensitivity. I firmly believe that the future of Yukon is in the cultural experience. In today's modern, digital, fast-paced and sometimes overwhelming world, there is far more demand for quiet time on an iconic landscape.

I am reminded of the time that *Lonely Planet* listed Yukon as the fourth from the top of 10 regions to visit around the world. People were encouraged to visit soon because change was coming fast to the territory with the extractive industry rush and the ravages of climate change. Today, the *Lonely Planet's* website advises that any visit to the Yukon also means much time outdoors. There is no doubt that the Yukon's vast and pristine wilderness is its number one tourist

attraction. People from around the world visit to indulge in the grandeur of the landscape. Any change to that landscape will forever change the visitor experience. We must be ever mindful that mining comes and goes while tourism will be here forever.

In a nutshell, people visit the Yukon to experience what isn't available in other places. With a large market from Europe for example — and it's great to go there to see the old buildings, to see what's on the streets and the canals in Holland, and all of that is very beautiful. The people who are there live there. That's what they see every day. When they come here, they don't get to see our pristine wilderness. People come from around the world because they don't have the ability to experience what we have. I just can't reiterate enough that we have to maintain our pristine wilderness. Its value as it stands is something that only increases and will continue in time and for future generations.

Finally, when considering which new and emerging events to foster, I encourage development of more competitive sporting events and sport training camps. The Yukon also has a strong contingent of winter sport enthusiasts who also compete successfully. Groups such as the Yukon Freestyle Ski Association are developing local training facilities and garnering national interest. I ask the government to commit to sitting and meeting with local folks who want to create new sporting events that will attract national and international participants.

I'll wrap up by saying that I look forward to bearing witness to the revitalization of the tourism sector and to doing so in the good company of the many people who strive to make the Yukon the place to visit.

Mr. Silver: It's a privilege for me to rise and speak to Motion No. 724. I think this motion is fairly straightforward in that I am in agreement with it in principle, as I imagine all members of this House are, but the real question that faces us today is: How can we do the most effectively and efficiently, and support the many small businesses and NGOs that make up the industry and get the most out of our marketing efforts? In promoting local tourism, we must also recognize that we do not have the budgets to compete on the same level as many other provincial jurisdictions, and that being creative with our limited resources is extremely important for us in the north.

Fostering success in regional tourism economies, not unlike any other sector of the economy, involves having the infrastructure in place, whether it's roadways or energy securities. There are plenty of opportunities for the north to succeed in the tourism industry. We just have to make sure that the environment is there.

It is great that \$590,000 has been added to the Tourism and Culture budget and it's important that money spent by the department should have the best possible return on investment. If this money continues to meet the high expectations of the tourism industry, then it will be money well-spent. The biggest concern that I often hear from constituents who work in the tourism industry is that not enough money makes it into direct marketing efforts. Tourism

marketing money has a strong return on investment and the money that is added to the GDP could be huge. Although the amount in real dollars is great, relative to what tourism gets now, it is still relative in terms of the overall budget.

I would like to once again congratulate the Tourism Industry Association for their lobbying on new tourism marketing funds that appear in this budget. It is unfortunate that the government had to be dragged kicking and screaming into this funding program. Now they are taking credit for it and that's good to see. We would like to see a commitment from this government to make this a more permanent part of the department's core budget — and judging by the smile on the minister's face, he's in agreement with that as well and it's not just a one-off.

What we're seeing here is two years up to an election — a two-year commitment. This is too important to be handled on an application-to-application basis with Ottawa, and I believe that it should be made more permanent.

Specifically in regard with the Millhaven Bay project — the Yukon government has been in support of its land acquisition, but it is important that we help foster smaller ventures as well. Let's ensure that the policies in place can support all scales of projects in tourism. The greater the product inventory that the Yukon has to offer, the more likely those visitors will extend their stay and recommend to their friends and relatives to return again. We've seen that with Montana Mountain. The good folks who started off the Montana Mountain trail program did a great job of coming up to Dawson and helping the local kids through local grant programs and monies found through Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to help them support a downhill trail up in Dawson City. Some of the students I've taught, I've never seen them so proud of a commitment they've done. It has really turned their lives around in a lot of ways.

It's great, because one of the original things that we heard from the Montana Mountain crew was, you can't just have the one hill. Tourists are going to want to come up and they're going to want to come to a bunch of different places, so it's great to see these projects extend past just one project.

There are a number of great businesses, groups and NGOs that can help a strong industry in the Yukon. Our cultural sector specifically should be noted. All the museums, the First Nation cultural centres and theatre groups that tell Yukon stories are extremely important. It's unfortunate that the federal government's cuts to the Parks Canada budgets have meant that Yukon artifacts are no longer being cared for at the same level they were prior to 2012.

Yukon has a number of very special and unique events that are so representative of our great spirit — classic festivals like the Dawson City Music Festival and Adäka Cultural Festival. We also have important winter festivals, such as the Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous and Yukon Quest, which help bolster tourism efforts outside of the primary summer season. We had a great beer festival in Whitehorse the other week, and I was proud to be able to sit there and give people beer. It was a great event.

I would like to acknowledge some of the great events that have sprung up recently, especially the two culinary festivals in the last two years, a big part of which was the innovation of the Tourism Industry Association. It was great to see Yukon's fantastic foods getting some national attention.

This summer we also saw the first-ever YukomiCon, an event that I would never have dreamt that Yukon would have had here when I first moved here, but it was great to see and it was very well-attended. These events are great because they encourage the community and would not be possible without the hard work put in by volunteers. We all know that the Yukon is built on volunteers — absolutely.

The tourism industry continues to be a gem in our economy. It is far more stable than the ebb and flow of mineral prices, and it is the largest private sector employer in the territory. I thank the members opposite for bringing forth this motion, and will absolutely be supporting the motion as it is worded.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Given that I only have 20 minutes on this I would like to spend the bulk of my time on the first two points of the motion.

We committed to marketing Destination: Yukon in our Yukon Party platform. The list is quite lengthy, so I will mention only a few of these items. We committed to work with industry, communities, and First Nations to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round destination; enhance marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets in the United States, Canada and Europe; promote affordable domestic and international air access; work with the Yukon Convention Bureau, industry and Yukon communities to further promote Yukon as a choice destination for hosting meetings, conventions and sports events; utilize the tourism cooperative marketing fund to build partnerships with industry that improves marketing efforts for both Yukon government and industry; create a product development program to assist tourism operators in developing and enhancing the quality of their product; continue efforts to make Kluane National Park more accessible to Yukoners and visitors; continue to work with Whitehorse and Carcross to develop their respective waterfronts; continue to implement the Yukon Museums Strategy in collaboration with museums, First Nation heritage and cultural centres and community interpretive centres; continue to work with the City of Whitehorse and the Miles Canyon Historic Railway Society to promote the trolley and Yukon's railway history; continue to provide necessary support to Yukon museums to enable them to run their operations and retain and train experienced staff. We committed and we are delivering.

Prior to the start of this mandate under the watch of Yukon Party, tourism continued to grow in spite of a worldwide economic crisis. Since I have become minister, we have continued to develop our tourism marketing efforts around the globe. With CanNor's assistance of \$2 million over the past four years, the department has been able to pursue an

enhanced overseas destination awareness marketing project. This initiative has been a great success, with overseas visitation to Yukon growing by 33 percent over the life of that project. Due to the success of that project, our government has elected to maintain an enhanced level of investment in overseas marketing on an ongoing basis, allocating an additional \$590,000 to the overseas marketing budget, starting in 2014-15.

Looking at the Asian market, Japan continues to be Yukon's fastest-growing international market and ranks fourth in overseas visitation. In fact, between 2009 and 2011, Yukon saw an 800-percent increase in Japanese visitation. In 2012, Yukon hosted more than 3,500 Japanese visitors, who primarily experienced aurora-viewing excursions. On January 28 of this year, the department and I led a delegation comprised of 15 tourism-related businesses to Vancouver to attend the first-ever Yukon/Japan tourism marketplace. I'll talk a bit more about the Asian market in a few minutes.

In mid-February, we profiled Yukon's Larger than Life brand at Canada Corroboree in Australia. Australia is Yukon's second-largest overseas market, with close to 7,000 visitors in 2013, representing 19.5 percent of overseas visitors and two percent of overall visitors.

During our tourism mission to Australia, I was able to sign cooperative marketing agreements with Canada and Alaska specialist holidays with Adventure World, Adventure Destinations International, Destination Canada and Holland America Line in Australia, who promote Yukon travel experiences and products in the Australian market.

We met with the Canadian Consul General; engaged in five media interviews; met with close to 1,000 travel agents and 30 tour operators and signed five cooperative market agreements valued at \$75,000 in total. The steady growth of the Australian market is the result of the successful partnerships between industry, government, the Canadian Tourism Commission and our tour operator partners in Australia. Australia remains a strong growth market for Yukon and we have enhanced our marketing efforts including the appointment of an in-market general sales agent in late 2013.

Yukon's Australian strategy focuses on high-yield travellers — consumers who spend more, stay longer and are less influenced by exchange fluctuations and economic conditions. Yukon's iconic tourism experience that resonates in the Australian market includes the northern lights, the midnight sun, the Klondike Gold Rush, iconic drives and rich heritage and culture. Holland America is a key strategic partner in Yukon's success in the Australian market as the majority of Australian visitors to Yukon visit in conjunction with an Alaskan cruise.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the primary target markets for the department's overseas marketing program are Germany and Switzerland. Secondary are the United Kingdom, Australia and Japan, while emerging markets are identified as France, the Netherlands, South Korea and China. Overseas visitors to Yukon generally stay longer and spend more than

U.S. visitors, which aligns with our strategy to attract high-yield customers to our territory.

Yukon has benefited from CanNor funding programs for tourism-related initiatives, such as the expansion of our overseas marketing efforts, upgrades to the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport and the Yukon visitor tracking program. I think we would be well-served to ask ourselves: How successful have we been?

We know that 2013 was a record-breaking year for border-crossing stats, with an eight-percent increase in the number of private vehicles and motorcoaches crossing the border into Yukon. The statistics show a seven-percent increase in the number of visitors from the United States, a 17-percent increase from Canadians and an eight-percent increase from overseas. Year-to-date in 2014 — so these numbers run from January to August — Yukon's tourism industry continues to benefit from a five-percent increase in total arrivals and a 27-percent increase in international arrivals at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport.

Dawson City has also benefitted from a 21-percent increase in the number of combined travellers entering through the Little Gold Creek border crossing and via international arrivals at the Dawson City Airport, thanks to Holland America's 2014 tour programs and partnership with Air North, Yukon's Airline.

We committed to enhance marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets in the United States, Canada and Europe.

I was recently in Germany and Holland. German-speaking Europe is a key market for Yukon. Germany continues to be Yukon's largest overseas market, representing approximately 25 percent of overseas visitors. You'll recall a year ago that Premier Pasloski, myself and 16 Yukon tourism industry representatives travelled to Germany and England in the first-ever Premier-led tourism trade mission with a delegation from a Canadian province or territory.

The Premier's European tourism trade mission resulted in an accord between Yukon government, Air North and Condor to bring more European travellers to Yukon. The accord supports an air travel agreement that will allow seamless travel from Europe to Air North's flight network providing increased travel options for European tourists and Yukoners. The Premier and our European partners signed several marketing agreements with German tour operators. The resulting marketing efforts targeted over three million people in German-speaking Europe.

We committed to working with industry, communities and First Nations to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round travel destination.

I want to talk about the next stage of our efforts. Early next year, the department and I will lead a tourism trade mission to Japan, followed by meetings in China. The objectives of the Asia mission are to increase Japanese visits to Yukon and to explore opportunities for both group and independent travel from China. This mission will demonstrate our commitment and support for Japanese and Chinese tour

operators and facilitate long-term investments in Yukon's tourism industry from these markets.

China is the fastest growing international market for Canada, growing 30 percent so far in 2014, and China is now Canada's third-largest overseas market behind the United Kingdom and France. We committed to marketing "Destination: Yukon" and we delivered.

I now want to turn my attention to the domestic marketing initiative that we've just launched. We committed to enhanced marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets in the U.S., Canada and Europe. We have delivered and we are grateful for Canada's participation in accomplishing this commitment. The Yukon Now initiative is the largest tourism marketing program in Yukon's history and will build on a momentum over the past few years and truly put Yukon on the map. This new program is a joint Yukon-Canada investment of \$3.6 million over two years. With Yukon Now, we're primarily engaging in the domestic market but there will be key opportunities to reach U.S. and overseas audiences as well. This new investment represents the largest single investment in tourism marketing by the Yukon government in our history. I would like to provide a few highlights of this innovative marketing program that will take "Destination: Yukon" to a whole new level.

We'll hit the ground running this fall by developing television commercials for the winter tourism season and filming next summer for summer-based commercials. These highly creative and innovative commercials will target the Canadian market and will promote Yukon as a destination like never before. Our objective is to create commercials that will not only increase awareness in our domestic market, but also make Yukoners proud of this incredible place we call home.

We'll also be working with local producers to create web-based series for the www.travelyukon.com website. We're very excited to engage with new partners who will deliver tourism-related storytelling in a new format and engage potential visitors around the world.

Another exciting component of Yukon Now is the development of an innovative digital platform that will feature user-generated content from Yukoners and from visitors.

This unique initiative will harness the power of social media and tap into what Yukoners hold dear and what they want to share with the rest of the world about why Yukon is the best place on earth.

Yukon Now will also see enhanced investments in media relations and all markets, increased cooperative marketing initiatives in Europe, Japan and Australia, and strategic investments in China. In 2014-15 alone, Yukon Now will increase our existing \$660,000 investment in domestic marketing to \$2.215 million. I would like to especially thank our Yukon MP, Ryan Leef, for his hard work on this file. I would also like to extend my thanks to the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon and the Yukon Chamber of Commerce for continuing to work with the department on this increased investment in tourism marketing. This investment

responds to calls from industry for additional marketing expenditures. As well, the findings of Tourism Yukon's marketing program assessment supported increased investments in the domestic market.

The largest share of the investment will be made in the domestic market, which has experienced significant growth in the past four years and continues to show potential for incremental growth. The budget will breakdown as follows: 86 percent of the program will target the Canadian market, 11 percent will focus on the overseas market, and three percent will focus on the U.S. market. This new marketing initiative will involve an integrated approach to utilizing many marketing tools, including Yukon television commercials to be broadcast strategically in the domestic market. We look forward to working with our partners in government and in the tourism industry to maximize opportunities for a prosperous future for Yukoners.

Yukon Now will provide new opportunities for our tourism operators. New television and on-line footage produced as part of the Yukon Now program will be used to create a new show for the Whitehorse visitor information centre.

As I mentioned earlier, Tourism Yukon's marketing program assessment and market intelligence confirmed that marketing investment to raise awareness of Yukon as a travel destination in the domestic market presented a strategic opportunity. We continue to invest in Yukon travel-based companies through the tourism cooperative marketing fund, with \$700,000 in matching funds annually.

As of mid-September, a total of \$324,000 had been invested: \$165,000 in the European market, \$63,500 in Australia, \$60,000 in the U.S. market and \$35,800 in the Japanese market. We committed to utilize the tourism cooperative marketing fund to build partnerships with industry that improves marketing efforts for both industry and government, and we have delivered.

Tourism Yukon develops cooperative marketing initiatives in four areas: travel trade marketing, partnership marketing, support for Yukon marketing organizations and tourism cooperative marketing projects. Cooperative marketing investments in 2013-14 totalled more than \$1.8 million, and Tourism Yukon expects to attract a similar level of investment in 2014-15.

\$534,000 is budgeted in 2014-15 for travel trade marketing with tour operators and tour wholesalers in Canada, the U.S. and overseas.

Travel trade initiatives promote Yukon products and experiences through advertising campaigns, sales incentives, promotions and public relations events. The 2014-15 partnership marketing budget of \$611,000 includes agreements with the Wilderness Tourism Association of Yukon of \$264,000; the Yukon Convention Bureau of \$200,000, and, of course, the CTC.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hard-working staff from the Department of Tourism and Culture. I would like to extend a special thanks to those working at marketing Yukon around the globe. Over the last three years, I have had

the opportunity to travel across Canada, speaking to other tourism ministers and department officials in other provinces and territories. I have learned a lot, but two lessons stand out for me: (1) we have a unique and positive relationship with our stakeholders in the territory and we are very fortunate; and (2) our marketing team is the envy of many, many jurisdictions across Canada. They are relentless and work extremely hard and smart at building the Yukon brand to people around the globe. We committed and we are delivering.

I would like to thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this motion forward. I will definitely be supporting it.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: The Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on a point of order.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to invite a good friend of mine to the gallery — Sonny Gray. He is a landlord and property manager. Thanks for joining us, Sonny.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward this motion. I think it should be no secret to anybody in this House or elsewhere that the Official Opposition — and, in particular, I as the leader — feel very, very strongly about the importance of the tourism industry today and the potential for tourism for this territory in terms of the dynamic growth opportunities that are associated with tourism.

I thank my colleague from Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. I was sitting here thinking, my goodness, he would qualify as perhaps one of Yukon's cultural products, given his role as an ambassador, musical and otherwise, for this territory.

There are many aspects of tourism and the potential for tourism that I think we could speak to. In addition to the cultural aspects of tourism, I am particularly interested in the economic opportunities associated with tourism. I do want to spend a little bit of time on that because I think that opportunity requires our due diligence and our investment. You don't get anything unless you put something into it.

There are a number of ways of measuring the economic benefits and the economic impact of tourism in Canada. I have raised numerous times over the last three years in the Legislative Assembly, at industry meetings and other opportunities the importance of us getting the economic modelling of the tourism industry in the territory correct.

For example, the Member for Klondike referenced the severe cuts that were made to Parks Canada by the federal government. He was polite enough not to mention the fact that this government refused to stand up to the federal government and say, "That's wrong and it does have a direct impact on us."

You know, Mr. Speaker, in 2011, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada did a report on the economic impact of Parks Canada. They noted that Parks Canada is Canada's

largest provider of natural and historic tourism products. The destinations that it manages form the cornerstones of Canadian tourism. In this territory, we have those cornerstone destinations. We heard earlier about the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Tatshenshini-Atkasine wilderness site — the border comes right in from northern B.C. into Yukon — created in 1992.

The report revealed that the annual expenditures made by Parks Canada and the millions of visitors to Canada's national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas make a substantial and widespread contribution to the Canadian economy through job creation and revenue generated for local businesses. These expenditures contributed \$3.3 billion to the Canadian economy in 2008-09.

I raise that because the difficulty we face in this territory is that we, as I heard earlier today, variously say that the tourism sector contributes \$250 million to the economy. I think this is the great how-do-we-know question. When I raised the question at the Opportunities North conference a couple of weeks ago to the economists there, they admitted that the only thing the Yukon government is doing so far is measuring data about numbers of people coming in and numbers of people going out.

We have still not invested in doing the work to determine the economic multiplier effect of the tourism dollar — how many times it touches various businesses and various individuals in this territory. When we know that information, then we're better able to make the investments and to see the real impact and the real potential for this industry.

There were comments made that over the past decade this government has made increased funding for marketing. The facts show the opposite. I decided to go this morning and I was rifling through our filing cabinet. People must have thought I was crazy because I was standing there, going through the budgets. I'll just compare mains to mains because I think it's the simplest and most clear way of doing it.

In 2004-05, out of a budget of \$13.5 million, this government spent \$7.294 million on marketing. Thereafter it went down. Marketing became \$4.7 million, \$5.7 million, \$5 million. Right up until this year, marketing became \$5.8 million. Mr. Speaker, there hasn't been an increase in marketing dollars. There hasn't been an increase on the emphasis on marketing this territory.

It speaks to a lack of commitment to this sector. We heard that loud and clear when TIA said on January 23 — when they called on the Yukon government to make a strategic investment in the territory's tourism industry by committing \$2.5 million per year for a domestic television marketing program. They said that would be in addition to the existing tourism marketing program.

I thought at that time, well, maybe — because you know when you're trying to make a point, you sometimes exaggerate. They're the ones who piqued my interest when they said the tourism marketing budget for the Yukon has not received a substantial increase to its core funding in at least 10 years despite the fact that our — if we look at the difference between what the federal transfer was in 2004-05 and what the

federal transfer is now in 2014-15, there is a substantial change, Mr. Speaker. Why have we not also made that sustained investment in a sector of the economy that we say is so important, that we want to see grow? If we believe in it, then we put our money where our mouth is.

The Tourism Industry Association pointed out in January that the Yukon's marketing budget has never been big enough to allow the territory to gain much of a presence on television. If the government would have the vision to see this through, it would open doors never thought possible. It would create direct and indirect benefits for every tourism operator in the territory and that has a direct impact on every business in this territory.

I just think that there is an importance that, when we're talking about something, we actually speak to the facts and the facts are that over the last 10 years, if it had not been for the pressure by TIA on this government and the willingness of CanNor to invest, we would still be with less money 10 years later going into marketing than was spent with this government in 2004-05. That says something about priorities.

There's another aspect of this resolution that I think is interesting and bears a couple of comments. The resolution speaks and uses the language in subsection 3, developing new tourism projects such as the Millhaven Bay project. I'm glad to see, and I'm happy to see, the Yukon government embracing the potential of the Millhaven Bay project near Carcross. The Member for Watson Lake mentioned that the Carcross-Tagish First Nation has been working on a project in this area since at least 2005.

I think it's absolutely imperative to point out that it was not until the spring of 2013 at a Tourism Industry Association meeting in Haines, Alaska, that this government woke up to the fact that not only was it not helping, and clearly not supporting developing this potential tourism iconic destination spot, but they were impeding the progress.

The government stalled for many years in terms of its relationship with First Nations. It had the opportunity to use section 9.6.0 of the final agreement with Carcross-Tagish First Nation to do what is called a Crown and settlement land exchange. They chose not to.

At that meeting in Haines, Alaska, the Government of Yukon was challenged to basically step out of the way. They were told that, "You are not being asked for money. You are being asked to help us make this happen. We have a private sector investor who is willing to do this. Just step out of the way and do what you can do as a government, which is to facilitate that land swap." I thought, like many people thought, that's what it says — 9.6.0 is Crown and settlement land exchange — that's exactly what it is. But you know what? It's not what this government chose to do. It chose to issue a 30-year lease and in exchange for giving that lease, it said you must then make sure that there is land available for other development. But it's not an even playing field here, because should there be a change in the circumstances of this resort, that land would not be what would revert to the First Nation or even to the resort owners. It's going to revert to the Yukon government. Guess what if it doesn't go ahead? The Yukon

government has its cottage lots. In some places that might be called "sharp dealing".

So I think that it in terms of being truthful and respectful about what is going on here, it would be useful for us to use the language that this really would be — if we see the Yukon — it's not developing the Millhaven resort. It is not. The more correct phrase would be to "support new tourism projects such as Millhaven Bay". That would reflect what the First Nation at Carcross-Tagish and what the communities around there in the Southern Lakes area would like to see — support, but not developing it.

I have attended the public meetings and the other meetings about this development. Nobody has ever asked the Yukon government to develop this project.

In order to facilitate the conversation this afternoon and to move it to just reflect the two areas — I think one aspect must be an oversight and one is simply a change of one word. I think there is an oversight in this motion because the minister made it clear that the government has decided to address domestic marketing, which has not been a priority.

Amendment proposed

Ms. Hanson: In order to respect what the tourism industry had also requested, I would move that Motion No. 724 be amended by:

(1) deleting the word "developing" and replacing it with the word "supporting" in item (3); and

(2) adding an item (8) to read, "working with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon to provide sustained funding for domestic marketing initiatives."

It doesn't commit the Yukon to anything other than working with them to provide sustained funding for domestic marketing initiatives. I have copies, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Order please. The amendment is in order.

It has been moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition:

THAT Motion No. 724 be amended by:

(1) deleting the word "developing" and replacing it with the word "supporting" in item (3); and

(2) adding an item (8) to read, "working with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon to provide sustained funding for domestic marketing initiatives."

Leader of the Official Opposition, you have about six minutes.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I won't need that. I really do urge members to support this. I put these words forward because I think they reflect essentially friendly amendments to achieve the intent, I believe, of the Member for Watson Lake. I don't think that the Member for Watson Lake intended to suggest that the Yukon government is developing the resort at Millhaven Bay. I mean, that's not what the reality is. That's not an initiative of the Yukon government.

So I think that for the First Nation, for the private sector developer that's going to be putting in excess of \$40 million into this region, to hear that the Yukon is supporting that development, as opposed to developing it — I think they'd be shocked to think that there was an assertion by the Yukon government. I would hope the Yukon government's not planning to develop a \$40-million resort on its own.

So I think "supporting" is more reflective of what the intent was. I think the addition of the item, working with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon to provide sustained funding for domestic marketing initiatives, is consistent with what I hear being spoken by the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

I would imagine — again I think it may have been an oversight — because there is reference to overseas marketing, but not about the issue of domestic marketing, which we know that the Tourism Industry Association and the minister has reflected in his remarks as well. We know that TIA thinks and believes and knows from its own data and its work in the industry and across the country — and has cited the examples of successful marketing programs from other provinces and territories. I simply add these as a way of making sure that we have a motion here that does reflect what is on the ground in terms of supporting the development at Millhaven Bay and — what one would believe, I would hope — is the intention of this government, which is to work with the Tourism Industry Association toward providing sustained funding for domestic marketing. The minister in his own words has said how important this is. I would hope that taking that the next step means we would together to provide sustained funding from whatever source. I am not saying what the source is. Perhaps the minister will be able to tap into some money from some other sources but the issue is working with the association.

I commend this friendly amendment to the members and look forward to their support.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for bringing this amendment forward. I think by deleting the word "developing" and replacing it with "supporting" is fine. I don't see that we take any issue with that.

We are excited for that Millhaven project to move forward and we have been providing them an incredible amount of support as that moves forward. I would like to also thank the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for his work on this file. He has put a lot of time and effort into seeing this project move forward.

On the second item where it says, "Adding an item (8) to read "working with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon to provide sustained funding for domestic marketing" — that is something that this Yukon Party has proven to be successful over the three mandates. We will continue to work with the Tourism Industry Association; they provide great insight and great knowledge into the tourism sector of our territory and they continue to work with us as we do with them to ensure the sustainability of our tourism sector as we continue to see increases. That's all I have to say.

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. 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: D'accord.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

Amendment to Motion No. 724 agreed to

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

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would like to thank the Minister of Tourism and Culture for his remarks earlier today. I would like to thank my colleague, the MLA for Watson Lake, for bringing forth this really important and timely motion.

There has been some very interesting commentary made here today, and I will attempt to address some of it. I suppose I would like to start by saying that tourism in the territory has been and remains a key economic generator for the territory. Three key planks always come to mind — when I assumed the ministry of Tourism and Culture. I want to back up because, back when we were first elected — the Yukon Party government in 2002 — there wasn't actually a stand-alone Department of Tourism and Culture. In fact it was Business, Tourism and Culture. It was a very important platform commitment that we had run on in that particular election. The first order of business that we did was to reinstate the Department of Tourism and Culture as well as develop and establish a stand-alone Department of Economic Development — speaking to the very importance of tourism and culture in the territory and what it means to the Yukon Party government. I want to make that very clear. This government has, from the very first day of our mandate to where we stand here today and going forward — tourism will remain and continues to remain a very important plank when it comes to

our economic growth and also the quality of life that we have to come to know as Yukoners.

Of course, it has helped to diversify our economy in those times when perhaps mining has not been as robust as it has or as it could be in years past, but Tourism and Culture has very much remained resilient. That's a word I want to draw upon because from the days of 9/11, that's where the tourism industry globally — not just here in the territory and this country — really took a turn. It led all of us — as a collective, as a community, as a territory and with industry and as governments, all orders and levels of government — to come together and be very strategic in terms of where we invest dollars, in terms of how we invest those dollars, and be able to tweak accordingly. I think that because of that strategic approach to tourism marketing because of those global events that have occurred since 9/11 — and 9/11 was just the start. It could be 9/11, it could be forest fires, it could have been flooding, it could have been the SARS outbreak that happened in Toronto some years ago — all of those culminate in challenges for our tourism industry to excel as a key economic generator.

Again, every time those events would happen in the territory, we as Yukoners would come together with industry. We worked hard to come together in a formal arrangement with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon through the senior marketing committee, and being able to come together on a regular basis to ensure that our dollars are market-driven, that it's resource-based and industry-led each and every time.

Because of those three planks, I believe that we have been able to weather many storms over the years. Yes, we did have a significant increase — a record-level increase — last year. I'm also very proud to say that during those past 12 years since we assumed government in 2002, Yukon had really shone as a leader in tourism marketing in terms of visitation — not as much as we had wanted to, but we certainly held our own compared with many other jurisdictions in this country.

That is to be attributed to the marketing expertise of not only the Department of Tourism and Culture, but by being able to come collectively and work in an integrated fashion and with a very strong relationship, generating, garnering and growing that relationship with industry under the banner of TIAY.

So when we speak to the amendments that were just supported, it is really a continuation of what we have done all along. We have been working with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon as a banner organization. Under that organization, there is a multitude of different organizations in support of specific events, in support of specific streams of our tourism sector.

Kudos to all of our industry stakeholders for being able to show strength and continue to be strategic in our investments, and to be resilient, to be flexible and to readjust and to go back to the drawing board and say, "You know what? This program didn't exactly meet all of the objectives we had set out in our annual plan but this is an opportunity for us to go back and to tweak."

This motion speaks to not just tourism marketing, but all of the very attributes that make the tourism sector so very strong in the territory. Over the course of the last number of years, under three consecutive Yukon Party governments, we have invested heavily in infrastructure, waterfront development at Carcross and the Whitehorse waterfront. One only has to take a stroll through both of those particular areas and see first-hand the direct benefits accrued to our communities and to our territory as a whole.

There has been some discussion about investment in Yukon museums, our interpretive centres and First Nation cultural centres. I just want to remind the Assembly that when we assumed office, there wasn't actually a program in support of First Nation cultural centres. There is now.

In fact, not only have we worked collectively government to government with First Nation governments and self-governing First Nations, we have developed a program in support of cultural centres' ongoing operations and maintenance each and every year. But we also continue to build on the number of cultural centres — we have been able to partner with the Kwanlin Dun First Nation cultural centre sitting on the waterfront. It was an amazing collaboration; it was the first of its kind in terms of the Yukon government being able to collaborate and partner directly on First Nation settlement land. To be able to be an anchor tenant and to have a long-term lease with Kwanlin Dun First Nation was groundbreaking.

One only has to refer to comments of former Chief Mike Smith. He and I had made a joint presentation about a year ago to the ministers responsible for local governance. We talked about what can be achieved when we work together with common priorities to be able to pool our resources. Now today, we're able to see the fruits of that labour with a beautiful cultural centre that speaks to the stories and the history and all that makes the people of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation very proud people, and for the benefit of the whole territory, with the Whitehorse Public Library now being a long-term anchor tenant.

Likewise the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — the cultural centre there — again combining our resources and having a new visitor information centre housed within that particular facility. Again, it's another example of very creative ways of being able to help grow our economy in collaboration with our partners, but being able to grow the tourism sector.

Indeed, if anyone has had that opportunity — or you have not had that opportunity — to see first-hand that cultural centre and that visitor information centre and the partnership with Parks Canada, I might add as well — it is a glowing example of what our government has been able to achieve. Likewise, continued investments in our historic sites that are co-owned and co-managed with First Nation governments — Rampart House, Fortymile, Tro'chëk — there are a number of various historic sites that we are very pleased and honoured — Fort Selkirk. I was very pleased to be part of that ceremony, designating that as an official Yukon historic site — but something that has been recognized for thousands of years by Yukon First Nations — being able to continue to invest in

those partnerships. Likewise, we speak about airports and the very importance of air access and the connectivity to our growing markets, whether it be the domestic or the international front. The investment to the Whitehorse International Airport for example was just about a \$20 million investment.

When I hear comments coming from the other side about how there have been reductions in tourism-supported products, services and marketing, you know I have to go back and say, take a look at the budgets. You know, we have continued to invest heavily and again, we just have to take a look at the record level visitation rate of last year alone and how those investments of years past have helped generate and helped calculate to double-digit increases in our visitation, something that other jurisdictions very much are aspiring to do.

We have worked to expand our broadband access and the introduction of cellular access to all of our communities. There is more work to be done, but each and every one of those steps are incremental and makes us more competitive and makes us a supreme destination of choice.

One thing I will say is that, as the previous Minister of Tourism and Culture, I did have the opportunity to go on a number of occasions overseas to see some of the international travel showcases like ITB in Berlin. It opened up my eyes in terms of the competition we are up against, not just as Yukon, but as a country in Canada, and how we have always gone to bat for enhanced dollars for the Canadian Tourism Commission and partnerships. I think that through funds available — and now we speak to the most recent initiative, Yukon Now, \$3.6 million over two years in support of domestic marketing. That's a great example of a great partnership with Canada.

I want to go back a number of years to where we were in 2007 with the Canada Winter Games — the first time ever any of the three territories had ever hosted the Canada Winter Games north of 60. It was a tremendous success and we seized that opportunity working with our other two northern counterparts in Nunavut and Northwest Territories. For the first time ever we came up with Look Up North campaign. It was a tremendous success that worked very well. It had global reach — national reach — I should say.

We tied it into that tourism brand and into Larger than Life but also, the other two brands of the territories and the Canada brand in its entirety and tied that into products. It was a tremendous success and that then led into the 2010 Winter Olympics. I know some of the members across the way participated in those events and I think they would agree that it was a tremendous success. It did help boost our numbers and it really did lead to an enhanced awareness of the north.

Now you look at other initiatives, thanks to investments through the Yukon Film and Sound Commission — something that our government also invested in and actually saw to fruition. The Yukon Film and Sound Commission brought in the sound. Now you will see the *Amazing Race* and there was an amazing coverage of our territory in just the last number of months with the start of the *Amazing Race*.

All of these combine to a greater awareness of the territory and how we can collectively work together to realize our strengths and to build on that abundance of wildlife, the wide-open spaces and our history, stories and the people. Yukon First Nations, culture — all of these — to our Gold Rush history and the Alaska Highway — all of these culminate in an opportunity for us.

I think that it is a very timely motion, as I mentioned before, because of these recent investments and I want congratulate the Department of Tourism and Culture and the Minister of Tourism and Culture for coming together and working with industry, as we have all along the last 12 years — also being able to build on those successive marketing campaigns that we have grown, and we have grown capacity, so that we are able now to be able to take that \$3.6 million and be able to leverage that even further through new funds, like the tourism cooperative marketing fund and through new funds through the Product Development branch, and by being able to work with our visitor centres.

Recently, I know the Minister of Tourism and Culture, in collaboration with the Minister of Environment, worked to expand the number of days and hours available for visitor centres, being able to capitalize on the enhanced air access that we have here, domestic and international, and being able to continue to grow our market.

All of the investments in arts funding, cultural funding — those are tremendous as well, and those are something our government introduced. I believe it was just over a \$600,000-increase in those particular programs over the last number of years. More recently, there have been other added funds in support of the arts organizations and artists themselves.

I don't want to go on too much longer, other than to say that to really question the level of investment by this government in sports tourism, in culinary tourism, in meetings, in conventions, incentive travel — all those areas, we have worked to expand over the last number of years.

We continue to build on successful campaigns. The gateway cities program dated years back to where we are with Destination: Yukon and Yukon Now.

I want to commend this motion to all members. I thank again my colleague, the MLA for Watson Lake, for bringing this forth and having the opportunity just to talk about some of these investments and to reiterate our government's commitment to the continued growth of the tourism sector as we carry on.

Mr. Elias: It's a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to this motion brought forward by the Member for Watson Lake. Listening to the debate today, I'm going to try to focus on a positive, real, tangible example that exists in my riding that was 65 years in the making. It's with regard to what is now a commercial grizzly bear viewing in the Fishing Branch, in Ni'iinlii'Njik protected area, and how that came about through our *Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement*.

I have to mention this though. I just listened to the Leader of the Official Opposition. This seems to be a reoccurring theme with the Member for Whitehorse Centre where the

member picks out certain aspects of these very valuable and important agreements throughout the territory and picks out sections of these agreements, no matter what First Nation it's in, and uses that section for political gain.

That's what I've seen here today, but I'm going to go the opposite way. I'm going to show and talk about something that is positive. I'm going to talk about something where there is a partnership between the public government and the Yukon territorial government and a First Nation government and the renewable resources council and the federal government where a vision was realized. It's showing economic opportunities and benefits, not only to my constituents and in my riding, but to many others: helicopter companies, airline industries, and the hotel and service industry. It creates wage employment for some of my constituents as guides, et cetera. It begins with chapter 10 in the *Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement*, schedule B, where it talks about the Fishing Branch Ecological Reserve. In the final agreement, it provides for the creation of what is now the Ni'iinlii'Njik, or Fishing Branch, and the ecological preserve.

Over the last two decades, the settlement of First Nation land claims in our territory has led to the creation of national and territorial parks and protected areas. Fishing Branch is conserved through the 1995 Vuntut Gwitchin final land claim agreement. It is about 6,700 square kilometres, and the area protects cultural and natural resources and, most notably, unusually high concentrations of salmon and grizzly bear.

This is important to note — that the protected area consists of both public and First Nation lands. This was actually the first protected area in Canada — it could be in North America — where this type of government-to-government collaboration existed through a final agreement and self-government agreement.

This is something positive that this territory can look toward, in terms of that cooperative relationship between First Nations and public governments.

In the year 2000, a jointly developed and approved management plan identified objectives and guidelines to protect the area's natural and cultural resources. The plan allowed for commercial grizzly bear viewing in the protected area. After fulfilling these conditions, a controlled pilot bear-viewing trial started in Fishing Branch protected area in the fall of 2006.

This demonstrates the positive role land claims can have in promoting conservation and the effectiveness of partnerships in protected areas management, especially related to the development of a new, highly specialized activity within the wilderness tourism industry.

In 1995, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation of Old Crow settled its land claims, and the settlement included the creation of a 170-square kilometre territorial ecological reserve on the Fishing Branch River, pursuant to the *Yukon Parks and Land Certainty Act*. Also through the land claim, an additional 140 square kilometres of First Nation settlement land was added to this protected area.

This addition is a significant contribution to conservation and is a ground-breaking first in Canada, if not in North America, as I said earlier.

Today these protected areas are cooperatively managed by the Yukon and the Vuntut Gwitchin governments under jointly developed management plans, which were approved in 2000. The primary objective of the plan is to manage the area as an ecological unit to protect the full diversity of wildlife, particularly salmon and grizzly bears in a beringian karst landscape. While wildlife protection is the priority, the plan also recognizes the possibility of introducing commercial grizzly bear viewing as a means to provide visitor opportunity, promote ecological awareness and wilderness tourism, and provide economic benefits for the First Nation.

The Vuntut Gwitchin land claim agreement defines the management objectives for Fishing Branch protected area, which includes the protection of the full diversity of wildlife, particularly salmon and grizzly bears. The claim also identified the need for visitor services, learning opportunities, public education and economic opportunities for the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

Based on these broad objectives, the protected area management plan states that, while bear viewing is secondary to protection of wildlife in its habitat, effectively managed viewing has the potential to: increase public understanding and appreciation of bears and bear ecology; increase public understanding of appropriate human behaviour in bear habitat; and, under controlled circumstances, increase tourism and provide economic benefits.

Fishing Branch park is a wilderness park that protects a distinct and fascinating ecosystem. Each year, chum salmon travel thousands of kilometres from the Bering Sea to the Fishing Branch River, bringing valuable nutrients from the sea that sustain a flourishing ecosystem deep in the northern interior. Karst formations enhance this nutrient-rich habitat by storing thermal energy in underground reservoirs of water. The warm waters resurface and flow year-round, creating an island of temperate forests around Bear Cave Mountain and the Fishing Branch watershed. This unique environment supports a high seasonal population of grizzly bears, which congregate each fall to feed on spawning salmon. The park area also includes part of the spring migration route of the Porcupine caribou herd, as well as sheep, moose, raptors and a wide variety of other wildlife.

Commercially guided bear-viewing opportunities are available in the ecological reserve during the salmon run in September, October and November. Other recreational opportunities are still being explored in the park, so access is limited and requires a park permit. Fishing Branch territorial park is a remote wilderness park, far from the nearest road or airport. It is located between Dawson City and Old Crow, Yukon, and access to the park is primarily by helicopter.

Going to the business — the grizzly-bear-viewing opportunities are operated by Bear Cave Mountain Eco-Adventures Yukon. They offer exclusive grizzly bear viewing for photographers, artists and wildlife enthusiasts from mid-September through to mid-November. It provides the

opportunity to learn about the impressive phenomenon that results in the seasonal congregation of grizzly bears at Fishing Branch. It provides the opportunity to learn about the impressive phenomenon that results in the seasonal congregation of grizzly bears at Fishing Branch.

The people of Old Crow, home of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, know the ecologically rich areas as Ni'iinlii'Njik, which means in English, "Where fish spawn". Fishing Branch, or Ni'iinlii'Njik park is protected as a cultural and historical area for the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

Bear Cave Mountain is located within Fishing Branch, and the park protects this far northern wilderness with unique features created by limestone caves, year-round open water, salmon runs and grizzly bears. Rugged mountains, gentle slopes, floodplains and karst geology, including caves, are typical of the north Ogilvie Mountains ecoregion at Fishing Branch park. Surface features, lichens, coniferous forests, bare soil and rock, heather and herbs are also representative of the ecoregion.

Phil Timpany is the manager and a renowned bear specialist and wildlife photographer. His expertise and passion for the bears and the ecology of this area make the partnership between the Vuntut Development Corporation and Bear Cave Mountain Eco-Adventures unique and successful.

I just had the opportunity to speak to David Frost, who was a guide for Phil and the Bear Cave Mountain Eco-Adventures. I talked to him in Old Crow last weekend, and he said that the tourists who came to Fishing Branch this year were primarily from Europe, and the viewing and the opportunities there were just absolutely exceptional. He wanted me to let the Assembly know that booking for the 2015 season — for clients coming to enjoy this special place in my riding, guided by the Bear Cave Mountain Eco-Adventures — is full to capacity. That's important to note.

Bear Cave Mountain Eco-Adventures ensures visitors a full slate of activity and adventure and so they ask people to imagine your day beginning with a guided walk to the nearest viewing site, followed by some underwater photography and, in the afternoon, gain some elevation and view the entire face of Bear Cave Mountain.

The unscathed land of Bear Cave Mountain is the substance of folklore. Isolated from roads and development, this area is valuable — a zen-like wilderness that provides distinctive opportunities to connect with nature, with the past and with grizzly bears. Humans have long tread common pathways to share the bounty of the remarkable Fishing Branch River.

The chum salmon draw the grizzly bears to the Bear Cave Mountain area. To prepare for hibernation, these magnificent giants of the forest take advantage of the abundant food supply. Every fall, in the shadow of craggy mountains, as many as 40 grizzly bears shamle along the river banks, foraging their limit of chum salmon that have travelled thousands of miles from the Bering Sea to spawn and die. The grizzly excels at fishing.

By mid-October, winter settles in at Bear Cave Mountain. The elements of an arriving winter transform the grizzlies into

ice bears. During November, the frosty bears amble up Bear Cave Mountain to den in its numerous caves and crevasses. A protective layer of fat enables the bears to rest in their dens for the winter, but as they do not truly hibernate, they can be easily awakened.

The grizzly bear fur colour ranges from a cream colour to a colour almost black, as shown in many photo galleries on the Bear Cave Mountain Eco-Adventures website.

The Vuntut Gwitchin people are strongly connected to the Fishing Branch and Bear Cave Mountain. Ni'iinlii'Njik is a sacred area with a long history of traditional use. Gwitchin elders remind us how the Fishing Branch watershed and tributaries are vital for the community and for the protection of fish and caribou.

In the spring, the Porcupine caribou migrate through this area, and the Vuntut Gwitchin elders have always said that: "We know the caribou like ourselves; we live with them; we take a few; watch them go through; give them thanks and we speak for them." The unspoiled natural simplicity of Bear Cave Mountain truly showcases the ecological and cultural power of a place where nature and humans harmonize.

In talking to David again, he said that next year's clientele include people from our own country, in Haida Gwaii, Britain, Hong Kong, Switzerland and all parts of Europe. They are fully booked. Those types of initiatives where tourism marketing, "Destination: Yukon" and the efforts of our Minister of Tourism and Culture in travelling and promoting the Yukon is — in this instance in my riding, I consider it bearing fruit.

So I thank the Department of Tourism and Culture for all of their hard work and diligence and the Tourism Industry Association and all of our partners throughout the territory for making tourism such an important part of our territory.

I think that this is one positive aspect that has come from a vision and has come from 65 years of hard work. It's good to see that one aspect coming from Chapter 10, Schedule B of the *Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement* is something tangible and real and has come to a tremendous success that includes the most isolated northern remote community as well as the rest of our territory and a public government in partnership.

This is a success story that I would like to put on the floor of the House today in support of the motion from the Member for Watson Lake. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Tredger: I would like to speak a little bit about my area, Mayo-Tatchun. It's a large patch of central Yukon.

Much has been said about tourism in the Yukon and in many ways, this area is a litmus test for the rest of the Yukon — there are villages and communities and there are large tracts of intact wilderness. The people there are resourceful, they're friendly, they're entrepreneurs, they're helpful and they're welcoming. They love their land, they love their communities and they work hard to raise their families and contribute to the Yukon.

If you're travelling north from Whitehorse and get to Carmacks, take the time to get off the highway, drive along

the river — over the Nordenskjöld River to the Merv Tew Park — a beautiful place, set on the Yukon River. I've held my community barbecues there, and it's just a very nice piece of history there.

The riverfront boardwalk along the river, as you go by Carmacks from the recreation centre, all the way down to the bridge of the Nordenskjöld — it's a wooden boardwalk that follows the river. Stop at the Tagé Cho Hudän Interpretive Centre. There are artifacts there and there are local products. As my colleague from Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes — when she was there, she bought a pair of slippers from one of the local seniors, May Roberts.

As you travel further north, — Five Finger Rapids, Tatchun Creek — there are campgrounds. When you get to Pelly Crossing, be sure and stop at the Big Jonathan House to see their cultural displays, artifacts and meet the friendly local residents of Pelly Crossing. Shaheen Baker was there this summer and did a marvellous job of welcoming visitors from around the world to Pelly Crossing.

Stewart Crossing the Silver Tail Chamber Of Commerce and Tourism Association operates an information booth, a much-appreciated stop for tourists and locals alike as they go there to find out more about what is happening and when it's happening.

In Mayo, where the Mayo River enters the Stewart, there are many attractions. Mayo has long been a hub for mining and tourist activities for the Yukon.

The Binet House museum chronicles much of this and has artifacts and real in-depth insights into the life of early people in the Yukon who lived there.

There are numerous trails, and further along toward Keno is Five Mile Lake, a great campground.

Many people access the Peel River wilderness area from Mayo. Float planes leave there to fly into various parts of the Peel River, and many guided tours operate out of there.

This year is a particularly important year. It is the 20th anniversary of the Mayo Midnight Marathon held on June 20, a weekend of fun, frivolity — an extravaganza because there's the Mayo Midnight Marathon where not only do people run the marathon — they can also walk 10 kilometres or five kilometres .

There is also a half-marathon. Families and people from around Canada come and take part in that. It's also on that weekend that the Mayo arts and music festival takes place, where there are products from local artists, music performed by local people and the wider community — a great family opportunity.

The Stewart valley community market sells produce, although at that time of the year there is not a lot of garden produce, but there are bedding plants out, as well as some early lettuce, jams and things like that. On the 21st of this year, the Sunday, is Aboriginal Day and Na Cho Nyäk Dun will have many celebrations for people to attend.

Keno City is a real success story. It's a historic mining town. Businesses are opening up there — the Keno City Snack Bar, the Sourdough Café. Last summer, I was delighted to be able to attend the grand opening of the Keno City Hotel.

The Member for Whitehorse Centre and I were able to attend the Yukon Chamber of Commerce meetings at the Keno City Hotel in Keno, and what a good time it was. There is the Silvermoon Bunkhouse and the Sourdough Café. Take time to go up and see the signpost. Do some hiking along some of the magnificent trails. In Keno, again, you will meet hospitable people as you take a step into the past.

Yes, Mayo-Tatchun has lots to offer. I have taken part in the Yukon Quest since 1998, so that's quite a few years. I don't keep track, but it is fun. Whole communities get involved and people from around the world journey to the Yukon to take part in the Yukon Quest. As well, the Yukon River Quest goes through our area.

So what can we do to support tourism? First we have to acknowledge what we have. Tourists come to the Yukon for the dark skies, the wild rivers and the crisp, clean air to meet and interact with our people — people known around the world for their hospitality, friendliness and willingness to share, to stop and help somebody by the side of the road. People are known to open up their fish camps and their hunting camps. People are welcoming and open.

We have to protect that. We have to recognize the uniqueness of the Yukon in the world. The members opposite talked about the competition for tourist dollars. I say, let's build on our strengths. Let's build on what we have. We have a unique, accessible wilderness that is found nowhere else in the world. We have rivers and streams where you can spend time, where you can fish, where you can hang out, where you can canoe. We have cafés and restaurants to serve people — accessible wilderness and opportunities like nowhere else in the world.

I must commend the Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association for the work that they have done to promote tourism in the area. Volunteer people meet reasonably regularly, offer advice, support one another and are willing to work with anybody and anyone to increase tourism in the area. This spring, when I attended their meeting, they once again expressed their concern about the roads. Tourists need to get into our area. They do it, for the majority, by roads.

What we are looking for is a long-term strategy for the Silver Trail and the Klondike Highway.

I commend Highways and Public Works for the work that they have done and the maintenance that they have done on both of those roads. I especially commend the people who have worked on them, who come out in a snowstorm or after a rain, but we need to have a long-term strategy. A combination of increased and heavier traffic with permafrost melting means we need to do more than patch various parts of the road. We need some long-term solutions. Whether it means rebuilding or relocating parts of the roads, we need to assess the risks that we are encountering and develop a long-term solution.

This summer, part of the road into Keno City was repaired. It wasn't done until September when the crews could get to it after the tourist season. The fear of the people in Keno, the people in Mayo and people up and down the

highway who depend on that road is that, over the winter, it's going to deteriorate again. We need some regular maintenance. We need a plan for the major roads and for the side roads.

The Department of Tourism and Culture talks about the Duncan Creek Road. I haven't been up there since mid-summer. I believe there was some work done on that. I hope there was some work done on that because, for the last several years, it has been very dangerous. It's important that those roads be maintained so that we don't get the horror stories out there — that this road is impassable, that on that road I lost my windshield. We need to ensure that there is enough thought, money and crews to keep these roads in good, working condition.

While I'm talking about side roads, the road up to the signpost by Keno City — a very important road and mentioned in tourism brochures. We need to ensure that road is maintained. When my colleagues and I were up there a year ago, we had a flat tire on the road, and the road has had several washouts. It's important that, when a road is advertised and people go to a tourist area, their safety is taken into consideration.

The other thing that the Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association talked about was signage. It's important when you're on a highway to know where you are, and where you are going and how far it is. Often the signs get covered up or knocked down in the wintertime. It's not as if there are a lot of communities along the way to stop and figure out where you are going. It is hours between communities and it's important that we have signage, as much as we can, telling how far it is, as you leave Whitehorse, to Keno City or to Mayo. Those signs don't show up until you get to Stewart. It wouldn't take much to put a sign up saying Keno City and however many kilometres.

Stewart Crossing gets the idea in the mind of the traveller that there is a community out there. There is a way there. It's not something that I can only find on a map.

Another side road that needs attention — and we've talked about tourism — is Fort Selkirk. Fort Selkirk is accessed from Pelly Crossing via the Pelly River Ranch road. That road is used for fish camps — and Dale will smile when I say this — an iconic sustainable farm that has been in operation from 1897 — it's a living museum — by placer miners as well as access to Fort Selkirk. For two years that road has not been maintained. It's rapidly deteriorating. If we are going to advertise places and invite people into our communities, we need to ensure that there is safe way for them.

We have an intact wilderness that is relatively accessible. It's a resource unparalleled in the world. There are opportunities now and into the future, but we must act with local residents and First Nation governments to ensure that the increasing access is managed to ensure protection. I think of the increasing spider web of trails caused by ORVs cascading out around Whitehorse. We're also feeling the effects in Mayo-Tatchun. We need to work together to ensure that off-road vehicles are on trails and that that while they provide that

access, they also don't destroy the very thing people are looking for when they get that access.

We need some long-term wilderness sustainability to make tourism a sustainable industry that builds on our culture, on our wilderness, our rivers and our forests. The lure of the north — the people of the Yukon have it in abundance. It's time to preserve it and ensure a managed resource for the future. Let's work with the entrepreneurial people of the Yukon. Let's build an infrastructure that is properly co-managed for the betterment of Yukoners now and into the future.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It is an honour for me to rise today to talk about tourism. I would like to thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this motion forward, Motion No. 724.

When it comes to tourism, I think this is one of the biggest things I campaigned on when I was running to become the MLA for the great riding of Kluane. Kluane is, of course, as you know, Yukon's extra-larger than life place to be, which hosts the largest mountain in Canada, at 5,959 metres. The whole size of our national park is 21,980 square kilometres, and it is the largest non-polar icefield in the world. I believe there's a portion in Chile that would argue that point, but they lose, period. That's just the way it is.

We are, as we spoke earlier, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We had some questions in the House today. You just need to go to the Parks Canada website and have a peek-a-boo at the logo. That UNESCO World Heritage Site does play in for tourism opportunities and I am encouraged to see that this government is working with the Klondike region to move this forward.

To get started, I would really just like to talk a little bit about some people who do not get the accolades that are needed. I am going to talk about the staff that we have who work in the Department of Tourism and Culture and I am going to especially talk about our people who work in the visitor reception centres. I am going to start in Beaver Creek — we have a visitor reception centre in Beaver Creek. One of the neatest things I have seen there every time I go to Beaver Creek is that, as soon as you pull into Beaver Creek, there is an old car parked at the visitor reception centre. Everybody pulls in to see the old car. The employee who works there is a collector of old cars and — bang — there he gets his first opportunity into the Yukon to see what is going to go on and happen. You know, it is a great little visitor reception centre.

They work their way down the road a little bit and they wind up at the Kluane Museum and I know just chatting with the lady who works there this fall. She said, "It is really dusty out front here and it would be good if we could have something done." I said, "I am your MLA. Let me see if I can do something for you." That museum, which hosts the largest gold pan in Canada, I think — it might even be in the world — it is the largest gold pan, it's huge. It is an awesome museum to see and I recommend that just about everybody take their family to go see that. Some of the animal mounts inside that are incredible.

You know, every time I talk about this — everything that I talk about with visitor reception centres works into the fact that it is not just our visitor reception centre staff — Yukon government staff — it is the staff of the local First Nation and it is Parks Canada staff.

Another great working relationship and a good example is the Kluane First Nation. At the Tachäl Dhäl, which is the Sheep Mountain lookout, the Kluane First Nation partners with Parks Canada to keep that staffed. It's a great place to see the sheep on the mountains, to see the grizzly bears, the eagles and everything else there at the Slims River. Then you just need to go to the Da Ku building. It's a beautiful building. It's a beautiful partnership. It's a partnership that I was so happy to see when this came to fruition because it was a local First Nation — Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. It was the Yukon government; it was Parks Canada through a lot of work facilitated by Tourism and Culture Yukon staff that put a lot of time and effort into that to make that happen and to see it through to fruition.

While I'm speaking into the microphone and this is going to go into Hansard, this is always a plug for opportunities for Kluane. Parks Canada and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and the Kluane First Nation are the key stakeholders in managing Kluane National Park. I think our Tourism and Culture minister spoke to this a little earlier today. I'm very impressed and I'm very happy with our Tourism and Culture minister and our Economic Development minister because they're helping push and working with the business community, with the local First Nations and Parks Canada, looking at other opportunities for more access to the national park through the good working relationship with some of the park cutbacks that I heard from the Member for Klondike. I didn't see them as cutbacks; I saw them as opportunities to move forward. The governments work together. This government worked with Parks Canada to keep the Kathleen Lake day use area open and it was a huge, huge success.

I was a tourism operator, and I'm going to speak to that a little bit in a little while. As a tourism operator, I was also president of our local chamber of commerce. I was just reading through e-mails and I see there's an invite that I'll be there at 9:00 on Friday morning. The local chamber of commerce is getting up and started and running again and I'll go to show my support. I find it key.

The one thing that I did find is, since I've been elected, the work that I've — and I want to thank again my fellow colleagues, all the colleagues on this side of the House. The hard work that we've been able to put together — we had a wonderful tourism summit and there's some more stuff coming up this fall.

I did see a lack from our last MLA of concern for tourism. That was why, when I campaigned, I think that was my top priority. It's impressive to see the work that tourism has done. This motion really does get to speak to a whole realm of things in the area of Kluane.

One of the things I didn't want to lose sight of is that any time anybody thinks about Kluane National Park, they think about Kluane National Park. There's more to it than that.

There's lots of First Nation history; there's the Trail of '42, which is the Alaska Highway. For a little tidbit of information for some of you guys — I love to do this — in 1935, little did anybody know that the U.S. Congress voted \$2 million for a road to Alaska — \$2 million? That was the Alaska Highway, and it was built in 1942 and we know the rest of the story. But besides parks, there's First Nation history. We have the Alaska Highway. We have a very rich and strong mining history too. We have a very rich trapping history and outfitters and big game outfitters. All that put together makes for a great reason to be able to find yourself in Kluane, with lots of opportunities for things to do.

When I look at the motion today, I want to talk a little about each section in the motion. The tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round destination — first of all, year-round is so important. Everybody knows that in the summertime, good luck finding a hotel anywhere in the Yukon, whether you're up in Keno City or whether you're in Dawson City, Haines Junction, Beaver Creek or in Watson Lake. It's the off-season and the shoulder seasons — and I really have to give the Tourism and Culture department and the Economic Development department credit for looking at these shoulder seasons. We're starting to see more activities, whether its conventions we're starting to see with the tourism operators — partnerships with TIA are key to this and I think (8) added to the amendment really speaks to that. But the department on this side; the work from the time that the Department of Tourism and Culture has moved forward is incredible. The stats are incredible. They have to be commended in there.

Point (1) speaks to the promotion of local tourism and increased economic opportunities for northerners and I think this government is doing it. All you have to do is look at some of the initiatives that the department's coming for. You have to look at the work in Kluane. We have all the businesses coming together here on November 7 to talk about Destination: Kluane. To that point we've seen, and I think I got across to the local municipality, the First Nations and tourism operators that we have many plans. We have a 2000 tourism economic development plan, we have a 1985 tourism — there are plans on the shelf that say what to do but nothing gets done. Every time I get a chance to speak to the tourism operators out there, to the businesses out there and to the municipality, I say I'm not here to put another plan together and do nothing about it. I'm here to work with Parks, work with you folks and see things come to fruition.

That's opportunity for the north. The overseas marketing — the business I was in was a tourism business. For 10 years I ran an adventure tour company, and I can tell you — and I promised a few people that I would get their names in Hansard. I can tell you that my friend Stenjek from the Czech Republic, my friend Roger Ruust from Switzerland, my friend Otmar from Austria and Hans Rudy from Ireland are marketers for us. They've been sending clients to the Yukon — European clients — and I was so happy to see that we are working on our overseas marketing and that we're looking toward Asia. When we had our tourism summit in the spring

there were some folks from China there. They were looking for product. They went and travelled up the —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Stick: Just because we were mentioning names, I would ask the members in the Legislature to welcome Taavi Wickman, who is a participant in the Canada World Youth program and is here in Whitehorse. We extend our welcome to him and to Whitehorse.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I want to get back to the folks from China who were there who came to this. They left and drove to a local lodge. They drove up to Destruction Bay and said, “What do you have to offer? What can you provide for me? I want to bring you customers.” It was incredible.

I want to talk a little bit about supporting the new tourism product such as the Millhaven Bay Project. That is huge in a diverse economy. This government believes in a diverse economy, and that’s why this motion was put forward and why we are debating it. We also believe in economic development when it comes to mining and when it comes to many other things.

There are opportunities. We have areas of the Yukon that are untouched, but there are areas of the Yukon that have access that we can develop more product. You know what, supporting the development of some of this new product, whether it’s — I’ve seen some stats on our local First Nation wanting to do a golf course and something down by Kathleen Lake on some of their category A land. I love that. Every time it comes forward, I see the opportunity for our tourism minister — and it starts off with the Department of Economic Development, where they look at feasibility studies — and we push on this side for that stuff.

Point (4) enhancing Yukon’s cultural product — more than ever, in my riding, do you see the cultural aspect — the First Nation culture, the mining culture, the diverse culture that we have up there — being promoted. Before, you know, when you used to go to Parks Canada — when they first came in the 70s and 80s — as a child, when I went on hikes with some of the wardens, there wasn’t a conversation about what First Nations were. I’m so happy to see that diversification and a little bit of intuition from some of the locals putting this stuff together — you just have to go to the Da Ku building and look at some of the infrastructure that the local First Nation has built to showcase their history.

Supporting Yukon’s museums and cultural organizations — I do like the Kluane — I spoke to the museum at Burwash Landing. It’s incredible; it’s a great museum. But you know, Mr. Speaker, I look at the Alaska Highway, when it came through in 1942, and I see more opportunities for museums. I’ve had a conversation with the Member for Watson Lake about — there’s a big hangar at her airport. What a great place for an aviation museum from the war — right at the intersection of the Haines Road that goes to Haines, Alaska, or

up to Alaska — why not a museum with old military vehicles? There are still opportunities. We have some stuff in Whitehorse, but to diversify out locally I think is incredible.

Promoting of events — one of the key things for me when I got elected was to push and work with my local municipality on bringing more events to the community. I have had the opportunity to sit down with our local municipality and pitch an idea to them so I can move forward on development of our old rodeo grounds — which would be incredible for the community. It wouldn’t be a whole bunch of O&M, but it would be an opportunity for music festivals, for rodeos — it was the rodeo grounds — but baseball tournaments, soccer tournaments and a number of other things.

I want to put a little plug in for promoting events and new events. It says “fostering new and emerging events”. The Minister of Tourism and Culture had the opportunity to go and look at the economic value and the tourism value of Sturgis. It’s a motorcycle rally and the minister has a motorcycle. We see more motorcycles on the highway and he says, “Why don’t you do something in Haines Junction?”

In a one-hour chat with three of the businesses, this coming summer on an off weekend when we’re not interfering with the Atlin Music Festival or the Dawson Music Festival or other events, we’re going to have a motorcycle rally and a big poker run that’s going to take them from Haines Junction to Destruction Bay and back. It’s going to be a beer-and-rib-fest weekend so come out and try some ribs and beer helps to wash them down.

Point (8) actually is working with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon to provide sustained funding for domestic marketing initiatives. I was a member of TIA — our local Chamber of Commerce was a member of TIA back when I was on the chamber — and it is pivotal and it is key that rural chambers of commerce, visitor associations, and other organizations that are in the tourism industry, are affiliated and work with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon and have memberships. You know, TIA goes after the government. There is a lot of money that this government puts toward TIA, to work with TIA and it is important that the money is distributed throughout the Yukon and Yukon-related events.

I listened to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun talk about some of the stuff that he would like to see — better opportunities — and we cannot forget our rural Yukon.

I was not going to speak as long as I did, but I just want to say that I am very proud to represent the Kluane region — and a big push for the tourism industry. I am glad that our government is continuing, through a diverse economy, to make the Yukon the best place in Canada to live, work, play and to raise a family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hassard: It is a pleasure to rise to speak today on Motion No. 724. I would like to thank the MLA for Watson Lake for bringing this important motion to the floor today.

Tourism is a vital component in the economy of the Yukon. The visitor tracking program estimated that annual expenditures by visitors to the Yukon in 2012, to be in excess

of \$180 million. That \$180 million keeps the doors open for many businesses from Watson Lake to Beaver Creek to Dawson City. As well, that same \$180 million puts the food on a lot of tables throughout the Yukon.

I am very proud of the commitment of this government to work with industry, communities and First Nations to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round destination.

We must remember that while Yukon has a very important role in the tourism industry, it's important to remember that Yukon tourism remains market-driven, research-based and industry-led. That being said, this government will continue to enhance marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets in the United States, Europe and the rest of Canada.

This government continues to dedicate funds to help out with many tourism initiatives throughout the Yukon. In my riding of Pelly-Nisutlin government provides funding for George Johnston Museum and the Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre in Teslin and the visitor interpretive centre in Faro. I'm also very happy to see the repairs moving forward on the iconic Ross River footbridge, which is an integral piece of tourism history in Ross River as well as the Yukon.

Tourism and Culture continues to provide partial funding for First Nation collaborations — \$38,000 per year for the Big Jonathan House with the Selkirk First Nation; \$100,000 per year for the Da Ku Cultural Centre in Haines Junction, in collaboration with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; \$100,000 for the cultural centre in Dawson City with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in; \$38,000 for the John Tizya Centre in Old Crow in collaboration with the Vuntut Gwitchin; \$38,000 per year to the Tagé Cho Hudän Interpretive Centre with the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation; and, of course, the \$100,000 for the Teslin Tlingit heritage centre, which I mentioned earlier.

Tourism and Culture also helps many First Nations with funding for upgrades and projects in their respective cultural centres. As well, they enter into rental agreements, et cetera — rental agreements that might house government-run interpretive centres, such as we see in Carcross and Haines Junction. These are just a few more examples of how this government works in collaboration with First Nations.

It's also important for the government, as we promote affordable domestic and international air access and work with the Yukon Convention Bureau, industry and Yukon communities to further promote the Yukon as a choice destination for hosting meetings, conventions and sports events. It's important to utilize the tourism cooperative marketing fund to build partnerships with the industry to improve marketing efforts both for government and for industry.

As well, we can create a product development program to assist tourism operators in developing and enhancing the quality of their product. This government continues to work with Whitehorse and Carcross to develop their respective waterfronts. We need to continue to implement the Yukon

museum strategy in collaboration with museums, First Nation heritage and cultural centres and community interpretive centres, as well as work with the City of Whitehorse and the Miles Canyon Historical Railway Society to promote the trolley and Yukon railways history.

We will continue to provide necessary support to Yukon museums to enable them to run their operations and retain and trail experienced staff. With CanNor's assistance of \$2 million over the past four years, the department has been able to pursue an enhanced overseas destination awareness marketing project. This initiative has been a great success, with overseas visitation to Yukon growing by 33 percent in those past four years. Due to the success of this project, this Yukon Party government has elected to maintain an enhanced level of investment in overseas marketing on an ongoing basis, allocating an additional \$590,000 to the overseas marketing budget, starting in 2014-15.

If we look at the Asian market, Japan continues to be the fastest-growing international market and ranks fourth in overseas visitation. Eight hundred percent, that's the increase we see between 2009 and 2011. In 2012, Yukon hosted more than 3,500 Japanese visitors, most of whom were here primarily to experience the northern lights.

Australia is Yukon's second-largest growing overseas market, with close to 7,000 visitors in 2013, which represented approximately 19.5 percent of overseas visitors and two percent of overall visitors. The steady growth of the Australian market is the result of the successful partnerships between industry, government and the Canadian Tourism Commission and our tour operator partners in Australia. Australia remains a strong growth market for Yukon and we have enhanced our marketing efforts, including the appointment of an in-market general sales agent late in 2013.

Yukon's Australia strategy focus is on high-yield travellers — consumers who spend more, stay longer and they're less influenced by exchange-rate fluctuations and economic conditions. Holland America is also a key strategic partner in Yukon's success in the Australian market, as the majority of Australian visitors to Yukon visit in conjunction with an Alaska cruise.

As you know, the primary target markets for the department's overseas marketing program are Germany and Switzerland; secondary are the U.K., Australia and Japan, while emerging markets are identified as France, Netherlands, South Korea and China.

Overseas visitors to the Yukon generally stay longer and spend more than U.S. visitors. This aligns with our strategy to attract high-yield customers to the Yukon. Yukon has benefited from CanNor funding programs for tourism-related initiatives such as the expansion of our overseas marketing efforts, upgrades to the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport, and the Yukon visitor tracking program, which I mentioned earlier.

We know that 2013 was a record-breaking year for border-crossing statistics, with an eight-percent increase in the number of private vehicles and motorcoaches crossing the border into the Yukon. The statistics show a seven-percent

increase in the number of visitors from the United States, a 17-percent increase in Canadians and an eight-percent increase from overseas. From January to August of this year, Yukon's tourism industry continues to benefit from a five-percent increase in total arrivals and a 27-percent increase in international arrivals at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport.

As well, Dawson City has benefited. They have seen a 21-percent increase in the number of combined travellers travelling through the Little Gold border crossing and arrivals at the Dawson City Airport. This is due in large part to Holland America's 2014 tour programs in partnership with Air North.

This government has committed to enhance marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets. I think a person would have to be pretty hard pressed to say that this government is welching on our commitment toward tourism and culture.

In closing, I would like to again thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing Motion No. 724 to the floor of the Assembly here today, and I would like to thank the others who have made comments here on the floor today.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this motion forward and to my colleagues on both sides of the floor who have spoken to this motion already.

I have a few points I want to make in relation to this motion, and I will go through in the order they appear in the motion — but before I do that I wanted to speak first of all about the relationship between the departments of Economic Development and Tourism and Culture and the strong partnership they have in advancing their mutual interest in seeing a strong tourism sector in the territory. I'm very pleased with the work done to date, and I know that the Department of Economic Development works very well with the Department of Tourism and Culture to advance these issues.

There are a number of ways that the Department of Economic Development supports the tourism industry, and the funding that is available through the Department of Economic Development is often accessed by communities, groups or business that operate in the tourism field. Whether it's the strategic industries fund or whether it's the community development fund, the regional economic development fund or any of the other support opportunities in the Department of Economic Development, tourism is often the focus of these.

In looking to the motion, the first item is relatively self-explanatory — that the tourism industry benefits northerners and, of course, more specifically, Yukoners. That's self-evident and I don't think it needs much explanation.

The second one, though, is in relation to Yukon's funding for overseas marketing initiatives. That's something that I've been very pleased to see the leadership from both the Premier and the minister on. It's an issue that is very important. It is important that we get out and market the territory for a

number of reasons. One of them is that it brings visitors to the territory, but it also raises awareness of the territory, and that increases our ability to attract finance, to attract money to the territory, which benefits not just the tourism industry, but all Yukoners.

The funding that has been provided to date has been significant, and the resources devoted to marketing Yukon — not just financial, but other types of resources as well — have been significant. I would commend the minister for his work on that to date and the work that has yet to be done. I know that there are some plans for additional activities in the coming months and years that will be led by the Department of Tourism and Culture with regard to overseas missions and other initiatives of that sort.

The third project relates specifically to a specific project, and that is the Millhaven Bay project. As we know, this is a project that stems, in part, from a memorandum of understanding arrived at between the Yukon government and the Carcross-Tagish First Nation government, which included a list of projects that would be undertaken in partnership between the two governments.

That memorandum of understanding was signed in December 2013 and was a very important step forward, not only for the tourism industry, but for the general relationship between the Carcross-Tagish First Nation and the Yukon government.

I know that the Leader of the Official Opposition in her comments characterized the discussions and developments that led up to the memorandum of understanding as being "sharp dealings" — that was the quote that she used. I have to take exception to that and disagree quite vehemently. That certainly was not the case. I personally was not involved in the discussions that led up to the memorandum of understanding, but I know from talking to those who were that that was far from an accurate characterization of how those discussions went. What we had with this memorandum of understanding was two responsible, mature, governments meeting as equals and signing a memorandum of understanding to advance a number of issues that would benefit both governments and both of their citizen groups. The memorandum of understanding was signed by the Premier and chief as equals, as leaders of their governments. It certainly wasn't forced upon us and wasn't forced upon the Carcross-Tagish First Nation. It was arrived at collaboratively through discussion. To characterize the discussions as "sharp dealings" is offensive to me and likely offensive to the Carcross-Tagish as well.

I think there is evidence of the fact that the Carcross-Tagish First Nation don't see it the way that the Leader of the Official Opposition does as well. In fact, on the day of the signing, the Chief of the Carcross-Tagish First Nation indicated that this memorandum of understanding was indeed — and I quote — "a big deal". He went on to say: "It's like Christmas Day come early." Does that sound like the language of a chief who has been dealt with sharply, who has had some sort of agreement forced upon him or forced upon his government unwillingly?

Absolutely not. That's the sign of collaboration. That's the sign of two governments coming together and arriving at an outcome that is beneficial to both of our people and, indeed, to the entire Yukon. I wanted to take a moment to dispute the characterization of the Leader of the Official Opposition there.

Included in that MOU was a commitment to — and I quote: “Develop a world-class wilderness resort at Millhaven Bay on Bennett Lake.” Of course, the language that was used in the MOU was developed and I appreciate why we made the change in this particular motion to “support” from “developing”. It's immaterial to me. I think it conveys the same support, which was the intent of the Member for Watson Lake.

What has happened since then has been strong support from the Yukon government for that process — a process that had not really been undertaken in the Yukon before. I know that the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has done a lot of work looking at other jurisdictions, including British Columbia, for how they have handled such types of processes and such types of distribution of rights associated with tourism lodges or wilderness lodges. That was an influential jurisdiction for us in achieving the process that we have currently.

The Millhaven Bay project isn't the only one that was identified in the MOU, and I think it bears exploring a few of these other projects because they relate, in my opinion, to the motion that we have on the floor today.

The second topic in the MOU was the making available of land for remote-access cottages. I think that's an excellent step forward. It's perhaps not related as much to the tourism industry but it's certainly very important to Yukoners.

The third is very much relevant to our motion debate today, and that's to continue work on the Bennett beach development. What we're seeing in Carcross on the whole — and in part because of the work done in this memorandum of understanding — is a real renewal of Carcross and a really incredible step forward for that community as they develop their assets in the community and showcase them, not only for Yukoners, but for tourists and visitors alike. What has happened in Carcross and what will happen, including the work done on Bennett beach, I think will be an important step forward for that community.

The next piece in that memorandum of understanding was the development of Conrad Campground. Again, this is an excellent example of partnership between Carcross-Tagish First Nation and Yukon government that would see the development of the campground at the property that is adjacent of the heritage site on Windy Arm, the Conrad site. That work is underway currently and is being led on the Yukon government side by the Department of Environment. That work is going on very collaboratively and is underway currently.

The most recent development in that was the exchange of letters between the Minister of Tourism and Culture and the Chief of the Carcross-Tagish First Nation indicating a mutual agreement to proceed with a heritage management plan for the

site. That was something that we had agreed to already but it is a process that needed to be formalized and now will be undertaken.

It involves the establishment of a committee that has members from both the Yukon government and the CTFN, and the list of activities that they are to undertake is articulated in the CTFN final agreement, in one of the provisions or schedules in that agreement. Ultimately what is hoped for that process is the conclusion of a management plan for that site, for the heritage site, that will consider the artifacts, the heritage resources and the history of that site and protect those important aspects.

I guess what I should say, in conclusion to that chapter of my words today, is that what's going on in Carcross is indeed an example, I think, to be looked to for great success between First Nation governments and the Yukon government in developing the resources in that community.

Before I turn away from Carcross, I did want to note one other aspect — and it's related to what I've just been saying, but it's the support we provided to the CTFN for the development of the mountain biking trails near that community. It was a very successful project, the Singletrack to Success project. It was very successful and resulted in some very interesting new developments for the Yukon, having that level and quality of trails in the territory, especially in the Carcross area. It enables us to market the Yukon as a jurisdiction for more than just viewing the wilderness, but to get out in the wilderness and experience it at a very fast pace and a very up-close view of what the wilderness resources are in the Carcross area.

While that was a great success, it has also proven to be a good example that other First Nations and other communities have taken up on. Recently the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in Dawson have undertaken a similar project to develop biking trails on the Dome in Dawson and that again was supported by the community development fund as well. In these instances, we see First Nations tapping into funding opportunities that are available for the Yukon government and really finding ways to be successful in developing interesting and new tourism opportunities in their regions.

I heard the Leader of the Liberal Party actually mentioned a few excellent points about new or different types of events that can be hosted in the Yukon. The motion indeed speaks to some of this. The sixth bullet is “promoting events” and the seventh is “fostering new and emerging events”. So these are very related, I think. Some of the new and emerging events we have seen hosted in Whitehorse and throughout the territory recently have been very interesting. The Liberal member mentioned YukomiCon, which was a very interesting event that was hosted in Whitehorse that was supported by the community development fund — a very interesting conference, I guess you could call it — an event that occurred here in Whitehorse that saw a number of people come from outside the territory to participate in the YukomiCom. It was the coming together of a number of different cultures, I guess you could say, in the less traditional sense — cultures — that occurred between August 8 and 10 here in Whitehorse.

The emphasis of that event was local contact and interactive and educational activities for the participants. Also in focus were opportunities for local creators to practice their art, to connect and collaborate with peers, to increase their expertise and to interact with the public. I think that event was a great success. I know that all who attended it thought that it was fun and very interesting and a great learning experience.

There are also other types of events that we often overlook because we associate them with other issues. The past summer, I had the pleasure of attending the Gwich'in biennial event in Old Crow. That to me was very interesting because, at face value, it's a chance for the Gwich'in from across the north to get together. What it meant, and what it led to, was a number of very full flights on Air North from the south to Old Crow. I don't think that Air North has ever had so many consecutive, full flights to Old Crow as they did when the Gwich'in gathering was going on. You had people coming from all across the North — from Alaska and from other territories. Indeed, I think there were a few people from outside the country who attended that. One person, I think, was from Japan. When you have events like that that are ostensibly a cultural event, but they really operate as more than that. They offer an opportunity for people to come to parts of the Yukon, or parts of the country even, that they may not normally visit.

Those types of events are important to support and important to recognize for being more than just cultural events, but for being tourism events.

I think that would lead me to my next point, which is that — and it has been mentioned before by previous speakers — access is so important, whether it's access to Old Crow, as I just mentioned, or access to the territory from Outside. When we speak about access to the territory, we can't overlook the importance of Air North and their operations here in the territory. The extension of their service to Yellowknife and further on to Ottawa is very important, and has allowed some new and interesting events to take place. Recently a number of minor hockey teams from here in Whitehorse were able to travel to Yellowknife to compete in competition against teams from there. That kind of cross-territorial exchange is really important. It's obviously great for the hospitality industries in both cities, especially the host city, which would have dozens of kids and parents and supporters come to the community, rent hotel rooms, eat dinners and participate in the events. It also allows that exchange of friendship and exchange of ideas between communities, and I think it's really healthy for the north to have that kind of connection.

Those are the points I really want to make. There's much more to be said. Some have referenced already the extension of services that the Parks branch of Environment Yukon has undertaken for a number of campgrounds in the Whitehorse area. I think that's something that should be referenced as well, but I won't get into that too much, because I think my time is running out.

I did want to note that this motion is an important one, and is one that certainly reflects the Yukon government's commitment to the tourism industry, whether it's through the

Department of Tourism and Culture or other departments like Economic Development, Environment, Energy, Mines and Resources. All of these departments have a role to play in supporting a robust tourism industry here in the territory and we're very pleased to support that industry through those various ways.

Hon. Mr. Kent: It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to the motion brought forward by the MLA for Watson Lake with respect to the importance of our tourism industry here in the territory. Of course, it is one of those cornerstone industries that we enjoy along with resource extraction and some other important industries — the knowledge and IT sector. The public sector, of course, plays an important role in our economy as well, but from a private sector point of view, it's really tourism and mining that are the straws that stir the drink here as far as the economy goes in the territory.

All of us in the House represent our constituents and I have a number who are engaged in the tourism industry. Many of the wilderness tourism operators who live within Riverdale North are in the service and the hospitality sector as well as owners of canoe and kayak companies. It's a great employer of individuals who live, not only within Riverdale North, but of course, throughout our territory.

I wanted to focus on a couple of things. The Minister of Environment and Economic Development spoke quite extensively about the opportunities that exist in the Carcross and Southern Lakes area.

As an owner of recreational property in the Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes riding, it's something that I wanted to expand on a little more to just build on what the Minister of Environment said. When I heard the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes give his remarks with respect to this motion, I think his quote was, "mining is short-term and tourism is forever", and I wanted to speak a little bit about the relationship between the mining industry and the tourism industry and how they can co-exist, how they have co-existed and how they are very complementary of one another when it comes to moving the economy forward.

I'll start with the issues in Carcross, particularly those that Energy, Mines and Resources is directly responsible for. When I was minister responsible for the Housing Corporation and Education, I travelled with the Minister of Tourism and Culture to Carcross. It was the winter after our election in 2011 and we stood in the middle of what is now the Carcross Commons development — there was not very much there. The train tracks were there and one building, I believe.

To see how working with Carcross-Tagish First Nation and the development corporation led to the development of that area — an awful lot of the credit has to go to the Carcross-Tagish First Nation and the development corporation for their vision for that area, but I think we were able to participate and help give it that little boost that it needed.

To see it in the summertime, whether you're down there just for a coffee or a sandwich at the bistro on Bennett or one of the many events that are hosted at the Carcross Commons, it certainly has become a gathering place not only for the

community of Carcross, but for visitors and residents alike — a great opportunity to visit that area and more exciting things in store for the community of Carcross.

When it comes to Millhaven Bay, this does give me an opportunity to provide an update for the Legislature on where we're at with that project. It's an expression of interest process. It was selected and modified for use in the Yukon by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Lands branch within my department. The process gives both EMR and Tourism and Culture a role in assessing at key steps whether the proponent's proposal is adequate and should proceed to the next stage of review.

I believe it's about a seven-stage process that has been set out. It's modelled after similar developments and similar opportunities in other jurisdictions across Canada, particularly operations in British Columbia. The government is confident that the process we've developed is thorough and will give the public ample opportunity to learn about the proposed development and make comments. It's a proponent-driven process, and the proponent has held public meetings and submitted a detailed resort master plan to the government. Both the departments of Energy, Mines and Resources and Tourism and Culture reviewed the plan and determined that the proponent is ready to begin work on a submission to YESAB.

That is one of the final steps in the process that needs to be accomplished. Like any major development, obviously the proponent will be seeking investors, and we look forward to helping to facilitate visits by investors, like we do for mining investors or fam tours — on occasion that we do — and we look forward to continuing to work with the proponent to see this exciting ecotourism opportunity come to fruition — hopefully in the not-too-distant future.

Part of that memorandum of understanding that the Premier signed with Chief Cresswell also included a number of other important developments in the Southern Lakes area. As the Minister of Environment mentioned, those are developments that benefit both governments and Yukoners as a whole. What has received attention recently is the cottage lot development that we at Energy, Mines and Resources let — 19 lots that were released and developed between Bennett Lake and Tagish Lake. They are water or lake access only, I guess would be the way to describe them. Obviously there was a tremendous uptake on the lottery. There were over three times as many applications as lots available, and all 19 lots were assigned. We look forward to those individuals being able to own land on a lake within the Yukon that's accessible by boat, snowmachine, float plane or plane in the wintertime. It is something that hasn't been done in this territory in quite some time and I'm very proud to be part of a government that was able to deliver on that promise that we made to Yukoners in 2011 — another promise that we made and a promise that we kept. We continue to deliver on our commitments to Yukoners that we made in 2011 on the doorsteps throughout the territory.

Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Economic Development touched on a couple of the other opportunities

that are contained within the MOU. Bennett beach development is proceeding; the extension of Tagish Avenue — not to be confused with the Tagish Road — but Tagish Avenue, which is located within the community of Carcross. That funding partnership with the Carcross-Tagish Development Corporation and First Nation has been completed and now work can begin on that extension — more opportunities for waterfront lot development on First Nation land in the community of Carcross, so again, bringing more people to the community and increasing the business and other opportunities that exist down there. It's something that I know the First Nation is looking forward to, and we, as Yukon government, are looking forward to that development as well.

The Conrad campground was part of that MOU, and I know the Minister of Environment was working very, very closely with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation on seeing that project go forward, and hopefully Yukoners are able to camp there, perhaps as early as next year, if not the year after. I think there are some great opportunities with that.

Currently there is an RFP out, Mr. Speaker, to assess the feasibility of a marina in Carcross. That again, I believe, is being spearheaded through the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources — another exciting opportunity to enhance the tourism sector when it comes to the community of Carcross.

I now want to turn my attention to the comments made by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes on the exclusivity, I guess — that tourism cannot co-exist with mining. I think that certainly history has proven that they definitely can; they are very complimentary. Much of the infrastructure that we enjoy in the territory today was built as a result of the resource industry and the extraction industry — thousands of kilometres of roads that we have in the territory. Many of the airports that exist in the communities were built to support the resource industry. Of course, the Town of Faro is there because of the mining industry and has grown from that into a very vibrant and exciting community, full of residents who are proud to call Faro home. I certainly know it's one of my favourite communities to visit in the territory, and I jump at the opportunity to travel there with the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin whenever we get a chance.

Some of the other aspects that come when tourism and mining benefit together — rather than talk about some of the obvious ones, like Dawson City and the placer industry, as well as the two reality TV shows that have spun out of that industry and are quite popular on their respective networks — obviously, that's an easy one, but when we look at some of the other projects that are now major tourism draws, they owe their roots to the mining industry.

One only needs to look at the White Pass & Yukon Railroad built in 1898 during the Klondike Gold Rush. It's an international historic civil engineering landmark, a designation shared with such other projects as the Panama Canal or the Eiffel Tower or the Statue of Liberty. At the time, it was a \$10-million project, a product of British financing and one of the engineering marvels of the world. The 110-mile railroad was completed at the turn of the century, in 1900, with the final spike driven in the community of Carcross.

After servicing the mining industry for a number of years, and then closing in 1982, it reopened later on in that decade. As a seasonal tourism operation, in its first year it served 37,000 passengers, but as of the year 2012, it has become Alaska's most popular shore excursion, carrying over 390,000 passengers during that May to September tourism season in 2012. So again, something that was built to service the mining industry has turned into a major tourism attraction bringing visitors to the community of Carcross and is an important part of the history of the Yukon and a great example of something that was built to support the mining industry turning into a legacy project for the tourism industry.

Moving on to another important business here in the territory — we've spoken a number of times in this Legislature about how important Air North, Yukon's Airline, is to the territory.

It was founded in 1977 by Joe Sparling and Tom Wood. The company initially operated a charter service primarily in support of the mining industry. From those very small mining roots, this company has grown into what we see today — very much an incredible and important part of the Yukon's economy, partnered with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, offering jet service now to southern destinations and out east to Ottawa, as well as an extensive network within the Yukon. To see a company like that grow from just one plane and very grassroots opportunities to support the mining industry — definitely now integral in supporting the tourism industry as well as the modern mining industry here in the territory. I believe they do charters into the Minto mine at shift change to shuttle the workers back and forth when shift changes are done at the Minto mine, and they offered a similar service when the Bellekeno mine, or Alexco's mine in Keno City, was running a couple of years ago as well. Again, an important company that owes its roots to mining but now definitely is integrated and services mining and tourism as well.

I know the Minister of Environment spoke about it, but the world-renowned mountain biking trails on Montana Mountain in Carcross — an incredible tourist attraction that is a competitor to some of the best or can stand with some of the best mountain biking trails in the country, if not the world.

The discovery of silver on the cliff faces on the east side of Montana Mountain triggered a staking rush in 1904. John Conrad, who was a financier from Montana, consolidated the mining claims and built an extensive network of mule trails, tramways and wagon roads to transport the valuable ore off the mountain. Conrad's promise, unfortunately, of untold riches did draw thousands to the shores of Windy Arm, but was short-lived. In the 2006 *Carcross-Tagish First Nation Final Agreement*, they selected Montana Mountain and have again built it into a world-class mountain biking destination — again, another tourism operation whose start was the mining industry with the development of those trails. Of course, the First Nation has enhanced them significantly since — but something where one industry is benefitting from something that another industry was able to start.

I guess the one final example that I would offer is Kaminak Gold's camp that exists near the Coffee project they

have. I believe they purchased or perhaps are leasing the Great River Journey lodge that was located there. It's something that was built for the tourism industry that is now servicing the mining industry, and hopefully will be the centre point for one of the future mines here in the territory. I know that the company is excited about that project as well.

I don't think that we have to pick winners or losers when it comes to industry. Mining and tourism can and have co-existed, and they will continue to do so. Businesses rely on both and, when it comes to events, two of my favourite events that happen in the year and in the shoulder seasons for the tourism industry are the Dawson City international gold show and the Geoscience Forum, which happens here in Whitehorse, bringing hundreds of visitors and incredible economic benefit to those who live and operate businesses in Dawson City and Whitehorse.

I hope that I have been able to convey that businesses rely on both of these important industries. They are the two cornerstones of what our private sector economy is based on, and we can continue to promote both, not one at the expense of the other. I think that is fundamental in what the Yukon Party government believes, where both of these industries are incredibly important and both need the full support of government to continue to be successful, moving forward.

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

Ms. McLeod: Thank you to all the members for their comments, those who shared them with us today. I want to thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for putting forward the amendment. I'm certainly pleased that it was something we could support.

I think we all seem to agree that tourism and culture is one important aspect of our Yukon economy. With that, I thank you all for your time today.

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

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

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

Motion No. 724, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 723

Clerk: Motion No. 723, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support recycling and waste diversion by:

(1) making all beverage containers subject to a recycling surcharge and sharing the increased revenue with recycling processors and community depots;

(2) requiring a recycling fee for all sizes of tires sold in the territory;

(3) expanding the designated material regulation to implement a recycling fee at the time of purchase for electronic and electrical products; and

(4) working with the City of Whitehorse and rural municipalities to identify and implement sustainable, long-term and cost-effective solutions for processing recyclables in Yukon.

Ms. McLeod: I am honoured to rise today to speak to Motion No. 723.

Very often, we think that because we are such a small jurisdiction this matter of dealing with waste and recycling, it sometimes gets a little overwhelming, but we have to keep it in its scope and realize that countries and cities all over the world are grappling with this same issue. That it is difficult should not alarm anyone.

The Yukon government is currently consulting on changes to refundable beverage container fees. The consultation considers raising the fees on refundables and also including all beverage containers under the program. These proposed increases will provide increased revenue to Yukon's processors and community depots. This increased revenue stream will support long-term waste diversion goals in the territory.

I am very pleased to hear of the Yukon government's support for recycling over the past decade. These have been extensive, but we must always remember that there are multiple partners in the business of waste diversion and we must make sure to treat everyone equally.

Raven Recycling Society has benefitted extensively from investments by the community development fund. Over the years, contributions have included \$20,000 to launch the first

phase of a year-long zero waste and recycling education program to raise awareness about zero waste and how recycling can help Yukon become a zero-waste community; \$13,935 to develop a website to support a three-year zero waste and recycling education campaign; \$41,500 to create a plan for a community gathering conference, develop a zero waste event toolkit — an on-your-waist toolkit and an educational video, entitled *Zero Waste Starts Now!*; \$124,793 for upgrades to customer drop-off area and yard, which includes new recycling bins and levelling of the Raven Recycling yard and public drop-off area.

In 2012, \$80,000 to purchase a new forklift with larger capacity and a bale clamp capable of lifting up to 10,000 pounds; \$75,000 to contribute to an upgrade in the customer service drop-off area. In 2008, \$75,000 to purchase an electric forklift to increase safety and efficiency and begin the process of converting to a cleaner, more environmentally responsible operation. In 2010, \$12,600 to assess the financial sustainability of a renovated facility, or the scaling back of current recycling services, as part of a larger collaborative planning process for Yukon waste management.

The Yukon government is proud to support our fine recycling processors and we have demonstrated strong support. For example, in 2008, when Raven Recycling was facing financial difficulty from lower resource prices, the Yukon Party government provided \$320,000 to Raven Recycling over two years to ensure that the non-profit society could continue to offer Yukoners a comprehensive recycling and processing service.

The federal government has been a partner in supporting our recycling processors. In 2012 they provided \$200,000 to P&M Recycling to purchase a plastic-to-oil machine that transforms unusable plastic into heating oil. In 2009, Raven Recycling likewise received \$249,000 from the Government of Canada to do a feasibility study to determine the most effective ways to expand their recycling collection system that was in place at the time.

This astounding investment over the past decade in recycling as part of waste diversion is something that I think the government should be proud of. As early as last year, the government once again demonstrated their commitment to recycling and waste diversion in the territory by responding to the joint request by both processors for increased diversion credits.

The Yukon government and their major waste diversion partner, the City of Whitehorse, each contribute \$75 per tonne of recycling processed and transported out of the territory. This \$150-per-tonne diversion credit is a brand-new revenue stream supporting our processors in support of their continuing funding pressures. The Minister of Community Services should be proud of his efforts, and the City of Whitehorse should be proud of their efforts to assist the Yukon's recycling partners.

The current consultation on increased refundable fees is a great continuation of the Yukon Party's support for recycling in the territory. The motion mentions that all sizes of tires will have a recycling fee attached at point of purchase. This point-

of-purchase fee ensures that the proper disposal will be funded in advance.

Likewise, by expanding the designated material regulation to implement a recycling fee at point of purchase for electronic and electrical products, the Yukon government ensures that we have funded the proper disposal of products. This will help ensure that the users of our landfills will not seek to illegally dispose of these products. They can simply return them to disposal depots and government will have already recouped the cost.

The final part of the motion asked the government to work with the City of Whitehorse and rural municipalities to identify and implement sustainable long-term cost-effective solutions for processing recyclables in the Yukon. I think all members realize that work to meet waste diversion goals in the territory is an ongoing issue and that there are multiple partners needed to achieve these goals. This government has a proven track record of working with Yukon municipalities to address waste diversion concerns, as recently demonstrated by the partnership with the City of Whitehorse on the waste diversion credit.

Great things have been done in recycling and I look forward to the next steps under this government.

Mr. Barr: I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party to firstly we will say we will be supporting Motion No. 723 and I have some comments I would like to put out there.

I would like to start by thanking Raven Recycling Society for the vision that they shared with Yukoners close to 25 years ago — a vision that until very recently had blossomed into a beloved community project that handled around 85 percent of the territory's non-refundable recycling. The non-profit Raven Recycling project was born out of a desire to benefit the public good, based on the notion that bringing recycling to the Yukon would result in cleaner, greener and ultimately more prosperous communities. One could even argue that the success of Raven Recycling influenced the decision of our neighbours in Alaska to implement recycling services, as Yukoners wandered through Haines or Anchorage looking for paper and metal bins and their overt educating programs continued to explain the benefits of recycling to Yukoners of all ages.

I recall back in those days when it never crossed my mind that I should maybe save the cans or I would take stuff back for the money. What else should I do about it? When we don't know what we don't know, we can't do anything about it and when we do know, we can. I remember after being educated from Raven here, walking at the Haines State Fair with cans and I looked and there were other Yukoners and some of the local folk said, "What are you guys doing?" We said, "We want to recycle this stuff." They said, "Oh, just throw it in the garbage — don't worry about that stuff." We said, "Over in the Yukon we recycle things and it's great, it's good for the environment." So they started to ask questions of different people and I was witnessing those kinds of things.

I'm very proud to say that a friend of mine who passed away just last fall from leukemia — Ray Massey, who came

up to visit me — another story where you come to the Yukon to visit the Yukon and you never leave. Well, he stayed here and he saw that, because he was involved with recycling back in Ontario. He said we better get something going here. So it's through his efforts and those others who had the vision to bring recycling to the forefront. I would just like to acknowledge that and the work of people throughout the Yukon who see the benefits and see that it's a worthwhile endeavour. It does cost money if we are going to continue doing so.

Raven Recycling deserves our full support, not just because they are a non-profit society whose role in the community is paramount, but also because they are dedicated to handling the vast majority of the Yukon's non-refundables. In that vein, while this motion does take steps to improve the diversion of certain waste materials like tires and bottles, this is only a small snapshot of the waste that we are trying to divert as the government seeks to follow through on its commitment to diverting half the territory's waste by next year.

I would also add that this morning there was a very lengthy and informative discussion with Community Services department staff. We had lots of things to discuss and we would have stayed longer, had time permitted. We had to get ready to get in here and get ready for the afternoon session. We do look forward to further conversation in the Community Services debate when it does come forward over this sitting.

Before we go further, I would like to give an example of communities taking action to make Yukon that much greener. I'll start with Mount Lorne, a community that I am very proud to represent. Through the passion of the people who run the transfer station near the Robinson subdivision, Mount Lorne has already met and surpassed their 50-percent waste diversion. Under the conscientious leadership of Mike Bailie, the Mount Lorne transfer station is a shining example of what rural recycling and waste management can look like.

Imagine turning right off the highway on your way into Whitehorse — I do this most every day for 27 years and used to look at that place when it was called a dump burning. Today it is different. You pass through the gates and are met with a very clear vision of what is supposed to be placed and where. There is a lineup of clearly marked bins, garbage, compost, non-refundables, metals, paper, plastic, even a bin for e-waste.

There's a building with multiple rooms that hold a beautifully organized free store, a place where you can drop off your loved items and leave with new-found treasures. I've taken a few home and they're there; I use them. I wear some of them, but I always buy new underwear. That's very important.

We'll get back to the task at hand here.

You can even drop off your refundables and collect your cash on the site. That's really great because a lot of people in the rural areas — we're speaking unincorporated. I believe that's the only one where you can actually do that. They always have to bring it a long distance and it's very convenient.

The Mount Lorne transfer station even has its own cardboard balers. Imagine that. I was there with Mike and he showed me them. He repairs them. He's a MacGyver kind of guy and he'll get it working. Once they have all of this together, they are committed. Once they collect all of the recyclables and have a full trailer-load, they then transfer these collected recyclables to Whitehorse. They also want to share their knowledge and successes with other communities and community members. They welcome site visits, information sharing, and advice to anyone who wants it. Mount Lorne isn't the only community taking action to divert waste. Marsh Lake takes great pride in their transfer station. It is a little tricky getting up that road because it gets washboard, so I only say this — maybe the Member for Kluane is listening — maybe we could get the grader there a little bit more frequently to grade that hill because it doesn't take long, with the high traffic going up to the Marsh Lake transfer station, to bounce waste back out on to the road.

The driver backs up, picks it up, puts it back and it is brought up the hill. I know when I have been at the LACs, they do really appreciate it when that grader makes its way to Marsh Lake.

I see the Minister for Highways and Public Works jotting maybe some of this down and we could have good news happening for Marsh Lake.

I would also like to say that, for the last three years, the tendering of contracts at transfer stations has been a bit patchy at best. Contractors are asked to be patient, and I've heard this from some that there are times when the contractors will continue fulfilling the obligations, waiting for payment for the work that they've done and still no renewed contract in place. I know this isn't happening always, but it is something that I believe we should respect — that those of us, whenever we are wanting someone to do work for us, put out tendering contracts in a timely fashion and pay in a timely fashion. What it has caused —

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

Debate on Motion No. 723 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.