



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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## HANSARD

Wednesday, November 26, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

**DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake**

## CABINET MINISTERS

### NAME CONSTITUENCY PORTFOLIO

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

## GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

### Yukon Party

<b>Darius Elias</b>	Vuntut Gwitchin
<b>Stacey Hassard</b>	Pelly-Nisutlin
<b>Hon. David Laxton</b>	Porter Creek Centre
<b>Patti McLeod</b>	Watson Lake

## OPPOSITION MEMBERS

### New Democratic Party

<b>Elizabeth Hanson</b>	Leader of the Official Opposition Whitehorse Centre
<b>Jan Stick</b>	Official Opposition House Leader Riverdale South
<b>Kevin Barr</b>	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes
<b>Lois Moorcroft</b>	Copperbelt South
<b>Jim Tredger</b>	Mayo-Tatchun
<b>Kate White</b>	Takhini-Kopper King

### Liberal Party

<b>Sandy Silver</b>	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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## LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Doris McLean
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly****Whitehorse, Yukon****Wednesday, November 26, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

“Lord, we praise you and give you thanks for all the blessings we have received. Grant to us now as we assemble here honesty, integrity and wisdom, so that we may govern your people with justice and lead them to a better life. We ask this in your name, Amen.”

**Speaker’s statement**

Before we proceed, I would just like to note this is a new prayer for us. Up until recently, we have only had three prayers. There was a fourth one and it had gone missing at some time over the years. A very good friend of mine, a Padre who I met in Bosnia on my second tour, Major Wellwood, retired — after a couple of years of hounding him and him having two strokes, he finally remembered that I had asked him to write a fourth prayer. After visiting the Legislature here this year with his family, he sent me this one, so I have to thank him for it and we will add it to our rotation.

**DAILY ROUTINE**

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

**TRIBUTES****In recognition of Honour House Society**

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I rise today on behalf of the Legislative Assembly to give tribute to Honour House Society. Many of our members may not be aware of this society or the wonderful service they provide to first responders and our Armed Forces; until recently, even I wasn’t.

Last Friday, the Premier, some of my colleagues and I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Allan De Genova, president of Honour House Society, and Mr. Grant Smith, a director and the treasurer. They also met with the Whitehorse City mayor, Legion members and veterans, members of the RCMP, serving and retired firefighters, EMS personnel, Correctional Services staff and others.

Three years ago, Honour House Society and Allan De Genova completed their dream of a home away from home and a place of recovery for our Canadian Forces and first responders, both serving and retired, and their families.

Called Honour House, it is located in New Westminster, B.C. and consists of 10 bedrooms, each with their own ensuite bathroom and each of them have been designed with comfort and calm very much in mind. There is a large well-equipped kitchen and dining area, a spacious living room and two cozy sunrooms in which their guests can take time to relax.

Allan told us he got the idea while watching a documentary about a Canadian soldier in Afghanistan who

was injured and needed extensive medical care when he got home. It was at that time, watching the documentary, that his wife said, “Al, there is really no place for these men and women and our first responders and their families to go to be looked after while they get their treatment. Perhaps you should start something up similar to Ronald McDonald House in Vancouver for our men and women in uniform”, and Mr. Speaker, he has.

When a society approaches elected officials, it is more often than not to request support of one kind or another. At the beginning of the meeting, it was clear that their focus was to meet with everyone so they could bring awareness to Honour House. Mr. Smith said, “We often have vacant rooms. This is not because they are not needed, it is because far too many people are not aware that Honour House is there for them and there for their families.”

In the past two years, Honour House has been used 2,000 stay nights. Guests have been from across British Columbia and even a few from Yukon. I understand that another Yukoner will be staying there shortly.

I would like to encourage everyone, not just our military and first responders, to visit the website [honourhouse.ca](http://honourhouse.ca) to learn more. Membership in Honour House Society is not restricted. It is open to anyone who is interested in showing their support.

I understand that while Allan and Grant were here, they met a lady visiting from Vancouver. After a very short explanation of Honour House, she intends to join the society and get membership for her family and her friends as Christmas gifts.

We owe a lot to our military, our police, firefighters, border security, correctional officers, sheriffs, and emergency services personnel. Our first responders protect and save our lives and the lives of those we love every day without hesitation, never asking for anything from us in return. Honour House allows us, citizens at large, the opportunity to show our support and appreciation for their selfless sacrifice. Let’s also show our backing and gratitude to Honour House Society by spreading the word about Honour House.

I have a few guests in the gallery on the side of the Department of Justice. I would ask all members to join me in welcoming: Chief Superintendent Peter Clark from the RCMP, joined by Constable Meagan Brown; from the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, Geoff Wooding; and from the Sheriff’s Office, Phillip Morgan. Welcome.

*Applause*

**In recognition of CPR Awareness Month**

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I rise in the House today to raise awareness of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or CPR, on behalf of all members.

November is CPR Awareness Month and it is the perfect time to be reminded of the importance of being trained in CPR. Heart attacks claim the lives of more than 23,000 Canadians each year. Effective CPR, when administered immediately, can double a person’s chance of survival.

I have to ask: Would you know what to do if you came across a person suffering from a heart attack, or other cardiac emergency?

CPR training makes individuals more confident to step in and help if the need arises. More than half of the time CPR is performed, it's performed on a loved one and often in one's home. It just makes sense to take training that can enable you to potentially save the life of a loved one, or another person suffering a cardiac emergency. Taking a CPR first aid training course is a small commitment to make when you consider the huge impact it may have on someone else's life. Courses are available at Yukon College from the Canadian Red Cross. St. John's Ambulance also offers courses here in the territory. Workplaces also offer courses to their employees.

Every minute counts when someone's heart has stopped beating. The more you know, the better prepared you are to apply this lifesaving technique. I encourage all Yukoners to be proactive and take training in CPR. There would be nothing worse than feeling helpless during an emergency because we didn't know how to administer CPR.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming Amanda Price and Daniela Martinson from MADD Whitehorse. Welcome.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** It is a pleasure to rise here today in the Assembly and ask MLAs to join me in welcoming staff from the Department of Community Services — some of our dedicated, uniformed service personnel who are here themselves and are representing the many men and women who serve our territory every minute of every day. If members will join me, I would like to welcome to the gallery Assistant Deputy Minister of Protective Services, Rick Smith; Fire Marshal Dennis Berry; Deputy Fire Marshal James Paterson; primary care paramedic and acting community operation supervisor, Jon Trefry; critical care paramedic, Andy McCann and director of Wildland Fire Management, Mike Etches.

*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

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Pursuant to Motion No. 757, adopted by this House yesterday, I have for tabling a reprinted version of Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*. The reprinted version is in both English and French and incorporates an amendment agreed to in Committee of the Whole. This bill contains what I believe to be a true translation into French of the English text of Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, as amended.

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

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to support the Yukon College Teslin campus to coordinate and host a two-day business basics workshop, giving potential entrepreneurs the basics of running a business with hands-on opportunities to apply what they learn.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to support the Haines Junction Minor Hockey Association to purchase a skate-sharpening machine.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to adopt the recommendations of Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada by establishing:

(1) a zero-percent blood alcohol content limit for all drivers under age 21 or with less than five years of driving experience, with express police enforcement powers and mandatory roadside administrative licence suspensions for breaching the program; and

(2) a prohibition on being positive for any illicit psychoactive drug for all drivers under age 21 or with less than five years of driving experience that includes express statutory police enforcement powers and mandatory administrative licence suspensions for breaching the prohibition.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to amend the *Workers' Compensation Act* to address post-traumatic stress disorder suffered by first responders, including emergency medical services professionals.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explain why the new Whitehorse ambulance station dispatch centre continues to sit empty a year after the building opened.

**Speaker:** This then brings us to Question Period.

### QUESTION PERIOD

**Question re: Mountain View Golf Course leased land buyback**

**Ms. Hanson:** In 1997, the Mountain View Golf Course signed a 30-year lease to secure approximately 51 hectares of land adjacent to their golf course. This land was

leased to the golf course from the Yukon government for a possible nine-hole future expansion of the course. Fast-forward 13 years to 2010. The Yukon government purchased back their own leased land from Mountain View Golf Course for \$750,000 only 13 years after signing the lease.

Why did the Yukon government spend \$750,000 of Yukoners money to buy back its own land?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** My understanding is that the land in question was required to install a perimeter trail and a storm water management system for the Whistle Bend subdivision. That is about the extent of my knowledge on this subject because this is a matter than I have not dealt with directly.

**Ms. Hanson:** Maybe I can help the minister. The rationale that this government developed to support the buyback of this lease was that the land was considered a prime location for possible future lot development of the Whistle Bend subdivision. However, a lot feasibility study commissioned by the Yukon government noted that there were environmental, technical and political hurdles and most of the land was unlikely to be fit for lot development.

Furthermore, correspondence between the Yukon government and the City of Whitehorse clearly indicates that the city had no interest in developing that land. This government talks a big game about fiscal responsibility, yet it bought back land that it already owned for \$750,000.

Why would this government go out of its way to purchase back land that it knew the City of Whitehorse didn't want to develop and that the feasibility report that they commissioned indicated was not in fact a prime location?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Again, as I was not the minister responsible at that time nor in fact a member of Cabinet at the time when this occurred, what I'm relying on is the information I have from department staff, which is that the land was required to install a perimeter trail and storm water management system for the Whistle Bend subdivision. Some of the land may also be considered for future lot development.

My understanding, as well, is that planning documents prepared by the City of Whitehorse for phase 1 and phase 2 of Whistle Bend in 2009 made it clear that the lease boundaries require revision for the subdivision to be constructed as planned, and that assistant deputy ministers from the departments of Energy, Mines and Resources and Community Services negotiated an agreement with the leaseholder to make those changes.

**Ms. Hanson:** I'll help the minister again, Mr. Speaker. Documents obtained by the Yukon New Democratic Party showed that the decision to buy back the lease was initiated by a request from the then Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Correspondence shows that the premise of the transaction was to help in paying off the golf course's debt load. In fact, the lease-purchase agreement specified that \$500,000 of the money was to be directly paid against the golf course's debt.

Nobody questions the need for the government to support recreational organizations. What is not okay is to do it behind closed doors and under false pretenses.

Can the minister explain why his government didn't think it was necessary to inform Yukoners before subsidizing a golf course to the tune of three-quarters of a million dollars, while undermining the city's approved plans for that area?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Again, as I indicated to the member in my first response and my second response — as I was not the minister in question at the time or a member of Cabinet at that time, I am relying on the information from staff, which is that in 2011, the Yukon government did come to an agreement with Mountain View Golf Club to acquire a section of their current lease. The land was apparently required to install a perimeter trail and stormwater management system for the Whistle Bend subdivision. Some of the land may also be considered for future lot development.

As well, the information provided to me by department staff indicates that the planning documents prepared by the City of Whitehorse for phase 1 and phase 2 of Whistle Bend in 2009 made it clear that the lease boundaries required for the subdivision to be constructed as planned, and that assistant deputy ministers from the Departments of Energy, Mines and Resources and Community Services negotiated the agreement with the golf club.

I know we hear again the constant off-mic kibitzing that we typically hear from the Leader of the NDP, but again, I am providing the explanation based on the information that I have. As I noted, I was not the minister for either department at that time or a member of Cabinet, so I am relying on the information provided to me by the department.

#### **Question re: Special needs education programming**

**Mr. Tredger:** Educational assistants are an essential part of our schools. They provide specialized, one-on-one support to students with special needs. In the past, these educators have been assigned by schools to students in need, based on a comprehensive evaluation process that is enshrined in the *Education Act* and involves a student's parents and is led by the school administration.

Now, however, school councils and parents are telling us that the Department of Education has centralized the special needs evaluation process and is excluding front-line educators and parents. Not having parents involved in this process is a violation of the *Education Act*.

Why is the department, under this minister's watch, centralizing special needs program decisions, instead of letting school administrators make these decisions with input from front-line educators and students' parents?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Supporting success for every single one of our learners is a priority for the Government of Yukon — it has been and will continue to be so, and it will be just that in years to come. We'll continue to enhance our efforts in this particular regard.

The member opposite continues to make reference that there have been changes pursuant to the *Education Act*. There have not been any changes made to the *Education Act* in this particular regard and, in accordance with the requirements of the act, it is the school administration, in consultation with our

staff and the student's parents, that determines whether a student requires or has special educational needs, and if so, what specific individualized education plan is appropriate to meet those student needs.

As I understand, criteria have been developed by the department to assist school administrators to determine whether that student has specific needs. Of course, those criteria are used in determining what supports are required to assist each and every individual student.

Again, we continue to work with the school administration and our school partners in addressing these very important matters.

**Mr. Tredger:** Those are changes in practice. This morning, Yukoners heard from the father of a Yukon student who has autism. The Department of Education removed his daughter's education assistant support, despite assertions and evidence that she needs that ongoing special assistance. As a result of this top-down decision, the student isn't receiving the support that she needs to overcome her special needs and to learn and to grow as a member of the school community. Parents have a legal right, as stated in the *Education Act*, to be consulted during determinations of special assistant needs, yet here we have a parent pleading through the media for help for his young daughter. The government is letting Yukon children down.

How is the minister going to address the immediate needs of students who require special assistance, and can she commit to giving parents their legal right to participation and appeal during —

**Speaker:** Order please.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Let me be very clear. I fully acknowledge and I fully recognize the concerns that have been raised by that specific parent. I had the opportunity to meet with that parent just recently. I'm also apprised of the concerns with respect to this specific school and have actually been working with the school community regarding the allocation of student supports.

I have met with the school council, as has our deputy minister of Education and, for the past several weeks, our department has been working with the school administration and the school council to review information, the assignment of current staff and the provision of supports so as to ensure that those students who require those additional supports are receiving those supports.

A meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, at which time we will be looking to review those findings and to determine what actions may be required in response to those recommendations flowing out of that.

Again, the department is very much aware and will continue to enhance our efforts to ensure that those supports are readily available to each of those students.

**Mr. Tredger:** The minister continues to ignore the chorus of voices of people who have had enough of the mismanagement of programs and services. It is reprehensible enough that educational assistants and individual education plans are being removed from students in need. That is ignoring the voices of parents and local school administrators.

I have already reminded the minister about the shortage of shared resource room staff in our schools, and I mentioned a number of failures of leadership at the Department of Education. We owe it to our students to offer them the best possible conditions for success.

When will the minister listen to parents, school councils and schools themselves and put the brakes on the Department of Education's ongoing centralization of decision-making, and inform parents of their right to participate and appeal during the special needs determination process?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Again, Mr. Speaker, we continue, as we always have, to work with schools, students and parents to ensure that all Yukon students have the resources they require so that they can be successful at school. That is a commitment of mine, it is a commitment of my government, and certainly it will continue to be here as long as I am here.

I would like to point out for the member opposite that in fact we do have some 634 students who are currently on individualized education plans. There has been no change. In fact, the degree of supports that the government has provided continues to increase. In 2002, there were 81 paraprofessional staff. Now, in 2014, there are some 178 paraprofessional staff. In that same time period, the school population has also gone down by about eight percent. We recognize that there are other factors at play, including better diagnosis, thanks to the good work of the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education.

I would also like to point out that we have approximately 84 positions in our schools that assist students who require support, including learning assistants, counsellors and teachers assigned to shared resource rooms. Again, supporting success for every learner continues to be a priority.

#### **Question re: FASD and legal system**

**Mr. Silver:** This spring, our Legislature passed a unanimous motion supporting a private member's bill put forth by the Yukon's own Member of Parliament. Bill C-583 seeks to amend the *Criminal Code* to add a definition of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, FASD, and to establish a procedure for addressing individuals who are involved in the criminal justice system and who, it is suspected, suffer from FASD. It requires the court to consider, as a mitigating factor in sentencing, a determination that the accused suffers from FASD. Last week, the federal Conservatives decided that they didn't support the bill and asked the member to pull it and, for some reason, he agreed.

Does the Government of Yukon support the decision by our Member of Parliament to kill his own piece of legislation?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** What I can talk to is what we are doing here within the territory between the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Social Services, as well as the Department of Education, the schools and the correctional facilities.

Right now we're undertaking a prevalence study at the Correctional Centre to determine the level or the individuals who have FASD in the Correctional Centre or perhaps are even on probation. We'll continue down that path. It's a

voluntary program that a number of people have participated in already. We just spoke about that only a couple of days ago on the floor of this Legislature during budget debate. We'll continue down that path. I thank both ministers from Education and Health and also thank the MP for bringing this to the federal stage.

**Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, the bill put forward by our Member of Parliament was being debated last week in Ottawa. Members of the NDP and the Liberal Party spoke and they said that they did support it. A Liberal MP from Labrador said that she hopes that all parties and all members in the House could get together and support this bill in recognition of the place that fetal alcohol spectrum disorder has in Canada and in our justice system. Unfortunately, the Conservative government decided it didn't want to pass the bill and instead wanted it to be referred to a committee for more study.

Incredibly, the Member of Parliament — our Member of Parliament — rose in the House of Commons and agreed. I'm not sure if I have an answer here, so I'll ask the minister again: Does the Government of Yukon support the decision by our Member of Parliament to kill his own piece of legislation?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Mr. Speaker, we're not here to debate what they're doing in the federal government. What we're trying to do is bring forward — if the member opposite wants to debate what is happening in the federal government, I would advise him to run in the next federal election.

What we are attempting to do here in the territory is to take collaborative action between the Department of Education, the Department of Justice and my own department to build capacity and training.

We have initiated a partnership between not only Health and Social Services and Justice, but with the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Northern Institute of Social Justice to deliver a certificate course on FASD and case management. The course is fully subscribed, I think, with 30 participants. They come from a variety of governments and agencies, but we are also working on awareness campaigns. We are working on a school curriculum and we are working to support individuals who currently are afflicted with FASD. What we are attempting to do here in the territory is deal with the problem. So instead of worrying about what the federal government is doing — although we did support that motion — we are working with the people here in the territory.

**Mr. Silver:** It is interesting to hear the minister say that we are not here to debate things that are going on in Ottawa. Yet the first private member's motion from this government was to support the federal government's plans with ISIL. So he had better tell the Premier that we are not actually here to debate things from Ottawa.

It is very disappointing to see what is happening in Ottawa. Our Member of Parliament introduced a good piece of legislation — one that all parties in this Assembly unanimously supported. It would have been a huge step forward for those suffering from FASD who end up in our justice system. Unfortunately, the bill is now dead, and our MP didn't even fight for it. The powers that be in federal Conservative land decided for some reason that they didn't

want to pass the bill, and now it will not. It has been withdrawn from consideration in Ottawa.

Has the Minister of Justice contacted his federal colleague to let him know that this government disagrees with this short-sighted decision, based upon our unanimous support for that motion?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** In addressing the member opposite, Yukon has been a leader in the role of FASD and the prevalence of FASD, especially within the correctional centres. I know from first-hand experience going to the federal, territorial and provincial justice ministers' meetings, we've had this on the agenda over the last number of years — ever since I have been Justice minister. We will continue down that leadership role. Our MP, Ryan Leef, has been a key component of this, and I understand that because of the actions that have been taken on his bill, it will now sit and will go through committee. There will be a number of people working on the recommendations — or suggestions — that were written in that bill, and then there will be more work to be done. We certainly appreciate the hard work that our MP has done in Ottawa and congratulate him on his efforts. I have to thank the ministers from Health and Social Services and Education for working with Justice on the prevalence study and on addressing FASD in our school system.

#### **Question re: Veterans' disability pensions**

**Ms. White:** Remembrance Day has come and gone, but supporting Canadian veterans is a year-long responsibility. Last week, I asked the Premier whether the government intends to expand to all departments the step taken by the Yukon Housing Corporation that ended what amounted to clawbacks of veterans' disability pensions by excluding these benefits from income calculations. The Premier didn't commit to expanding the Housing Corporation's initiative last week, so I would like to offer him another opportunity to tell Yukoners whether he plans to implement it in other government departments.

Will the government commit today to following the Yukon Housing Corporation's lead and end clawbacks of veterans' disability pensions by Yukon government services?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Again in this House, I would like to recognize the commitment and the sacrifice that has been made by our veterans of the past, and indeed, those who continue to serve today. In fact, some of them are right now in active duty in a war zone. Mr. Speaker, this government has a very strong record of providing support for all those people in need and this government will continue to ensure that all people who are in need will be addressed through supports from this government.

**Ms. White:** Recognizing the sacrifices in words is one thing. Now let's honour those sacrifices with action. The government has no business clawing back veterans' disability benefits, when they are a payment for pain and suffering in the service of our country. Surely, if we need to pinch pennies on program eligibility, we can find other ways than penalizing our veterans at a time when the limited assistance that they do receive is under sustained fire. These benefits are classified as

tax-free by the Canada Revenue Agency, Mr. Speaker. This is a commonsense decision. Why is this government refusing to do a very simple thing that would make Yukon's veterans' lives easier and honour the sacrifices they made? Why can't veterans' tax-free disability pensions be excluded from all Yukon government calculations of income for social assistance purposes?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I have listened to the member opposite on this subject a number of times and it appears to me that she doesn't quite understand what she's talking about. There are two very different things we are discussing here. One is the disability pension. Virtually every province and territory in this country includes a disability pension in their calculation of income for social security payments and that is what the member opposite was talking about. They include disability pensions.

What they do not include are compensation payments provided for pain, suffering, hardship or wrongdoing. There are two different things that we are talking about. One is a disability payment and the other is compensation for pain, suffering, hardship or wrongdoing. We do not include those things in any of our calculations — compensation payments — but we do include disability pensions, because they are a pension and they are a payment of income for benefits under the *Social Assistance Act*.

#### **Question re: Drinking and driving**

**Mr. Barr:** The government has broad legislative authority that can be used to reduce impaired driving deaths and injuries on Yukon roads and highways. Rather than waiting for a tragedy, this government should review and amend Yukon's legislation, based on existing best practices in Canada, and the recommendations of Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

Will the minister consider strengthening the graduated licensing program, including enacting a zero-percent blood alcohol limit for all drivers under 21 and all drivers during their first five years of driving?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** In addressing the member opposite, this government takes impaired driving very seriously. We work with organizations like the RCMP, like COPS, Mothers Against Drunk Driving and others. In fact, we work with those organizations from four different departments, that I am aware of — the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Education, and the Department of Highways and Public Works.

This government is clearly committed to working with these organizations. We've seen the RCMP increase their checkpoints, especially during holiday times, which will be coming up. In fact, on December 5, I'll be out with the RCMP, with Chief Superintendent Peter Clark, who was in the gallery today and who will be out, as well, on a national campaign supporting the RCMP and supporting Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

**Mr. Barr:** Despite the dedication of organizations like MADD, the reality is that too many tragedies still happen. Public safety must be the highest priority. This would include

empowering traffic authorities to take action, rather than just react by sanctioning offenders after an accident. For instance, MADD's 2012 legislative review recommends legislation requiring police to issue 90-day suspensions to drivers who fail to submit to a standard field sobriety test.

Will the minister answer the question and amend legislation to broaden police powers, with the intent of enhancing safety for all drivers and passengers sharing the road?

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** I thank the member opposite for the question. I rise in this House today to talk a little bit about the Department of Highways and Public Works and some of the stuff that we do when it comes to education and the safety of our highways. We work with the other organizations, including Mothers Against Drunk Driving. We have an active campaign every year. We donate our electronic signs for times during graduation when the school kids are graduating to warn them of the dangers of drinking and driving — whether it's during the Christmas holidays. We also have a very active social media campaign through the department of Motor Vehicles. You can see that on Facebook and some of the other social media things.

The Department of Highways and Public Works, in conjunction with the other departments, is working very diligently on this and working with all other organizations to minimize drinking and driving.

**Mr. Barr:** We're speaking about legislative changes that the Minister of Justice can enable. Yukon's impaired driving rate is the highest in the country and almost five times the national rate. Decreases in impaired driving deaths in other Canadian jurisdictions proved the effectiveness of legislative changes.

Other initiatives and programs have also proven to be effective. For instance, if the IMPACT educational program was available to youth learning to drive, I think our new drivers would be better positioned to make better choices. One thing is very clear: something must be done.

Will the minister require participation in an alcohol and drug assessment program for all drivers charged with impaired driving and those who accumulate multiple administrative licence suspensions?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** We know that the NDP-Liberal coalition feels that they can solve all problems in this world through legislation and regulation — that by simply passing a law, they've accomplished and solved the problem.

We are committed to delivering to Yukoners what we put in our platform. That is our focus. This issue was not part of what we committed to Yukoners for. We challenge the opposition to put forward to Yukoners what they think is important in their platform, as will this party.

I want to congratulate the strong work that is being done by the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Highways and Public Works and in the awareness campaigns that go on. We don't solve problems through strict regulation and legislation. We work with those good organizations, we support our men in uniform and we will deliver to Yukoners what we committed to.



**Question re: Procurement policy**

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Small businesses and the public benefit from fair, open and transparent public procurement policies. In fact, the law requires it. The Supreme Court of Canada has largely determined the principles of procurement law in Canada, including rules to govern requests for proposals. There is no room legally for inconsistencies within public competitive tenders and evaluation, but we've heard of many such inconsistencies from members of the Yukon business community.

Fair, open and transparent procurement will result in less risk for government. An independent specialist in public procurement recently invited here by the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce said that elected officials should ensure audits and reviews of public procurement process occur on a frequent basis and that recommendations are implemented. This is a basic building block for fairness, accountability and good governance.

How often does the minister conduct regular —

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

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** I'm not sure what the member opposite's question was. I'll get it probably in the second round of questioning.

I do want to talk about the procurement support centre. I think this is the avenue that the member opposite was going for. Approximately 40 percent of this government's annual expenditure is through contracts with private business. We issue over 6,500 contracts annually. This is money which goes directly into the local economy and ultimately into the pockets of Yukoners.

We have a procurement support centre that works with all the different departments within the Yukon government. This way in which we procure these items can be just as important as what we procure. The key underlying principle is that, to this government, procurement is in an open competition. We're working to support that principle and encourage the competitive bids for goods and services by making our tax dollars go as far as we can.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Well, I can agree with the minister that how it procures goods and services is important. When procurement is performed consistently, it benefits the public and private sector through open competition and reduced costs of goods and services.

Part of this government's overdue plan to modernize its contract regulations in policies and procedures is the procurement support centre, which offers advice and information to both businesses and government about roles, responsibilities, process and reporting. The new Yukon centre could promote fiscally responsible and competitive public policy in Yukon, but only if it is empowered to meet its objectives.

Will the minister fully empower the procurement support centre by requiring all departments to use the centre for tendering and other procurement processes?

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** I do thank the member opposite for the question because that's exactly what we're

working toward. We've been working closely with the Yukon Contractors Association to make our practices easier, first of all, for small business to manage. We're helping to equip some of our local businesses with the skills that they need to work with government and to bid on some of these contracts. By doing this, some of the money that we'll save through this responsible procurement is available for some of our other projects. Every time something comes forward from the Auditor General, we work toward some of the requirements in there.

We also have a very active training program for employees. We have seen a lot of people go through our procurement support staff — those ones who are able to tender contracts — they come in and go through some of these programs. We have seen municipalities and First Nations come and piggyback with us on some of these procurement support courses that we have put forward.

We are moving forward on this. I enjoy and I am proud of being able to do the work that we do on our management system.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Mr. Speaker, a specialized centre offering procurement expertise to government is a key factor of successful public procurement in North America. This government has committed to providing additional support, guidance and training to the 1,700 staff who buy goods and services for government. This employee support must be based on best practices and common standards.

The Supply Chain Management Association of Canada is a leader in effective procurement and governance training and professional certification. There are over 8,000 members in all provinces and territories in Canada, except for Yukon. This includes 50 members in Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Will the minister support the good work of the public service by sponsoring employees of the procurement support centre to be accredited members of a recognized professional association by the end of the next fiscal year?

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** I spoke to the training that we have put forward for our procurement training and, as a result, so far we have had over 1,940 certificates awarded to our YG employees over the last couple of years. The procurement support centre staff are leading an interdepartmental working group on the collaborative project to stabilize our procurement documents.

By promoting government contract relations policies and procedures that are fair and consistent for local business, we make the Yukon the best place in Canada to live, work, play and raise our families.

**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. 785

**Clerk:** Motion No. 785, standing in the name of Mr. Elias.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to undertake a tourism trade mission to Asia in order to realize the significant potential of Asian markets to Yukon's tourism industry and facilitate partnerships between government and industry that will benefit Yukon's tourism industry.

**Mr. Elias:** It is a pleasure to rise today in support of Motion No. 785, urging "... the Government of Yukon to undertake a tourism trade mission to Asia in order to realize the significant potential of Asian markets to Yukon's tourism industry and facilitate partnerships between government and industry that will benefit Yukon's tourism industry."

In 2006, the Department of Economic Development published *Pathways to Prosperity: an Economic Growth Perspective, 2005-2025*. This discussion paper outlined opportunities for economic growth in the Yukon. The document highlighted the rapid growth of the middle class in Asia and their growing demand as customers. It notes that China's per capita income was seven times more from 1978 to 2003 and, with a population 10 times that of Japan — the world's second-largest economy — China is going to quickly change the global context. They will drive consumer trends and become a major force in global tourism demands, with the document noting that international air traffic in China is expected to grow by 10 percent annually for the foreseeable future.

The tourism industry has made it a priority to capitalize on this new market with high-yield visitors. In 2006, federal, provincial and territorial governments, and the tourism industry outlined a national tourism strategy that included a commitment to continue the Asia-Pacific gateway and corridor initiative to boost commerce with the Asia-Pacific region.

Our accessibility to these Pacific gateways is the Yukon advantage. In particular, the heavily serviced Vancouver-to-Whitehorse routes enables Asian travellers to easily access Yukon. The Yukon government has recognized this opportunity and the importance of this marketplace and it has become a focus for overseas marketing.

In 2009, at the request of industry, the then Yukon tourism minister announced a \$500,000 investment toward overseas marketing that was specifically for Europe and Asia. These first steps toward the Asian marketplace, as a source of Yukon visitors, were taken with the support from the Canadian Tourism Commission. The CTC was developing relationships in Asian marketplaces and Tourism Yukon was able to leverage existing relationships.

I would like to congratulate the current Minister of Tourism for continuing this wise investment in the largest and fastest-growing tourist body in the world. Visitors from overseas to Yukon increased by 79 percent between 2004 and 2012, so we are seeing that those investments are paying off.

In response to the success, the Minister of Tourism, this past spring, increased the overseas marketing investment by \$590,000 and hosted the first-ever Japanese receptive tour operator Yukon supplier marketplace on January 28, 2014. This reception introduced Yukon suppliers to 12 Japanese receptive tour operators based in Vancouver. The tour operators are responsible for booking Japanese visitors to Tourism Canada.

Our investments in the Asian marketplace and our developing relationships and expertise have allowed Tourism Yukon to start to hold events and engage Asian tourism markets on our own. This is all starting to pay off, as we are on the radar for Asian economic development groups like the Canadian Inbound Tourism Association (Asia Pacific) and the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada. The reception itself was an opportunity for Yukon tourism businesses to engage directly with tourism operators who sell product to visitors in Japan. The opportunity to network, familiarize operators with product offerings and hear what that market wants was an invaluable opportunity for Yukoners. These operators will continue to build and enhance their product and be better prepared for Asian visitors to Yukon. Likewise, their expertise will help other businesses become Asia-market ready. This will lead to the best-possible experiences for all visitors from Asia, who will recommend Yukon as the high-quality destination we all know that it is.

These events are a great demonstration of the government's investment in Yukon's tourism industry. The event itself was great and the commitment by the government to develop this tourism market was on full display. The tour operators were thrilled that the minister attended and spent the day with them and were thrilled that the Premier stopped by and spent several hours promoting Yukon as a destination. The attention of people like the Premier to Yukon's tourism industry was valued very highly and demonstrated Yukon's interest and commitment to the Asian markets. It is time that Yukon takes the next step and why I think it is important for all members to support his motion today.

The Minister of Tourism and Culture announced that this coming February, he will lead a tourism trade mission to Japan, which is Yukon's fastest growing tourism market. The trip will include access to other parts of the Asian marketplace, which includes countries like China, an under-served, emerging market with vast promise for growth. The trip has a number of objectives to help Yukon tourism businesses realize real gains from the trip. The trip will increase awareness of Yukon as a travel destination within Japan, strengthen alliances with key business partners, facilitate business-to-business relationships and realize opportunities for growth for the tourism sector from the Japan market.

The Department of Tourism and Culture is currently accepting applications for Yukon businesses to participate on this trade mission. The applications will be accepted until December 15, 2014. I would encourage any Yukon tourism operator ready for the Asian marketplace and interested in this trade mission to contact the department and apply.

The Asian marketplace can play a key role in developing our winter tourism market. One of our key pillars of tourism marketing in the Yukon is aurora viewing. Our proximity to Pacific gateways strategically positions us to become a destination of choice for Japanese and Chinese tourists seeking aurora viewing.

Asian visitors currently are a key component of our winter tourism strategy, and this trade mission is the next step to further develop these opportunities. By enhancing this market, Yukon tourism will fill room nights in Yukon hotels during non-peak periods. This initiative will fit directly within industry goals to develop visitation during these times of the year.

The mission itself is a portion of the great work being undertaken by the Minister of Tourism and Culture and his department. Thus, I will leave it up to him to speak to a lot of that work, but I would like to congratulate him on the unprecedented investment in tourism marketing for Yukon in partnership with the Government of Canada. The \$1.8 million per year for two years to develop enhanced marketing, which includes television advertisements, was the largest investment in Yukon's history for tourism marketing. It will go a long way toward increasing awareness of Yukon as a destination in our key gateway markets.

The government always has the best results by working with industry and by meeting their requests for increased investment in television marketing. The minister has demonstrated once again that this government is in tune with the needs of the tourism industry. By following this model, we have seen the year-over-year increases in visitation that put us among the leaders in the country. The hard work of those marketing officials and the members of the Tourism Industry Association is a key part of this, and I think we should also recognize their contributions. The tourism industry has asked the Yukon government to take the next step and continue to punch above our weight in tourism marketing. We will meet that challenge and embark on our first Yukon trade mission to Asia.

Yukon's marketing approach is always innovative, targeted and effective. I am sure we will see great results from this trade mission and meet the objectives to have a real impact on Yukon tourism businesses. I want to wish all the participating tourism businesses the best of luck and safe travels once they do take their trip this winter. I look forward to hearing from all other members in this House on this motion and seek unanimous support. Thank you.

**Mr. Barr:** I rise to speak on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition regarding Motion No. 785. Make no mistake: we obviously support tourism initiatives that provide economic development opportunities for Yukoners. We have already heard the minister's speaking notes multiple times on

this tourism trade mission. We know it's happening; I wonder why this government thinks continued discussion about it is the best use of its time when there are many pressing issues that need attention.

We know that trade missions can be an effective means to increase awareness of Yukon and its splendid landscape. Having said that, I'm curious to know how many people will be on the trade mission to Asia and do wish the participants with business-ready products all the best.

Sixteen people went on the nine-day mission to Germany and the United Kingdom in September 2013. Can the minister report how much that trade mission cost and what the direct benefits were, and will he report on the completion of the costs regarding the Asian trade mission that's pending?

The government usually extolls the virtues of benefits in economic gains and speculates on the positive results for those who will prosper from more tourist visits, but there's also an increased burden on infrastructure and services in communities throughout the Yukon. Facilities for tourists must be maintained and upgraded to meet the demand. It is also crucial to have the infrastructure in place to accommodate the people who work in the tourism industry.

When I see this, I think of Dawson City and the Palace Grand, for example, that we heard about in the news not long ago. I was reminded of a conversation — and also thinking about when I used to go to Dawson City. We do have people coming; we do have people who are staying in Dawson longer — and this is just one example — who are flying there and spending an extra couple of days, and yet we're hearing that the Department of Tourism and Culture will not come up with dollars for a show to happen there — \$25,000 — that a lot of people there would benefit from. The tourists coming would love to see that show. I remember going to see that show in years past, and then we hear it won't even be open to tourists. I have to raise these parallels, because having these spectacular things to do is imperative when we attract the people here.

I do know that the decline of the aurora sighting of our Asian market is happening, so it's important that we extend these invitations, so we can continue to benefit from this. I can't say enough about making sure that, when we do these things, there's a proper cost-benefit analysis that would help better inform future decisions regarding tourism initiatives. I'll just say again, I've listened to the minister read his speaking notes several times, and we may be hearing that again, Mr. Speaker.

I'll just say that anything to do with revitalizing the tourism sector is high on the Yukon New Democratic Party's list.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I would like to thank the member opposite for reading his briefing notes as well. I would like to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this important motion to the floor of the Legislature.

I would like to talk today about undertaking this very important mission. I believe — as well, many Yukon stakeholders believe — that there is significant potential in this market. We have an opportunity to build a number of key

relationships that will benefit our tourism industry. In fact, we've already started.

The growth of Yukon's tourism sector has been the result of successful partnerships between industry, government and key tourism partners in our target markets. Tourism missions are an opportunity to strengthen our strategic alliances between Yukon suppliers and our tour operators to increase awareness of Yukon as a travel destination. They can also increase the diversity of product carried by overseas tour operators. They also show our level of commitment to work with our local and overseas industry partners to promote Yukon as a year-round tourism destination and they demonstrate the importance of partnerships with industry to expand international markets.

Past missions include the mission this fall to Germany and, for the first time ever, the Netherlands. This mission was an opportunity to further strengthen our established partnerships in Germany and build on new and developing Dutch partnerships to ultimately grow our European markets.

Last January, Tourism Yukon, along with the Yukon tourism industry representatives, held the Japanese receptive tour operator marketplace in Vancouver. There we worked to build stronger relationships with Japanese tour operators in both Vancouver and Japan — Japan being one of our fastest growing overseas markets.

Leaders from Yukon's tourism industry are invited to participate in missions because they bring a unique and invaluable perspective to building our key overseas markets. Industry delegates benefit from trade missions through opportunities to increase exposure to Yukon tourism products and to explore partnerships with overseas travel trade. By partnering, we can increase tourism revenues for businesses, resulting in a stronger tourism sector and a stronger economy for the benefit of all Yukoners. Through events such as business-to-business meetings, the Yukon delegation works to strengthen existing partnerships and makes new alliances. Industry delegates contribute time, expertise and financial resources to this mission.

As part of the international component of Yukon Now, the 2015 mission of tourism businesses to Asia will include meetings in China during the first week of March. The objective of this mission is to explore opportunities for independent travel from China. The mission to China will involve strategic meetings between department officials, the Canadian Tourism Commission and tour operators interested in bringing visitors here to Yukon.

Media events and interviews are another method of stretching our market reach throughout a particular jurisdiction. I have conducted media interviews in several cities in Germany, Australia and in the U.S. — Arizona being one — just to name a few. Media interviews will also be scheduled in China.

China has been the fastest growing visitor market for Canada over the past four years and presents a new and exciting opportunity for Yukon's tourism industry. China boasts the fastest growing GDP in the world at a projected 7.7 percent in 2013 and 7.5 percent in 2014.

Healthy economic growth, coupled with a reduction in travel restrictions, has increased Chinese ability and their interest in travel. Canada received approved destination status in 2010, and Yukon has recorded a three-fold increase in Chinese visitors crossing its international borders since that time.

According to the Canadian Tourism Commission, Canada was ranked high as a winter destination by the Chinese, and therefore presents an opportunity to generate awareness of Yukon's offering in this market. The Canadian Tourism Commission study suggests that priority experiences include culture, nature, history, outdoor activities and family travel.

There were over 320 visitors to Canada from China from January to August of 2014, more than a 30-percent increase over 2013. The Chinese market also uses Vancouver as its principal gateway to Canada. Tourism Yukon recently hosted a China forum, which helped Yukon businesses prepare for this new market and allowed them to hear from those already attracting Chinese visitors.

We look at Japan as another Asian market. The objective of the February 2015 mission is to increase Japanese visits to Yukon. The Japanese component of the mission will include group travel trade events in Osaka and Tokyo with Yukon tourism businesses and key Japanese tour operators. Media events and interviews will also be scheduled in Japan. The mission to Japan will build on success achieved in 2014, with increased investments in media tours, cooperative marketing and the tour operators marketplace that was held in Vancouver.

Yukon saw an eight-fold increase in Japanese visitors since 2011. For Yukon, Japan is our fastest-growing international market. The growth of the Japanese market is the result of the successful partnerships between industry, government, the Canadian Tourism Commission and our Japanese travel trade partners.

Increased flights from Narita, Haneda and Osaka airports are creating better opportunities for more Japanese visits to Yukon. Japan was Yukon's fourth-largest overseas market, with over 3,800 Japanese visitors in 2013, representing more than nine percent of overseas visitors.

Yukon River, Dawson City, hiking, canoeing, dogsledding, nature activities and fall colours all represent potentially strong products for Japanese visitors, especially if provided in the Japanese language via Yukon-resident guides. Research by the Canadian Tourism Commission suggests that a growing number of long-haul Japanese travellers would prefer to substitute demanding excursions for relaxing trips that focus on key attractions. Yukon central products for this market include viewing the northern lights and nature, wildlife viewing and soft adventure experiences.

Strong competition exists from other northern lights destinations, including the Northwest Territories, which appears to have better awareness, and Alaska, which has an increased awareness and better direct air access. The Department of Tourism and Culture hosted a highly successful marketplace in Vancouver in January of this year that brought together 14 Japanese and 15 Yukon operators to explore

opportunities to expand products and experiences for the Japanese market.

One of the questions I get is: How do we decide where and to whom we market? To answer that question, I would like to talk a little bit about Yukon's explorer types. Some of our listeners might not be familiar with what we mean when we talk about an explorer type.

The Canadian Tourism Commission — otherwise known as the CTC — is a national tourism marketing organization. The CTC has developed tools for Canadian tourism businesses to help attract travellers. These tools help industry to better understand their best customers and what these visitors are looking for in their travel experience. The CTC wanted to find out exactly why different types of people seek out entirely different types of travel experiences. The result was the explorer quotient, also known as EQ. This tool has the power to change the way that travel experiences are developed, marketed and sold. They have developed EQ profiles to help small- and medium-sized businesses to focus product development, marketing and sales efforts on their best customers.

Market analysis is an important first step when developing any market plan. Market segmentation is a marketing analysis technique that allows businesses to group customers into segments based on given criteria, such as demographics, geography or other factors like attitudes, beliefs and values. This approach allows tourism businesses to identify and understand those segments that are most likely to buy their products to then better align their marketing and product development efforts accordingly.

Explorer quotient is a market segmentation system that applies sophisticated, value-based segmentation specifically for the travel market. It examines not only the traditional demographics of age, income, gender, family status and education level; it also looks at people's social values and views of the world.

EQ breaks each geographic market down into different groups called "explorer types". Each type is identified by particular characteristics stemming from social and travel values, travel motivations and behaviours. A standard series of questions was asked on the 2012-13 Yukon visitor tracking program survey to determine the explorer types of Yukon visitors.

Six explorer types emerged as common groups for our Yukon visitors. They included: authentic experiencers; cultural explorers; familiarity seekers, which includes gentle explorers, no-hassle travellers and virtual travellers; free spirits; historians, which includes cultural history buffs and personal history explorers; and, finally, number six, rejuvenators. This information offers insight into the types of travellers Yukon is currently hosting in order to better understand who visitors are, how to communicate to them and how to reach them.

The largest segment in the summer are the authentic experiencers — 29 percent of the summer visitors — followed by the cultural explorers, which were at 19 percent.

Combined, the top two segments account for 48 percent of Yukon summer visitors.

Let me share with you what some of the research says about authentic experiencers and cultural explorers. Authentic experiencers are typically understated travellers looking for authentic, tangible engagement with destinations they seek, with a particular interest in understanding the history of the places they visit. Authentic experiencers tend to have a higher than average education. In terms of employment, they are more likely than average to be retired. They tend to have an average household income. Cultural explorers are defined by their love of constant travel and continuous opportunities to embrace, discover and immerse themselves in the culture, the people and the settings of the places they visit. Cultural explorers tend to have a higher than average education. They tend to be in full-time employment and as a result, there is a lower than average percent who are retirees. They tend to also have an average household income.

As we look at this list, I think that Yukon is a great fit — a great match — for what these explorers are seeking and what we have to offer. One thing that caught my attention was that both groups are interested in winter outdoor activities. This mission to Asia will demonstrate our commitment and support for Japanese and Chinese tour operators and facilitate long-term investments in Yukon's tourism industry from these particular markets.

The Japanese market for Yukon experienced a major turnaround in 2011, with triple-digit growth in the fall and winter aurora market. Yukon was one of the only regions in Canada to see major increases from this market. By tracking the number of visitors to the Whitehorse visitor information centre, we have a better indicator for Japanese visitation. Given the addition of Japanese-focused product in 2011 and successful aurora seasons, the forward prediction for Japanese visitor numbers are positive.

Many of the major Japanese tour operators are now in development of summer and fall Yukon products. It is our government's desire to help all operators to grow their winter visitor numbers significantly. We are continuing to support trade marketing campaigns, which will position Yukon as a premier aurora-viewing destination with the Japanese trade.

Summer experiences that may be of interest to the Japanese traveller include aurora in the late fall — from August to early September — before the fall colour season of eastern Canada, as well as hiking, canoeing, beautiful scenery, wildlife viewing, Klondike Gold Rush history, historic Dawson City, the White Pass historic train and the midnight sun.

Mr. Speaker, I want to mention some of the markets that are of interest to us in addition to Japan and China. The total Asia-Pacific visitation numbers in 2012 were 14,095. In 2013, that number was 16,176. This represents an increase of 2,081, or approximately 15 percent.

When I went to Australia in February, we had approximately 7,000 visitors from Australia. Australia remains a solid prospect for Yukon. In 2012, it overtook the U.K. as our second-largest overseas market, behind German-

speaking Europe. Yukon's Australia strategy focuses on high-yield travellers — consumers who spend more, stay longer and are less influenced by exchange rate fluctuations and economic conditions.

Yukon's iconic tourism experiences that resonate in the Australian market include northern lights, midnight sun, 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 Alaska cruise.

Our government utilizes cooperative marketing initiatives to attract investment from its travel trade partners, Yukon tourism operators and tourism organizations and other stakeholders, which increases its market reach and impact. Each year, Yukon government attracts more than \$1.8 million in private sector investment through cooperative marketing initiatives as private sector partners match government's contributions.

Tourism Yukon develops cooperative marketing initiatives in four areas: travel trade marketing, partnership marketing, support for Yukon marketing organizations and cooperative marketing projects. Mr. Speaker, \$534,000 is budgeted in 2014-15 for travel trade marketing with tour operators, tour wholesalers in Canada, the U.S. and overseas. Travel trade initiatives promote Yukon products and experiences through advertising campaigns, sales initiatives, promotions and public relation events. The 2014-15 partnership marketing budget of \$611,000 includes agreements with the Wilderness Tourism Association, the Yukon Convention Bureau and the Canadian Tourism Commission. Also \$700,000 each year is budgeted for the tourism cooperative marketing fund. That fund provides 50-percent funding to marketing by Yukon operators, businesses and partners. Every dollar provided by the TCMF is matched by \$1 from industry applicants for marketing initiatives.

Our Yukon Party goal is to support Yukon businesses as they market and grow their companies. I again thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this very important motion forward.

**Mr. Silver:** I would like to thank the member opposite for his motion today.

In the Spring Sitting during Committee debate, I had asked about this trip and whether a date had been selected for the trade mission. The minister responded: "... the simple answer to that is we're still looking for options. If it's feasible — there is lots to consider, but the Department of Tourism and Culture is working on that file now."

Given the motion, I am to assume that the government has now decided that it is feasible to do a trade mission to Japan. In order to properly discuss this, I think there are a number of questions that need to be addressed for both the House and for the tourism industry.

In the tourism budget debate this fall, I had asked about the 2014 trip to Germany and the Netherlands. The minister didn't answer my question at the time, so I am going to put him on the record again for us today: (1) What is the estimated

impact of the trade agreements signed in Europe this summer, in terms of both dollars and visitation? (2) Given that the Netherlands is not listed on the top 10 Yukon markets, why did the minister feel that this was an important destination? (3) How are these trips being measured for visitation increases and dollars spent in the Yukon?

From what I have seen since the Member for Porter Creek South replaced the Member for Whitehorse West as Minister of Tourism and Culture, there has been an increase in foreign travel, but early indications show that this year's visitation stats are down from last year. The return on investment needs to be there in order to justify the expense of another trade mission.

I do not disagree with the member opposite that Japan is a huge potential for Yukon's tourism industry, especially in the winter months. However, given the limited budget for tourism marketing, I hope that the minister is doing his due diligence in ensuring that the benefits are tangible for our operators before he runs off to another foreign country.

**Ms. McLeod:** I rise today to speak in favour of Motion No. 785. Much work has been done by the minister and by this government to promote tourism with Germany and beyond. I would say that this initiative has been very successful and I'm basing that on personal experience.

Condor Air, as we know, has a direct flight from Whitehorse to Frankfurt, Germany. What folks might not know is that, from Frankfurt, it is a short hop to just about anywhere in Europe. I took this flight just this past August and I don't believe that there were any empty seats. I think this is a real tangible indicator of success. I look forward to the continuing work of the Minister of Tourism and all his hard-working civil servants who make things possible. I'm sure that the Asia focus will be every bit as successful as the Germany effort.

Thanks to the minister for his hard and steady work and to the Member from Old Crow for this opportunity to speak in favour of this motion — and thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I am very pleased to rise in response to today's motion as put forward by my colleague. I would like to perhaps also just carry on with respect to what the Minister Tourism and Culture has elaborated on and perhaps just to reinforce some of the facts that really speak to the very importance of these trade missions, and I do have to speak to some of the comments coming from the Member for Klondike.

I don't know — likening trade missions to running off to a foreign country is perhaps not as astute as one could be when we do speak to these important missions. I always say that when you do choose to — very much — travel to a foreign country, or anywhere, for that matter — specifically for tourism, for advocating and for promoting Yukon on the national as well as international scale — there is a lot of thought and deliberation.

I keep on going back to how every expenditure that is incurred by Department of Tourism and Culture is reported,

particularly on the marketing front, with respect to that it's industry led, research based and market driven — so that also speaks to trade missions. I want to point out that trade missions have been carried out over the years.

However, it was this government — the previous Yukon Party government back in 2002 — that spoke to an even more important role of the Department of Tourism and Culture by reinstating the Department of Tourism and Culture after previous governments had chosen not to give it the stature that it so deserved.

From that time, we have been able to build the base for the Department of Tourism and Culture over the years in support of diversifying our economy. I know there has been a lot of discussion over the years about how we need to pay more emphasis and more attention to diversifying the economy. What better way to do that than by really focusing on our strengths? Tourism speaks volumes when it comes to generating revenue, putting people to work, expanding skillsets and being able to promote all that we have to offer here in our territory.

As a born and raised Yukoner, I have seen this territory grow significantly, and more so, in particular, over the past decade. When I say “grow”, I mean in terms of population, but I also see the number of businesses growing; I also see the number of products and the number of services being offered on the tourism scale. That does not happen overnight. It is built incrementally over the years, over the months, and it is to be attributed to the hard work and the expertise within our Department of Tourism and Culture in the marketing branch. It also speaks to the work of many different departments — the Department of Economic Development — working in collaboration with many of our departments to expand our main, primary industries.

It also speaks to the commitment of the tourism industry. I always say that our tourism industry is very competitive and it's very resilient, and that has been shown to be the case over the many years after all the challenges that have hit the tourism industry.

So it is really important to reflect on where we've been, where we are today, where we need to go and where we need to set our sights on. The one thing that I have gleaned from my nine years as Minister of Tourism and Culture in previous years was that it is indeed a very competitive world out there. It's a global market. With the advances of the technology and digital economy, the world has definitely become much smaller and more competitive, in terms of coming up with innovative and unique tourism products on a global scale.

We have to work smarter with the resources we have; we have to leverage those resources, even more so than we ever have today; and we have to network and partner with all of our jurisdictions, whether that be with the State of Alaska, as we see through the Alaska Travel Industry Association. We have a great marketing partnership with them. By working with ATIA, for example, and the State of Alaska over the years, it has really helped us promote our tourism product so much more than if we were to do that in isolation.

Likewise, we are continuing to work with the Canadian Tourism Commission and working with them on these global tourism fairs through ITB, the largest travel trade show there is in the world. If any of the members opposite have the opportunity to actually set foot on that marketplace and to see first-hand themselves just how competitive it is, it really puts things into context. It covers a massive amount of ground in terms of so many — to the scale of the equivalent to some 10 football fields, and it would be covered — every inch of that space — by various tourism booths and marketplaces.

Yukon has always partnered up with the Canadian Tourism Commission so we have been able to really leverage that reach of CTC. We have been able to leverage the reach of Travel Alberta, British Columbia and so forth — and we're working with our two northern territories as well — all of which is to say that Yukon continues to have a very competitive brand, and it is based on the wild, open spaces. It is built on our history of First Nations' rich culture. It is also built on our very rich history from the Klondike Gold Rush to the Alaska Highway — the construction thereof. It is built on many various factors. It is built on all that we have here today in the territory. Increasingly, we continue to expand upon those markets that we have built very well.

I know the Minister of Tourism and Culture has talked about the growth in the winter tourism product and we have seen some great key, iconic events — Sourdough Rendezvous and the Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race — international events such as those — and, to a degree, the Fulda Extreme Arctic Challenge that was just recently held here earlier this month.

These are all events that we continue to build on — and very much the aurora viewing market continues to expand. I am very pleased to hear that it has been growing in the territory. Of course, we see through tourism — because of various global factors at any given year — that aurora viewing has seen its ups and downs over the years, but it is starting to see its way back up. It lends credence that we need to keep our eye on the ball — focused — and let us also be reminded that there is competition out there.

I know that in my travels to Europe, I was constantly reminded of the competitive nature of the sled dog adventure tours and the packages that were being marketed through the Scandinavian countries coming together. How could we distinguish ourselves — Yukon, working with Alaska and the two northern territories and CTC?

It is indeed a very exciting industry to be associated with — and incredible people who make our industry work so very well. They are very talented and very creative individuals at work, knowing that every dollar needs to be leveraged and stretched tenfold. We do that very, very well.

This motion really speaks to the importance of trade missions — whether they are to Asia in this particular case, or to Europe or other foreign lands. I certainly support this one. The day that China received the approved destination status was a great day. I remember confiding with our tourism officials at that time, you know — is that an opportunity for us to really seize on that opportunity? Of course, that happened a

few years ago and I was reminded by industry and by the department that we need to work collectively. It is a large market and we do need to ensure that we're prepared, so that when we do go over and put a push on the Asia market, we are prepared.

It's all about relationships and capitalizing on those direct one-on-one relationships. In fact, our fantastic growth in our relationship with German-speaking Europe has grown by having individuals reaching out and by being able to build one-on-one and having that relationship with our airlines. We speak about air access and how critical that is to the growth of the tourism sector — to any sector at that — and one only has to see the recent statistics over the last five years in people planing or deplaning at our international airport here in Whitehorse, and the numbers are quite incredible. The growth in those numbers again speaks to how important it is to continue to invest in that strategic infrastructure such as air access.

We now have that capacity to facilitate international flights. Not every smaller jurisdiction has that capacity. We are one of the smallest — if not the smallest — jurisdictions in the world perhaps to entertain having direct charters from Frankfurt, Germany through Condor. Those airlines have very much transitioned over the years. Again it speaks to collaborating with our tourism industry, the department and the Government of Yukon, but also collaborating with the Government of Canada and also working with the overseas travel trade — the tour operators and the wholesalers — who actually are helping us put the bums in the seats of those planes so that they are able to come here.

That is what will continue to sustain and diversify our tourism market. We have relied on the cruise market, we've relied on the rubber-tire traffic market, we've relied on overseas visitations and we'll continue to rely on other wilderness tourism markets — sports tourism is one — meetings, conventions and incentive travel. There are many different markets here at play. Any time we can see the need and certainly identify the opportunity to really garner new relationships and garner new partnerships with our partners and with potential and prospective partners — whether that be overseas or on the national scale — it is a good thing indeed.

The Minister of Tourism and Culture has already spoken to some of the investments we have made through the Yukon Party government over the past 12 years, and it is important that, as we continue to build those relationships, we also have support and we have financial assistance to businesses and to organizations to facilitate their participation so that we can extend our marketing reach in various markets.

Through the tourism cooperative marketing fund — a fantastic fund — we have been able to leverage, as the minister just alluded to, almost \$2 million per year in private sector funding. Again, we will match that in terms of participation in trade missions or cooperative marketing campaign initiatives, whether here in the territory, whether in the country, or whether it is overseas. Those are strategic initiatives that we continue to build on.

The other investment just recently was the desire and the decision to extend the hours of operation for our visitor information centres. Now I am very heartfelt to also hear of Parks Canada's decision to extend their hours and their seasons as well, recognizing how tourism is growing very much — beyond the summer and into the fall and the spring, working toward an even more added winter tourism market. These are all absolutely critical.

When individuals do come here, they need to have things to do and see. Beyond our natural beauty, we have many tourism operators we are working with to ensure that they are busy and that they are able to have that capacity to build their packages in a professional manner that is sustainable, consistent and reputable on the national and the international stage as well.

Again, it takes a team of many individuals and many organizations in the territory. I want to thank TIA Yukon for all of their work and the senior marketing committee over there for their work over the past 12 years in setting the stage and in setting the marketing priorities year after year, and very much engaging with the Government of Yukon in ensuring that this trade mission is a complete and utter success in the territory.

Mr. Speaker, I see my time is running low, which is unfortunate, because I have a lot to say when it comes to tourism and culture. I do want to extend the opportunity for all members to have an opportunity to say how supportive they are of the tourism industry because I have heard how important it is for the Government of Yukon to continue to increase its reach, and to continue to work with stakeholders and to continue to rely on that expertise brought forward by industry.

I very much look forward to hearing particularly from the opposition how important tourism is to our economy and to the success of our territory. I very much look forward to receiving the support of all members of the Assembly in this regard.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** It is a pleasure to rise and speak in support of this motion today with regard to the efforts of the Department of Tourism and Culture, as well as the government as a whole, in not only attracting visitors from Asia, but as well, attracting interest and investment from across the world, and in particular, the regions that we are talking about today.

I should note that the work that has been done to date has been significant and that the investments made by the Minister of Tourism and Culture to date have been remarkable and, from what I can tell, are very much appreciated by industry.

This, of course, represents the next step in developing more comprehensively the Asian tourism market. I know from experience, through the work that I have done with the Department of Economic Development, that there is a significant opportunity in Asia and, more specifically, in China and Japan.

I had the pleasure of travelling to the region a few years ago with the Department of Economic Development in some



of the investment attraction capacities that we have with that department. In meetings I had with officials, not only in government but in businesses there, there was a tremendous amount of interest in the Yukon and, more generally, in the Canadian north. There is a strong interest, I believe, in that region to explore parts of the world like northern Canada and Yukon, and I think that is something that we should be tapping into to a greater extent than we are today.

We do have, of course, some existing market share with regard to the Asian tourism market. It has been referenced by both the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin and the Minister for Tourism and Culture that we have a significant amount of interest in the aurora viewing that we have available here in Yukon. I should note that we are not the only ones out there marketing aurora viewing and that our colleagues and friends in Northwest Territories are doing the same. They are doing so very actively. The Northwest Territories is very active in terms of promoting itself, as they call themselves, the best place in the world to see the aurora, or the northern lights. That is something, obviously, that we have a standing dispute over with our colleagues and friends in Northwest Territories.

I can tell from members' reactions that I am sure they agree with me that Yukon is, of course, the far better option for viewing aurora than Northwest Territories. This is a debate I have had often with my colleague, the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Justice and a number of other portfolios in Northwest Territories — Minister Ramsay.

I should note that they are very active. Northwest Territories is very active, and they have undertaken trips like this to Asia before. I know that the Premier of Northwest Territories and a minister of Northwest Territories are heading over to Asia as well in January on a very similar mission.

They have a bit of a broader mandate that includes mineral investment and oil and gas investment as well. It's important, I think, that Yukon does its part and ensures that we attract investment and interest from Asia as well, to meet that market demand.

One observation I wanted to make about this type of trip — and I'm glad that we're doing it. It's an important first step to build some of the relationships necessary to attract the interest we need. One observation I wanted to make is that these types of initiatives are important, not in and of themselves as a singular event, but as a process of relationship building. My experience has led me to the conclusion that these types of relationships take time to foster and develop and, while it's important to do these trips from time to time, it's also important to sustain the level of interest and level of relationship that we have with not only businesses, but groups and governments in Asia.

Particularly in China, we see that decisions are often made based on relationships, whether that's in a business or government world. Oftentimes we see investment in parts of the world where governments or groups have been very active or proactive in building relationships with Chinese investors and businesses. I think that's something we need to consider, because it's not always immediately apparent that these trips

have been successful, when we look at any number of indicators.

I did want to note that it's important that we build those relationships and that they are important in the long run and are not necessarily immediately reflected in statistics or metrics that we use to measure success.

I also wanted to make the observation that, while we do have some of the market share from Asia currently, we could stand to have much more. What that would do, in my opinion, is add some additional diversity to our tourism economy here in the territory. As it stands right now, our tourism economy is certainly focused on the summer. We do see a significant amount of activity here in the summer with regard to tourism, but I think we could stand to see some increased diversity and increased activity in other seasons other than the summer. For the reasons that have been expressed by both the Minister of Tourism and Culture and the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, I think the Asian market would provide some of that diversity for our tourism industry.

As has been recognized by some of my colleagues already, China in particular has a very rapidly growing middle class that is increasingly having new or growing expendable income. That's a phenomenon that is reflected not just in tourism, but in a number of different sectors of the economy throughout the world. Economies, industries and governments across the globe are taking note of that and beginning to compete for that market.

So it's very important that we begin to establish those relationships and begin to tap into that market, because it's a tremendous opportunity.

When it comes to the role that Tourism and Culture plays in this type of endeavour, I think the minister did a great job of giving that particular overview. I wanted to add some of the ways that the Department of Economic Development can support or bolster these efforts.

Obviously there are a number of funding bodies available through the Department of Economic Development for tourism companies to market themselves anywhere in the world but in light of today's subject, in Asia. We have the enterprise trade fund which is available through the Department of Economic Development for the promotion or expansion of a business's market share or the development of new markets. So if there is a company in the territory that is interested in capitalizing on a new market like an Asian market, the enterprise trade fund may be one that they should consider tapping into to explore that development. The enterprise trade fund has provided funding for companies to do these types of activities previously. I think that some of the groups that are going with the minister and with this particular mission may indeed choose to tap into the enterprise trade fund.

As well, we have the strategic industries fund which is aimed at developing new or emerging sectors of our economy. The opportunity there, I think, for tourism providers or companies, is to identify new ways or new products that they can provide. If they're able to make a good case for something that they want to do, the Department of Economic

Development is available to support them in doing that through the strategic industries fund. I encourage any businesses that are interested in developing new products or developing new types of services that aren't currently being provided to consider the Department of Economic Development in the course of their business.

To date, Yukon has benefited greatly from foreign investment into the territory. It is something that has happened over the course of many years — at least beginning in 2006 or 2007 when Yukon really awoke to the realities of the need for foreign investment. The Government of Yukon is committed to encouraging private sector growth and the development of wealth-generating activities in the natural resources sector as well as in the tourism sector. The development of these sectors can be supported by financial partners from outside of Canada, so attracting foreign and direct investment is critical to progress in the resource sector but it's also in the tourism sector as well.

Relationship-building activities such as attendance at investment forums, trade shows and conferences in Asia, Europe and North America and hosting inbound investors in Yukon have led to significant investments in the mineral sector and the natural resources sector. I think that by expanding these activities to tourism, we can replicate some of that success that we've had in the natural resources sector with the tourism industry.

There have been a number of significant deals between Yukon-based companies and foreign investors since 2007, including a significant number of projects in the natural resources sector. Of course the Wolverine mine is one of the marquee of that. The attraction of the investment from the Yukon Zinc Corporation, through Jinduicheng Molybdenum Group and Northwest Non-Ferrous International Investment Co. Ltd. was an investment that made that mining project happen.

I am confident in saying that that investment would not have happened if not for the relationship-building activities that had been undertaken by companies and the Yukon government over the course of the last number of years.

I think these are experiences that we can learn from, that we can build on and that we can expand on in the tourism industry. I am pleased to see that the Department of Tourism and Culture and the minister are heading that action and undertaking these activities with regard to the tourism industry in Asia.

I would again thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing forward this motion. Thanks to the Minister of Tourism and Culture for leading these efforts and for making the significant investment into what some call an emerging market, but really — I think that while the market is still emerging, it has very much emerged and is a significant opportunity for the tourism industry in Yukon. I know that the benefits will come. They may not come immediately and they may not come in as recognizable a fashion as we may hope, but the relationship building and the interest development are critical activities when it comes to this type of activity. I am very pleased to see the Government of Yukon pursuing this.

I commend the motion to the House and look forward to hearing from colleagues about how this motion will put us on the right path to developing this important market for the tourism industry in Yukon.

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** I am pleased today to rise to speak on behalf of the motion that the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin put forward. I have been in the tourism industry before this new job I acquired a few years ago. It supported my family; it supported my way of life. I am pleased to rise to say a few things about this motion and how key it is that we do a trade mission to Asia.

When the conversation first came forward about a trade mission to Asia, it reminded me of my earlier days in the tourism industry in travelling to Yellowknife and waiting in the Explorer Hotel to go out for dinner. The lobby was full of big Mantra parkas with their hoods up — inside the hotel — and with gloves and boots. They were folks from Japan who were going out on the big lake to have a look at the northern lights. I thought to myself, that's what we need in the Yukon. That's what we can do in the off-season, in the wintertime, to promote tourism. Lo and behold, not long ago — last winter — when I went to the Westmark one night to have something to eat, there was a bunch of Mantra parkas, and they were heading out to see the northern lights.

Asia is a growing population. One of the key things they like is the northern lights, and I think there is an opportunity here with the aurora borealis and the sights — and more of it.

A lot of the people who come over here for tourism opportunities just enjoy basically being able to go out in the outdoors, whether they are in the middle of winter wandering around Carcross looking at some of the buildings or whether they are up in Beaver Creek talking to a local in the middle of winter. I think it is key for our off-seasons and for our winter tourism. We know in summertime, you cannot get a hotel in Haines Junction all summer long, but in the wintertime, you can.

I think for economic development — and I have heard both sides of the House many times support the tourism industry. I have heard it from all members of this House. I was hoping to hear from a few more members from the opposition on the benefits of this, because I think it is important. Look at the infrastructure that we do have in Whitehorse and in our communities. It is feast or famine a lot in the tourism industry, and the summertime is really, really busy and the wintertime slows down.

We are starting to see more and more in our shoulder seasons — a little bit more promotion of our tourism industry — through the good work of our Tourism minister and the Department of Tourism. They are looking at diversification and other opportunities, so it is important, Mr. Speaker.

I do remember a time when I was back in the tourism industry. We don't get the daylight in September like we do in June. The clients at the place I was working were all nestled in bed and I was working on a generator to make sure that we had power in the morning to feed them their breakfast and get them off to their fishing trips. We had a Japanese couple who

had come over and randomly booked in and fell in love. I am walking back from the generator shack and I look up into the sky and it's the middle of September and the northern lights are just beautiful — they are dancing. Protocol for anyone at the lodge when the northern lights are out in September — when the northern lights are up in the sky — everybody is up. So we banged on everybody's door and brought them all out. They all got the opportunity to have a look at the northern lights. That couple has brought other couples back to the establishment where I used to work — just on word of mouth.

Having that opportunity to do a trade mission over to Asia to let them know that the Yukon is here and what we have to offer — some of my fellow colleagues spoke a little bit about our infrastructure. We are seeing international flights — Condor — flying over from Europe. That is a trade mission over the years that we have gone and done. I think, you know, in the future with the Department of Highways and Public Works and with the great Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport and the opportunity that we have with our infrastructure to land the larger planes, it wouldn't surprise me in the future to see planes from Asia flying direct.

A little-known fact when it comes to the tourism industry in the Yukon is that there isn't one business that is alike. They all are a little bit different and other opportunities to offer. I had a chat this morning with the Minister of Community Services about the passing of a great man — Alex Van Bibber — in the early morning today. We were talking about the tourism industry and his business and about, you know, how diversified the tourism industry is. You know, the industry is always looking for new opportunities. It is to raise money and to make money for their businesses and they will adapt to the new types of folks that are coming to the Yukon from Asia. To undertake a trade mission is to realize that significant potential is important and to focus on Asian markets right now, I think is very important also. To see these partnerships between the government and the industry is also key. I would like to see the opportunity for northern travel.

I remember, during the Olympics in Vancouver, some of the commercials, where the partnerships between Nunavut, N.W.T. and Yukon — in the commercials, there were always the northern lights in the background.

When you go to N.W.T. or when you go to Nunavut and you look at the northern lights, you get that opportunity to see the northern lights in full. One of the neat things that we have in the Yukon Territory that they don't have so much over there in some of the communities is the aspect of the beautiful mountains that we have. In the Kluane region, to see the northern lights at the base of the St. Elias mountain range, it's a totally different experience from seeing the northern lights, for example, on Great Slave Lake.

I think it's key and I think it's important that we go on these trade missions. I've seen the success from the European trade missions. I've spoken — and actually Hansard had to come back to me and ask me for the spelling of the names of some of the travel agents and booking agents in Europe that I know and I worked with over the years. I would love to be able to quote some names in the House of some Asian markets

and some names, which would probably be a little bit more difficult to spell.

On that, I guess I commend this motion to the House and I hope we get support of both sides of this House. I think it is a benefit to Yukon's tourism industry and I think it's a benefit to Yukoners, because every dollar spent in the Yukon means we can have a better place to live, work, play for all Yukoners and for our families.

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

**Mr. Elias:** I thank the members who chose to speak on this motion. I think it's important for me to reflect on what I've noticed in the southern portion of my riding over the past three years. What I've noticed, especially along the Dempster Highway, is a very dramatic increase in the presence of European tourists, especially during the months of August and September. In talking to some of those tourists at the various campgrounds up and down the Dempster Highway, right up to the Northwest Territories border, they are just absolutely and utterly amazed at the vistas that the Dempster Highway holds during those months, especially at the wildlife they encounter during that time.

Over maybe the past three years, I've seen a dramatic increase in European tourists. It would be wonderful for me to see an increase in Asian visitors as well because the aurora viewing up the Dempster Highway, from late August to May, basically, is absolutely spectacular. It's important for these types of tourism trade missions to happen and to occur, because when tourists come to the Yukon, they rent campers, they rent vehicles, they stay in our hotels, they eat in our restaurants and they spend a lot of money in our territory.

I was hoping that more members from the Official Opposition would speak to this type of important initiative and about how they could see it benefitting the various ridings that they represent, but I guess it is not a topic that the NDP can be quick to be pugnacious on so they —

**Some Hon. Member:** (inaudible)

#### Point of order

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

**Ms. White:** Standing Order 19(g) — imputes false or unavowed motives to another member.

**Speaker:** Government House Leader, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** On the point of order, I believe that the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin was expressing his opinion of the NDP and how they engage in debate.

#### Speaker's ruling

**Speaker:** He was definitely expressing his opinion, and I just caution all the members to watch the type of language they use, especially when referring to members on either side of the House. It is really unnecessary, and it doesn't go well with the debate at hand at all.

**Mr. Elias:** Back to the positive points on the motion and the benefits to our territory — 2013 was a record-breaking year for border-crossing statistics, with an increase of eight percent. Each year, tourism generates \$250 million in gross revenue for Yukon businesses; 39 percent of the total revenues of the accommodation and food services sector is attributable to tourism; and more than four percent of Yukon's gross domestic product is attributed to tourism.

In January to August 2014, overseas visitation to Yukon grew by seven percent and air arrivals at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport grew by five percent. Whitehorse is the smallest city in North America with direct flights to Germany. Condor brought over 4,000 visitors to Yukon in 2014, contributing \$8 million to \$10 million to Yukon's economy.

Visitor information centres in six Yukon communities provided travel information and visitor services to over 209,584 visitors through to the end of August 2014.

Yukon government provides \$1.5 million in funding support to 12 museums, seven First Nation cultural heritage centres, and one umbrella organization. The Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre, which is owned and operated by the Department of Tourism and Culture, is Canada's only museum dedicated to telling the story of our ice age past.

The department has identified and recorded over 3,900 archaeological sites and maintains over 50,000 artifacts. In collaboration with Klondike placer miners, over 3,000 new fossils were collected by the palaeontological program last summer. There are over 5,000 records in the official Yukon geographical place names database that lists names of Yukon's lakes, rivers and mountains.

Yukon government has installed interpretive signage panels at over 180 sites on scenic routes and points of interest throughout the Yukon. The department co-owns and co-manages three historic sites with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and the Selkirk First Nation. Yukon's historic sites inventory lists over 3,500 records of historic resources, such as grave sites, engineering features, buildings and structures. Nine locations across Yukon have been designated and protected as territorial historic sites under the *Historic Resources Act*.

The department's Arts section has a budget of \$4.2 million to assist artists, performers, non-governmental organizations, communities and schools to support artistic expression, touring events and facilities, which enable the arts to flourish. In the fiscal year 2014-15, the Yukon government added eight works to the Yukon permanent art collection, valued at \$3 million. The 370-piece collection is displayed in 24 public or government buildings.

Yukon Archives provided services to over 1,500 researchers and retrieved over 7,500 archival records last year. Yukon Archives holds over 6,500 linear metres of archival and library material.

The Cultural Services branch has a budget of \$11.3 million for operation and maintenance. This includes \$600,000 in the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* for revotes.

The Cultural Services branch is responsible for historic sites, museums, arts, archives and historic resources, which includes palaeontological and archaeological artifacts. Heritage Resources has a budget of \$1.1 million for all aspects of land-based heritage resources, including archaeology, palaeontological artifacts, place names, and scientists and explorers licencing.

The Historic Sites unit has been allocated \$1.3 million. This includes a revote of \$35,000 for the research, preservation, management, development and interpretation of Yukon's historic sites and routes. The Museums unit has a total budget of \$2.3 million. This includes a revote of \$245,000 to enable continued partnerships and support of Yukon's vibrant museums and cultural centres. The Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre has an annual budget of \$442,000 for operation and maintenance.

The department provides over half a million dollars to directly support operation and programs at seven Yukon First Nation cultural centres. The Arts section budget of \$4.2 million this year enables continued support of Yukon's dynamic arts community. The Arts section received an ongoing funding of \$70,000 — \$35,000 in the fiscal year of 2014-15 to increase funding for Advanced Artist Awards. The department provides \$814,000 in operational funding for the Yukon Arts Centre.

I think, in closing, trying to attract a greater portion of the Asian market is a good thing. I think that congratulations are in order for the Minister of Tourism for continuing this wise investment for our territory because this is the largest and fastest growing tourist body in the world and we want a piece of that — and the previous minister as well, because she has corrected me so many times on the floor of this Assembly and congratulated me as well on my good work in the riding of Vuntut Gwitchin while I was in the opposition benches. I thought that was important to put on the public record for all time.

In closing, I just want to congratulate everybody. I hope that this motion gets unanimous consent and the Asian tour is a resounding success and provides a great benefit for years to come to our territory.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

#### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

#### Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Mr. Elias:** Agree.

**Ms. Hanson:** Agree.

**Ms. Stick:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Mr. Tredger:** Agree.

**Mr. Barr:** Agree.

**Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 16 yeas, nil nays.

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

*Motion No. 785 agreed to*

### **Motion No. 791**

**Clerk:** Motion No. 791, standing in the name of Mr. Hassard.

**Speaker:** It is moved by the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide Yukoners with the fundamental skills necessary to prepare them for jobs, responsible citizenship and life-long learning by working in conjunction with First Nation governments, Yukon College and other stakeholders to develop an inclusive, adaptable and productive workforce that contributes to and strengthens Yukon's economy.

**Mr. Hassard:** It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to Motion No. 791, which urges "... the Government of Yukon to provide Yukoners with the fundamental skills necessary to prepare them for jobs, responsible citizenship and life-long learning by working in conjunction with First Nation governments, Yukon College and other stakeholders to develop an inclusive, adaptable and productive workforce that contributes to and strengthens Yukon's economy."

Training skilled tradespeople is an essential element to address the needs of the modern workforce. Over the past decade, we have heard study results that suggest there is a looming gap in skilled trades. Skills Canada statistics in 2009 showed that over 40 percent of new jobs will be in skilled trades or technology. These are fields that require practical experience and training. That study is just one of many.

Numerous studies as well have warned that Canada is facing a massive shortage of skilled workers over the next few decades as millions of baby-boomers hit retirement age and exit the workforce. That is why this motion is so important. Governments in Canada must continue to address the looming "skills mismatch", as was coined by economists.

Estimates by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce regarding the skills mismatch are sobering, to say the least. The chamber estimates there will be 550,000 unskilled workers who won't be able to find work by 2016. By 2021, that number could be well over one million. At the same time, it is estimated there will be 1.5 million skilled job vacancies in 2016 and as many as 2.6 million by 2021. We need to start getting those unskilled workers trained to ensure that they can start filling these job vacancies. That is what this motion is about.

I would like to first congratulate the Education minister on some of the fine work that she has done to date to work with our stakeholders here in Yukon to address these skills gaps.

It is important to note, as well, that these skills are portable due to national agreements to recognize certification. Yukoners can get trained in the Yukon, but can work anywhere in Canada. Here in the Yukon, Mr. Speaker, we are well-positioned to train Yukoners to fill those jobs that exist and will be created in the mining sector. That is why it is great to see the Yukon government working with Yukon College and the Government of Canada to create the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining. Graduates from the program will have the ability necessary to fill the skilled vacancies at Yukon mine sites. It is a great way to ensure that Yukon continues to get the best value from our resource industries. Students from the centre can enroll in geo-tech training, underground mining and heavy equipment mechanics. These graduates will be our future leaders in our territory's mining industry and that is the sort of home-grown opportunities that Yukoners want to see this government providing. Electricians, plumbers, welders — tradespeople of all sorts — will be in short supply. I know that this government and previous governments have done a lot of work to support trades training in the Yukon and I would like to highlight some of those now.

Firstly, the Yukon Women in Trades and Technology was established in 2000 and Advanced Education has provided support since its creation. This program is mandated to increase women's participation in the trades in the Yukon. Every year, workshops engage girls on a variety of skilled fields — to share with them the opportunities and advantages of pursuing a career in trades. Encouraging women to pursue a career in trades achieves multiple goals, including reducing under-representation of women in well-paying, skilled trades and technology jobs, as well as addressing shortages of skilled tradespeople and making sure that we are preparing all Yukoners for Yukon opportunities.

In 2011, Yukon Women in Trades and Technology set a three-year strategy that included a number of goals. Those goals were: to increase the familiarity of careers in trades and technology for school councils, parents and students; increase interest in high school shop classes for students; create a greater understanding of the opportunities to apprentice in a chosen field while still in high school; assist employers in recognizing the benefit of actively supporting women in the trades; increase membership in the YWITT to include active tradespeople, employee groups, sponsor groups and those who deliver programs; maintain positive relationships between the YWITT and its partners; and advance organizational and financial sustainability. Since this three-year plan will be wrapping up this year, I look forward to seeing what this great organization has planned for the coming years.

Skills Canada's local branch, Skills Canada Yukon, serves an important role to advance and highlight developing apprentices and tradespeople in the territory. I understand that the previous Yukon Party government invested in Skills

Canada Yukon and know that it has been an organization that this government recognizes as a key stakeholder in developing trades in Yukon.

The government helps fund the annual skills competition and has also contributed ongoing support to run the Skill Centre here in Whitehorse. All this work contributes to Yukon government's work that engages all stakeholders and governments to build a made-in-Yukon solution.

This government has demonstrated a strong track record of supporting the trades, and the Yukon Party has recognized that there is a looming skills gap. Beginning back in 2008, the government held a symposium that brought together individuals representing business, industry and all levels of government — including federal, territorial, municipal and First Nation — as well as non-governmental organizations, under-represented labour market groups and employees affected by labour market demands. The results of this collaboration provided the principles of Yukon's labour market framework. That framework was to: be adaptable — respond to changes in the economy through innovation and flexibility; be inclusive — embody a holistic approach that considers the interest of individuals, workers and employers; build on strengths and successes — recognize the positive activities already underway in Yukon to attract, retain, educate and train people for the labour market, while remaining open to new ideas; accountability — focuses on results; and collaboration — with an emphasis on partnerships.

In 2010, the resulting work launched five strategies to support Yukon's economic growth over the next 10 years. First was a comprehensive skills and trades training strategy, the employee retention strategy, an immigration strategy, a labour market information strategy and, finally, a recruitment strategy. I will just take a moment to speak in some detail on those five.

A comprehensive skills and trades training strategy is necessary because skill enhancement plays an important role in improving productivity of the labour force, maintaining the competitive nature of Yukon's economy in the face of globalization, and ensuring that new technologies and advancements are efficiently adapted.

To meet the productivity challenges of the future, many people will need to improve their knowledge and skills. Some of the reports I have referred to earlier support this. A skilled workforce is needed to maintain labour productivity. For individual workers, skills upgrading may help with self-confidence. It may increase productivity and lead to higher paying positions or even new occupations. Skills and trades training are also important for groups under-represented in the workforce, such as aboriginal people, youth, older workers, people with disabilities and, of course, women in trades. One way to address inequities is to provide these groups with the training opportunities and the tools needed to successfully integrate into the labour market.

An employee retention strategy goes hand in hand with the recruitment strategy, and both are identified as a need because it is an important management activity in securing an effective workforce. Good recruitment is about finding the

right person for the job and has implications for business performance, the image with customers and industry, staffing levels and profitability. In responding to labour shortages, Yukon has a number of possible sources of labour. The recruitment strategy is not only aimed at encouraging potential employees from other jurisdictions in Canada to relocate to Yukon to live and work; it also recognizes the potential of the local labour market, including under-represented groups such as aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, visible minorities, older workers, youth, social assistance recipients and, of course, women in trades.

As you well know, Mr. Speaker, hiring an employee is only the first step. Building an awareness of the importance of employee retention is essential. The costs associated with employee turnover can include lost customers and business, as well as damaged morale. In addition, there are costs incurred in screening, verifying credentials and references, interviewing, hiring and training new employees.

Retention strategies strengthen the ability of business to attract and retain their workforce. Once the right staff persons have been recruited, retention practices provide the tools necessary to support the staff.

Including an immigration strategy is very important because it's forecast that Canada's dependency on immigration will not diminish any time in the near future and that there will, in fact, be an increased economic pressure to recruit and maintain immigrants. Citizenship and Immigration Canada forecasted that immigrants are expected to account for all net labour force growth by 2011 and for all net population growth by 2031. This means that if the Canadian economy is to continue to grow and diversify, and if Canada is going to continue to prosper, then immigration must play a central role in supporting our economic development. If immigration fails to meet employers' needs to fill a variety of skilled and semi-skilled jobs, there will be serious implications for the Canadian economy, both in the short and the long term.

A consistently insufficient supply of labour translates into increased pressure to raise wages and prices, which can create economic instability. Also, without the labour force to staff business, government and non-profit organizations, critical programs, services and goods will not meet consumer demand. Implementing a labour market information strategy is critical to understanding labour patterns and trends.

This will become essential if Yukon is to remain competitive in an economy and labour market that has changed in terms of demographics, occupational skills required, technological advances and future training demands. It's necessary for employers, potential workers, businesses, government, NGOs and other stakeholders to have access to timely, accurate and relevant information on the labour market.

I would like to note that our Minister of Education continues to be proactive in ensuring that the federal government has access to our Yukon statistics, to make sure that any labour market decisions are being made with the appropriate and correct statistics in place.

Framework strategies break into four key areas of labour market development. These four pillars, as we call them, are training and development, recruitment, retention and labour market information. I think that these four pillars form a great platform to build Yukoners' skills and all of our workforce.

This framework has formed the basis for Yukon's work with Canada to establish supports for training. This work has created some great initiatives, like the labour market agreement for persons with disabilities.

This program has a few key principles to provide labour market supports for persons with disabilities. Eligible participants must provide informed consent to address and identify a suspected disability. Services provided to participants will have a strong focus on case management and participant follow-up. This program is being delivered after Yukon Education work with stakeholders to identify gaps in services to persons with disabilities. Again, we would like to thank the Minister of Education for continuing to work with the stakeholders on the ground to identify these areas of need. Their expertise will continue to ensure that the government addresses those areas that are best served by support.

Yukon College and Yukon Education created the mobile trades trailer so that rural Yukoners can receive trades and training in their own communities. This is very important. As the non-Whitehorse representative, any time we have something that can be done in the communities it's a greatly added benefit. I would like to thank the previous Minister of Education for all of the work that he did on that file as well.

There are many other programs that the Department of Education is delivering to Yukoners in order to enhance their skills. These include: community training funds; the Canada job fund that was signed with Canada; the Yukon apprenticeship program; Yukon trades qualification program; work to establish a Yukon university; and the labour market development agreement. All of these are helping ensure that employers can continue to have a skilled and productive workforce and that Yukoners are the first individuals given a chance at these jobs.

There are many more great things happening for trades training in the Yukon, but I would like to hear what other members have to contribute to the debate so I will leave some of those for them.

I would like to again recognize the ongoing work over the last decade by the Yukon Party government to address the growing skills mismatch in Yukon and Canada. Now I realize there is always more work to be done, but the continued efforts by this government are concrete steps in the right direction. I encourage all members to continue to work with the Yukon government in this undertaking on behalf of all Yukoners.

I look forward to hearing what everyone else has to say this afternoon and hopefully see this motion receive unanimous support here in the House today.

**Ms. Stick:** I want to thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for this motion.

I certainly read this motion differently than the interpretation — or what the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin spoke to. I didn't realize we were talking just about skills training, because I looked at this and I read a number of times and I have come up with a bit of a different interpretation. I do believe that it is a good motion, because I think it's a good motion in that it's urging the government to do the job they were elected to do, so we will support this motion, but I'll speak to what I understand from the wording of this and what it says in my opinion.

These are very clear goals. It talks about fundamental skills, which are — by definition — the basic ability necessary to function competently in society. Skills are reading, writing, mathematics and communication. We need a good education foundation and I would include in that necessary supports for all students, for parental involvement, for appropriate programming, for EAs who can assist students requiring the extra support to reach their potential and facilities that offer options for all students — whether it be skilled trades or other professions — lawyers, accountants — I think it is all-inclusive. This shouldn't be just down to skilled trades only.

The first thing it tells me is that we need a good foundation for education because that is where we get our fundamental skills. Responsible citizenship, I think, is the responsibility of everyone — not just government. It is for every member here; it is something we do in our families; it is something we do in our communities and it is something we do here in the House.

Lifelong learning is a good goal. It is a personal choice, because not everybody wants to return to school or carry on with that, but the government does have a responsibility to provide affordable options for people who do want to carry on with their education, making it affordable for a single parent on social assistance to be able to return to school — whether it's upgrading, whether it's a skills trade, or a profession. It is providing seniors who might want to carry on with their personal learning — whether it's new employment skills or taking courses for the pure enjoyment of learning. Those should be available to all citizens in the Yukon, not just in Whitehorse, but in the communities.

There need to be supports for individuals with disabilities to be able to participate in continuing education, work training or job support, which allows them to become those individuals we spoke about. We're lucky — we do have programs such as Challenge, Career Industries and the Yukon Council on DisABILITY that do some of that work. It is important for us to support them, but there are still many individuals out there who would love a job and don't have that. We also need to ensure that there is access to classes and supports for students, whether young or old, for whom English is not the first language.

The motion speaks to working in conjunction with First Nation governments, Yukon College and other stakeholders. Those are good, but Mr. Speaker, we are all stakeholders. We are all citizens of the Yukon. We do have a stake in this and we all need to be included in moving this forward.

Adaptable — we need to be able to change or be changed in order to fit or work better in some situation, or for some purpose. We must recognize that we have to be able to change. It shouldn't be singularly focused on trades. There are so many other options for people out there, but these are all outcomes.

This is what we want, but you don't get to your outcomes and you don't reach your goals if we don't do the work up front. How do we do that? For me, it is best to provide for our most vulnerable — our children and youth. We need to increase the focus on and supports for children and youth and families in order to achieve these outcomes that are spoken about in the motion.

The Yukon Medical Health Officer, in the government's *Yukon 2012 Health Status Report — Focus on Children and Youth* said — and I quote: "...investing in our children early on in life and through the school years will pay dividends in healthier Yukoners for generations to come." I don't believe he was just speaking about health as in how well you feel, but I believe it was much more inclusive. He was speaking about education; he was speaking about well-being; he was speaking about — and health, of course, that too.

Let's look at what is happening in order to reach this. We have not eliminated child poverty — not even close, Mr. Speaker. More families are going to the food bank to supplement their monthly food basket. This means children in families who go there are living without food security and without good nutrition. This is not a good thing. We need to start working concretely on child poverty.

Income is the most influential determinant of health. I don't know if you have heard the saying: "Your income is your outcome." Twenty-eight percent of families in Yukon are single-parent families, single income and more vulnerable to poor housing options, poor food security and, therefore, poor outcomes. Many individuals and families with children are without access to consistent health care due to lack of family physicians.

Lack of food security — increasing numbers of children not having access to nutritional food impacts their learning, it impacts their health and it impacts their well-being.

We are still hearing of many cases where there is a lack of adequate mental health services for children. Youth are unable to get the help they need when they need it for addictions or for real mental health difficulties. We are higher than the national average when it comes to suicide. We are higher than the national average for smoking, drinking and risky behaviour with our youth.

We have the highest dropout rates for First Nation students in our communities. Data from 2011-12 shows that in secondary schools in rural Yukon, students missed an average of 47 days, or more than two months of instruction. These individuals missing school — dropping out — they will not be part of that lifelong learning. They will not be that productive workforce. We need to put supports in up front with our children and with our youth.

The early development instrument was completed in 2011-12 for Yukon children, and it showed that 20 percent of

Yukon's kindergarten students were vulnerable in the area of physical health and well-being — not good indicators for strong outcomes in life, not good indicators for a productive workforce. We haven't seen an updated EDI, but I look forward to it because I want to see how we are improving on these indicators. How are we improving on the outcomes for our children and youth down the road?

We need a robust and sustainable early childhood development strategy that pays attention to at-risk children, to nutritional needs and parenting support in every community in the Yukon — in every community where there is family or there are children.

We have spoken about this in the House, certainly. We need affordable housing so families are not paying the majority of their paycheques to rent, because when they are worried about money — when most of their money is going to rent, they are worried about food. They don't make for productive workers. They are worried, they are stressed, they are wondering how to make ends meet — not what is the next course I am going to take or what is my next job or how can I improve my opportunities?

It is, what am I going to pay today and not pay tomorrow? How am I going to get food on this family's table? What am I going to go without so my kids can eat? It doesn't make for a good, productive workforce. It makes for a stressed-out, worried, not productive workforce.

We will support this motion because we do believe that the government needs to work on these goals. We want to see clear strategies with goals and measurable outcomes that will tell the government that it is moving in the right direction. We want to see a social inclusion and poverty strategy — not just a lens — that addresses an inclusive, adaptable, productive workforce, because if you do that, that will reduce poverty. That will increase social inclusion.

We want to see a comprehensive public health plan, especially one that addresses the needs of children, youth and families. We need to put our efforts into those most vulnerable ones that the medical health officer pointed out. We want to see a mental health strategy, especially for children and youth, that is going to address their emotional and behavioural well-being, because when they have that, they will be productive and they will contribute to the Yukon economy. We need to address risky behaviours, including the use of alcohol, cannabis and tobacco — risk-taking behaviours. We have the reports — many different ones — that this government has paid good money for. They all have good recommendations. We need to see those recommendations taken, given clear goals and measurable outcomes so that we can move forward and have an inclusive, adaptable, productive workforce that contributes and strengthens Yukon economy. It's not just skills training. It starts long before skills training, and there is a lot to be done.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing this motion forward. I'll certainly touch on skill development throughout the course of this afternoon. Any parent who has two or more children knows that, really,



no two children have the same interests, the same goals or the same needs, for that matter. Each has his or her own path.

Often when I think about skill development, I think about the skills that my sons have learned over the years. In fact, my son, Jack, who was diagnosed with low-functioning autism at two years old, has made incredible gains over the last 11 years. These gains, I believe, were due, in large part, to the support of this Yukon Party government ensuring that supports were in place for him at an early age.

I also believe that Jack has made great progress because of the educational assistant supports he has had in the school system from kindergarten at Christ the King and now his first year in high school at F.H. Collins. Jack may not have had the opportunity to build on the simplest of skills, being communication — listening and responding to verbal cues, something that most of us, perhaps, take for granted — but because of an extremely dedicated team in the education system, including his educational assistant — who worked with him even before kindergarten — Jack has been able to surpass most of our expectations in regard to his ability to learn new skills. In fact, I would suspect that, over the last number of years, Jack has helped to enhance some of my own skills, one of which is patience.

While I attended college, I think many of the skills that helped me prepare for jobs — responsible citizenship and lifelong learning — were skills that I learned growing up on the farm. I'll talk more about that in a few minutes.

In the past, Yukon students were encouraged to pursue their post-secondary education by attending university and getting a degree. I'm told that some of the students were discouraged from pursuing a trades-based career because it was felt that the trades offered limited options for earning potential or for long-term challenges to interest and sustain a worker. Yet I think it was more the hands-on trades type of learning that I did that I found rewarding and very fulfilling. I also found that those life lessons apply to more than dealing with just a rusty bolt or learning to weld something back together.

Not everyone who graduates from high school wants to go on to further studies, especially in a setting where an emphasis is placed on theoretical or abstract concepts. Some students prefer to learn and create in a very hands-on environment.

As I said earlier, each child has his own interests and, for many Yukon children, a career in the trades or technology sectors would be very rewarding. Not everyone is cut out for a university education, and that is certainly no reflection on anyone's intelligence. Sometimes it's just too far, too time-consuming or too expensive to take something that is broken into town to get it fixed. Often you have to do things yourself. The bigger life lesson there is how to be self-reliant. Nothing builds confidence like learning how to fix something broken so that it's usable again.

I think that's a very important life lesson. I know some parents who live outside of Whitehorse who are concerned about their children coming to Whitehorse for schooling. Children mature at different ages and sending a 17- or 18-

year-old out of the family home away from parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins to go to school can be very stressful for both the parent and for the child. It is for that reason that I strongly support the element of this motion that calls for us to work with First Nations and the college.

One of the tragedies of the NDP and Liberal governments was their almost total decimation of Yukoners in the age ranges of 20s and 30s. Given the disastrous effect they had on the economy, many young Yukoners became economic refugees, fleeing the territory to find jobs in other jurisdictions. My colleague, the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, spoke briefly but eloquently to his need to go work in B.C. So many of those young people have ties to this territory and they want to raise their families here. But it wasn't just the young people leaving. Fifteen years ago, seniors were moving south when they retired. Many left to be close to their children and their grandchildren who had also left. What a loss that was for our communities. Fortunately, that trend has stopped now and many seniors choose to stay here or even move back when they retire.

Indeed, every time we hear the members opposite talk about our investments in capital projects like senior care facilities, hospitals in Dawson and Watson Lake or schools, I think to myself, what a contrast between their approach and ours. Our strategy is to build infrastructure to accommodate the needs of a growing population. Their strategy was to drive Yukoners out of the territory.

Yukon Party strategy is to invest in all of Yukon and we have delivered. Yukon Party strategy has been to restore Yukoners' confidence in our territory and in our economy and we have delivered. Under the Yukon Party watch, the Yukon's population has grown by about 20 percent. We have a decade's worth of growing our economy. Under the watch of the Yukon Party, we have taken on difficult challenges like waste water. We have also invested heavily in KIAC and SOVA and we've delivered. We do this because we are committed to being productive, contributing members of society. This Yukon Party is committed to Yukoners.

Google search defines "transferrable skills" as skills acquired from past jobs, volunteering, hobby or life experience. The on-line business directory defines transferrable skills as aptitude and knowledge acquired through personal experience such as schooling, jobs, classes, hobbies, sports and so on — basically any talent developed and able to be used in future employment. For example, a transferrable skill applied to a business could consist of parenting skills in the opening of a preschool.

The Skills Canada mission statement "Why We Exist" reads: "To encourage and support a coordinated Canadian approach to promoting skilled trades and technologies to youth". The Skills Canada vision "Our Future State" reads: "Canada's youth have the workplace skills for the future."

The Skills Canada value statement, entitled "How We Conduct Ourselves", is characterized by: safety — safety comes first; excellence — embrace the highest standards; commitment — passionately involved and dedicated to the cause, willing to go beyond what is expected; accountability

— transparent and trustworthy; fairness — treat others as we wish to be treated; integrity — beyond reproach; camaraderie — enjoy and celebrate the best in each other; and diversity — inclusive in everything we do.

Growing up on a dairy farm — when I was five years old, I started helping my father by feeding calves. My chores evolved over the years from cleaning calf pens to accompanying my dad to the feed mill, cattle auctions, selling hay — in fact, my first business transaction was selling a male calf for \$50 for veal. I was five years old.

As I grew older, my responsibilities increased to milking and feeding cows, field work on the tractor — whether it be plowing, disking or raking, baling hay and straw — construction of buildings, tractor equipment and vehicle maintenance and repair, as well as plumbing, heating and electrical.

I also learned a great deal about animal health and veterinary services. From time to time, we were required to give antibiotics to sick cattle intravenously. I recall having to give a shot of oxytocin with a syringe to a cow, 15 minutes before each milking, so she would milk out completely.

We trained farmhands. I showed cattle through the local 4-H program. In fact, at the royal exhibition fair in Toronto one year, we sold my 4-H calf for \$30,000. I built fences and planted, fertilized, bought and sold crops. We built and graded roadways and driveways, towed broken-down vehicles, tile-drained fields and pastures. We trucked, bought and sold cattle, negotiated prices and terms of contracts. I learned about butter fat and bacteria in milk. I learned the hard way — I might add — that when the cooling system for our 1,500 milk tank quit in the middle of the night, you end up with a burned-out agitator motor and what was close to 1,200 litres of liquid milk was now a lot of butter.

I recall in the late eighties, setting up a very basic computerized milking system that would indicate when a cow was finished milking. Through that skill development, we see new systems today that are completely computerized and milk cows without the assistance of a person.

I learned about hinges, pulleys, jacks, lifts, blocks and tackle, tires and air pressure. I learned how to scale an 80-foot ladder up the side of a silo and I learned angles and grease fittings. I learned about death, life and how to deliver a calf into this world. Perhaps three of the greatest lessons I learned over the years on the farm were: listen to your father, respect your mother and always help thy neighbour.

When I look at the premise to the motion from the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin about skill development and working with First Nations, governments and the college, I stand behind this motion. This is a good motion for all of us to debate on the floor of this Legislature today and again, I thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing this motion forward.

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** I too would like to thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing this motion forward today. Skills are something that I personally believe are such an important aspect for our students to consider when they are

making career choices. I know that many of the old myths about those who enter the skills field have certainly been debunked, and it is an incredibly important and fulfilling job that students can choose.

In my remarks today, I want to talk about a few of the organizations and some of the investments that this government has made with respect to skills training. I want to talk about some projects, as well, that those students who may follow the debate or follow Hansard, or may want to get an update on, can expect in the coming years with respect to mining. I want to touch briefly on the next generation hydro, because that will certainly be something that requires a tremendous amount of skilled labour to construct and eventually operate if we are able to move to that project sometime in the distant future.

Again, as young students embark on their careers, I think they need to know some of the opportunities that exist here in the territory here for them beyond the industrial projects — of course, some of the other smaller scale projects and construction projects that accompany those types of economic opportunities.

First of all, I would like to give special recognition to Skills Canada Yukon. They continue to do a tremendous job of developing young skilled workers and helping them and assisting them to go on to national and, in some cases, international competitions. As the previous Minister of Education, I had the opportunity to attend two of the Skills Canada national competitions, one in Edmonton and one in Vancouver. I was impressed not only with how skilled our Yukon members and competitors were, but also with their behaviour. The way they represented the territory at those events should be commended. They do a tremendous job and they are tremendous ambassadors for our territory and for those who are involved in the skilled trades, and their employers and others who have assisted them along the way. It is not just the competitors. It is those instructors and mentors and others — the staff and board at Skills Canada Yukon — who do a great job in assisting those individuals.

I was also able this year to stand in for the Minister of Education at the annual apprenticeship awards. I can certainly inform members of the House that we are in great shape as far as the future. Of course, more can be done to attract individuals to the trades, but the list of individuals who were at that dinner was tremendous and was across a variety of different fields. It's not just carpentry, but everything from oil-fired appliance mechanics to electricians and many, many others who were involved in that evening.

I would like to congratulate those who received their apprenticeship awards this year and to thank the Department of Education staff for putting that event on. The team led by Judy Thrower and others does a tremendous job each and every year of putting on that event that I know is very much appreciated by the employers and those who are involved in the skilled trades.

Yukon Women in Trades and Technology — I know we have heard about it in this House on a number of occasions. When I was at the Capstone Mining BAH Humbug on

Thursday, I ran into an old friend of mine, Brenda Barnes, who is now involved with that organization, so I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Brenda. I know she will do a tremendous job. She was one of the opposition researchers when I was in government previously. I find her to be a tremendous person and I know that she will do great job in that role. So congratulations to Brenda for taking on that important job with YWITT.

When it comes to programs and investments that this government has made with respect to skilled trades and technology, the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining is something I am quite familiar with at Yukon College. There are significant investments not only by the Government of Yukon, but capital investment as well by the Government of Canada. I believe the planning is underway for the enhanced trade facilities that will support that program at Yukon College. We were able to purchase the mobile trades trailer — or invest in the mobile trades trailer along with Canada. I know that, having been at the grand opening of that facility at Yukon College along with a number of colleagues from the Legislative Assembly from both sides of the floor. I hope I speak on behalf of all of us that we were totally impressed with how that facility will operate. I understand from Mr. Ed Bergeron, who is the welding instructor in Dawson City, that the dual credit welding program and the adult welding program that were offered there last year were a tremendous success. That is a testament, not only to Ed and the team at Yukon College, but those individuals in Dawson City who have taken up the challenge to try to acquire those types of skills. I know it is something that will offer opportunities for many other trades and deliver that type of training throughout Yukon communities.

I know that in Dawson City last fall — and I believe again this fall or just a couple of months ago — the northern schools got together and participated in a comprehensive trades training exercise where there were a number of different opportunities offered to the students of those northern high schools. I believe even younger grades were hosted in Carmacks. I do stand to be corrected on that. Obviously, I am no longer the Minister of Education, but it is something that I know my colleague, the current Minister of Education, was pleased to attend in Dawson City and certainly speaks very highly of what was accomplished at that time.

A partnership that needs to be mentioned here again is the one that we have with the Government of Alaska. It stems from the intergovernmental protocol that the Premier and former Governor Parnell signed a number of years ago.

It was the first MOU coming out of that, and it was an education MOU that really focused on skilled trades and training. There have been a number of exciting developments from the signing of that MOU — the first, of course, was the introduction to mining course that was offered here at Yukon College subsequent to that. The University of Alaska, in Juneau, provided an individual to come and assist with the instruction of that, really mentoring the local instructor. At the time, I understand it was an incredibly successful course they ran at Yukon College — so much so that they offered it again,

I believe, last year, but this time, it was with a bit of a twist. The training took place close to Delta Junction in Alaska, where Yukon students were able to go to a mine training facility there with a portal and take advantage of the infrastructure that the Government of Alaska has put in place with respect to underground mine training and everything that it has to offer.

In speaking with my colleague, the MLA for Watson Lake, I understand one of the mining companies that is looking to repurpose a mine near her riding is accessing individuals in Watson Lake to take a course and conduct that training in Alaska as well. I would like to congratulate that company and those individuals who are looking to train up for opportunities that exist in the Yukon mining industry, and opportunities that will exist for years to come.

There are a number of industries that form the client base for the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, and all of them will require skilled labour at some point — of course the agriculture industry, forestry, oil and gas and the energy industry. I thought maybe what I could do is touch on a few of the mining projects that are in various stages of development. I'm not going to talk so much about the existing mines — Capstone's Minto mine or the Wolverine mine at Yukon Zinc, or Bellekeno, which is temporarily shut down. I want to focus and provide an update on some of the projects that are in the exploration or advanced exploration or permitting stage.

I'm going to start with ATAC Resources Limited and the Rakla gold project. As members know, it's a grassroots discovery made by ATAC in 2006. It covers 1,700 square kilometres and is located 55 kilometres northeast of Keno City in the traditional territory of the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun. The First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun and ATAC renewed their exploration cooperation agreement in January of 2014. It focuses on relationship building and providing a framework for future exploration and environmental activities at the Rakla gold project.

The company spent an estimated \$7 million on a drilling and exploration program in 2013 and it was estimated that they would have spent an additional \$6.8 million in 2014, with a focus on the Carlin-type gold discoveries at a number of the different drill targets within the property.

ATAC Resources filed their preliminary economic assessment for one of their deposits, the Tiger deposit, in September 2014, and they continue to explore that property. We're very hopeful that at some point in the future they're able to make a production decision and bring that property into production. I was able to speak with representatives of ATAC at the recent Geoscience Forum and they remain bullish about the property and everything that it has to offer even in these tough market conditions that we're experiencing right now throughout the world.

The Casino project, which is run by the Casino mining corporation, is a very large-scale copper-gold mine within the Selkirk First Nation traditional territory, but also would have impacts on neighbouring First Nations, particularly the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. The initial capital investment for complete development of the

project is estimated to be \$2.5 billion, including direct and indirect costs. The total life of mine-sustaining capital is estimated to be \$361.7 million. The capital would be expended during a 22-year estimated mine life, which, for many of these individuals who are now considering a career in skilled trades, could form a substantial amount of their career.

Where the company is with respect to that project — they're proposing that the open pit mine will process 120,000 tonnes of copper and gold ore per day over the 22-year mine life. They plan to use conventional floatation mill and heap leach technology. Concentrates will be trucked to Skagway using B-train double and tridem trucks. Employment estimates for the construction phase are 1,000 people and 600 during production. I think that speaks to the need for us to train individuals and have individuals choose skilled occupations as their career. We look forward to ensuring that as many Yukoners as possible are employed at this project when it comes into production.

The Casino mine project is currently in the YESAA process. I believe that the assessment has been paused while further engagement is done with the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, but I'm sure that the company, at the recent Geoscience Forum, would have been able to provide an update on what their plans are and when they hope to go into production.

I see that certainly my time is running short to provide other project updates, such as Copper North, the Carmacks copper project or Centerra Gold's Betty/Hayes property. We have obviously an awful lot of excitement around the Kaminak Gold Corporation — the Coffee Gold Project — and this I think compared to some of the other mines that I've spoken about is one that was very recently discovered. I believe the first drill hole was done in 2010 and here we are just a few short years later and significant investment continues to happen on that site. I know the company is very bullish. They're bypassing the pre-feasibility study stage and a \$12-million budget was approved for work on the feasibility activities in 2014 with a total of \$30 million to be spent on the feasibility study expected to be completed by the end of next year — again, very bullish on the opportunities there.

North American Tungsten is through the YESAB process. They have a decision document that will allow them to proceed with terms and conditions on their Mactung project. Of course, this company has for some time operated the Cantung project, which, although just inside the Northwest Territories border, is serviced through the Yukon, and particularly the community of Watson Lake.

Rockhaven Resources with their Klaza property near Carmacks and the Selwyn project that has gained an awful lot of press, as well as Victoria Gold's Eagle project, are all at different stages of mine development. Victoria Gold has its quartz mining licence, and Rockhaven is at early-stage exploration. Selwyn continues to be a major spender in the exploration side of things here in the territory. Wellgreen Platinum's project near Burwash Landing continues to gain favourable write-ups in media and continues to look to raise money.

Again, many of these individuals whom I was able to speak with at the recent Geoscience Forum remain committed and bullish to their projects.

I know I am not going to get a chance to talk probably about the next generation hydro and the potential there, but today is the first of a series of technical workshops on that project. I would invite members of the House to attend the public presentations that are taking place this evening, I believe, at the Westmark Whitehorse. I think it starts at 7:00 p.m. I stand to be corrected, but I think that's what time the public program starts. Unfortunately, I am double-booked, so I won't be able to attend this evening, but I was able to provide opening comments at the session that was held today for technical officials from the various First Nations throughout the territory and a number of other individuals from the Yukon Energy Corporation — and ATCO Electric Yukon, to Yukon College, and others I was able to speak to there this morning.

In closing, one of the exciting aspects when it comes to the resource industry that I will close with — and it was in conversation with a local service and supply person at the Geoscience Forum. We spoke a little bit about what it was like 12 years ago when we were in the previous downcycle for the industry, and we were deep in that downcycle. We sort of mused about geoscience at that time and, really, the only project that was getting any positive press at that time was True North Gems' emerald project near Finlayson Lake. To see where we were there with the projects that were in the pipeline to where we are now, I think, bodes well for the future and provides that incentive for individuals who are interested in getting involved in skilled trades. I mentioned some of the job numbers. There are going to be literally thousands of direct and indirect jobs associated with these projects going forward. I would encourage any of those individuals who want to pursue a career in the trades to do so, because I think there are going to be tremendous opportunities going forward.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I'm really pleased to be able to speak to this motion, which is all about lifelong learning, skills development, being contributing citizens of our territory and how we can continue to facilitate and continue to support lifelong learners. There has already been a lot said, and I know the Minister of Health and Social Services has things to contribute in this regard, but I do want to just touch upon a number of things.

The Member for Riverdale South, I believe, had made reference to a holistic approach to lifelong learning and that is always front and centre. Even though I don't have enough time to go through all of the initiatives underway and all the programs and services being offered by the respective departments, I do want to just touch upon a number of key ones within the Department of Education.

Our government continues to be very much committed to supporting the development of an inclusive, adaptable and productive workforce that meets the needs of employers and will result in new employers in the territory. We are dedicated

to success for each and every learner in the territory — through each of our 28 public schools — and I've seen this first-hand. I've said this before, but having been born and raised in the territory and having attended our schools, and then having gone to our schools and having gone to pretty much every school in the territory, there are some incredible initiatives underway. It's a really exciting time in education and how and the way we are delivering education is inspiring. I always pay credit to the local leadership in our communities, which continues to come up with creative ways and very innovative partnerships that are being struck, whether it's with First Nation governments or individual schools, or whether it's with organizations or employers themselves. There are incredible things underway in the territory. I have to say that there is always room for improvement — always. We would not be here if it wasn't for the need for more improvement.

What I can say is that we continue to work with individual communities to identify priorities so we can make best efforts to prepare each of our students within our public schools for the world of work and the responsibilities of citizenship, through basically flexible and school-based programs, individual learning centres, alternate learning models and more. I think flexibility is really key in when we talk about delivering education.

What I have seen is just that: by being flexible, we are able to tailor programs to individual students. We are able to offer a larger variety of core courses and the way we deliver education too — the modes — not just in the classroom, but out on the land, out in various workplaces. There are many, many opportunities.

Through Advanced Education, of course, we support a whole host of labour market training and post-secondary programs that may assist Yukoners in upgrading their skillsets, gaining employment, participating in the workforce or pursuing lifelong learning.

When it comes to education, of course — and I know that we have spoken at great length about really working to bridge the gap in terms of providing the same level of supports and learning opportunities for rural students as there are here in Whitehorse — there are a number of initiatives currently underway — the rural equity action plan, which we have spoken to at great length in the Legislature. That is really key.

I keep looking to initiatives that are underway, such as the blended learning model in Watson Lake. I continue to be absolutely impressed with the work going on in communities such as Watson Lake, Old Crow, Teslin and all of our communities. But, Watson Lake, for example has shown us that through the use of digital resources, technology, on-line learning curriculum, we are able to reach out to students and we are able to see the attendance rates improve substantively. We are able to see students continue to be engaged in the schools and stay in the schools. We haven't seen that necessarily in the past in communities like Watson Lake and that is changing.

I attribute that to the leadership of the Watson Lake Secondary School and working with parents, working with the school council and working with the governments. There are

some very good things happening there as we speak. In fact, I know that the MLA for Watson Lake — my colleague — took part in the graduation ceremony in Watson Lake and we saw a record number of graduates — some 14. We haven't seen that number there for many, many years. That, in itself, is a huge feat — never mind students coming through the door and keeping on coming through the door and receiving education.

Old Crow, for example — incredible things underway there as well. For the first time, on June 13 — Yukon's birthday actually — and the Minister of Justice's birthday — we were able to see a graduation ceremony in Old Crow. It was the first time that we have seen a graduation there and a graduate from that community of Old Crow.

Again, it is looking at alternate ways of reaching out to students. I attribute that to the work of the individual school, the administration, school council — working seamlessly with the Vuntut Gwitchin Government, the community itself and through the Yukon College — the Individual Learning Centre as well — and coming up with alternate streams and working individually with those students to keep those students in school and to provide an alternate way of graduating — finishing off your high school.

It is a choice. Some choose to continue to come to Whitehorse and that is a choice. But, you know, by making these options available, we are enhancing the success rate of individuals finishing school, completing and going on and becoming full-fledged contributing citizens of our territory.

Teslin is another example where the alternate high school has been applied as well. It is another initiative that has been of great interest to other communities. Like the blended learning model, it has been of great interest to other communities and is now being expanded to Robert Service School in Dawson and St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction.

How that is applied, how that is rolled out and the outcomes are very much dependant on the priorities of that particular community and that school — so again, working with individual communities in that very regard.

I know it has been touched upon here earlier today — but partnerships with First Nations are absolutely critical, whether it is early learning — and I did want to make mention that when it comes to early learning and early childhood programs, we continue to work with the Department of Health and Social Services in terms of improving how we can better align our early childhood programs offered by the Yukon government within all of our programs and services. We very much believe that all kids — all children — should have access to high quality early childhood education that ensures that they arrive at school ready to learn. In that regard, through the Department of Education, we have been working to expand the learning together program that was initiated and rolled out at Selkirk Street Elementary School a number of years ago. It has worked out really well, and now we have expanded it to three additional schools: Hidden Valley School, Eliza Van Bibber School and Johnson Elementary School.

More recently, we were able to partner up with Kwanlin Dun First Nation and their early childhood centre. It is a

fantastic partnership. It is a win-win situation that applies to all families living in the area, not just citizens of Kwanlin Dun First Nation. Again, the purpose of providing that play-based learning environment, providing those physical, social and emotional confidence-building activities, providing ideas for better parenting, supports delivered by full-fledged community professionals on the ground — that forms the essence of that program. It is working well, and it is something that we continue to talk about with the Department of Health and Social Services, strengthening our alignment between our programs and very much so with the Department of Health and Social Services — their programs. We have seen an expansion of their recent programs as well — the healthy families program, for example.

When it comes to additional partnerships with First Nations, we have talked about the work underway with CYFN and also individual First Nation governments — Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, for example, and the rollout of the bicultural program and looking to expand that program, built on its very success — again, making education more relevant, more reflective of the citizens who we serve and making education more engaging and obviously empowering students, as well as our teaching professionals, to ensure that we're able to empower those students to reach their full learning potential.

We have a number of experiential learning programs and projects underway. The CHAOS program — community, heritage, adventure, outdoors and skills — which is operating at the Wood Street Centre for grade 9 and grade 10 students. It's a program that was rolled out, I believe, in 2011 — if I'm not mistaken. It has been fully subscribed to and it just shows the relevance of the programming provided.

I actually had an opportunity to meet up with the student complement earlier this fall. They had just finished up a session out on the Yukon River for a number of days. Again, it's appealing to a certain segment of our student population and it is deriving results at that.

We've seen other programs underway in the community of Dawson in partnership with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, working on the bilateral agreement that was signed by the previous Minister of Education and the previous chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. We're seeing accreditation of culture camps and we're seeing expansion of alternate learning programs being delivered through Robert Service School.

I continue to pay credit to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and the community of Dawson for showing leadership and really being able to articulate to other communities what can be done. They are doing a tremendous job. They're showing great leadership.

When you take a look at what is going on there and what is going in Old Crow — just with the spring culture camp, for example, and working on accreditation of that particular program and seeing that start at an early age, from kindergarten right through to grade 7. It's great to see, and those are opportunities that were not around necessarily.

I cannot believe that I'm just about out of time, because I have so much to say.

I do want to say, though, that Yukon College — and I could spend hours on Yukon College and all that we're working on with the college. There are a great number of opportunities ahead of us. We have just recently renewed long-term funding in support of the Northern Institute of Social Justice, the Yukon Research Centre and then, of course, the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining and expanding those dual-credit programs available for trades training in our schools, as well as in the communities at large, whether it was welding, available through Dawson — I know the actual mobile trades trailer unit is in Pelly Crossing right now, another great collaboration with Selkirk First Nation. It will be heading over to Ross River soon, in January.

Those are all opportunities — dovetailing on the experiences through the rural experiential model as well, making available those opportunities for rural students to experience the trades and to experience a whole host of learning opportunities that they wouldn't necessarily have if not for initiatives like REM in building capacity among our teaching professionals and among the students and garnering their peer networks.

Yukon College, of course, is in an exciting time in their stage. We just celebrated 50 years last year for Yukon College. Today we continue to see the growth of programming and building on the strengths that have made them a leader in northern post-secondary education as we know it today.

I did want to touch upon there being a number of initiatives underway through Advanced Education in support of our labour market framework. Again, when it is in support of the trades — I know it has been touched upon through apprenticeships. On Friday, I know I look forward to going to another year of Young Women Exploring Trades conference, a trades and technology conference. It is another great organization through YWITT. We are reaching out to a population that — we feel we can grow those particular numbers by reaching out to girls — young women at earlier ages — through workshops, such as cool tools, available in partnership with Education and YWITT, and by looking to expand the number of courses available in our rural schools as well.

All of this is to say that we will continue to work collaboratively with our stakeholders, with First Nation governments, with communities, with individual organizations. There is a lot of work ahead of us, but we are very fortunate to have the resources that we do have — putting them to good use and into particular programs that see employment and see Yukoners being able to expand their skill sets to be able to take advantage of the opportunities, not only today but well into the future.

I see my time is due — one minute — so I will perhaps sit down and let the next speaker — but I would like to thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing forth this important motion and being able to elaborate on some of our

initiatives that we are working on, and we continue to reaffirm our commitment to education and to lifelong learning.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I wasn't going to speak on this particular motion. However, after listening to one of the previous speakers and having heard a number of inaccurate statements being made in the Legislature the other day — that in some manner are acquainted with this — I thought it was appropriate at this time to correct the record on a couple of things being done by my department that have a great relationship to the Education department and to some of the comments made by the Member for Riverdale South.

The first thing I will talk about is the social inclusion and poverty reduction strategy. I know the other day — I believe it was Monday — the Leader of the Official Opposition made a great point of saying that for four years we haven't developed the guidelines, the baseline data, for the *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy*. She just simply got the facts wrong once again. The *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy* was adopted by this government in December 2012. Even with NDP math, that can't be four years ago that it was developed and implemented.

Given that that statement was so incorrect, I thought I would first of all correct that and then I would go on to say that we have also developed a comprehensive baseline of data that was established and that will inform the strategies, goals and objectives. This baseline of data was established and a subset of these indicators will be tracked over time and I remember one day in the Legislature providing those indicators. So if members opposite would like to have those indicators once again provided to them, then I would be only too happy to do this. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics has advised that these indicators should not be tracked more than one review every five years. That would indicate to me that we will have a review done in five years, in 2017, perhaps even late in 2016.

There has been a great deal of work put into this strategy and I only have to look at the committees that were formed to guide the development of the strategy. We had a community advisory committee that included representatives from organizations that represent the most vulnerable people in our society. The community advisory committee engaged the community. They ensured public input. They, I believe, strengthened the relationship between government and non-government organizations and they provided a great deal of intelligent, sage advice and feedback to the government — to Health and Social Services — throughout the development of the strategy. I should also add that the foundation of the strategy was evidence-based and it came from three separate major reports: the 2010 *Whitehorse Housing Adequacy Study*, *Dimensions of Social Inclusion and Exclusion in Yukon 2010* and it also included *Bridges and Barriers 2010: Yukon experiences with poverty, social exclusion and inclusion*. All of those things were taken into consideration when developing the *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy*. We do have baseline indicators and a report will come in the very near future.

The second thing that one of the members had a conversation about today or talked about today was the wellness plan for Yukon's children and families. This report was released in April 2014 and it provided a road map for Yukon government and possibly other governments, community groups, businesses and individuals a pathway for wellness in our population in the years to come.

It set out three pathways for achieving wellness, preventing illnesses and generally improving the health and wellness of our children — getting a good start in life, raising children who flourish, and healthy living by all.

So these were the three pathways. We developed a website and an interdepartmental committee within YG is now meeting regularly to coordinate initiatives related to healthy living. I know, through our cooperation with Education, we're coordinating implementation of learning together and healthy families programs in rural communities. I think that's one of the really positive things.

**Some Hon. Member:** (inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** My young friend is impatient for me to finish. I think he wants to get on to something else.

I'll also just mention a couple of other things that we're doing within the Department of Health and Social Services, as well as Education, that are providing tremendous support to our young people, the first of which is the Yukon Food for Learning program established in Yukon schools. We recently met with representatives from the Yukon Food for Learning Association and we can't emphasize enough how wonderful these people are and what a great job they're doing on behalf of all Yukon children in providing food for learning in Yukon schools. I have a great number of statistics and planning for the future and what else this association hopes to do with our cooperation, but suffice it to say that we are one of the major funders of this organization. That funding has increased over the years and, even though it's with a three-year agreement at the present time, we would anticipate some kind of increase in the years to come.

So those are only a few of the things. I also was going to talk about the collaboration with First Nations throughout the territory that we're engaged in, as well as some of the advances and changes that we've made in the Yukon childcare system, but I'll end it there. I just wanted to make sure a couple of those things were on the record and corrected.

**Ms. White:** I wanted to make sure that I didn't repeat myself too much, so I checked out the last time we had a similar debate in April of last year, when we talked about the importance of trades which, to be fair, I didn't realize this was so fundamentally about.

It's an interesting thing to know that, when I was in elementary school, I was told that smart kids went to university, not-so-smart kids went to college and the dumb kids went to trades school — so how times have changed now that we're talking about all the importance of trades and technology trades.

It was interesting to hear the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin talk about the Yukon Women in Trades and Technology,

because he's right. It's a fantastic organization and, before I got elected, I was on the board for three years. Sadly, it turned out it was a conflict of interest, because the Women's Directorate is a funder of Women in Trades and Technology, so I had to step down. It's a phenomenal organization because of what it does for young women.

On Friday, I will be hosting the event. I'm not even sure how many times now — it has been a lot of times. It's fantastic to see hundreds of grade 8 girls as they descend upon the college gym and spend a day doing four different trades — things from culinary — which I can relate to — carpentry, metal work, and the list goes on. It is a pretty fantastic thing to see.

It is interesting, when we talk about apprenticeships and we talk about trades because, in order to get your journeyman's certification, you have to go through an apprenticeship. You have to work a certain amount of hours underneath a ticketed person. We have asked in this House before — and we still haven't got any answers — but I'm curious: If it's so important to have tradespeople and journeymen — or journeypeople — they haven't really tried to change the terminology yet — how many apprentices does the Yukon government employ? How many people within all the departments, how many tradespeople do they have who are working on their apprenticeships? That is a question I would like to know because, if we were really serious about encouraging trades — if we were really serious — then we would also have them within our ranks.

That is just a question to throw out. How many apprentices are right now working for you, the Yukon government — working on their journeymen tickets?

I will leave it at that. Trades are important. The motion talks about lots of things, but one of them is trades.

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

**Mr. Hassard:** I certainly appreciate all of the comments from members this afternoon. I was hoping for more, I guess, but apparently fundamental skills aren't important everywhere in the Yukon, as I thought they were.

In closing, I would just like to make one comment for the last speaker — that is, personally I hope we don't have that many journeymen working for the government, because I hope they are all out working for private enterprise somewhere. That being said, I would like to thank you all for your time this afternoon.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

#### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

#### Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Mr. Elias:** Agree.

**Ms. Hanson:** Agree.

**Ms. Stick:** Agree.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Mr. Tredger:** Agree.

**Mr. Barr:** Agree.

**Mr. Silver:** Agree.

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

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

*Motion No. 791 agreed to*

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair (Ms. McLeod):** Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 7, Department of Economic Development, in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

#### **Bill No. 15: *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — continued**

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is Vote 7, Department of Economic Development, in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

#### **Department of Economic Development — continued**

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** From my recollection, when we last broached the subject of the Department of Economic



Development's budget through the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* for 2014-15, we were discussing the diverse fibre project and some of the nuances around routes and the issues related to irrevocable right-to-use agreements with the various partners on the other end of whichever line would be built. We had a bit of discussion around the issues related to an all-Canadian route versus a route through Skagway and Juneau and some of the issues that might raise from a security point of view, wherein I noted that I didn't feel those were as much an issue as some people think they are because of the interconnected world we live in today.

Without being able to recall the exact question that was asked, I will defer again to my colleagues across the floor to ask a question.

**Ms. Hanson:** I think that the minister had addressed the question that I had asked, because I did quickly check the Blues from Tuesday.

I have a question with respect to the strategic industries development fund projects. We had a fair amount of discussion about this area in previous budget debates. I guess, given the time, I am most interested in if the minister could outline the number of local companies that have so far received funding this fiscal year — local, as in the context of Yukon — through the strategic industries development fund, or how many will be receiving it — if they have already received it to date, or are anticipated to receive it by the fiscal year-end.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Of course, the strategic industries development fund is aimed specifically at Yukon businesses, so the only businesses or groups that would receive the funding would be Yukon businesses. That is to say, though, that if groups — for instance, a First Nation — received funding, they may choose to employ a business outside of the territory.

The strategic industries development fund supports the Government of Yukon's commitment to foster the development of industries that have the potential to create jobs, generate wealth, and increase Yukon's economic output. From April 1 to September 30, 2014, 12 strategic industries development projects were approved for the 2014-15 fiscal year, representing \$678,148.

The strategic industries development fund provides funds to projects focused on natural resources, tourism and culture, film and sound, and research, innovation and commercialization. The funding is intended to assist the private sector to address barriers to development in their respective sectors and to improve the competitiveness of their businesses.

For example, some of the activities that could be funded during the life of a project include research, planning, marketing, investment attraction, project management, financial projections, product testing and implementation support. Some examples of ineligible activities include construction costs, purchasing capital assets, leasehold improvements, ongoing operation and maintenance, costs

related to the owner or his or her immediate family and certain administration costs.

The fund does not provide assistance to projects that would rely on continued government support once in operation. In a case of mining development projects, the strategic industries fund can assist companies to improve the quality of their technical and feasibility studies, increasing their chances of obtaining adequate equity and debt financing from capital markets.

Examples of current projects to date include \$154,951 of the total project budget of almost \$500,000 for the Klondike Placer Miners' Association for the gold gravity concentrate upgrading research in this budget year. Another example would be \$146,250 to Icefield Tools to expand its global market share, as part of its market expansion strategy.

The number of projects funded to date for this budget — the numbers I have here are for this supplementary budget. These are simply strategic industries fund's revotes from 2013-14 to 2014-15. There are 11 projects.

Those are two of the following: Chief Isaac Incorporated; Dena Nezziddi Corporation; the Interpretour Inc.; the Klondike Placer Miners' Association — which I mentioned earlier; the Northern Film and Video Industry Association; Outcrop Yukon; the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce; the Yukon Chamber of Mines; the Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce; the Yukon First Nation Tourism Association; and the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance. The total value of those 11 projects that are in this supplementary budget are \$294,821.74.

**Ms. Hanson:** I appreciate the minister providing that level of detail. I realize that some of them might be on this contract registry.

The minister did say this and it links back to his economic development strategic plan, and the phrase is "built on the traditional pillars of mining and tourism". My question is: When we talk about accessing the strategic industries development fund, are mining and tourism enterprises competing for the same funds? If so, how are the net incremental benefits of mining and tourism proposals that are submitted for consideration compared against one another when being evaluated for funding?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** With the strategic industries fund, the aim is to develop some new aspect to an industry, typically. Now, for example, the Klondike Placer Miners' Association, you do not have individual placer mining companies coming to do this research. You have the industry coming together and conducting the research that would allow a new type of gold recovery. That is the kind of thing we want to see happen.

Individual companies can come forward — for instance, the example I used of Icefield Tools. What is new about that approach is the fact that it's a manufacturer who is selling their product around the world but they had barriers to entry with certain markets so the funding that we provided to that business was to develop a business plan to market their product into new markets. So there's a new aspect to that market in that case.

We don't typically get businesses at loggerheads or competing, necessarily. If there are multiple businesses coming together for a similar project we'll ask them to join forces somehow. That's our experience so far but, I guess to answer the question, the intent is to try to find new aspects to an industry or new industries that we want to see developed — so with the focus on natural resources and tourism, obviously we want to see new markets developed, new products developed or some sort of new innovation within those particular industries.

**Ms. Hanson:** I just note that the minister didn't directly answer the question I asked because I was asking whether or not the — I asked how the net incremental benefits of mining in tourism proposals that are submitted for consideration are compared against one another when being evaluated for funding because it is one fixed pot of funds.

During the Economic Development briefing we were told that the evaluation of strategic industries development fund proposals include the cost of the project, the timelines and outcomes and that the return must be significantly higher for higher awards of money — makes sense.

My question is: How does the minister or the department know the return for arts and culture and tourism projects without proper measurement or assessment tools? That leads to: How do you define and compare the significance of an investment in an area for arts, culture and tourism versus one of the ones he cited there, in terms of gold field tools and with respect to that kind of technology? What are the criteria? How do you know the return if you don't have the measurement tools for arts, culture and tourism?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** If an arts or culture or that type of business were to approach us for a strategic industries development fund, we would look at the best available data that we have. I would note that the focus of the strategic industries development fund isn't on those industries so much because of the fact that there are a number of other funding pots for those.

If it is a cultural industry, for instance, there is funding available through the Department of Tourism and Culture, and there are other funding pots within the Department of Economic Development that may be better suited to those types of businesses — for instance, the funding available through the Film and Sound Commission for film or recording programs that may be better suited to that.

If the member is asking how we compare those cultural industries — and I know that her point, in a roundabout way, is that we need to do a better job of collecting data about the cultural industries. That is the point at least I have heard her make publicly and, I think, in previous debates. The answer I would provide would simply be that we make the best judgment we can based on the best available data.

**Mr. Silver:** I have a question about the UNESCO funding. We did hear from the shareholders committee on UNESCO that gap funding was established by this territorial government — by the Yukon Party government. This was after the motion — I put a motion forth, it was amended and then it was unanimously passed here in the Legislative

Assembly. I got a message, like I say, from the shareholders that bridge gap funding was established.

I'm just wondering where this money come out of. The minister just listed off all of the strategic investment funding — which I believe is where Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in was looking for funding, but it didn't come out of that, so where did it come from? We want to know who to thank, especially if this designation does move forward.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** As we have noted previously in discussing this issue, both in the regular sitting of the Legislature as well as the motion debate we had on the topic, there was an application before the department for the strategic industries fund and as I noted previously, we in the department felt that there may be other opportunities that may be better suited to this particular application than the strategic industries fund.

Obviously pursuant to the motion we passed, we've been working closely with CanNor to ensure that the project was able to move forward. I should also add that an announcement hasn't formally been made about this yet so while the member is correct that we haven't formally indicated that support should be provided, we haven't made a formal announcement so I don't want to preclude that. But once we make that announcement, we will be in a position to explain exactly where the money comes from, et cetera.

But what I said when we originally discussed this was that, you know, we viewed the project favourably, that we were confident we would be able to find the financial resources to support it and that we would work with CanNor to ensure that they understood that we would be supporting it as well — which was what I understood to be one of the biggest issues — that CanNor wanted to know that another government or another funder was available.

So we have indicated that would be the case — that we do view the project favourably. We've communicated that to CanNor. My understanding is that CanNor is poised to very soon make an announcement of some nature with regard to this project.

**Mr. Silver:** I look forward to finding out which department of the Yukon Party government helped to provide the funding for this debate to continue in the Klondike where the debate should be had.

I'm going to move to support for local airlines. There is federal legislation existing currently that provides support for northern businesses. We're wondering if the Yukon Party has ever considered something along those same lines for northern airlines — specifically through ticketing policies with YTG.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** This obviously is an issue that is familiar to many members, as we've debated it over the course of the past few years — in particular, when WestJet announced its entrance into the Yukon market. We began having some discussions about what the role is for government in support of the airline industry in Yukon.

With regard to some of the funding pots that are available and support mechanisms that are available through the department — businesses like Air North have capitalized considerably. For instance, Air North is one of the most

obvious examples of the small business investment tax credit that the Department of Economic Development manages. With regard specifically to ticketing and booking flights through the government, we are aware that Air North does get the majority of our business. They have to date. We have had a number of discussions with Air North about that, and they are certainly very satisfied with the support they have received from government, but we are always interested in looking at other options from other jurisdictions and whether or not they will make sense for Yukon. We continue to engage with industry stakeholders, as well as other levels of government, to determine what the best possible course of action is from a policy perspective.

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order.

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

### **Chair's report**

**Ms. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, and directed me to report progress.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** I declare the report carried.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Seeing the time, I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

*Motion agreed to*

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

*The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.*