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HANSARD

Wednesday, April 22, 2015 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

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Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Tourism and Culture; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Justice; Yukon Development Corporation/ Yukon Energy Corporation
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Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Community Services; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Environment
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 22, 2015 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Earth Day

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, it is Earth Day today and I rise today to pay tribute to what is an important annual event for many of us.

Earth Day is an opportunity for us to make positive changes over the long term. I am pleased to say that our government is committed to doing this each and every day. The Climate Change Secretariat coordinates the government's wide response to climate change on a daily basis, while also forming climate partnerships with various organizations — the many government departments involved with water management who ensure the continued health of all Yukon waters; as well, through initiatives like the *Solid Waste Action Plan*, which includes the current efforts to enhance our efforts for recycling, waste reduction and diversion; and the *Energy Strategy for Yukon*. It gives me great pride to say that we are making real progress on implementing the climate change action plan.

We remain committed to the goals of the government's climate change action strategy, specifically: enhancing knowledge and understanding of climate change; adapting to climate change; reducing greenhouse emissions; and leading Yukon action in response to climate change.

I would like to recognize those who have helped make great strides toward those goals. First, last December, the Yukon government once again participated as a member of the Canadian delegation to the United Nations international climate change negotiations. Our participation ensures that Yukon values, circumstances and ideas are factored into national and international decisions on climate change. This shows northern leadership and builds working relationships to advance our research, adaptation and mitigation interests. Our government also sent a Yukon climate change youth ambassador in recognition of the importance of youth involvement in climate change issues. This demonstrates our commitments to promoting discussions among future generations and to enhancing the knowledge and skills of our Yukon youth.

Secondly, this year the Climate Change Secretariat is co-leading the Arctic Council's initiative focused on climate change adaptation. Following the Arctic Council's ministerial meeting in Iqaluit later this month, they will launch a climate change adaptation information portal. This on-line database

will enhance northerners' ability to effectively adapt to climate change by fostering knowledge transfer, innovation and the development of best practices. This government's commitment to a healthy environment goes beyond climate change. I would like to commend our Water Resources branch for its efforts leading the implementation of the *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan* in collaboration with other government departments. This plan helps ensure that the Yukon will have water for nature and water for people.

In the last year, our government has been busy meeting many of the goals outlined in the water strategy. Now in its second year, we look forward to reaching new milestones in 2015-16 and, to that end, we are investing more than \$1 million this year in order to continue funding a training program at Yukon College and to build additional hydrometric and water quality stations across the territory.

The Yukon government is also committed to modernizing recycling regulations. By updating the current regulations, our government is reflecting its continued commitment to promote recycling and responsible waste management throughout the territory. It will also ensure customers recycle more beverage containers, while helping to keep products such as electronic waste and tires out of our landfills. By making these changes to the regulations, we are ensuring that recycling fees better cover the costs of diverting and processing recyclable materials.

I am proud to be the Minister of Environment and, as an avid outdoorsman and someone who has been involved in community-based resource councils and committees for years, I have a great affinity for our environmental stewardship, which supports a healthy, sustainable and prosperous Yukon, now and into the future.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all Yukoners to join me in celebrating Earth Day.

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to celebrate Earth Day.

Not only do we globally celebrate the planet today, but in Canada, April is also National Poetry Month. Poetry allows us to see the world through different eyes and today I want to show you earth as a pale, blue dot.

I would like to share with you, *Shoulders*, by Canadian spoken-word giant Shane Koyczan. I am going to try really hard to do this poem justice:

Like many, I love to look at the stars

I love the fact that ours is just one among many

What I love about astronomy is that our constellations tell a story

Our constellations were born from mythology.

Mythology was our first attempt to understand the world in which we live

We put a god in everything

And those gods would give us our reasons.

Why is the sky blue? Who chose blue? Gods.

How come men have nipples? It's the will of the gods.

Why does the wine taste so good? There's a god in it.

And for a while there was not a single thing that the gods could not explain.

We believed that their anger gave us lightning, their despair gave us rain.

We whispered our desires to them, believing that their charity would sustain us.

Those gods... were just stories.

But stories became a large part of how we learn;

They burn lessons into our memories;

They become a part of how we remember.

We can remember almost everything,

Right down to that first unbearable bee sting,

When we learned that this tiny blue marble we call the world has rules.

Rule number one: Don't mess with the bees!

An unforgettable lesson brought to you by your memories.

I remember that I grew up loving mythology.

I remember the story of the titan Atlas, who was also the god of astronomy,

The original global positioning system sending sailors safely home by telling them which constellations to keep starboard.

He taught us about the stars.

He did all of all of this while he held up ours —

Our pale blue dot.

But Atlas is caught between two different tellings of his story.

In the first, he leads a rebellion against Olympus and is then sentenced to hold the heavens on his shoulders for eternity.

In the second story, he is chosen to be the guardian of the pillars that hold up the earth and sky.

I prefer the second story.

It means that the world is not a punishment; but rather, a responsibility.

But how can just one be charged with such a burden?

How can just one be responsible for all of this?

When I think of Atlas, I think of a single drop of rain.

I think how unfair it would be to hold a single drop solely responsible for making the entire world clean again.

I remember how my grandmother tried to explain our world to me —

She told me a story

She said the ground and the sky, they love each other

But they don't have arms.

So rain — that's just how they hold one another.

I began to see how the earth and the sky need each other.

But I wondered about us.

In this perfect design, where do we fit?

Which piece of the puzzle are we?

Like constellations, I began to see a connection between dots and numbered my thoughts

And drew lines from one to the next.

I began to see us in the context of a bigger picture, sharpening the blur slowly into focus

We are Atlas.

I saw that this pale blue dot, this one world, is all we get.

There will be no reset button, no new operating system, no downloadable upgrade.

We will not be allowed to trade in our old world for a new one with climate control or better fuel efficiency.

We get one shot at this.

Dismiss all reports of second chances; we get one

And yet we draw advances on our future as if we one day we won't be held accountable.

We will.

We are.

The human race runs toward a finish line emblazoned with the words "too far" and wonders,

Will we ever cross it?

Have we already?

We are faced with the seemingly impossible task

And it's okay to be afraid.

Our dilemma stands before us like a mountain carved into a blockade —

The sheer magnitude of our problem would be enough to dissuade anyone.

How do we save the world?

We lay in our beds curled into question marks, wondering,

What can we do?

Where do we start?

Is hope a glue crazy enough to hold us together while we're falling apart?

The burden seems immense

But we can do this.

We must take the martial-arts approach to loving our planet —

Love as self-defence.

Forget about the cost.

There will be no other thing as worth saving as this —

Nothing more important; nothing as precious.

This is home.

All of our stories start and end here.

We are sheltered within an atmosphere that has given us every single breath we will ever take.

Every monument we will ever make has come from the flesh of our planet —

Water like blood, skin like soil, bones like granite.

It is not a myth, there is no debate, facts are in.

Fact is, there's never been any question.

We are facing crisis.

We dismiss the truth, not because we can't accept it, but because having to commit ourselves to change is a scary prospect for anybody.

The most alarming part of the statement "we are facing crisis"

Isn't the word "crisis",

It's the word "we" —

Because those two letters take the responsibility away from one and rest it squarely on the shoulders of everybody.

We are Atlas now.

But our strength will come from finding a way to share in shouldering the responsibility of turning the impossible into somehow —

Somehow, we will do this.

We can do this.

We can dismiss apathy; we can reject uncertainty.

We can be the new chapter in our story.

We will not see change immediately.

We must act in faith as the hour hand grips the minute hand and they land on the eleventh hour.

We must believe like the seed that change is possible to see.

Never seize the flower; it grows knowing it must become more than what it was.

It changes, because in growth, all of its potential can be unlocked.

Change is like rain, it starts with a single drop —

Just one, like our pale blue dot,

Caught in an endless waltz called gravity, we circle the sun, wondering who, if anyone, left the light on.

We are constellations drawn upon the earth; we are connected to one another; we are bound.

We must behave as the arms that connect the ground to the sky.

We must try to be more like the rain.

Our stories may differ, our goal is the same.

How do we save our pale blue dot?

We act as the rain, realizing that each individual drop is as equal and important as any.

We act as one.

Now we are many.

Mr. Silver: I rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute and mark the 45th annual Earth Day.

Mr. Speaker, Earth Day was originally held on April 22, 1970 in the United States and it was originally intended as a one-time deal. It was to bring awareness to the environmental movement, but now it's considered as the birthplace of the modern-day movement.

As Yukoners, we have a lot to celebrate when it comes to our environment, to our beautiful scenery, to our fresh air and our clean water.

We are certainly very fortunate, but we should also take note of all those things that we may take for granted that some other countries and areas of this world do not possess. As individuals, we all have a part to play in ensuring that the actions that we take and the products that we buy are not damaging to the environment. As lawmakers, we have the added responsibility of ensuring that what we do in this Chamber is for the long-term benefit of generations of Yukoners to come. That means not mortgaging the future for short-term gains.

Earth Day is a chance to celebrate what we have and provides us with an opportunity to reflect on our individual choices that we make each day and how they affect the carbon footprint. I was first introduced to a topic, to a concept, to a theory 25 years ago when I was studying environmental

science, and that is called the “tragedy of the commons”. The tragedy of the commons is an economic theory and it is by Garrett Harden. The term is taken from the title of an article that Harden wrote in 1968, which in turn is based upon an essay by a Victorian economist on the effect of unregulated grazing in common lands. The theory states that individuals acting independently and rationally, according to their own self-interests, behave contrary to the best interests of the whole group by depleting some portion of the common resource. Simply put, without a plan from a greater community, the individual and society will believe that their small actions couldn't possibly have that much damage.

Now the reason for this history — and I have to tell you that it is very humbling to do a history lesson in front of Mr. Deuling, who is a legend in that pursuit in the Yukon. The reason for the history lesson is that this is not a new concept. It has been a widely held truth in science for over a century now that this tragic belief is having an enormous, detrimental effect on our climate. As an individual, as a community or as a small government, we cannot simply assume that our small, individual contribution does not affect the larger picture, for that is simply not true.

This is why Earth Day is such a profound success as an environmental movement. We live in a global village, and the tide is turning on those who believe that our small footprints do not add up. More than six million Canadians join together each year with more than one billion people across the world in 170 countries to stage events and provide awareness on a local environmental stage.

I am very pleased to stand here today and recognize Earth Day. Living in a healthy, beautiful territory is something that we are fortunate to enjoy and that I truly hope to pass on for generations to come.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Graham: It is indeed a pleasure for me, and I hope all members will join me in welcoming the grade 11 history class from Vanier Catholic Secondary School along with their instructor, Jud Deuling. Welcome to the Legislature, and I hope it is a very pleasant stay for you.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of personal privilege

Speaker: Hon. Premier, please.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Yesterday, during Question Period, I misspoke when I stated that we have increased health care funding by 350 percent. As I have stated before in this House, the correct statement was that we have increased our

investment in home care by 350 percent. I wanted to stand on a point of personal privilege just to correct the record.

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House agrees with the *Earth Statement* authored by prominent scientists, economists and policy-makers, which states that in order to prevent a rise in temperature beyond two degrees Celsius, the “safety limit” agreed to by governments, a large portion of fossil fuel reserves must be left in the ground.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Environment to recognize that, contrary to a statement in this House on April 21, 2015, the Yukon Aishihik wood bison was removed from the specially protected species list and added to the list of big game species in 1998.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to actually transfer the Yukon College endowment lands to Yukon College.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Health and Social Services to visit Watson Lake to explain the government’s decision to issue a tender for provision of pharmacy services in the community of Watson Lake.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

Speaker’s statement

Speaker: Before proceeding with Question Period, the Chair will make a statement regarding events that occurred yesterday in Question Period.

During Question Period, the Member for Copperbelt South asked the Minister of Justice a series of questions about inmate risk assessment. In responding to the member’s final supplementary question, the minister drew the House’s attention to comments that he referred to as “heckling”. The minister then referred to comments about heckling, which he attributed to a staff member of the Official Opposition. At that point, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King rose on a point of order. The gist of the point of order was that the minister had either used abusive or insulting language against, or imputed a false or unavowed motive to, the aforementioned staff member.

The Standing Orders referred to by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King — 19(g) and 19(i) — do not protect persons who are not members of the Assembly. However, Guideline 8 of the Guidelines for Oral Question Period says:

“A question must adhere to the proprieties of the House in that it must not contain inferences, impute motives or cast aspersions upon persons within the House or out of it.” The Chair applies the same rule to responses to questions.

Having reviewed the Blues, it is the Chair’s view that there was no point of order. The minister repeated what another person had allegedly written. The minister did not cast aspersions on the person who allegedly made the remark.

The Chair would also remind members that they are responsible for everything they say in the House, even if they are quoting another person. Attributing the words to another person does not immunize a member from being called to order.

In response to the point of order, the minister used the word “hypocrites” to refer to members of the Official Opposition. That term is out of order, and the minister has been a member of this House long enough to know that and not to use it.

Before ending this statement, the Chair would note that the point of order was preceded by a number of comments that personalized the proceedings. There were also a number of comments by members who had not been recognized to speak that also raised the level of tension in the House.

As the Chair said yesterday in dealing with the point of order, ultimately the level of order and decorum in this House is up to the members. Whether the Chair intervenes on his own, or rules on a point of order, the offending words will have been said before they can be dealt with. The Chair does his best to apply a uniform standard, but it is ultimately the members who will determine what that standard is.

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: YESAA process

Ms. Hanson: Yesterday, Bill S-6 was pushed through the parliamentary standing committee. The Yukon Party’s federal cousins voted down a dozen amendments, removing any chance of staving off more economic uncertainty in Yukon. By now, most Yukoners know that the changes to YESAA contained in Bill S-6 will be bad for Yukon. First Nation governments have been clear: they will be forced to fight these unilateral changes in court. Industry has been clear: the threat of more litigation will spell the end of Yukon as an attractive place to do business.

The Premier is either being wilfully blind to the negative economic implications that will come with the passing of Bill S-6 or he simply doesn’t care about the repercussions. It is clear that the Premier is not listening to any stakeholder groups or citizens when it comes to Bill S-6.

So, Mr. Speaker, who is the Premier listening to when he pushes his unilaterally imposed changes to YESAA?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It is very disappointing that, at this point of this debate, the Leader of the NDP still doesn’t understand that this is federal legislation. This is federal legislation — we were consulted on it, as were First Nations. What I will say is that an environmental assessment process that creates consistency with other jurisdictions allows us to

remain competitive, allows us the opportunity to see jobs and opportunities to keep Yukoners here at home, and that's a priority for this government.

Ms. Hanson: It's difficult when the Premier refuses to acknowledge that he pushed for the most controversial amendments. First Nation governments have been clear that they will challenge the changes to YESAA in the courts if Bill S-6 is passed. When the vice-president of Capstone Mining was asked what impact the litigation would have on mining, he said — and I quote: "It's going to result in more layoffs, more mine closures and the end of mining in Yukon."

Kaminak Gold Corporation has said the changes to YESAA would make their presence in Yukon uncertain. These are their words, not mine.

The Premier has also made it abundantly clear that YESAA does not just apply to mining, meaning that all assessments will be caught in the crossfire created by this government. It is clear to everyone in the Yukon that the Premier is taking the Yukon's economy to the precipice. Can the Premier give any assurances to any businesses that their investments will not be tied up as a result of costly and lengthy court battles?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Bill S-6 is good for Yukon's economy and will strengthen Yukon's environmental assessment process. We stand by that. We know that there are ways to get through this, as has happened in the past. I stood in front of the House of Commons committee and said that, as leaders in Yukon, we have the ability to find a way to implement these amendments on the ground.

That offer to Yukon First Nation leaders is still there and I look forward to the opportunity to work with Yukon First Nations, as we have in the past through the devolution transfer agreement and also through the Yukon oil and gas agreement. We have done it before; we can do it again.

Ms. Hanson: After going behind First Nations' backs, why would they trust this government? You know, this government's actions simply defy belief. The Yukon Party is walking into economic uncertainty with their eyes wide open. Worse yet, the Premier is actively encouraging his Conservative friends to pass the legislation more quickly. Everyone in the Yukon except the docile dozen knows that these changes to Bill S-6 will take the Yukon down a path of litigation and economic uncertainty. As the Premier repeats his recycled and inaccurate talking points of Bill S-6, he begins to sound more like the last violinist on the Titanic while the ship sinks beneath his feet.

Why is this government so wilfully taking Yukon down a path that is going to lead to broken relationships, litigation, uncertainty and economic decline?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It is surprising, but yet the Leader of the NDP continues to creep to a new low on a daily basis.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Ms. White: 19(g), 19(i) — so either it imputes false motive or uses abusive or insulting language.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I agree. The Premier's language was somewhat abusive, but he is only returning what he was getting, so there is no point of order. I would like to take this opportunity to wonder if any of the members were listening to my statement earlier today. Hon. Premier, please curtail yourself, sir.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I was mentioning, Bill S-6 is federal legislation. Yukon government was consulted on these amendments. We provided our input. We believe that the federal government listened to and took into consideration our comments and recommendations prior to tabling Bill S-6.

They also went out and consulted with First Nations. I won't comment on the adequacy of that, because that would be disrespectful for First Nations. What I can say is that having environmental assessment legislation that is consistent with other jurisdictions is good for Yukon. It's good for Yukon families. It's good for Yukon jobs. As I have stated publicly, I look forward to the opportunity to sit down with Yukon First Nation chiefs as leaders in this territory to find a path forward. The federal government has provided — or will provide, if this goes through — legislation. It is the responsibility of leaders in Yukon to find a path forward to implement these amendments.

Question re: Drug and alcohol addictions counselling

Ms. Stick: The Yukon NDP knows that expanding access to alcohol and drug services for all Yukoners in all of our communities is one of the urgent needs facing our health care system. Just last fall, we noted in the 2014 clinical services plan that alcohol and drug services are in significant deficit outside Whitehorse, and there is no greater need — particularly in the communities. This finding was highlighted again as recently as last month in the Auditor General's report on corrections in Yukon, which stresses that most communities outside Whitehorse do not have access to substance abuse management and relapse prevention programs.

Mr. Speaker, when will the government develop a coherent plan for coordinated community-based actions on alcohol and drug services?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Certainly the department has been collaborating with a number of key stakeholders around the territory, including First Nations, Mental Health Services, Many Rivers, Community Health and Justice to identify a number of gaps in services.

I give accolades to this government who has invested in replacing the Sarah Steele Building. Those services are expandable into many of the communities, but we also see services through Many Rivers on a contract basis reaching out to the communities in the territory.

This government continues to invest in services for people with addictions and mental health issues and I stand behind those investments. We certainly know that the members opposite continue to vote against those services.

Ms. Stick: The 2014 clinical services plan had no shortage of comments on the significant deficit facing alcohol and drug services outside of Whitehorse, including — and I quote: “...all aspects of ADS care, including the general absence of aftercare and a high rate of recidivism.”

The Yukon Party government has neglected rural services for ADS prevention, detoxification, pre-treatment and especially after-care. The Sarah Steele replacement may expand the number of clients provided with care, but even the minister cannot disagree that the building is based firmly in Whitehorse. The absence of community-based services means people are on their own before and after treatment.

What is the minister doing to address the lack of ADS after-care in Yukon’s communities?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, a new community addictions program has been developed to address this very thing. The community addictions program will provide supports within communities, including prevention, pre-treatment, counselling, and after-care supports. But as I mentioned in my first response, this government has made significant investments in moving forward with Sarah Steele. We continue to have dialogue and contracts with Many Rivers. We work with Mental Health Services. This government has invested over \$1 million in the Jackson Lake land-based treatment facilities. So we’ll continue to stand behind those investments and we urge the members opposite to start voting in favour of providing these services to Yukoners who need them.

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, alcohol and drug services have not been a priority across the territory and in the communities. If the minister wants proof positive of this statement, he need look no further than his own department’s Health and Social Services strategic plan for 2015-19. The only issue this government will be tracking over the next four years is the rate of emergency room visits by people, related to harmful alcohol use. Youth access to addiction services and supports, the percentage of ADS clients accessing after-care programs and rural access to ADS services are all left to some future date. The minister mentioned a report. Where is it? I would like to see it tabled in this House.

Will this minister turn his words into action and make rural access to alcohol and drug services a priority today?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, mental health and addiction services for youth and their families is a collaborative process with the department and work is ongoing to ensure that that effective integration of supports continues.

We have seen this government continue to provide investments, not only in alcohol and drug services and counselling for adults, but for youth as well. We know that the members opposite continue to vote against those services. This government has invested over \$1 million in Jackson Lake. The members opposite continue to vote against those

services to those individuals. This government has brought forward investments in replacing the Sarah Steele Building and the members opposite continue to vote against those services. This government is doing great work, and I would like to extend my thanks to the staff — the men and women who work each and every day providing these services for mental health and addictions to people all across the territory.

Question re: Continuing care facilities

Mr. Silver: A business-case analysis was done by a private contractor on the Government of Yukon’s new 300-bed continuing care facility and listed the price of it at \$330 million. Now, in this year’s budget there is \$26 million set aside for the advancement of this project. Several months ago, the government referred to this as a 300-bed facility. This spring, the government changed its mind and now refers to it as a 150-bed facility. The new minister said yesterday that the second phase could be built 20 years down the road. The government has certainly changed its tune from just a few months ago.

While the government figures out how many beds it actually is going to build, can it at least tell Yukoners what the total cost for the project is going to be?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Well, here we have another clear example of the Liberal leader not paying attention to debate in this Legislative Assembly. The Liberal leader is well aware that this afternoon we have a private member’s motion debating this very thing. I don’t know if it is just that he is not organized or doesn’t understand the motions that are on the docket for this afternoon.

Let’s be clear. This government is moving forward with an investment in a facility that will have 150 beds provided to Yukoners, many of whom are our relatives, friends, families, brothers, sisters and grandparents — people — Yukoners who need these services. So 150 beds that will be completed in 2018 — and at that time we can conduct a further needs assessment on whether we need to move forward with an additional 150 beds.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Now I know the Member for Whitehorse Centre, the Leader of the Official Opposition, finds seniors’ care funny, and that is very sad, Mr. Speaker. This government takes this issue very seriously, but we care about Yukoners. We care about our brothers and sisters and family members and providing that level of care to those Yukoners who need it when they need it.

Mr. Silver: The minister can still hurl insults and we will still keep on asking the questions. The public is confused about this new facility. There is a motion from the previous Minister of Health and Social Services that was brought forth in December of 2014 — only a few short months ago — and I quote: “That this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue moving forward with the planning and construction of a new 300-bed continuing care facility...” Now, unlike the government, I have been quite clear as what I would do. I would put more resources into facilities in our communities, and I would not build a giant warehouse in Whitehorse.

Last fall, the government did its own analysis on the potential cost of the new facility. It said the cost will be \$268 million for a 300-bed facility, a full \$60-million less than an independent consultant. Here's the question, Mr. Speaker: What number is the government going to use — \$268 million or \$330 million?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Another clear example that the member, the Liberal leader, is confused. We have in fact seen how the Liberals make investments in this territory. We only have to look back from 2000-02 when an exodus of people was leaving the territory because of those investments.

We've been clear all along, Mr. Speaker. We're building a facility that will be for 150 beds, completed by 2018, and that facility will be expandable to 300 beds. The member opposite just needs to pay attention to the details and be a little bit clearer with his questions.

Our priority is to provide that level of care to Yukoners, many of whom are our friends and family members — a high level of care. They are no longer able to stay in their homes. This government is committed to providing that to Yukoners and we would encourage the members opposite, instead of heckling in the Legislature this afternoon, to pay attention and to support this program.

Mr. Silver: Pay attention to which motion? It's a moving target with this government.

Mr. Speaker, Yukoners are understandably nervous when they see this government barging into major construction projects without a plan. The fact that the government can't decide whether it's 300 beds or 150 beds — that's not helping either, Mr. Speaker. The timeline for this project is being driven by the timing of the next election — that is known. The government wants people working on this project as we head to the polls for the fall of 2016. This type of incompetent management will result in more wasteful, overbudget projects.

The government has been repeatedly criticized by the Auditor General of Canada for its shortcomings in this regard. We just heard this week that the LNG facility will be 22 percent over its budget this week, so why is the government moving ahead with construction when it can't even tell Yukoners what the end cost of the project will be?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This government is focused by providing health care for Yukoners today and for the future, and that's why we have the vision to be building a long-term care facility right now for 150 residents, with the ability to expand it at a later date if the need is there. That's what's quite clear.

What's also very clear is that the Leader of the Liberal Party was very publicly opposed to the hospital that this government built in his community and opposed to the new nursing home. I challenge the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Member for Klondike to ask his constituents today what they think about those facilities.

We are focusing on building our population, focusing on diversifying our economy to deliver the programs and services that Yukoners desire and Yukoners deserve.

Question re: Beaver Creek infrastructure

Mr. Barr: The Yukon Party government's apparent belief that Haines Junction is the westerly boundary of Yukon is astounding. The Village of Beaver Creek is the latest casualty of the government's lack of investment in the upper Alaska Highway. We learned that the fire alarms in many buildings are no longer directly connected to the Beaver Creek fire hall. This is an essential and important component of a community's emergency response system.

Is the Yukon Party government aware of Beaver Creek's disconnected fire alarms? What is their action plan to reconnect the alarms to the fire hall?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I should point out that the Beaver Creek facility that was recently constructed was something that the members opposite voted against. It provides an excellent service to that community by integrating the protective services needed for that community.

If there is some malfunction with some technical aspect of the building, of course we'll look into that and try to correct it. I haven't heard that the fire alarm is disconnected currently. If that is the case, I'm sure officials are working diligently to fix it, but I certainly don't think it's something that requires political direction to do. I will assume that the officials are diligently working on that. I know that the members opposite don't have the confidence in our officials to do that, but if there is a need for some direction, of course we'll provide the direction to fix the fire alarms.

Mr. Barr: The school is not hooked up, among others. The Beaver Creek airport doesn't have an automated runway light system. That means that, in case of an emergency, someone from the community needs to physically go to the airport and turn on the lights so that emergency aircraft can land. When there is an emergency, turning on the runway lights should not be on the checklist of a modern Yukon community.

Will the government finally listen to Beaver Creek residents and install automated runway lights at the community's airport and will they finally pay attention to the needs of Yukoners who live between the Alaska border and Haines Junction?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Of course we're paying attention to the needs of Yukoners. That is why we invested in a brand new building for Beaver Creek that was recently constructed. It was built on time and on budget, to my understanding, and it provides an excellent service to the community. It integrates all of the protective services that are provided there and is certainly a central point in the community when it comes to providing those services. If there is a particular aspect with some runway lights, I'm sure I'll hear about it from officials in due course, but certainly that is not the kind of thing that we provide political direction on — with regard to whether or not a fire alarm is plugged in. If there is something at the operational level that needs to be dealt with, I will be happy to look into the matter.

Certainly the investment in this new building is a wonderful boon to the community and it improves the services that are available to the community of Beaver Creek. It is

unfortunate that the members opposite voted against that wonderful new facility.

Mr. Barr: It is still the minister's responsibility, Mr. Speaker. It isn't just the fire hall that is left wanting when it comes to the community support. The Beaver Creek Health Centre recently received a new ambulance, but, get this — it is too big for the building. We have already discussed this at length in the budget debate and it is similar to the Watson Lake ambulance bay that is short on space. In the dead of winter, when the ambulance requires cleaning and maintenance and when stretchers need to be loaded and unloaded, the ambulance needs to sit outside and be exposed to the Yukon winter.

How did the Yukon Party government think that this is an acceptable solution for the residents of Beaver Creek? Why didn't the government make sure that the new ambulance fit into the Beaver Creek Health Centre?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: You know, it is again disappointing to look at the lack of leadership that we see from the opposition — the opposition who say that one day they would aspire to be government, Mr. Speaker. If they really cared about the community, what they would have done is to advise those people to contact the officials to make sure that the work was done —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order — back off. I can't hear people. I can hear more on this side than I can on this side.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: If they cared they would advise those people to contact those officials. Instead, what they are trying to do is make political points. Next time that they see an issue like this, show some leadership and do the right thing.

Question re: Energy transmission line

Mr. Tredger: The Yukon government, through the Yukon Development Corporation, is spending \$5.3 million on a new 138-kilowatt transmission line between Stewart Crossing and Keno. This \$5.3 million is just for planning.

We understand that the cost of the new transmission line will be in the neighbourhood of \$40 million. Will the minister confirm that planning and construction of this new transmission line will cost Yukoners an estimated \$45 million?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The money that is currently allocated is just for planning to get it shovel-ready, but I would remind the member that, since the questions came up yesterday in the House about investments and hydro infrastructure, this is but the latest in a long string of investments that this government has made in investing in our hydro infrastructure. That includes the investment in Mayo B; that includes the investment that connected the Carmacks-Stewart transmission line project, which connected the two grids and which is a platform commitment we fulfilled. It includes the investment in the third turbine at the Aishihik facility and, of course, in the latest step, upgrading the line to

Keno — which, as the member may know, the line itself is in need of work and, at this point, we're looking at the options for what type of line it makes sense to replace it with, when we will be making investments to that infrastructure, which has reached a stage in its life where it does need investment in it.

Mr. Tredger: In the event of power outages, Keno residents have to wait hours for a temporary generator to be brought up from as far away as Whitehorse. They have been asking for years for a backup generator. Just yesterday, the Minister of Community Services talked about Keno being too small to justify incorporation or getting a local advisory council. I certainly hope that the minister is not pretending that Keno residents, or even Mayo residents, are the main beneficiaries of this \$45 million project. That is a very expensive backup generator.

The real beneficiary is the mining sector, but Alexco has shut down production and Victoria Gold is far from being an active mine. Will existing mines and future industrial consumers be expected to contribute to the direct costs of this \$45 million project, or will it be up to Yukoners to foot the bill?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, I should point out to the member that these are planning dollars at this point in time. It's the latest in a long string of investments that we've made in hydro infrastructure, including the Mayo B hydro facility, the investment in the Carmacks-Stewart transmission line project, the investment in the Aishihik third turbine — and I would point out to the member that, as part of his preamble, he noted the issue of power outages in Keno.

Investing in and upgrading this line — which is due for an upgrade because of the age of the equipment — looking at the options for that and determining what voltage that should be is part of improving that reliability. Rather than buying — as the member suggested — a fossil fuel-powered generator to be placed in Keno, we're investing in the line that takes clean hydro power from Mayo B to the residents of Keno, and of course to Alexco and any other future customers that come on, whether they be residential or industrial, in the Keno area.

Mr. Tredger: The Yukon Energy Corporation is expected to manage this project, but curiously its parent company, the Yukon Development Corporation, is putting out the tenders on this project. It is clear that this path involves no ratepayer scrutiny. If the Energy Corporation was to fully manage this project, it would have to bring it to the Yukon Utilities Board and have its plans scrutinized. If this project was to receive proper scrutiny from the regulator, there is a good chance it wouldn't go ahead as it is. There just aren't the industrial or residential consumers to merit a \$45-million expenditure.

Is this the government's plan to deliberately use the Yukon Development Corporation when it wants to rubberstamp energy projects and spend millions of dollars on projects without appropriate scrutiny?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I have the sense that the Member for Mayo-Tatchun doesn't understand the Yukon Utilities Board process and doesn't understand that there's a difference

between when projects such as this one — and, at this point, they are planning dollars for a project — are funded entirely by government and are not being added into the rate base that customers then have to pay for as part of their electrical bills, those projects do not go before the Yukon Utilities Board as a matter of course.

Anything that the corporation — in this case, Yukon Energy Corporation — wants to see added to the rate base and that they are fully covering themselves and they are paying for, that has to go to the Yukon Utilities Board, because it is being charged to consumers — but if government makes an investment, that same requirement does not exist.

I would remind the member that this investment in improving the electrical line in the area is necessary because of the age of the equipment. It will improve the reliability of power supply in Keno. It will provide that power through hydro power from the Mayo facility, rather than fossil fuels, as the member suggested. I would remind the member that, in addition to industrial customers in the area, that in fact there has been work done on potential wind projects within the Keno area and at Ferry Hill — that, if those projects were developed, would also be using that transmission line. This is the latest of a string of investments, including over \$100 million in Mayo B, over \$40 million in the Carmacks-Stewart transmission line project — which connected the grids — and the Aishihik third turbine. This government is investing in hydro infrastructure.

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. 926

Clerk: Motion No. 926, 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 continue moving forward with the planning and construction of a new 150-bed continuing care facility that is designed to provide for future expansion in recognition of Yukon's growing senior population, while at the same time continuing to enhance home care for seniors in order that they can stay in their homes and home communities as long as possible.

Mr. Elias: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of Motion No. 926, urging the Yukon government to continue moving forward with the planning and construction of a new 150-bed continuing care facility that is designed to provide for future expansion in recognition of Yukon's growing senior population, while at the same time continuing to enhance home care for seniors in order that they can stay in their homes and home communities as long as possible.

There appears to be some confusion among the members opposite about the purpose of the new 150-bed continuing care facility. I would like to take a few moments to help correct some misunderstandings that the members opposite may have. We should also remember that, in my opinion, what has been lost in this discussion is that this is not a seniors facility; it is a care facility. Seniors will be the majority of clients, but continuing care is for any Yukoner who may need specialized care. It is about our families. It is about our grandparents. It is about our parents. It is about our brothers and sisters. It is about our friends. It is about caring about Yukoners.

That being said, we know that the Canadian population is aging. Stats Canada indicates that seniors make up the fastest growing age group. We know that this growing population means that the majority of clients at this continuing care facility will be seniors. The trend is expected to continue for the next several decades.

In 2011, statistics calculated by Employment and Social Development Canada pointed out that 8.8 percent of our population in the territory was 65 years and older. The projection grows substantially by the year 2036 where, in the Yukon, it is projected that 19.6 percent of residents will be 65 years or older. That means one in five Yukoners will be older than 65 by the year 2036. My point here is that our government is planning for the long term for a demonstrated need.

A Yukon Party government priority remains to keep Yukoners in their communities and homes as long as possible. To that end, we have invested extensively in seniors housing in Yukon communities. Successive Yukon Party governments have built new seniors housing in Whitehorse, Haines Junction, Watson Lake, Teslin and Faro over the last few years. Work to build a new seniors residence in Mayo is presently underway. In addition, work to replace the McDonald Lodge in Dawson City began last year.

We have agreed that home care is very effective in keeping people safely in their homes longer, both in Whitehorse and rural communities. Over the past 14 years, the budget for home care has increased by 364 percent, to a budgeted \$5.609 million to allow seniors to stay in their homes longer. I have heard the Member for Riverdale South refer to our continuum of care. Unfortunately, their stance reflects a misunderstanding of what continuum of care actually means when it comes to looking after our loved ones. The government's planning reflects a continuum.

It is not a matter of living with medical supports or living without medical supports; it is a matter of degree. People who do not require any specialized supports are at one end of the spectrum. Most people fall into this category of home living — or independent living.

For various reasons, including illness or aging, some people require home care or assisted living. Home care is exactly as it sounds. Additional support is brought into the home, as needed. Supported living refers to facilities that offer meals, light housekeeping assistance and social activities. It is not for those who have complex medical needs.

The term “assisted living” is also used to describe this kind of retirement community, or aging-in-place facility, where food, laundry, housekeeping, personal care services and assistance with minor physical or functional health challenges are provided. As medical needs become more complex, assisted or supported living facilities will not suffice.

One type of care cannot be used to replace the other. This is where the position taken by the opposition is flawed. Home care is effective, but is not a substitute for continuing care for those who require a significant level of support or specialized services.

Our government’s current numbers show that, today, we have over 200 home care clients who may develop health issues that require continuing care beds in the near future. In addition, 14 percent of home care clients have no local caregiver at all. This lack of a caregiver is considered one of the strongest indicators for predicting the future needs for continuing care. Residential continuing care is the term that refers to facilities that provide 24-hour professional care and supervision for those with complex medical care needs and are unable to manage themselves.

I’ve noticed that, sometimes, the members opposite appear to use all of these terms interchangeably. I hope that I have helped to define these terms better here today, so we can all agree about what we are talking about when we discuss the new 150-bed continuing care facility.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, a continuing care facility should not be confused with a hospital. Although the care required may be as intensive as in a hospital, a continuing care facility is more home-like and comfortable.

We all want to be treated with dignity, regardless of what our circumstances are, and we would all like to have as much control over our environment as possible. That is why this new continuing care facility is being designed to provide as much client control over their environment as possible.

In addition to being medically supportive, a home should be both comforting and comfortable. The Whistle Bend continuing care facility will offer advanced dementia care services, hospice palliative care, a subacute activation unit, a mental health unit, bariatric care and a day program.

We believe that this facility will fill an important gap and demonstrated need in our community. This is not about the number of beds. This is about providing dignity to those we love as they face the most difficult and challenging of circumstances.

Ms. Stick: A 300-bed facility is what was announced by this government many times over, both publicly in this Legislature and to the media. From the very get-go, it was about a 300-bed facility.

I thank the member opposite for bringing this motion forward because I too agree that a lot of information needs to be clarified. I do understand that this is about people, but this motion speaks to the 300 beds. This motion speaks to 150 beds.

As recently as March 11, 2015, there was talk of a 300-bed continuing care facility, built in two phases. Phase 1

includes 150 continuing care beds and the support spaces such as offices, common areas, a loading area, kitchen and laundry needed to sustain this facility, and phase 2 includes an additional 150 beds. Today in Question Period, there were comments about this. I was struck by something heard today and heard yesterday — that this will be 150 and maybe, in six or eight or up to 20 years later, we will look at an additional 150.

As recently as September 2014, in a news release from this government, this is what was said: “Construction of the new facility was announced earlier this year. The initial phase will be for 150 beds, with the second phase of an additional 150 beds to begin immediately after completion.” So we open in 2018 and we start building the next 150 beds. This is the government’s news release. It is what was said, Mr. Speaker, by this government.

We also heard that, well, we’ll do another needs assessment. This government — I mean this goes back to a report that was issued in June 2013 by this government. It was placed on their website and it was a document, entitled *Final Report: New Whitehorse Continuing Care Facility* — 186 pages; no small report. Initially, it was posted on the website of the department and then taken down. I found it by chance, downloaded it and read it, and I was shocked that this hadn’t been announced anywhere. This wasn’t in any capital plans. This hadn’t been spoken of publicly. It certainly wasn’t in any platform, but it was out.

One of my first questions, when reading the report, was: Who was consulted? It was clear that this was a needs assessment, but who was consulted? I will come back to that, because to me this is the crux of this situation.

We know that this government was looking at this project well before June 2013 — for them to have completed that work. It took time. This report looked at national and Yukon demands for nursing home beds, and there is a way that governments across Canada report this and ways that it is calculated.

Let’s look at the numbers used by this government in this government’s own report.

Nationally the average bed utilization — and that’s how they phrase it; the number of beds needed — is 46 out of 1,000 in population for seniors over 65 — fair enough. The Yukon rate is 53 over 1,000, and I would suggest that it is higher than the national average. When looking at the stats and when determining needs, the authors of this report also looked at the wait-list for long-term care beds. I acknowledge there is a need. I acknowledge there are beds in the hospital being utilized by people who would be cared for better in a long-term facility, but what happened then was that our rate went from 53 out of 1,000 to 62 out of 1,000. That is much higher than the national rate, which is 46 over 1,000. This is double of what Quebec’s number is. This is one of the highest in Canada, but let’s go with that and agree for the moment that that’s our rate.

Does that mean, Mr. Speaker, that right now we should be considering a 300-bed facility? Doesn’t it make sense to start asking the questions? Why? Why is it that we have a higher-

than-average utilization rate than Canada? Why are we higher than other provinces? What is the reason that Yukon seniors are ending up in care facilities? We know they have complicated care needs, but why are ours higher? Why are the numbers higher? Especially when similar stats that you can look at show that the population in long-term care beds in the Yukon, on average, are younger and more independent than their counterparts across Canada — why is that Mr. Speaker? Why did no one ask that question? Shouldn't it have been a question about how we can improve the health outcomes for seniors so they don't need that level of care? I don't see those questions being answered anywhere.

Throughout the whole needs assessment, it talks about a 300-bed facility and the need for that in the very near future — that's what we need. It didn't look at other options. It did not do a comparative study of costs. We did not see a comparative analysis, and I'm not just talking about home care or smaller facilities. I'm talking about other things that are missing.

The member opposite gave us definitions of a continuum of care. A continuum of care is just that. It is a variety of services that spans from a person living independently and those in a long-term care facility. We have home care. We have home support workers. We have Macaulay Lodge. We have facilities now, but there is a big gap.

The member talked about assisted living and he talked about supported living. We have the Vimy Heritage Housing Society that has gone out and done a community needs assessment about providing 75 units for individuals or couples to live in and to be able to receive meals, maybe some light housekeeping and perhaps laundry. That is what they have looked at. That does not exist currently in the Yukon. The gap is going from home care and living in your own home into something still fairly independent without all the supports that would be required — or that are a part — of a 300-bed continuing care facility. Not everyone needs those. Not everyone needs to move from their home with home care into that type of facility. It is not necessary. Vimy has asked this government, "Help us. We have done the needs assessment; we have done the study, and we need land." They are not asking the government to run it or to build it, but they are asking for assistance. They have recognized that this is a gap in services in the continuing care continuum — it's one.

Others would include the same type of facility or the same type of apartments, but perhaps with a nurse on staff or some kind of rehabilitative services on staff.

It is good to hear that they understand a continuum of care, but we also have to recognize that there are gaps in our service. Instead of rushing into this, let's look at what our other options might be. They might be more economical and better able to be delivered in communities where people live — and what people want.

How do we help seniors stay independent? How do we provide services to them so they can maintain their health? These are questions we should be asking. If we are to look at the *Health and Social Services Strategic Plan, 2014-19*,

seniors care is not a strategic priority, and yet we have this project on the books.

It does state in that report — and I quote: "Given increases in the share of seniors among our population, and in our awareness that most seniors wish to stay in their homes for as long as possible, we'll also be working with older adults and communities to try to maximize the years spent in good health in the community. This means encouraging older residents to stay active and social, and to have healthy habits in all areas of life; providing respite and guidance for informal supports; and maintaining home care and other services that help ensure seniors are safe and secure in their homes."

It's good awareness. It's positive. I support that. You would think there would then be something in this strategy or this strategic plan that would address these issues, but it doesn't. It doesn't extend to either policy planning or action items. Nowhere in this Health and Social Services strategic and performance measures framework does it even talk about a 300-bed facility. Shouldn't it be there? Shouldn't it be part of a long-term vision going up to 2019? There is brief mention about a focus beyond to maintain — I'm not sure about that one — or decrease the fall rate in continuing care programs — serious falls and hospital admissions for those 65 and over. That's it.

If we look at the *Yukon Health Care Review* from 2008, senior care was a strategic priority and it stated: "Having appropriate continuing care services in place can reduce demand on other high cost items and overall costs to the system by pushing health care to the lowest cost appropriate, service delivery model — the right care at the right place at the right time".

It recognized that in some communities — the smaller ones — they are isolated and might not have the appropriate support systems. They talked about home care. They also talked about the costs and looked at monthly and daily operating costs — Copper Ridge, Macaulay, McDonald Lodge — and these are high. They're really high. Back in 2008, \$361 a day, Copper Ridge; \$287, Macaulay; \$221, McDonald. We know that bigger does not mean cheaper or more efficient. We know it's not the most cost effective.

We know that demographic changes are going to put an increased strain on our health system and on care. But it seems that seniors are ending up in the hospital because they did not receive the appropriate care to that point and when they get into the hospital, they deteriorate quickly and end up in a situation that requires more acute intervention — lack of access to appropriate care at the right time.

Too many seniors are not able to leave the hospital. Perhaps if we put more resources in the form of individuals in home care, we might be able to see more people stay at home longer. I recognize that some individuals will need an acute care level. We know that, but not every senior should be planned to go there. I read those reports. I read the case plan. I looked at the summaries, and what is it? Is it a 300-bed; is it 150? Is it to build 150 and then start the next one right away? Is it 20 years down the road? It is not, to me, a good plan.

One of the recommended actions out of 2008 was that, where projections indicate a future demand, the government should continue to invest in expanded home care community-support programs and supported assisted living. Intervention and care at this level is proven to keep individuals out of the acute care facility and long-term care system and provides better level of appropriate services at a lower cost. The government should develop a comprehensive long-range plan to increase residential long-term beds at Thomson Centre or new facilities to ensure that plans are in place for the future.

Part of these reports is talking about amalgamating some of these facilities now. They are not sure what should happen to the Thomson Centre. They don't support putting more funding into Macaulay. That is part of the reports.

To me, one of the most glaring omissions in all of this is public engagement and consultation — 186 pages in the new Whitehorse continuing care facility report from 2013; a 30-page report, the new Whitehorse community care facility memorandum; a 53-page report, the *New Whitehorse Continuing Care Facility Business Case Analysis*. That is a lot of paper. That is a lot of work. It is a lot of statistics, drawings and graphs, but there wasn't any consultation. How do I know this? It's because I have asked. The Yukon Medical Association has been clear that they have not been consulted — certainly not prior to these reports coming out. The Yukon Registered Nurses Association has been clear. They have not been consulted — not before these reports came out. Some still haven't heard from this government about the implications of 150 beds, of 300 beds, on their professions.

Seeing as it is such a large facility, it's going to have a large increase in professional staffing. Why wouldn't this government speak to these professionals about what's going to be needed, what's going to be anticipated, and how they're going to fill those positions? We have trouble now. We have difficulties now. How are we going to staff this place? It's not just nurses. It's not just physicians. Let's talk about other professionals — LPNs, occupational therapists, recreational therapists, speech and language pathologists, social workers, physiotherapists, and then the staff needed on a daily basis to manage this place: cleaning staff, kitchen, laundry, maintenance personnel, security, managers, and supervisors. It's a lot of people, Mr. Speaker.

What are the O&M costs going to be? We heard that 300 beds would be the best model because it will be the most cost-effective, but that's not what reports across Canada say. They say that anything over 200 beds will indeed cost more. It loses that efficiency. I don't make up these facts. The information is out there.

The Canadian Nurses Association and the Canadian Medical Association speak loudly about what is needed across Canada — how they want to focus on being able to give people the best care at the right time and the right place to encourage seniors to stay at home, to be independent. They go to Ottawa and speak to MPs there about what they see happening.

These are professionals who have knowledge, who have skills, and who I think should have been consulted on such a

project like this. These are professionals who know what it is going to be like to try to staff this 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That's a lot of staff, Mr. Speaker, and to not have gone to the professionals and speak to them, and ask their opinion and have some input is wrong.

I think it should have been part of a needs assessment.

In 2012, the Minister of Health and Social Services announced that they were putting 10 additional beds in the Thomson Centre in the fall of 2012. In his announcement — I'll just quote what he said: "One of the biggest challenges for us is staffing the unit ... To provide care to 10 additional individuals, we need 17 staff and it takes time to get the right staff in place." That was just for 10 beds in a facility that's already functioning, that's already up and running, and we're only adding 10 beds. Seventeen staff, and it's the biggest challenge. I would say staffing a 150-bed facility or a 300-bed facility is going to be a big challenge.

We have nurses, we have vacancies of nurses, we have nurses who come up on contract, we have nurses who go into the communities on contracts — there's a shortage. How are we going to staff this? What are those costs going to be?

Occupational therapists, recreation, speech and language — we know how difficult those are, the speech and language — and social workers. We do have a program here and that's great, but specializing in gerontology — those are rare.

One of the pods or neighbourhoods my colleague across the way mentioned was palliative care. Mr. Speaker, has anyone spoken to a palliative care physician about this project? I don't think so. As a matter of fact, I know they haven't. So let's talk about that and moving palliative care away from the hospital to Whistle Bend.

Palliative care — and it was mentioned there was palliative care and there was also hospice, but they are two different things. A person may move from one to the other. Palliative care units are usually for those individuals with high acuity needs — pain management, shortness of breath, complex care needs — and they're usually units within a hospital, because they need access to medications, they need access to a pharmacy, they need access to tests, whether it's blood tests or x-rays or those types of things. Those are usually delivered in a hospital or in a building very close to a hospital. They need doctors and they need nurses.

Hospice beds are different. Hospice beds are for palliative care conditions, but where the individual is stable and generally in the last three months of life — or less. They do not need medical intervention as much. They are not expected to need bloodwork or investigations. They do need to be more in a home-like situation, and they may move to a hospital at some point, or not, depending on how they are doing. But the hospital should continue to be the place of care for those with high needs and acute problems. So why would we put palliative care beds in a facility far from the hospital instead of close by, or maintain the one that is in the hospital and make improvements on that.

We have great palliative care in our hospital. The care is excellent, but the hospital and the rooms they use are not designed for palliative care. They are small. I know when my

own husband died, there were 12 of us in the room with him. You could not fit 12 very comfortably into a room at the hospital. There was excellent care, but not the greatest setting. At one point, it was this government's plan to have palliative care beds in the hospital and hospice beds in the Thomson Centre. What happened to that plan? Where did that go? That made sense — larger rooms, close to a pharmacy. Is this new facility going to have a pharmacy there 24/7 as the hospital does? Is there a way they are going to be able to get drugs or will they have to get them from the hospital?

I ask these questions because I talked to palliative experts and asked them their opinion on moving palliative away from the hospital to Whistle Bend. They are all for having the hospice, so yes, hospice beds can be away from the hospital, but let's remember that palliative care does require acute medical care.

There was mention of a mental health pod or neighbourhood. Who is that for, Mr. Speaker? Is it for seniors? Is it for the individuals who we now have to send out of the territory? Is it for the individuals who sometimes have to remain at the jail because of their mental health? Are these the individuals we are talking about? There wasn't a good descriptor when looking at this in their reports. So it is fine to say there is going to be a mental health pod, but what does that mean? Who is it for? Are we going to have psychiatric nurses working there, and where are we going to find them?

Who has the government consulted on this? Who will staff this? What are those requirements going to be, or is this strictly for seniors?

There is so much that hasn't been answered — O&M costs, how we are going to staff it, and how people feel about this. Where is a comparative study that shows clearly that this is the only way to go? I agree that we do need more facilities, but I also think that we could be doing a better job up front. I believe we need to put more resources into home care, increase the numbers and increase the availability of home care so that individuals can stay in their homes a lot longer — make sure that every community has home care and home support services as an option. That would have a big impact. Studies have shown that.

We can look at CIHI. We can look at CARP reports. We can look at the Canadian Medical Association and what they say, and at the Canadian Nurses Association and what they have to say. All of them repeat, over and over — better home care, better outcomes.

Yes, we will need some long-term care facilities for those with acute care needs, but to suggest that it should be a 300-bed facility — and I'm not sure. They talk about 150 to start, and I'm not sure now where the other 150 — is it immediately after? Is it six years, eight years, 20 years? They have the information in front of them. It's in the needs assessment but they seem to be backtracking. It's just a moving target and I find that difficult.

Again, I'll mention the home care because I truly believe we could be doing better. To enhance home care, we could expand the hours. We could relieve — put more staff in now. Home care workers are doing a great job but they are

stretched. They are stretched and they're working as hard as they can, as fast as they can, but they need more. They need more staff. They need more home support workers, they need more nurses and they need more home care workers, because they are dedicated health care professionals. They are doing good jobs.

It's not just seniors and elders. It is people leaving in the hospital who can receive home care. It is people with disabilities who can receive home care — it is not just seniors. They do an important job, but they need to be supported. They need to be resourced appropriately and, if they were, they truly could be meeting more of the needs of seniors, elders and citizens across this territory.

Again, the Canadian Nurses Association: "Enhancing home health care makes sense because it's what Canadians want, but also because the evidence shows it can make positive differences in a person's health status, relieve pressure on overcrowded care facilities and lead to performance efficiencies in the health system." Those are good things. That is what we should be striving for. We have long advocated a patient-centred, collaborative care model, but we didn't collaborate on this. We haven't spoken to communities, First Nations or other levels of government. We haven't talked to the citizens. We haven't heard from them what they think, what they want, and they should have been the first thing. Even the Vimy housing society did that. They went out and they spoke to people. They had people fill in a survey. They could build 75-unit apartments with meals available and light housework and fill it immediately, and start construction on another 75-unit one and fill it, according to their needs assessment that was done for them. It was a very telling report. Seniors are looking for that.

Seniors housing is great — we have lots of that across the territory — but it's only a part of the continuum. Supported living is missing. That ability for seniors to live independently and perhaps have a meal downstairs; to have social activities organized. Home care can go into those places and provide the services needed there, but we can't talk about a continuum of care if that's not even what exists right now.

Let's look at other options. Not everyone will go from home care to a 300-bed facility, but they would like something in between. They would like assisted living. Why haven't we focused on that, rather than the plan for an acute care facility or a long-term care facility?

The Yukon NDP will not be supporting this motion because it only speaks to part of what's needed to move ahead. It only talks about home care and improving that. I agree with that. It talks about 150, but all along this government has been speaking about 300 beds. We need more than enhanced home care. We need a continuum of care that includes everything. Seniors do want to stay in their homes; they do want to stay in their communities. They are a resource. They are a resource for their families and for their First Nation.

People don't want to see them leave. Mr. Speaker, we will not be supporting this motion. I don't think the government has done its homework. They haven't done the

consultation. They haven't spoken to seniors. They have after the fact. When the plan is ready and when the plan is there, they say, "This is it. Let us show it to you. Let us share it with you." But you didn't ask them ahead of time.

This government didn't go out to all the seniors groups. There are many of them in the Yukon — ElderActive, Golden Age, Signpost Seniors — there are many — Yukon Council on Aging. There are many groups. When I spoke to them about this when it first came out, they were not aware. They had not had an opportunity to even comment or to make suggestions, and I find that disrespectful. This is about them. It should include them and it didn't. This is about professionals in our community — doctors, nurses, all the others listed. We didn't talk to them. They looked at other facilities Outside, went to Vancouver. Fraser Health — looked at their facilities — very different, big populations. This is the Yukon. Let's find a solution that Yukoners can embrace and see as a good thing.

Just to finish, Partnerships B.C. — it talks in here about a Whitehorse continuing care project. The initial 150 — but to sustain a 300-bed continuing care facility.

So we can talk about 150 beds but we know what the plan was. We know what the plan is. We've seen the plan but I don't think it is a good plan.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would like to thank my colleague, the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin, for bringing this very important motion forward today.

I would like to start by making an important point and that is that the definitions and terminology for living supports are not consistent across Canada. I think this is important because the NDP keep calling for the government to invest in home care, but we have to the tune of a 350-percent increase over the last decade.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are confused. They also need to understand the difference between gaps and pressures.

Home living is for people who live independently in their home, apartment, or their condo. They are responsible for arranging for home care or other support services that they may require. We've made a number of investments to help seniors stay in their own homes longer — one being the assistance with minor home repairs and upgrades.

We've also delivered on our commitments to work with NGOs to provide seniors housing and assisted living facilities. Supported living combines accommodation services with meals, light housekeeping and sometimes social activities. It's able to meet a wide range of needs but cannot support those with serious or complex health care needs.

Assisted living provides housing and hospitality services — which mean, for example, food, laundry, housekeeping and personal care services — for adults who can live independently but require a supportive environment and light care due to physical and functional health challenges.

Residential continuing care provides 24-hour professional clinical care, as well as supervision, for adults with complex care needs who are unable to manage at home with the

support of family, friends, home care and so on. This seems to be where the disconnection is for the members opposite. People living in continuing care facilities have extremely heavy care requirements, such as advanced dementia or where they require total care and require specialized care services that are delivered in a home-like setting. These individuals — often our parents, our aunts and uncles, perhaps our grandparents and our sisters or brothers, and sometimes even our children — cannot be maintained at home or in an assisted living or supported living complex.

We are talking about Yukoners — Yukoners who have the highest level of needs. We are building a 150-bed continuing care facility that, yes, will be expandable to 300 beds when the need is there to care for Yukoners with the highest level of needs.

In our platform, we committed to caring for elders and seniors. We realize that while many Yukon seniors will be able to live out their days at home in their home communities, sadly there will be some Yukoners who will not be able to do that. We are stepping up our game, doing the responsible thing and planning on how we are going to take care of them. Although our needs assessments and business case tell us that there are going to be pressures, it's not about numbers. It's about care.

We committed to replacing McDonald Lodge in Dawson City with a new facility attached to the new Dawson hospital. Members opposite have already told us that they don't support that infrastructure. As I have listened to the members opposite this afternoon, I have come to the realization that they are confused. They seem to think that every Yukoner is going to end up living in a facility like the one that we are building. Well, that is not the case — albeit I have talked to many who are very much looking forward to this facility.

Having said that, there are other current options available to seniors in our territory. We have home care services. The number of home care clients has almost doubled in the past seven years, resulting in additions to funding in the last three budgets. The referral rates and complexity of care required by individuals continue to grow within that program. Home care is working collaboratively with Whitehorse General Hospital to support the discharge of clients who require an alternate level of care rather than acute hospital care. At the same time, home care has enhanced its services to specific clients to prevent hospitalization.

Part of our Continuing Care, home care is a Yukon-wide program that provides both professional and home support services to its clients. I thank the women and men providing home care across our territory to the many people who require it, for this is about caring.

Home care is a cost-effective and integral part of the bigger health care system. The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to meeting the needs of Yukon people in the most cost-effective way. Having a robust home care program supports the efficient use of resources within the system. This will assist in the delay of admissions to facility-based long-term care, as well as decrease the use of acute care services for many people.

I should mention that the home care program also employs community liaison coordinators who are physiotherapists or occupational therapists to supervise home support workers and provide assessment, treatment and care coordination for home care clients in communities that do not have a home care nurse. Again, Mr. Speaker, this is about caring.

I'm very pleased to see home care and the Yukon Hospital Corporation collaborating to coordinate therapy services for Dawson and Watson Lake. Given my time limits for this afternoon, I would like to touch on how we're relieving the pressure on our use of hospital beds to serve long-term care patients.

We're opening an interim facility to address the urgent need for more long-term care beds and, as you will know, we have purchased a residential property on Sixth Avenue to use as a small interim continuing care facility. This will provide 10 more beds for seniors' and elders' care and will be open later this fall. These beds will address the immediate need and the growing wait-list and number of individuals waiting for long-term care in the hospital. Many of those waiting remain in their homes, supported by family. Some are supported through the home care program; others are alternate level of care patients in the hospital.

The 150-bed Whistle Bend care facility — that again is being built to be expandable to 300 beds when the need is there — is scheduled to open in 2018. Once the new Whistle Bend facility is complete, the Sixth Avenue facility can be repurposed for other needs within Yukon government.

The McDonald Lodge replacement project is a joint project between Health and Social Services and Highways and Public Works. As part of the government's support for seniors, replacement of the existing McDonald Lodge in Dawson City was identified as a priority project by this government. This finalized schematic design was completed in May of 2014 and the RFP for construction was issued in July of 2014. The contract was awarded to NGC Builders, and site work began in August of 2014.

The project team is working closely with the Yukon Hospital Corporation to coordinate the work that needs to be done within the new Dawson community hospital in order to share mechanical and electrical systems. We anticipate the completion of this 15-bed facility late in 2015, with occupancy early in 2016.

The members opposite believe that we don't have any justification for the 150-bed continuing care facility. They're simply wrong, but I understand why the members opposite don't understand the concept of growth, as people were leaving the territory under the NDP-Liberal rule. However, the Yukon Party is far more organized. We have completed a needs assessment and functional plan and business case for a new Whistle Bend Whitehorse-based continuing care facility to meet growing needs as well as ensure resources for acute dementia, mental health needs and palliative care.

This need is something that my colleagues and I hear about from Yukoners. We hear from aging Yukoners who are in need of these services and who want these services. We

hear from their adult children — people in my age range — who are caring for their elderly parents and who live this difficult journey each and every day.

I'll tell you something, Mr. Speaker. The NDP-Liberals may not know we need it, but Yukoners sure do, and they know that we care.

The reality is that, since we took the reins of the economy, the Yukon Party has stopped the tsunami of seniors leaving the territory. The reality is that there is a stark contrast between the NDP-Liberals and the Yukon Party. The NDP-Liberals' plan was to tank the economy, causing people to leave the territory and a lack of opportunity for people wanting to move here; whereas the Yukon Party government believes in fostering a strong, diverse economy, which encourages growth and prosperity. The reality is that it is not feasible. It is not practical, affordable or sustainable to provide extended, complex care in small facilities throughout the territory. Such facilities would be outrageously expensive and impossible to staff. They would not allow us to support adequate client care.

In 10 years, from 2004 to 2014, Yukon's population increased by 19.7 percent. In 2014, Yukoners 65 years and older made up 10.7 percent of our population. In the next 10 years, it is projected that this same age group will almost double, as 19 percent of the current Yukon population is in the age group of 55 to 69 years. The cost to care for people in acute care hospital beds is somewhere around the neighbourhood of \$2,000 a day versus approximately \$350 a day in continuing care.

In Whitehorse, there are currently 96 beds at Copper Ridge Place, 47 beds at Macaulay Lodge and 31 beds at the Thomson Centre. As I have mentioned, in Dawson City, there are 11 beds at the current MacDonald Lodge. The demand for continuing care services is growing in all program areas, with an urgent and critical need for more long-term care beds. Again, these beds are for people with complex medical needs that are beyond the scope of anything that elders and seniors — and their family and friends — can address by living at home.

With the aging population, shifting demographics and a tendency for Yukon seniors to retire in Yukon in greater numbers than in the past, there is continued pressure and demand for home care and for long-term care placement services within our continuing care facilities. All Whitehorse continuing care beds are filled and there is a wait-list for care in all of our facilities. The continuum of care that falls within continuing care is advanced dementia, hospice palliative care, the subacute unit, the mental health unit, bariatric care and day programming. A recent count showed us that there were about 58 people waiting for care facilities services, 19 of whom are currently waiting in the Whitehorse General Hospital.

Unlike other jurisdictions in Canada, which have historically had lengthy wait-lists, this is a new pressure in Yukon. The Yukon home care program is already one of the most comprehensive programs in Canada and we continue to look at ways to increase support, particularly for the frail, elderly and those with dementia.

Quite frankly, it offends me to think that the NDP are opposed to helping the frail, elderly and people with dementia as they continue to vote against these services during each of our budget cycles. This Yukon Party government is committed to long-range, comprehensive planning for continuing care services, including residential care facilities, home care, palliative care and dementia care services, as the demand — in terms of volume and in terms of complexity — is increasing in all of these areas.

While individuals may require care that is almost, or in some cases, as intensive as an acute care facility, the way that the care is delivered and the environment is designed are purposefully different. Specifically designed environments meet the unique care requirements and support quality living for what remains of the client's life. Critical design elements include safety, client control and way of finding home-like environments to support living and to support wellness. To live and to die with control and dignity is one of the most important and essential goals of the program.

While a continuing care room may look very different from a hospital room, they all have the same specialized clinical tools, like overhead lifts, vitals monitoring and so on, but it's designed to be a comforting home. Our government believes in caring for elders and caring for seniors. We believe in providing them an environment where they can live and die with dignity.

The members opposite continue to talk numbers. They talk about flip-flopping. They criticize a new neighbourhood in Whitehorse named Whistle Bend. They don't understand there is a growing need and they have no concept of a business case and I don't believe they truly appreciate the good work carried out 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year by the women and men working in home care, working in supported living and working in continuing care. Mr. Speaker, I'm appalled. I'm disappointed in the members opposite for their attempt to make seniors and seniors' care a political issue. This is not a numbers game. This is not a political game.

This is about caring for our parents, our grandparents, our aunts and uncles, our sisters and brothers and, as I mentioned earlier, yes, sometimes our children. These people may have very serious health issues — issues like COPD, dementia, mental health issues, serious chronic health conditions, or permanent or long-term cognitive or physical incapacities. This issue — our commitment is about caring for people. It's about caring for our seniors and it's about caring for those who simply cannot care for themselves any longer.

This issue that the opposition continues to polarize is about ensuring that our loved ones have a level of care they need at a time in their life when they need it most. For the members opposite to make this an issue of where in the parameters of Whitehorse this home care facility will be located or how many beds will be provided to our loved ones is disappointing. I'm very disappointed. I'm saddened that the level of debate about caring for people who are not able to care for themselves has reached this point by the members opposite.

I support this motion and I thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing it forward. Thank you.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, it is worth repeating again the actual words of this particular motion, Motion No. 926:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue moving forward with the planning and construction of a new 150-bed continuing care facility that is designed to provide for future expansion in recognition of Yukon's growing seniors population, while at the same time continuing to enhance home care for seniors in order that they can stay in their homes and home communities as long as possible.

Mr. Speaker, this is very similar to a motion on the Order Paper put forward by a previous Yukon Party Minister of Health in December 17, 2014. That was Motion No. 854 and it read — and I quote:

THAT the House urges the Government of Yukon to continue moving forward with the planning and construction of a new 300-bed continuing care facility in recognition of Yukon's growing seniors population, while at the same time continuing to enhance home care for seniors so that they can stay in their homes and home communities as long as possible.

The only difference between these two motions is the number of beds. Now the minister is saying that the numbers aren't important, but oh they are, Mr. Speaker. The minister is saying that they're more organized, yet they can't even agree on the numbers in a few short months.

Let's look at how this facility has shrunk over time and the incredibly shrinking commitment of the size of the facility displayed by the new minister. A July 2014 consultant's report called *New Whitehorse Continuing Care Facility Business Case Analysis* said this about the size of the facility — and I quote: "In 2012, HSS, HPW, and Kobayashi Zedda Architects (KZA) produced a Functional Program for a 300-bed continuing care facility." That's on page 3, Mr. Speaker.

Here's another quote from the *New Whitehorse Continuing Care Facility — Facility Review and Functional Program* done by a local architectural firm — and I quote: "There are three parts to the report. Part One: Needs Analysis. Part Two: Physical Assessment of Copper Ridge and Macaulay Lodge and Functional Assessment of the Copper Ridge, Macaulay Lodge and Thomson Centre. Part Three: New functional space programme for a 300 bed facility."

Here's a quote from the request for proposals, facility consultant advisory services for Whitehorse continuing care January 2015 — and I quote: "The Whitehorse continuing care project — the Project — consists of the construction of a 300-bed facility."

As of the budget speech, however, it was suddenly only a 150-bed facility with no explanation given as to why. This is what was said in the budget speech by the Premier — and I quote: "On a larger scale, we'll be proceeding with the construction of the 150-bed Whistle Bend care facility in January of 2016, with an initial allocation of \$26 million."

Now the new Minister of Health and Social Services on the first day of the current Sitting went out of his way to describe the new facility as being a 150-bed facility. He said — and I quote: “This government has committed to building a 150-bed facility as we see in the budget in front of us.”

Yesterday he went even further to say that the second phase would be — and I quote: “...20 years down the road...”

Now this is indeed quite a change from what the government was saying as recently as December. Here’s a December 18, 2014 news release. Let me quote: “The initial phase will be for 150 beds, with the second phase of an additional 150 beds to begin immediately after completion.”

There has been a major change in the scope of this building, and the public is wondering why — and they deserve to wonder why. The government has flip-flopped on its commitment to the second phase of this project, plain and simple. We are not sitting here arguing whether or not there is a need for seniors facilities. We are not sitting here arguing about anything else other than the fact that this government’s leadership has the public wondering how many beds and how expensive. They have not provided the answers to these questions. The Yukon Party government can say that we are cherry-picking stats here. Well, please explain to me how, in a few short months, you can go from 300 beds to 150 beds, because everybody is wondering why.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Silver: I have more; don’t you worry.

There has been a major change in the scope of the building. The government has flip-flopped. That is known.

Let’s move on to the potential costs of this facility. A government case analysis done by a private contractor on the Government of Yukon’s new 300-bed continuing care facility lists the price of it at \$330 million. In this year’s budget, there is \$26 million set aside to advance this project. Just today in Question Period, the minister was unable or unwilling to tell Yukoners what the complete cost of the building will be.

I hope the minister can understand why the public would be confused about this new facility. Last fall, the government did its own analysis of the potential costs of the new facility. It said the cost would be \$268 million for a 300-bed facility, a full \$60-million less than the independent consultant. There is a large discrepancy, and one the minister would not address in Question Period today.

The question remains: What number is the government going to be using? Is it \$268 million? Is it \$330 million, or is it a whole other number?

The government has also refused to say what the price tag of the first 150 beds will be. It certainly will be more than 50 percent of the total cost, one would imagine, seeing as it would include all of the items needed for phase 2 — another question that we still do not have answers to.

Yukoners are understandably nervous when they see this government barge into a major construction project without a plan. The fact that the government cannot decide whether it is 300 beds or 150 beds is not helping either. The timeline for this project is being driven by the timeline of the next election. The government wants people working on this project as we

head to the polls in 2016. It is this type of incompetent management that results in wasteful, overbudget projects.

The Premier had the audacity to assert here today that my opposition to the building of the hospital in Dawson City had anything to do with whether or not we needed an upgrade in that community. I was opposed to the lack of leadership that would allow such a major build in my community without a needs assessment. My concerns came from my community, Mr. Speaker — the same community that came out in droves to ask so many questions when his representatives told us what we are going to get. When the questions from the medical community in Dawson that night got too overwhelming, it was his own representative who said in my community — well, something along the lines of, “If you don’t want it, we will build it somewhere else.”

The Premier has the audacity — for me to come into this House and to question the leadership of his government on issues about the medical fraternity in my community? Well, he doesn’t get it. His representative didn’t get it. I guess the Premier wasn’t listening as well to the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, who stood witness in this House and reiterated my concerns and the concerns of my community, and said they could not find any rationale for this project, other than a re-election plan. They are not my words, Mr. Speaker. We all saw it. It was in this House that the Auditor General of Canada said there was no needs assessment.

He can continue on his narrative that I’m opposed to medical care. He can continue on his narrative that we’re opposed to seniors or puppies and sunshine, but he will lose this debate every single time when Yukoners see both sides of the argument and see the bigger picture.

Mr. Speaker, those who do not learn from history are bound to repeat it. Forging ahead with no plan on what the building will cost is a recipe for more cost overruns. Mr. Speaker, with almost no consultation, the Government of Yukon has decided to proceed with this continuing care facility in Whitehorse — 300 beds, 150 beds. We still don’t know.

The estimated cost for the new facility will range from \$268 million to \$330 million, according to the government’s own reports. Clearly money is no object when it comes to continuing care in Whitehorse. At the same time, the government is spending with replacing McDonald Lodge in Dawson. While there were plans to make this a 20-bed facility, those were scaled back to 15 beds. People whom I spoke to in my community and other rural centres are interested in staying in their own communities. They don’t want to move into a one-size-fits-all facility hundreds of miles away in Whitehorse.

It begs the question: Why is this government pursuing this centralization approach instead of focusing on keeping seniors in their home communities?

The government has missed an opportunity to have more beds in rural Yukon. It did so because it seems to think that the solution is a big system in Whitehorse. We can all agree that the demand for continuing care is growing. The Liberal

caucus, however, disagrees fundamentally with the government on how to manage this growth.

I hear the birds chirping in the background, Mr. Speaker. It must be spring.

I like to see the demands in rural Yukon being met in rural Yukon. The government's approach is to funnel our seniors to Whitehorse. One of the planning studies that the government is relying on as it proceeds with continuing care decisions says that only new beds that will be built in the future are in Whitehorse. No other options were even considered.

The Government of Yukon recently leaned on the City of Whitehorse to make zoning changes to allow the new \$330-million facility to be built in Whistle Bend. It left at least two councillors publicly criticizing this government over its heavy-handed approach to this project.

We have already heard the concerns of First Nation elders who would not be comfortable in such a large institution. In the planning of this facility, what consultation has the government had with First Nation governments regarding their needs to plan for and to provide for their aging population? It's a question that still remains unanswered.

Perhaps the next government speaker could table some letters of support from First Nation governments or others for this one-size-fits-all approach.

In closing, unlike this government, I have been quite clear as to what I would like to do. I would like to put more resources into facilities in our communities, and I wouldn't build a giant complex in Whitehorse. I will not be supporting this motion, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your time today.

Hon. Mr. Graham: It is truly an honour to be standing here and speaking to this motion today and I thank the member for bringing it forward at this time. I have listened with great interest to some of the information — some of the misinformation, I guess — being dispensed here today. I found it quite interesting to hear some of the reasons for not constructing this facility. It's not in the platform — but in the platform is our commitment to care for seniors, and I guess this isn't considered to be care for seniors — or just because an issue has arisen that wasn't in the platform, it can't be done. The NDP attitude seems to be that if you didn't put it in your platform and an urgent issue arises, you can't do anything about it — interesting concept.

The Member for Riverdale South asked a whole lot of questions. Why do we have a higher rate? Why do we do a number of things? Bigger is not necessarily cheaper, she says, but she obviously didn't read the report. Mr. Speaker, on page 23 of the report, it is very clear that there are advantages and disadvantages to every different size of facility that you can imagine. The report looked at 100- to 125-bed facilities. It looked at a combination of various sizes of facilities. In the report there are also a number of references to everyone who was consulted. When we talk about consultations with respect to the size of the facility, we haven't built that size of facility anywhere in the territory to date. We had to go — or the consultants had to go — outside of the territory to take a look

at what was possible, what is being built outside of the territory, and what could be, or would be, the most efficient and what else could be utilized.

They took a look at operators of facilities with fewer than 100 residential beds and decided that, in the western provinces, facilities with fewer than 100 residents are no longer economically practical and are planning new facilities in the 120- to 130-bed range minimum. The provincial health authority in B.C. said they have an absolute minimum capacity of 125 beds.

The consultant also went through a number of reasons as to why facilities could be more economical if they are larger — and I quote: "Most of the professionals consulted agreed that efficiency is equated to costs, predominantly staff costs which represent about 80% of the operating budget for most facilities. Significant economies of scale arise from the reduction in the ratio of management and some support staff to the number of residents. The management staff required for a 100 resident facility is similar to that required for a 125 or even a 150 resident facility. Additional benefits accrue with increasing size by reducing similar factors in the areas of food services and material purchasing and handling."

I guess I have to take some responsibility for the member opposite's lack of understanding about a 150- and 300-bed facility. Mr. Speaker, I was the Minister of Health and Social Services at that time, and I should have understood that if I introduced a difficult concept to the members opposite, given their limited understanding of these things, they would not grasp that concept. I should never — and I accept responsibility for this — have said that we were building a 300-bed facility. I should have stated then that we are constructing a 150-bed facility with the option of converting it to a 300-bed facility in the future. I apologize for that, and I apologize to my caucus members as well because I see what a difficult concept it is for the opposition to grasp and I understand the difficulty that it has caused for us. I hope that members will understand now where that difficulty happened. It's my fault and I accept responsibility for it.

When the Member for Riverdale South asked about the higher rate of people in the territory who require a long-term care facility, what the member doesn't seem to understand is that many of the people currently accepting home care in the city — and I'll get to home care in a little while. There are about 520 clients in Whitehorse and in the surrounding and other rural Yukon communities who are currently accepting home care. About 40 percent of those home care clients, as I think my colleague the Minister of Health and Social Services has already indicated, are at high risk for institutionalization. We know those numbers are accurate because our home care workers deal with these people on a weekly and sometimes a daily basis. We know there are about 208 high-risk folks out there who are in high need and could need long-term care facilities sometime in the future.

What they didn't say is that many of these people are singles. We have a huge rate of people who are living alone, currently accepting home care, who have no built-in support system, so they don't have relatives, they don't have close

friendships that they can depend on to assist them during difficult times when they are living at home. We also have the highest rate of seniors, 85 years and older, living at home alone.

Those are reasons why we have a higher rate of people requiring long-term care than many of the provinces do. It's just critical, to me, that planning is done and construction is started as soon as possible to ensure that these services are in place to meet the needs — this growing demand — of our senior population here in the territory. I am only too happy to see Health and Social Services working on options with continuing care. They are working, I know, at continuing to increase our home care. It was interesting because again I heard the Member for Riverdale South saying: "Oh, you're dealing with fewer home care residents now than we have in the past." Talk about cherry-picking — at no time did the member opposite also state that many of these people who we are now dealing with are more complex. They require a greater degree of care and because we have a finite home care system, they take a larger percentage of the home care resources than do the people who only have to be visited once a week.

I know it is difficult to understand these things, but having had to resort to home care myself for a person whom I cared for in my home, I know how these things progress. I have seen it progress and I know how difficult it is to sometimes accept the fact that you are no longer able to care for that loved one in your own home. It is sometimes very difficult to finally accept that some other, higher form of care is required for your loved one.

Our approach will be to continue to support seniors living in their homes as long as humanly possible, but we are doing it while also ensuring we have the facilities in place to provide that more complex care when it is needed and at a cost we can all afford. We do not want to see these folks put into the hospital. I think at one time here I had a list of how many people in need of long-term care were in the hospital, and it approaches 20 to 21 people from time to time, depending on the situation. That is just too many.

As well, during my time as Minister of Health and Social Services, we have had as many as 50 to 60 people on a wait-list for long-term care, and that is absolutely unnecessary. We need to have these facilities in place. I congratulate the Minister of Health and Social Services for going ahead and working to open another 10 long-term care beds in the very near future on a temporary basis, because I think that is needed. I think it's essential to the territory and it's essential to our seniors.

It was interesting to hear again the member opposite say: "Well, we have Macaulay Lodge", but what she didn't say is that facility is more than 50 years old. That facility would require so much renovation to be brought up to current standards — to make the doorways wide enough to accept the new beds. There is just a whole host of renovations that would be necessary to bring that one up to the quality needed. Consequently, it's not used for difficult cases — for long-term

care difficult cases. It's used for seniors who are mostly mobile. It's used for seniors who don't need intensive care.

Once that building reaches the end of its useful life, I know those people will have to be moved somewhere else. That's why we're doing this planning, Mr. Speaker. Again, I don't understand the difficulty behind planning ahead and vision for the future, I guess. I fail to understand it. We know from these needs assessments that were done — unless the members opposite have difficulty with those needs assessments. I found it interesting that the Member for Riverdale South doesn't have any problem at all with one needs assessment done by the folks from Vimy, and she uses that one needs assessment to indicate that it's absolutely essential that we go ahead with the Vimy Place construction.

We've been dealing with Vimy for — what? — two or three years, Mr. Speaker. We have been dealing with them; we've made sure that they've had their ducks in a row and that they've done a needs assessment. We've encouraged them. We provided the funding to do the needs assessment. We provided the funding to do a business plan. We have provided assistance for them in every way we possibly can. I am surprised that it has taken the members opposite two years — three years, almost — to catch on to what has been happening and what we've been doing on a daily basis. I'm so happy to see that they agree with what we've been doing in the case of Vimy.

The Member for Riverdale South said Vimy didn't ask us to build it. Well, that's true, Mr. Speaker. They didn't ask us to build it, but there are a number of things that they've asked us to do, and it takes time to put those things through the process. We're currently working on them to make sure they obtain the land in the necessary quantity and location, and we're still proceeding with that facility, as we speak.

I'm not as closely attached to it as I was when I was with Health and Social Services, but I commend the minister, once again — and I know the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources as well — for working with Vimy to put forward the land and the necessary supports for them to build that facility.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Member for Riverdale South talk about what is done in other provinces and how they're going to smaller facilities. What she never said, again, was that in many of these provinces private care is a huge provider. I only look back to three years ago, when I said that we would like to see private care users come into the territory. I was severely harangued by members opposite because I was trying to give away long-term care beds here in the territory and I was turning over the long-term care system to the private sector and what a terrible person I was — but that was never the intent. The intent at that time, and it would still be nice — and I guess Vimy will now fill that gap — it would be nice for people to have alternatives. That was what I said, over and over, but I was harangued continually by members opposite that this was such a terrible, terrible thing that I was trying to do.

I guess — I'm not sure how much time I have left.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Graham: Good. Can I borrow the Member for Riverdale North's time and continue to speak on his behalf too? That won't work? Okay. He told me I could.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Riverdale South also talked about the staff that would be needed to staff such a facility. You know, I agree with her. It's going to take a large staff to work this facility. We know that. The question that went through my head while she was speaking was: Why the heck do you think we're doing the planning two- to- three- to- four years in advance? It's so we know what we need. It's so we can go out there and begin to put those things in place to hire those individuals. We also said that it will be — again, the 150 beds and expanding to 300 over time so it allows us the option of opening that facility in phases and staffing as we go. I kind of think — in fact, I even wrote it down — maybe it's just that the NDP think that it's just better to hide our heads in the sand because we're not going to be able to get these people and pretend that the seniors would go away if we don't have to deal with all of these issues.

Mr. Speaker, that's simply not our attitude. Our attitude is: we know this has been called — a “tsunami” of seniors is coming. I'm one of them — I know. I'm a senior myself. I talk with seniors. It was interesting to hear the member opposite say, “You haven't talked to anybody.” She named off three organizations whose AGMs I went to and I discussed it with people at those AGMs. We've talked with them, Mr. Speaker. We know that tsunami is coming and we want to be prepared for it. I think that between having this planning done for our long-term care facility, by expanding home care in such a way that we take care of everybody we possibly can and by encouraging things like Vimy or even possibly — horror of horrors — a private facility to open their doors here in the territory — all as options that would be available to seniors. Mr. Speaker, all of those things we believe are appropriate and we believe could be options in the future.

Then we have the member — God bless him — from Dawson, who wants to know the complete cost of the facility. He is so fixated on these cost things that I sometimes have to laugh, because I remember standing up here and saying that I don't even want to talk about the cost of the facility yet because we haven't begun the actual planning and the architectural engineering things that would determine exactly how much this building will cost. I said I don't want to get into saying very, very loose estimates provided by a consultant — it's going to cost in the \$250- to \$350-million range. I didn't even want to say those things, Mr. Speaker, because I knew that member opposite would fixate on those numbers and he'll follow that number through to the bitter end and he'll squawk about it every single time he gets an opportunity, because he simply doesn't understand the process. When we get closer to the time when the contracts are let — at that time we'll have a really good idea of what the true cost of this facility is.

Mr. Speaker, I see you telling me I only have a minute left so —

Unparliamentary language

Speaker: Order please. The Member for Mayo-Tatchun, on a point of order.

Mr. Tredger: I find the use of the word “squawk” in reference to a member's talk on the floor offensive. It certainly cannot be parliamentary. I find it offensive language and I would ask that that be ruled out of order.

Speaker: Minister of Education, on the point of order.

Withdrawal of remark

Hon. Mr. Graham: If it offends the member opposite, I am willing to withdraw that word and say that I apologize to the Member for Klondike as well for saying, “You were squawking.” You will bring that issue up before the Legislature time and time again and remind us —

Speaker: Order please. Your apology is accepted. I believe the Minister of Education has 30 seconds.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Okay, that means I will conclude simply by saying that I commend the Minister of Health and Social Services in his pursuit of this project. I wish him all the best, because I believe it is truly needed in this territory and I look forward to seeing it completed.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise to speak in opposition to the motion before us:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue moving forward with the planning and construction of a new 150-bed continuing-care facility that is designed to provide for future expansion in recognition of Yukon's growing senior population, while at the same time continuing to enhance home care for seniors in order that they can stay in their homes and home communities as long as possible.

I am looking forward to the time that I have to speak on this debate. I want to start out by noting that the mover of the motion this afternoon, in his opening remarks, alleged that the opposition is confused.

Mr. Speaker, let me lay out just how confused the government is on its announcement of a new 300-bed continuing care facility — now a 150-bed facility with an option for expansion. This afternoon, in Question Period, the Premier rose and said that 150 beds was phase 1 and that in future, the government might — quote: “...expand it at a later date, if the need is there” — quite a revealing statement. The former Minister of Health and Social Services has just finished his remarks that again repeated that there would be a 300-bed facility — quote: “...when the need is there.”

I think that shows right at the outset that they haven't done the needs assessment that should be done when they themselves can't even agree on when or where the need is there.

The Premier's remarks reveal a lack of attention to a government motion that is on the Order Paper and the former Minister of Health and Social Services just spoke to that — the motion stands in his name — Motion No. 854 — “THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue moving forward with the planning and construction of a new

300-bed continuing care facility in recognition of Yukon's growing seniors population..." — and it goes on, Mr. Speaker, to complete the sentence using the same wording as the motion from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, so I won't read the rest of that motion.

The Premier's remarks also demonstrate confusion about the government's lack of proper planning for the proposed 300-bed facility and, finally, the Premier's remarks show a lack of knowledge of his own government's project brief.

So I will start out, I think, with the project brief. The project brief says that this design/build model for the capital cost of an initial 150-bed design and construction contract will include — and I quote: "sufficient space, e.g. offices, common areas, loading, kitchen, laundry, to sustain a 300-bed continuing care facility." It also speaks about strong government and public support for the project. I am going to speak later about the lack of evidence from the public is maybe why the government has gone from announcing a 300-bed facility with great fanfare to now saying it will be 150-bed facility and possibly larger over time.

The cost of the infrastructure for a 300-bed facility to build a kitchen, laundry rooms, offices, a loading area and common areas that can accommodate a 300-bed facility are really going to be an astronomical overexpenditure if in the end they only build 150 beds. It is also costly and lengthy to build a facility when you haven't done the proper planning in advance. The members opposite spoke about economy of scale. How can it be an economy of scale to build a kitchen to serve 300 people if you are only going to put 150 beds there?

The question of costs is what I want to turn to next. The *New Whitehorse Continuing Care Facility Business Case Analysis* that is posted on the website revealed that the construction costs will be in the \$330-million range. That is the \$330-million expenditure for 300 beds for a population of 36,000 people. The size and the scope of the project will make it more difficult for Yukon contractors to bid on the project and could potentially reduce the numbers of workers from the Yukon being able to be hired and employed on those projects.

Now my colleague, the Member for Riverdale South, spoke about some of the other possibilities and spoke about the need for a continuum of care that supports seniors remaining in their own homes as long as possible. Seniors want to stay at home as long as possible, and they can with appropriate supports. The families of seniors and elders want their loved ones to remain in their communities for as long as possible.

Looking at the estimates in the \$330-million range, I want to turn to the fact that the Yukon government is not prudent in spending public money. Consider the Auditor General's report on the construction of two hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson City without a needs assessment — those hospital construction projects that the Auditor General also reported went millions of dollars overbudget. Those hospitals were constructed on borrowed money with long-term debts for future generations.

Now, the former Minister of Health and Social Services spoke about when an urgent issue arises, we need to move

forward. So they saw it as an urgent issue, they announced they would be building 300 beds, and then, because they hadn't done appropriate consultation and because some reasonable questions were raised about the size of the facility, they've backtracked and now they're saying they're looking at 150 beds.

As my colleague, the Member for Riverdale South, referred — the Yukon Medical Association, the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, seniors and seniors groups, palliative care doctors — think it would be wise for the government to speak to them before they make these kinds of announcements.

One of the issues when it comes to the seniors not just in Whitehorse, but in rural communities, is that their families want to be able to see them regularly. I've spoken to family members in Carmacks and I've spoken to family members in Carcross whose aunties or grandmas or grandpas are in a care facility in Whitehorse, and there's no bus service and there's no public transportation for them to be able to come to visit their families. So I think we need to look at offering services in the communities, encouraging people to stay in their homes and offering the supports for people to be in their homes as long as possible.

Now here's another comment that the current Health and Social Services minister made — when he said he's disappointed in the members opposite for making the debate this afternoon a political issue. Mr. Speaker, let me be clear: Perhaps the members opposite don't understand it but, as elected representatives of the Yukon public, our work is political; our work concerns having an organized form of government and dealing with public affairs. That is the work of politics, Mr. Speaker; it's serious work; it's important work; and we do it every day. So I would encourage all members of this Assembly to take a look at the Oxford English dictionary once in awhile and, when they bandy about words like "political," maybe they should just understand what it means.

The Yukon Party government is making a political decision. They're making a political decision to have a design/build project for a 150-bed continuing care facility that will have common facilities to serve 300 beds. That is a political decision, we are all elected to contribute to the political debate and we're all elected to debate political issues.

So I'm puzzled by the member opposite saying that, and I want to assure him that our purpose in this debate is to bring forward the importance of looking at the big picture. Look at the Yukon, look at our economy, look at our people — the entire population that we're elected to serve and represent.

The Yukon Party government should also talk to people before they make a decision to spend money on what would be, I think, the most expensive capital project they've yet embarked on. In this case, let's consider what seniors and their families really want.

Let's discuss this with the medical professionals, and let's encourage an approach that respects the needs of seniors and that offers care to seniors in their homes and in their communities as long as possible.

Before I close, I wanted to quote from some of the reports that we looked at in preparing for this motion but also some of the reports that we looked at when the government first announced their proposal to build a 300-bed institutional facility. They have since changed their minds because they have had some pretty intelligent criticism of their approach from the communities and from others.

I want to refer to the Canadian Association for Retired Persons and the Canadian Medical Association's 13th Annual National Report Card on Health Care strategy for senior care which says, quote: "Not only is hospital and institutional care unaffordable, but they are not the best means of care for most people. Most Canadians want to stay at home and in their communities for as long as possible and as a result, prefer to receive homecare."

We also had the president of the Canadian Medical Association in Whitehorse in November or December of 2014, I think it was. He said that home care, not institutional care, is the ideal model. Dr. Chris Simpson pointed to Europe, where they have managed to deliver better quality care for cheaper, and he highlighted Denmark, which has invested in home care at a rate of five times that of Canada, as having the best approach for efficient health services and adapting to the needs of an aging population. Dr. Simpson pointed out that the Copenhagen-based public health system had not added any new long-term care beds in two decades and had removed thousands of acute care beds simply by shifting the focus on delivering the care where seniors need it, which is in the community and in their homes.

We in the Official Opposition believe that we can do better for our seniors than building a 300-bed facility in Whistle Bend, and I speak in opposition to the motion before us standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the members who have spoken already this afternoon on this motion, and I rise to join my colleagues from the Official Opposition and the Third Party in speaking against this motion.

When my colleague from Riverdale South described finding — because finding the documents related to the development of a new Whitehorse continuing care facility in June of 2013. I can remember looking at this and sending it to a member of the Yukon Council on Aging and saying, "What do you think of this?"

That person, a senior, opened the link on the computer and said, "This is too big. I can't read it." So they phoned the Department of Health and Social Services and said, "Can I get a copy of that?" They said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "I'm looking at a link about a new Whitehorse continuing care facility final report and it's dated in June of 2013 and I can't read things on the screen. I would like a hard copy."

Mr. Speaker, the phone went sort of dead. That person came back on the line and said, "Oh, well, it's not available to the public." Then it was taken off the website.

Mr. Speaker, the concern that I'm expressing and the Official Opposition is expressing today is that it is one thing

for the Government of Yukon to decide that it knows all and it can determine for us, citizens of the Yukon, what is in our best interest — and not only determine that, but make every single decision along the way on how that is going to happen and how it's going to be delivered without consulting with us, the users — without consulting with us, the citizens. Fundamentally, Mr. Speaker, that is wrong. That runs contrary to any concept of democracy that I know about, and it certainly runs contrary to any concept of effective planning — community-based planning.

When we speak about the lack of consultation, it is deep and it is profound. My colleague referenced the 2008 health care review process, which engaged many, many Yukoners. The 2009 follow-up, *Taking the Pulse*, also engaged everybody from ordinary users of health care systems — citizens — to the continuum of health care professionals.

We've already experienced the first time the Yukon Party government decided to reject the interests, the views, the experience and the expertise of citizens and health care professionals in this territory — turned their back on what the recommendations were from the *Yukon Health Care Review* and the follow-up, *Taking the Pulse*, and made a political decision — a decision that was confirmed as political in this Legislative Assembly by the chair of the Hospital Corporation when he was asked, point-blank, why a government member of the Public Accounts Committee — so what was the basis of this decision to build these hospitals? It was direction from the government. It was not coming out of the health care review. It did not come from any community-based needs assessment — a reflection of what the community's desires or needs were. We are seeing a repeat of that, Mr. Speaker, in this top-down, father-knows-best approach to determining the kind of care that will be available to seniors as seniors and all citizens age in this territory, decisions that are being taken now that will preclude the kind of options that we know, based on evidence — evidence not just in Canada but across the world — about what contributes to healthy aging in place — healthy aging, not institutionalized aging. We moved away from that a long time ago.

I have heard a lot of stuff said this afternoon — in the guise of argument or in the guise of debate — trash-talking the opposition. That is fine. I am getting inured to that, because it doesn't make their arguments any better. The facts of the matter are that in the content of the three major documents that so far are available publicly — well, first of all, I want to go back to the former minister — I can't remember if it is the former minister or the current minister — but the notion that they consulted because they talked to the experts Outside. You know, I kind of think we have experts within this territory whom we augment from time to time with expertise from Outside. To think that we are making our decisions based on consultation with people from British Columbia who used to work for the B.C. Minister of Health or from the Fraser Health Authority or the Salvation Army in Toronto or the Swedish Canadian Rest Home Association — seriously, you don't think that we have people in this territory who have knowledge and expertise, who are living with

people who are aging, who are aging? We are all going to get there eventually. Wouldn't you think it would be nice to talk to us? What do we want? One of the fundamentals about care, home care, seniors care — any form of health care — is the right to make the decision about the care you should receive — a fundamental right to make that decision. That is being taken away by this government.

There are many, many questions that need to be answered before this territorial government should consider committing to spending hundreds of millions of dollars toward the building of this facility. I keep hearing that this is the facility that is going to be neighbourhood-like. It's going to be — they talk about “pods”. Let's just call them what they are — they are wards. We are talking about a three-storey institution. There is no way that you can describe a three-storey facility as anything other than an institution. You can reframe it. You can call it whatever you want, but a pod is a ward and these are wards. They may be designed nicer, but that is what it is. It is a three-storey institution.

When this was being considered, one of the reports that was looked at and was commissioned by the government — the *New Whitehorse Continuing Care Facility Business Case Analysis*. They were asked to look at a range of things, but one of the things I thought was kind of interesting was the issue of site selection. Based on the Yukon government's site selection criteria and construction cost estimates and the site appraisals, it wasn't the Whistle Bend site that came out ahead. It was the Porter Creek site.

Here we have a government that has its information, its own appraisals done, and it makes the decision to tell the City of Whitehorse that we want you to rezone an area that has been designed through community participation through the official community planning process — extensive consultation about the kind of community that Whitehorse citizens wanted to see — and suddenly we have had this government foisting not one, but two pet projects that require the city to amend its official community plan.

You know, it is just like — the bullying tactics are wild.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Unparliamentary language

Speaker: “Bullying” is not permitted.

Ms. Hanson: Well, excuse me, Mr. Speaker. I won't use it.

The Porter Creek site capital costs were estimated at \$328 million. The Whistle Bend minimum is \$330 million, so there's at least a minimum question as to why one site over the other?

Mr. Speaker, the risk assessment for the site selection goes on to suggest — you know, we've heard a lot about challenges for those building in Whistle Bend. Well, the risk assessment for site selection indicated that the Whistle Bend site has a significantly higher risk score. The largest reason for this discrepancy is the ground conditions. The soil conditions are known to require unusually costly foundations, and it is considered possible that they are not well enough understood

at this time to avoid delays and cost increases as the project commences.

Mr. Speaker, we've been there before, haven't we? We have been there before with this government that has knowingly entered into projects without having them well-thought-out, and guess who pays the dollar? It's the taxpayer, Mr. Speaker. It's the citizens of this territory.

So why would they choose to do this? What's the rush if they haven't thought this through?

The other part that's most interesting — they talk about being well-prepared and planning into the future. Let's look at some of those costs. The future cost — the 20-year cumulative investment required by Yukon citizens and this is using a net present value in 2014 — is, at minimum, \$950 million. That's a lot of money, Mr. Speaker. I want to know as a citizen and I want to know as a member of this Legislative Assembly that we're getting value for money, because you can bet that the Auditor General will be paying very close attention to this one, Mr. Speaker — very close attention.

There are some serious issues about just the financial basis for the decisions that have been taken here, to say nothing about the decisions that are being taken away from citizens with respect to the decision to invest heavily in institutional care versus home care. I have heard some very strange comments from the members opposite with respect to investments with respect to this government's commitment to home care. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that the facts don't bear it out.

The Canadian Institute for Health Information — the former and present ministers of health will know that that is the authoritative source in terms of data on health care in this country. The number of clients for Yukon home care has not increased. It has declined over the last three years under this government.

In 2011, there were over 1,000 — 1,015 — clients in home care. In 2013-14, the number is down to 940. We're seeing that the number of admitted clients, in terms of home care, is also declining. The number of assessed clients is declining.

One of the challenges we face — and until and unless we grasp the reality that home care has many elements to it, and the speakers have chosen to suggest that they are going to continue investing in home care.

It is our understanding, based on discussions with people who are involved with the provision of these services and people who are involved in receiving those services, that our home care system is stressed. They were asking professionals to work beyond their professional capabilities, in terms of the caseloads that they are being placed in.

There are serious challenges here — serious challenges. What we're finding is that reductions in access to home support and residential home care have meant that services are increasingly provided only to people with higher levels of need and often in response to a crisis — such as when somebody is in an emergency room visit and has been discharged and, somehow, somebody has to be there — but then you start piling on those caseloads on top of people who

are already taxed, in terms of those professionals. If we were seeing a commensurate increase in home care as part of this government's strategy, there might be some logic to it but absent consultation, this is a very difficult argument to make.

You know, it is a challenge for seniors with complex needs to live well at home with the current fragmentation in service delivery and the limited hours of care. There is no 24/7, Mr. Speaker, for home care. If you would like to provide it, that would be wonderful. We would love to see — and I know many seniors who would actually be in their homes right now, if that was available.

There is a growing body of research and evidence to show that seniors with complex needs can live well at home and use far fewer emergency and hospital services when you structure the services around a senior's needs, provide those services through an interdisciplinary team of professionals and front-line workers, and you make it available 24/7 — and it is less expensive than institutional care. It is way less expensive than what we are paying currently for the services at any of the long-term care facilities in Whitehorse.

I am just trying to make sure that — I am trying not to repeat the points that my colleagues, the Member for Riverdale South and the Member for Copperbelt South, also covered. I have different little tags to myself.

One of the things — there was reference made by — the Canadian Medical Association, first of all, in their studies and their cost estimates — a day in home care is 60-percent less expensive — 60 percent — than one day in long-term care. You know, Mr. Speaker, if you think about it — for the kind of investment in nursing care — the kind of professional care to provide people care in their home; to allow them to age — and even die — in their own home would be a lot more effective and it would be a lot more respectful of the individual citizen's right to make a decision about that kind of care and where they receive it.

My colleagues have referenced the work that both the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Association for Retired Persons have done over the years — and the Canadian Nurses Association — with respect to the care continuum and the importance of allowing people to live at home while receiving a level of care suited to their needs. That continues right into what we would consider — and many times have put people into care facilities, because we say that we can't provide that level of nursing care in their homes. We can. We can and we must, because you know what, it is way less expensive and it is way more effective, and it's also more respectful — totally more respectful — than telling people that they must go live in an institution.

Fifty years ago, Tommy Douglas showed us a better way, in terms of developing and institutionalizing health care in this country. We have all benefited from universal health care. Now, fixing seniors care will be our challenge. It will go a long way in renewing the whole health care system. I think it's a challenge that this territory should be taking. It's a challenge that is past due.

We do not need the Yukon Party to tell us as citizens what is good for us. What we do need is a government that is

willing to work with citizens to provide care that allows us the choice to stay in our homes, to receive the care that we require. We need a government that will actually deliver on the commitments it made.

I'll make one more comment, and it's about the appalling lack of follow-through with respect to palliative care by this government and the notion that they're going to establish a palliative care facility miles and miles and miles away from the hospital. It really does belie a fundamental misunderstanding of the needs of palliative care professionals, in dealing with the needs of people who are at that very end of life — the need to have quick access to pharmaceuticals and the pharmacy at the hospital. You won't get it if you are at Whistle Bend. As much as we rely upon private pharmacies to deliver medications, it's more than can be dealt with in that situation.

There are many, many elements of this. It speaks to the fact that there has not been public consultation. That's a fact. That's on the record. Nobody from the government side has denied that to date, Mr. Speaker. The public has a right to have a say in an element of health care that will affect us all, either directly or through our loved ones, our family, our friends.

Mr. Tredger: I just have a few words to say on this. I will thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing forth the motion. I thank all those who spoke on it today.

Our seniors — it's a right priority, but I believe this is a wrong policy and wrong action. Why do I say this? I think that I'm concerned that, right from the beginning, Yukon citizens should be involved.

Yukon citizens should be the deciding factor — a certain input into how decisions are made. We've had experiences — many of us have had experiences with our parents, our neighbours or our friends as they've aged. We're aware that there is a range of options and different ways to go about meeting the needs of our seniors. It's challenging. Our senior population is growing. There's increasing concern about how we're going to meet those needs. Now — now more than ever, we cannot rely on top-down decision-making. We need to talk to the people in Carmacks; to the people in Haines Junction; to the people in Whistle Bend; to the people in downtown Whitehorse. What is their hope for themselves and for their parents? What kind of system are we going to build that will allow dignity and respect that those in care need. What is our vision?

I know in Carmacks and in Pelly and in Teslin — and I talked to the elders or to their grandchildren — they tell me about their importance in the community and how they want to age in place and how important community events are like potlatches or funerals or graduations. When I'm teaching in a classroom and an elder comes in, I see the strength and the possibilities and the importance to our children of what having elders in our community means.

When I talk to children of elders — grown children, grandchildren, cousins — they want to help. They want to be able to take over cookies, to sit down and have tea, to learn

how to bead, to shovel their walks and feel important, to cut their wood.

There is a real concern in more and more of our facilities — not just for seniors or people in care, but all our facilities — but I would say particularly for seniors and people in care, that one of the greatest fears and concerns is their sense of isolation and their sense of not being in their community.

We have some decisions to make as a society. Is there a continuum of care? Is aging in place important? Are we committed to it? The motion speaks to home care. It might be more believable if our home care had the priority it deserves — if our society enabled it and strengthened it, and looked for ways to make home care happen. It might be more believable if we had an overall plan — if we had an objective community-based plan that had ownership from our citizens and involvement from the people in our communities, whether those communities are in Whitehorse or in the various municipalities around Yukon.

I think we would find, if we asked and worked with citizens, that we could develop a better system — a system that was more effective in meeting the needs of our elders, allowing them to contribute to our communities and to age with dignity — I think our seniors and those in care would be healthier. I think the situation would be more respectful and I think it would be more cost effective.

If we could structure our system around the needs of our seniors — my colleague from Riverdale South often talks about patient-centred care and what that means, what it can do for us and how we can build on it. I think we need senior-centred care. We need to design our communities around inter-generations, so we can combat that fear and sense of isolation that so many of our seniors are experiencing, so that, because someone lives in Mayo or Carmacks or Old Crow or Teslin, they don't need to move out of their communities — that they feel they have the support of their communities; that our society believes in them and in their dignity and recognizes the contributions they have made — and the communities, the villages, the institutions and the systems that they have helped build are there working for them as they age.

We can do it. It won't be easy. It will take time and it will take diplomacy. It might take some money, but it will be a system, a way, that we can be proud of and that we can as a society say — and look one another in the eye — that we care about all of our citizens, whether they are old or young. We care, and all of our citizens have something to offer and all of our citizens are part of our community.

I guess one of my concerns is that there doesn't seem to be an overall plan. How does this fit in? What are we doing in other areas? To invest — well, we don't know how much we're investing, because the government doesn't seem to have any idea how much we are investing — but to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in one form of care means that we are not looking at all of the options. It means that many of the range of options are being discounted or put to the side while we invest our resources, our time and our efforts — not only of the members of the Legislature, but our public servants,

who are working hard, coming up with ideas, looking for ways to help the people they work with each and every day.

They have many ideas, many effective ways. We need to listen to them before we go off in a particular direction. I guess that is why I won't vote for this, because I think the citizens of Yukon can come up with a better way. They only need to be asked, they only need to need to be involved and they only need to be respected.

I would urge the government to take a step back, take a chance, take a risk, and believe in Yukon people, because I believe they have the answers.

I won't be voting in favour of this motion. I do believe that it is a right priority, and it deserves our attention. It deserves the attention of our public service to look at how we can ensure all of our seniors in all of our communities can live in dignity, respect and maybe, most importantly, find ways that they can continue to contribute to our society.

Mr. Barr: I would like to just say a few brief words, because I hadn't planned on it. I have been listening to the debate today. You know, I want to reflect some of the words that were stated while I was part of our community tours in the communities that I went to. When comments from the people in the communities — seniors, family members — as we've heard today, this is about our grandmas, our grandpas, our brothers, our sisters, our friends, our aunts, our uncles, our cousins. It is about that. Those people we heard from in the communities, who were grandmas, grandpas — so on and so forth — did not want to be warehoused in Whitehorse. They want supports in their communities. When we talk about home care, there are guidelines as to what home care means or what is available — to the amount of care that someone who needs care can get.

What I heard was that people wanted some outside work to be able to be done. They wanted an expansion of what is available to be able to remain in their homes. When they couldn't remain in their homes, they wanted to be able to still stay in their community. I do know Carcross, for example — and Tagish — for probably 20 years has been asking for space that would house 10 seniors who could stay in the community; who would be able to still walk over to the bridge in Tagish and fish — still have what the Member for Mayo-Tatchun just said: have your niece and nephew come over and sit with you or have a fire pit in their backyard — a communal one like they're talking about having in Teslin — and having a structure where family could still connect.

When I heard about the members opposite in the Yukon government talking about this being about the same people I am talking about here right now — I guess we have just a different vision of how we're going to care for them — and it is about them. It is about me as I get older. It's also about a fellow I'm helping right now who does not want to come to Whitehorse, and he's getting on his years and he needs some help. I've been helping him for close to a year. He wanted to go to Carcross but there is no space for him. We don't even have that building, yet here we're talking about this megaproject here in Whitehorse.

It goes back to some of the things I've been saying in this House. Where is the infrastructure or where is the vision or where is the seniors building in Carcross and Tagish? We don't even have that yet, and here the government wants to go ahead with this megaproject — warehouse.

When I hear these nice words — “pod”, for example; “palliative care pod” — I volunteered at Whitehorse Correctional Centre for many years and then I delivered programs as a contractor for several years, and it used to be called “D dorm” or “A dorm” and now they are pods. Whitehorse Correctional Centre has pods, so we're sweetening the language to make things more palliative, but moose droppings look like little chocolate Easter eggs. What's a pod? What are words? Upon closer inspection, this place is an institution. I used to work in institutions in the 1970s in Ontario.

When I hear comments from members opposite about having to go Outside because we never built something this big before — well, Outside they have a population base in a square block that's the population of the Yukon. They build things a little bigger out there. Why wouldn't they? It's a different scale. It's a different perspective.

I do not support this motion. I didn't support it when it was a 300-bed motion to build an institution and I don't support a now 150 — which, I believe, because it has become more apparent to people that their palate might want to hear about 150, instead of a 300 — something like moose droppings and Easter eggs — and we are going to change some language around so that it is more palatable. At the end of the day, it will still be a 300-bed institution.

I just spent the last years of my sister's life with what we have at Whitehorse General Hospital in palliative care, and I couldn't imagine going through that experience where it is intended to be built — nor from the discussions with the people who were delivering that care, 24/7, because we sat there 24/7 with her and saw the differences in medications and the dedication.

What we need is a palliative care unit — no doubt — and it's long overdue, but not up there. We need to speak to the people who are delivering these services first, before we move ahead like this, or to the ones we expect to live there. If you were asking me, I would tell you, “No, I don't want to do that.” The people I have heard from in the communities do not want this. I would have been remiss not to stand up today and speak and pass on those words. The people in the communities — I heard one person who came out to these discussions who thought that it would be a good idea — one. I would be remiss to not speak on those voices' behalf today.

Thank you for listening, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the day.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, he will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Elias: I just want to thank all of the members who spoke to this motion that I put forward today. I did put my

name on this motion because I believe in it, and I see nothing wrong with planning and constructing a new 150-bed continuing care facility with the possibility of expansion so that our elders and our seniors can live with dignity in the twilight of their lives. I support this motion.

There was an attempt by some members to try to touch on the importance of one aspect of the motion and that was the importance of seniors. I guess, to me, elders and seniors are important because of their long, accumulated knowledge, experience and wisdom that they share with us. Seniors are important because, if given the opportunity, they have much to teach us in a lot of different ways. Seniors are important because they can be helpful in applying life lessons to us, especially with self-esteem and self-respect and self-discipline.

I think seniors are important because they offer a great deal of satisfaction and joy when we are around them. Elders and seniors are important because of the practical experience they offer us when we visit them. Elders and seniors are important because they have so much to give intangibly to us. Elders and seniors are important because they have learned the lessons of humility and they teach that to us. Elders and seniors are fun companions when we learn how to be in their company. Elders and seniors know things we would never guess unless we ask. Seniors and elders help us deal with disappointment, grief, illness and heartache throughout our lives. Elders and seniors know how important it is to have a sense of humour.

I want to conclude with this sentiment. When I see an opportunity for us to take care of our seniors and elders, because they took care of us, I am going to take full opportunity for it, and that is exactly what we are doing.

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.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. Stick: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Mr. Tredger: Disagree.

Mr. Barr: Disagree.

Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 11 yeas, six nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion No. 926 agreed to

Motion No. 942

Clerk: Motion No. 942, 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 begin the process of developing a made-in-Yukon K to 12 education curriculum through consultation with all of the Yukon government's education partners, including students, their parents, Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Teachers' Association and expert educators, Yukon College, representatives from businesses and industry, school councils and the general public.

Mr. Elias: It's a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to begin the process of developing a made-in-Yukon K to 12 education curriculum through consultation with all of the Yukon government's education partners, including students, their parents, Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Teachers' Association and expert educators, Yukon College, representatives from businesses and industry, school councils and the general public.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most important responsibilities we have is to educate our children. Education prepares them to become leaders, citizens and committed members of our communities. This is reflected in the mandate of the Yukon Department of Education: to deliver accessible and quality education to Yukon students of all ages; and in the strategic objectives of the department: success for each learner, an inclusive, adaptable, and productive workforce that meets the needs of Yukoners.

We share the important responsibility of educating Yukon's younger generations with many essential partners, including parents, public school and post-secondary educators, First Nations, the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, employers, school councils and community members, and post-secondary institutions, like Yukon College.

It truly takes a village to raise a child, as the saying goes. We each have a role to play in ensuring that our children have the education and skills they need to succeed in the future. Parents are the first and most important teachers and advocates in a child's life. The teams of hard-working teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals working directly with our children form the foundation of Yukon's strong and diverse school communities.

First Nation governments and the Council of Yukon First Nations are partners across many school programs, as we work together to improve outcomes for First Nation learners

and to provide all Yukon students with opportunities to learn more about Yukon First Nation cultures and traditions.

The Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon delivers French first language programs and advocates for French language education in our territory. Yukon employers offer valuable advice and input in developing school programs, as well as training opportunities, to ensure Yukon students are learning the skills needed in our workforce. Yukon school councils shape the evolution of each school, providing a voice and say from the communities on the growth and development of their schools.

Yukon College and other post-secondary institutions help us shape the pathways for students to go on to advanced education training and programs of study and we, the Government of Yukon, coordinate and collaborate with these partners to direct the future of education in Yukon schools.

For this reason, I was very pleased to hear our Premier announce that education has a permanent front seat spot on this government's agenda and that over the coming months we will be rolling out a new vision for the future of education in Yukon schools. This is no small task. It is a major undertaking that will involve a comprehensive look at Yukon's public education system to explore what is working, what is not working and how we can make it better.

We already have some sense of where to start, based on recommendations from previous reviews, such as the 2007 *Education Reform Project Final Report*, the 2008 *One Vision, Multiple Pathways: Secondary School Programming Process Final Report*, the 2008 *Helping Students Succeed: Vision, Goals and Priorities for Yukon First Nations Education* report, the 2009 Auditor General of Canada report and the 2010 to 2015 New Horizons strategic plan for the Department of Education.

In response to many of these recommendations, the Department of Education has undertaken a number of educational reforms, new programs and improvements since 2007 to improve education for Yukon students. However, it is now 2015, and it has been a few years since the most recent of these reviews was completed.

The first step in a comprehensive look at how Yukon's public school system is doing is to examine these past reviews, their recommendations and Yukon Education's responses. This will give us a sense of what is working and what still needs improvement, as well as addressing new programs and initiatives that have been in place since the last review. I am pleased to now summarize these past reviews for discussion with my colleagues and later with our partners in education.

The education reform project was released in 2008. It began in 2005 through the *Education Act* review of 2002 to 2004. Its mandate was to address the gap between First Nations' and non-First Nations' student outcomes, a challenge we continue to address today. Other goals of this project were the development of an education system that would meet the needs of all Yukoners, ensuring that students could participate successfully in work, post-secondary education, training and lifelong learning and increasing the involvement of First

Nations in schools and in the education decision-making process.

Areas addressed included early childhood learning, literacy, technology, facilities, FASD, rural schools, experiential learning, professional development, teacher evaluations, et cetera. Many recommendations focused on greater involvement and partnership with First Nations for governance and committees, curricula, language instruction, resources, administration of schools, First Nation student support and more.

Through a memorandum of understanding with Yukon First Nations and the governments of Canada and Yukon, we are working together on the subsequent joint education action plan to find ways to support the success of First Nation students in school. The goals of the 2014-24 joint education action plan include: building more culturally inclusive schools; identifying First Nation community priorities and capacity-building needs; collaborating on protocols and evaluation and closing the academic achievement gap through foundational supports that meet the needs of Yukon First Nation students.

A working group is developing an implementation plan with tasks and timelines this spring using feedback from the 2015 Yukon First Nations Education Summit. We are also continuing to develop educational agreements with individual First Nations. A great example is the signed agreement with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. Under this agreement, we jointly develop school curriculum and programs within Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in traditional territory, such as accredited cultural camps — First Fish Camp 10, Moose Hunt Camp 10 and First Hunt 10 — cultural education and more.

There is great work being done by the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit of the Department of Education. They are responsible for working with First Nations to develop and promote the inclusion of First Nation cultures, language and traditions for Yukon school programs, including building productive relationships with First Nation communities, increasing the amount of resources available that share First Nation perspectives in Yukon schools, improving the academic results of First Nation students from kindergarten to grade 12, and providing support to and enhancing First Nations' efforts to revitalize their languages.

In 2008, the *One Vision, Multiple Pathways: Secondary School Programming Process Final Report* was undertaken and released. The central finding of this report was that program enhancement and new facilities were not enough to improve student engagement and outcomes. The proposed solution was systemic change to promote inclusion and excellence through the development of flexible learning pathways, increased collaboration with partners, and individualized learning and student success.

With respect to the 2008 *Helping Students Succeed: Goals and Priorities for Yukon First Nations Education*, this 2008 report described a vision for the education of First Nation students in the public school system. They sought an education program and environment that supports First Nation student success in academics, culture and language, where

students graduate from high school well prepared for participation in life and life-long learning no matter where they lived and worked. This vision included a focus on First Nation curriculum development, experiential learning, parent participation and community partnerships.

Goal 3 identified the need to create curriculum and supports to teach students about the history and legacy of residential schools. As you know, a unit about residential schools was developed and has been introduced at several Yukon schools this year. We have worked very closely with First Nations in the development and rollout of this curriculum, and, Mr. Speaker, in about an hour and a half, I will be attending an information session this evening on this very topic. I look forward to hearing what my constituents have to say about this piece of curriculum and their feedback.

The 2009 Auditor General's report was completed six years ago with a number of recommendations to assist the department in more effectively delivering public school programs to Yukon children. It focused on performance indicators, student progress after they left school, strategic planning, risk management and the long-term plan for facilities management. The department's responses to the various recommendations in this report, which largely related to strategic planning, can be found in the Yukon Education annual reports 2010 to 2014. One example is the implementation of the school growth planning policy, school review and growth plans in response to recommendation 81 for individual school plans.

With regard to the 2010 New Horizons strategic plan, this initiative began five years ago and was the second phase of the planning cycle under the education reform project. With New Horizons, the Department of Education decided upon a strategic plan to begin significant long-term changes in school cultures, administrative growth and professionalism and was able to embark on long-term efforts to improve student achievements. The consultation process for New Horizons provided useful feedback on the way the department carries out its duties. Some key outcomes of New Horizons are as follows: strategic objectives centred on student achievement with an additional focus engaging and helping First Nations students to be successful; continuing development of land-based experiential programs to improve First Nation student achievement; movement to a web-based student information system; completion of an assessment framework and implementation of a school-growth planning policy; implementation of a larger market framework, including a comprehensive skills- and trades-training strategy; completion of a staff allocation formula; ongoing development of a long-term facilities plan; leadership training for teachers; and introduction of professional-growth plans.

We are on the path to a thriving public school system in the Yukon. We are working closely with partners. We are being responsive to their feedback and advice. We are supporting the needs of all learners, including rural and First Nation students. We are building flexible learning pathways to success for all Yukon learners so that students can fulfill their aspirations to work, business, trades, college, universities or

other pursuits. We are promoting locally developed learning opportunities and programs that reflect the unique northern context and perspectives of Yukon. We are working with other jurisdictions with a continued focus on competency-based learning, which focuses on literacy and numeracy, as well as collaboration, creativity, communication and critical thinking.

It is important to recognize that the Department of Education has made many great strides to support the success of Yukon learners. Some of our public school initiatives are recognized in the field of education as pioneering and good practice, such as rural experiential models. These for-credit programs bring together students in grades 10 to 12 and educators from rural Yukon communities for an intensive week of learning and teaching in fine arts and applied skills with local experts.

Blended learning combines in-person and on-line instruction through educational technology and students are able to progress through their courses at a pace appropriate to their learning needs with real-time support from a classroom teacher.

Experiential programming — a great example is the bison hunt program at Hidden Valley Elementary School, Holy Family Elementary School and St. Elias Community School. School staff and students go out on the land with volunteers from the Department of Environment and First Nations in their communities to learn about ecology, the natural world, hunting practices and cooking.

In fact, a teacher from Holy Family Elementary was a keynote speaker at the winter conference of the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario to speak about the bison hunt program at his school. Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't mention our Chief Zzeh Gittlit School in Old Crow and what they're doing, as this is the last week of their cultural programming in experiential learning. As members of this House know full well, the former Minister of Education travelled with me to our community of Old Crow and to our land-based cultural camp — or cultural learning centre — and she was able to learn how to set a trap and catch a muskrat. She skinned the muskrat and she stretched the fur and we talked about the traditional values of this experience, and then we actually cooked the muskrat and she ate it. So it was a full cycle of learning experience for our former Education minister.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, the groundwork is there. It is now time to meet with our partners, evaluate our work that has been done as a result of previous recommendations and decide how to chart our course forward from here. Yes, there will be meetings, but our focus will be action — action that will be evidence-based and well-informed to build upon our successes and make improvements where they are needed.

In order for the new vision for education to succeed, we must ensure that it reflects the values and needs of our many partners. To create sustainable and successful change, all partners must feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the state and future of education in our territory.

At this early stage in the process, I can tell you that the new vision will include more Yukon content in a curriculum that is based on the principles of 21st century learning, which focuses on foundational skills in reading, writing and math as well as the development of key competencies in collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication. It is place- and culture-based and engages learners. As a result, 21st century students are encouraged to learn on their own and apply what they know.

We need to ensure that the Yukon curriculum is relevant to Yukon students. As we discuss how to meet these curriculum objectives with Yukon educators and our traditional curriculum partner, B.C., we will also explore good practices from other jurisdictions that could be adapted for Yukon. A made-in-Yukon curriculum will reflect our territory while meeting international standards for education to ensure that our students have the knowledge to work and learn anywhere in world, whether it's here at Yukon College or overseas at Oxford University.

Curriculum is more than the context of textbooks. It is more than the units of a course. Curriculum is also the broader goals of competencies, skills and personal and social development of each child. So a made-in-Yukon curriculum isn't just about kids learning more Klondike Gold Rush history. It's about teaching them about the knowledge and values that form Yukon's culture and political identity as well as their role in our Canadian society. For this reason, clear, inspired and motivational curriculum resources and materials play an important role in ensuring excellence in Yukon's education system.

Education has changed a great deal since I was last in school, with a teacher at the front of the room with a chalkboard and the kids sitting in lines of desks handwriting their notes. Today's classrooms look very different: teachers and students move around; iPads and laptops have taken the place of pens and paper; Promethean boards and PowerPoint presentations have replaced the chalkboard; and technology is used across subjects and classes from blended learning to distance education.

There is a wealth of on-line learning opportunities now available to Yukon students that didn't exist when I was in school. Teaching our children how to use these technologies safely and about their rights and responsibilities as digital citizens of the world are critical to their future success, as the world of work also has changed and requires the daily use of technology in so many jobs.

Technology is one of the many ways we can support the individual learning needs of Yukon students. Students learn in different ways and they can be better engaged through their individual interests and strengths. It is up to all of us to ensure that the education system meets these needs and supports their success.

The Department of Education is well-positioned to begin these important conversations with partners to inform the new vision for education in Yukon, thanks to the hard work of teachers, administrators, councillors, school councils and department staff.

The next step is about working together. Clearly, education is about more than academics, so working with partners and communities to support each learner is critical to remodeling Yukon's education system. The Department of Education will be bringing key partners together before the end of May to begin this exploration for a new vision for education in order to chart our way forward. Students, parents, educators, the Yukon Teachers' Association, First Nations, CSFY, school councils, NGOs and community members all have ideas to contribute, and we want to work with them to move these ideas into action.

We all share the same responsibility and goal — the success of Yukon learners. If we are to bring real change to education and if we are to truly invest in our economy by investing in our education, we must take the time to work together and get it right to ensure that our kids have access to an education that prepares them to face whatever unexpected challenges arise in their future.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the member opposite for introducing this motion to the House and I thank him for his words on education. Any day that education is discussed in the Legislature is a good day.

Education plays a critical role in all of our lives and it is a continuous process throughout our lives, so I thank the member. This is the right priority. However, I do have to question how we are going about it. I'm not sure exactly what the government is proposing here. I wonder what the value is of embarking on a major curriculum change. It could be completed in two months, or two years — we're not sure. The Premier, in his speech, mentioned a couple of months — the minister said a couple of years. I suspect that to overhaul our curriculum will take a lot longer, and it is a lot more involved than what is being proposed.

As a principal and former educator, I'm proud of our students. I'm proud of what they've done — the universities around the world they've attended, the jobs they've done in our communities. I'm proud of our school councils and our parents, the First Nations and their belief and involvement in our schools. Much has been accomplished.

When the Premier spoke I was a little bit taken aback by some of the things he said about our system and about our teachers and about our students. It seems that some of his statements — and four pages of his budget referring to this proposed educational change — were so vague as to be meaningless. How could you not agree with apple pie? Some of his statements did not recognize the ongoing and important contributions of our hard-working educational staff, whether they are in the Department of Education, in administrative positions or in the classrooms.

A new vision for Yukon — based on what? The Premier said that not all of our students have the same aspirations. Then he went on to say that, "...despite this, we still offer only one standard — one educational stream through which all students must pass."

The newly appointed Minister of Education has been making an effort to go to our schools, and I thank him very

much for that. Perhaps the Premier would like to accompany him and he would see the differentiated learning happening — the experiential learning. The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin mentioned much of our programming that differentiates learning for our students. Wood Street, community-focused education, blended learning and the rural experiential models are all examples of educational streams that students can take to reach their goal.

The Premier mentions an educational system that is engaging and relevant for all of our students. Let me assure the Premier that that is the goal for each and every one of our teachers and for each and every one of our schools.

The Premier talks about — we used to talk a lot in education about pedagogy. Pedagogy literally means "guiding a child". We need to bring this back into education. Let me assure the Premier that this idea is alive and well and that teachers every day are guiding our students forward and working hard.

The Premier says that education needs to be a team effort among parents, educators, communities, our partners and all other stakeholders to guide each child toward adulthood. Let me assure you that that is happening. Let me assure the Premier that our parents want to be involved in our school system, that our teachers have ideas and things to bring forward.

The Premier says, to that end, we will be focusing specifically on assessing what resources our schools and our educators require to ensure that those needs can be met. This is not new, Mr. Speaker. In 2009, the Auditor General had this to say: "We expected the Department to be able to identify performance indicators and measure performance results for both Yukon students as a whole and for major student sub-groups ... Setting meaningful performance indicators ... are key ways for the Department to assess the effectiveness of its programs, services, and policies. We also expected the Department to establish goals, set targets, and benchmark results ... we expected the Department to monitor and report actual results, then address gaps and work toward continuous improvement."

Continuous improvement, Mr. Speaker — that has been the goal of our education system for many — as long as I've been involved in it. Continuous assessment and continuous evaluation — try something, see if it works, if it works do more of it, if it doesn't work, do less of it.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier says: "So this initiative will depend, in large part, on bringing the community back into education." The community is waiting to be back into education. Parents want to be back into education. Teachers want to be back into education.

Some of the Premier's statements were contradictory: "We need educators and administrators to provide their professional input." Yet two years ago this government policy was to silence teachers. When they were called on it, they were told it was a draft. That draft has never been rescinded. It has been just brushed aside, leaving teachers and administrators not sure — where do they stand?

Let me tell you, teachers want to advocate for their kids and let me assure you that teachers know what should be kept confidential. They deal with that every day. Part of their job is to know what they can say and what they can't. They know what's personal information. They don't need a communications officer assigned to the Deputy Minister of Education to tell them whether they can talk about their buffalo hunt or whether they can talk about the needs of their students. They understand what confidentiality is and, in front of them, they see the need every day.

So to say we need to hear from them — we need them back in education — at the same time saying, “We'll tell you what you can say” — I don't know; it seems kind of contradictory to me.

Mr. Speaker, a new vision — a new vision according to whom? Who has the government asked about their thoughts on the Yukon? I would like to know what happened to the reviews that the government has already performed on Yukon's educational system, as mentioned by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin — the *Education Act* review, the education reform project, *One Vision, Multiple Pathways*. In those situations, consultants and Yukon people were hired at great expense to look in detail at our system, to analyze our alternatives. These were major undertakings with visits to all of our communities.

The education reform project was a partnership between CYFN and the Yukon Party government. They were co-chaired — one from each. This was a major undertaking. Concrete recommendations were designed to improve Yukon's education system. What happened to these recommendations? What happened to the Yukon Party's vision for education, the New Horizons project? Has that New Horizons become stale already? Has it become “lost horizons”?

This sudden decision to overhaul Yukon's educational curriculum without any investment in personnel or material resources: Is this a serious attempt to improve our system or is it just purple prose? This unilateral, top-down, here-comes-our-vision approach to education — is this a response to some of the recommendations we have heard from every one of our reviews? Is this a response — as the education reform project says, “a workable and inclusive model”? Is this a response to the decentralization of decision-making and empowerment of school councils and communities? Those areas were identified as essential.

This is a top-down, announce-first-and-consult-later approach to First Nation relationships and to parent relationships. It betrays the very real concerns and efforts of teachers, school administrators and Yukon parents and the work that has been ongoing for years. I won't go there.

Yukoners would call for an end to the centralization of school-level decision-making. There is a need to address the growing violence in our schools. There is a need to ensure that our special-needs students, or students who are struggling in the school system, are receiving the support and care they need, and that our front-line educators are receiving the

support and care that they need to work with them each and every day.

Yukoners would be concerned about the lack of respect for parents and teachers. Yukoners would be concerned that — here we go again — another review, another report, another distraction. We know that our resource rooms are chronically under-supported, creating a vicious cycle that means students who enter resource rooms often remain there. We know, as the Minister for Health and Social Services mentioned, there is an increasing number of students with autism. There is an increasing number of students in our school system with other struggles to learn. Our school system is changing. A direct attempt to address that would be appropriate.

The Premier was right about one thing when he proposed his vague vision for Yukon's educational future: It does take a village to raise a child. It also takes a government that consults the village before it acts. Notwithstanding the budget speech, the government has a number of commitments to uphold to the community when it comes to education. I have a number of questions about this new vision.

What is the timeline? The Premier talked about a couple of months. The minister talked about a couple of years. Realistically, an overhaul of the curriculum — pretty amazing, given our record so far — in B.C., it takes three to five years to change the curriculum in one subject area. Different grade levels have to be interconnected. Different subject areas have to be matched.

The Premier, in his address, talked about the need for more made-in-Yukon curricula and cited the 20 percent that already exists in the act as not being enough. Is he aware of any school that has more than 20 percent — or even close to 20 percent — of their content locally developed? I'm not. Yet this rush to change the act — we've been told many times during this Sitting and previous Sittings how hard it is to change the act. Prior to consultation, we're talking about changing it.

The Premier talks about partners. Has CYFN been consulted or did they find out about this new plan the way we did, in a budget speech? The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin mentioned the MOU with CYFN. One of the tenets is transparency and respect. One would think before embarking on a major vision, a major or comprehensive review or a major analysis of the education system — whichever we're doing — CYFN should be part of that.

Parents — how are they going to be involved? Is it going to be through their school councils? Are we going to have community tours? Is it going to be various people going to various places gathering various information? This isn't clear. But let me assure you, if it's to be done properly, it can't be done on a napkin at the dinner table.

The plans have to be put forward and vetted by the partners. The process has to be transparent and open. YTA — have they been told that there's going to be a new vision for education? Have they been told that there's going to be a major K to 12 curriculum overhaul — at some time, by someone? “It's okay, we'll talk to you sometime about it.”

How does this mesh with the MOU of the three governments — Government of Yukon, Government of Canada and CYFN, as representative of First Nation governments — and their joint education action plan? How does this mesh with it? Have discussions been taking place to see where it fits in? It would be an interesting first meeting. “Since our last meeting, we’ve decided to embark on a brand-new vision for education. Don’t worry. We’ll tell you about it.”

Mr. Speaker, right priority, wrong policy. Our school system is in a state of continuous progress. We learn, we grow, we examine, we use evidence-based learning, we evaluate programs, and then we move forward. We assess the changing clientele, and then we move forward. At best, Mr. Speaker, this motion, this vision and this comprehensive analysis and this direction the government is going off in are a distraction from the real work of what’s happening in our schools. It’s too vague to be useful.

I’m concerned that it comes at a time when the Premier has seen fit to remove the previous Minister of Education, when the Deputy Minister of Education has been changed, and when the Assistant Deputy Minister has been changed. That’s a lot of change just before we embark on a new vision.

I would urge the government to take a step back to allow the educational staff to act on the recommendations of previous comprehensive reviews and visions, to work out a system of governance that is more inclusive, that isn’t centralized and that allows parents and teachers and students to take ownership and responsibility.

How is this different from what was recommended in the education reform project where they identified four areas that would be essential to meet goals — a workable and inclusive model of public school governance, the decentralization of decision-making and the empowerment of school councils and communities, a strategy to address aboriginal language, revitalization and retention — and to that I would add, the culture of Yukon?

Number four — initiatives to address the social and community aspects of Yukoners’ educational needs. 2007 education reform, 2008 and the reaction to it, 2009 and the Auditor General’s report — they all talked about the same thing: the need to engage all of the partners at the beginning of the process so that all of the partners can take ownership and move forward.

One of the things I learned when I was in the school system was that there are a lot of challenges. Each and every day there are challenges. Some of them you can resolve quickly. Some take more time. Some of them are systemic.

Sometimes that can be overwhelming. Sometimes that can be overpowering, but if you can be part of a team, you can grow and learn together and you can accomplish a lot.

I will not be supporting —

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

Debate on Motion No. 942 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.