



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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Number 253

1st Session

33rd Legislature

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## HANSARD

Wednesday, April 13, 2016 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

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

## CABINET MINISTERS

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

## GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

### Yukon Party

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Darius Elias</b>      | Government House Leader<br>Vuntut Gwitchin |
| <b>Hon. David Laxton</b> | Porter Creek Centre                        |
| <b>Patti McLeod</b>      | Watson Lake                                |

## OPPOSITION MEMBERS

### New Democratic Party

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

### Liberal Party

|                     |                                       |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Sandy Silver</b> | Leader of the Third Party<br>Klondike |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|

## LEGISLATIVE STAFF

|                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Clerk of the Assembly   | Floyd McCormick |
| Deputy Clerk            | Linda Kolody    |
| Clerk of Committees     | Allison Lloyd   |
| Sergeant-at-Arms        | Rudy Couture    |
| Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms | Doris McLean    |
| Hansard Administrator   | Deana Lemke     |

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Wednesday, April 13, 2016 — 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 now proceed with the Order Paper. Tributes.

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of National Volunteer Week

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I rise today to pay tribute to the many Yukoners who give their time and efforts to others as volunteers in their communities.

People across Canada are celebrating National Volunteer Week, which began on Sunday and continues until April 16. Yukoners volunteer to feed our hungry, protect our vulnerable, comfort the lonely and educate our children. Volunteers support the cultural, recreation and sporting events we attend and participate in. They beautify our greenspaces and they nourish our souls.

Whether they volunteer for a one-time event or become a board or committee member for many years, volunteers make a difference. We thank volunteers for all that they do to make Yukon a great place to live, work, play and raise a family.

Mr. Speaker, in the gallery today we have representatives from some of the volunteer community organizations. I would like to pause for a moment and honour them: Doug Caldwell is acting director of Volunteer Bénévoles Yukon; Bruno Bourdache is executive director for Volunteer Bénévoles Yukon; Dion Zdunic is communications officer for Volunteer Bénévoles Yukon; Dave Whiteside is president of the United Way Yukon; I also see Eileen Melnychuck up there and she's also with Volunteer Bénévoles Yukon as well.

Thank you to all of you for all that you and your organizations give back to Yukon and to Yukoners.

Yesterday, the Governor General awarded the inaugural Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers to 55 Canadians. Two Yukon volunteers are among that generous group: Marg White and Ruth Armson.

Marg has been a volunteer for more than 25 years with Yukon Curling Association and Athletics Yukon. She is also a member of the Sport Yukon Hall of Fame and a highly regarded official in both curling and in athletics.

Marg's devotion and efforts have led to the success of Whitehorse's athletic community, where she has provided local athletes with opportunities to learn and grow. Marg has been timing running and walking events since the 1980s — in the rain, in the sun, in the snow — and always with a smile and an encouraging word for the athletes, most of whom she knows by name.

For more than 30 years, Ruth Armson has fostered the development of creativity and self-confidence through

literature and theatre. She has volunteered thousands of hours in multiple roles with the Yukon Arts Centre as a teacher, a mentorship program coordinator and a facilitator for the seniors' memoir writing class. Ruth is also a former winner of the Commissioner's Award for Public Service. I congratulate them both on receiving this sovereign medal for volunteers and thank them for all that they have done for sports and arts in Whitehorse. Yukoners are proud to call them our own and, collectively, we are inspired by their tireless efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I know that each of my colleagues in this House can name volunteers like Ruth and Marg — Yukoners who have made a difference in their communities.

At this point, I would just actually like to acknowledge my wife, who has volunteered for many years with the kindergarten classes at Elijah Smith Elementary School and Takhini Elementary and just really enjoyed herself also as a volunteer for the Haywood Ski Nationals.

Our community libraries are run by volunteer boards and enhanced by community members who assist with programs and special events. Yukon has an incredibly high number of non-profit organizations that thrive because of the dedication of volunteers. The cultural identity of our territory is brought to light by volunteers in our numerous arts, culture and tourism organizations. Sporting events like ski loppets, bike races and broomball tournaments happen throughout the territory because of the time and the dedication of volunteers.

There are parents and families who are deeply involved in their children's education and classrooms, through field trips, school councils and committees. First Nation elders and community members pass their wisdom, knowledge and their languages on to the next generation in school programs.

We have many volunteers who give countless hours to better the lives of residents in our continuing care facilities. They assist with recreational activities, visit residents one-on-one, bring their dogs to visit, provide medical escorts, and so much more. There are volunteers participating in sports and tutoring programs in true community spirit, setting a great example for our kids.

Major events, like the softball world championships, the recent Haywood Ski Nationals and the annual Native Hockey Tournament, unite us as volunteers and as sports fans. Our 28 Yukon sport organizations and many more special recreation groups like Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, Special Olympics Yukon and Skookum Jim Friendship Centre — just to name a few, Mr. Speaker — can operate because volunteers believe in the value that these programs bring to our communities and of course to our citizens.

Our communities are made safer by volunteer emergency responders. We all live better knowing that there are well-trained, well-equipped volunteers providing firefighting, search and rescue and emergency medical services throughout our territory. Hundreds of Yukoners have stepped forward to be heroes in their communities. This kind of volunteer work isn't easy. Our first responders invest time and training to learn new skills. They perform physically and emotionally challenging tasks and they have to take time away from their home lives to do it; but they do it because they are building

the kind of community they want to be a part of. They do it because they see the difference it makes for their friends and for their neighbours.

They do it because it makes them grow. It makes them proud. It makes them better. For that, the volunteer first responders have my thanks and admiration.

Of course, they are not only heroes in their communities; countless volunteers work to change our lives and shape our communities in ways we might not even realize — for example, those who work tirelessly on our local advisory councils to help make their communities a better place to live.

Finally, I would like to mention the Yukon Community Crime Stoppers Association that was incorporated in March 2016 and will be launched this spring with the aim of enhancing public reporting and prevention of crime. This association is the result of the work of a number of volunteers from a variety of backgrounds who are all committed to making a difference in our communities.

For all the ways volunteers make our lives and our communities vibrant, healthy and connected, Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize National Volunteer Week. I invite all of my colleagues here in this Legislative Assembly and my fellow Yukoners to again give a round of applause to those volunteers sitting in the gallery and to join me in collectively saying a huge thank you to our tireless and dedicated Yukon volunteers. Our lives would not be the same without volunteers dedicating their time to making a difference.

*Applause*

**Mr. Barr:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to pay tribute to the thousands of Yukon volunteers during National Volunteer Week. Government offers up the framework of the territory, but it is the hundreds of volunteers who fill in all the gaps. Government could never afford to replace similar services or the hundreds of thousands of hours donated by volunteers.

We thank them for those early-morning hours put in by hockey and swimming coaches — people who are often out of bed before the birds start to sing, encouraging kids with their love of sport. We are thankful for those late-night hours put in by emergency response volunteers while we're safe in our beds. These volunteers, who give their time to fire, EMS, search and rescue — to name a few — these volunteers make sure we're safe and secure in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I think back to that first beautiful Sunday afternoon a couple of weeks ago when I was out in Tagish and I went by the volunteer fire department. There were firefighters gathered there to train, and they had been there on the Saturday also and practised in Tagish. We might take for granted that when we go to spend our beautiful spring days enjoying things like the celebration of the swans, these volunteers are training to better protect us when the crisis arrives.

Every sport organization in the territory — from soccer to lawn bowling, basketball to softball; for the young to the old — is run with the help of volunteers. Many parents at one point or another will coach a sport team and many of those

continue coaching long after their children have moved on. Volunteers make sure that we all have a chance to play and participate in sport.

Economic drivers like music and arts and cultural festivals wouldn't be possible without the countless volunteers that support these important threads that join our communities together. Nothing joins a community together like a celebration, and Yukoners give of themselves freely to make them happen.

We can't forget organizations or groups that embrace those who have fallen on tough times. From the volunteers at soup kitchens and food banks, to church groups, our neighbours, and volunteer organizations that tackle tough social issues, these folks are a smile, a bowl of soup, or a hug in our time of greatest need. We can't forget our friends and neighbours who shovel our driveways when we aren't able or bring us food when we are sick. Just last month, my neighbour brought me food a few times and it's a very kind gesture. They offer us support in our times of need to stop or help change tires on the side of the road. All these actions are freely given to help to strengthen our communities.

Mr. Speaker, there are far too many groups and individuals to list, but we feel their contributions to our communities each and every day — these contributions of time, energy and effort are a large part of what lures the people to the Yukon to visit, but convinces them to stay.

**Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, I also want to rise and pay tribute to National Volunteer Week.

I want to talk specifically about my community. We had some great tributes here about the generalities, but I wanted to draw down on some specific volunteers in my town. It was employment that brought me to Dawson City, Mr. Speaker, but it was the spirit of volunteerism and the community involvement that made this vibrant community my home.

One of the first people that I met in the community was a guy by the name of Jason Barber. He was a city employee at that time and he spent tireless hours going above and beyond his position in the town. Because of his long-time volunteerism and also because of Parks, the city and Property Management, private businesses knew that anything he would borrow for whatever event that he was volunteering for, they knew he would take things back in better condition than he borrowed it. He had a key for every single building in the town. It was guys like Jason and others who really made me want to be part of that community.

At the same time, our current mayor, Mayor Wayne Potoroka, was the head of the "bull gang" for the Dawson City Music Festival my very first year in Dawson City. The bull gang — if members don't already know — is the group of community members who spent a week or longer leading up to the Dawson City Music Festival setting up the grounds and the large tents for the festival goers. The group of volunteers who were on that bull gang my very first summer made me know that this was my home. The Dawson City Music Festival is put on mostly by volunteers and brings visitors from all over Dawson City and all over the Yukon

who turn up and support this beautiful festival — Canada's perfect tiny festival — which ends up making us a very unique community.

Whether it is the Klondike Visitors Association that puts on the annual Thaw di Gras festival in early March, requiring many volunteers and participants from our town, the volunteers organize events like road hockey tournaments, snowshoe baseball tournaments, dog and cat shows, chili cook-offs, tea-boiling contests and many others — all in the spirit of community and getting people out of their winter hibernation.

Another great example is the Sled Dawgs. It is a non-profit organization based in Dawson City that again relies on a number of volunteers to host such events as Trek Over the Top or the Yukon Quest. They maintain winter trails and they promote an active lifestyle in and around Dawson — again, made up of volunteers. I would like to take the opportunity as well to give one particular individual credit for his volunteer time: Steve Laszlo. Steve Laszlo is the local physical education teacher, and he coaches children of all ages in a variety of sports, filling almost every available weekend and evening. He is not only coaching students, but adults: women's hockey teams and men's hockey teams.

I think it's important to recognize Steve for this reason. Steve is a teacher. His job ends every weekday at 4:00 p.m., but he and the rest of our volunteers believe in a community responsibility to go beyond the job description. The spirit of coaching teaches fairness and inclusion, while promoting a healthy lifestyle — all of which contribute to a healthy and a vibrant community. I'm very, very proud to represent the Klondike constituency, which has a vast number of community members who volunteer for a number of societies and organizations, all of whom deserve personal credit. The groups help and support the community, which has a profound impact on the quality of life for all of our community members.

To all of the volunteers, thank you very, very much for all of your work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Applause*

### In recognition of International Day of Pink

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud today to rise on behalf of all members of the Legislature to pay tribute to the International Day of Pink.

May I begin first by applauding all members for the various ways that they have found to honour this day through their choice of garment or clothing — some in various ways, different ways — but I applaud everyone for making the effort to wear at least a garment of some kind of pink today.

Annual days of observance such as this one can start to feel routine after a time, but we must not lose sight of the importance of this particular day as evidenced by the degree to which it has been embraced around the world in such a relatively short time. What has now become an international day — a phenomenon really — began right here in Canada.

Members no doubt know the basic story but bear with me because I believe it bears retelling. David Shepherd and

Travis Price, seniors at Central Kings Rural High School in Cambridge, Nova Scotia, witnessed a grade 9 student being bullied in 2007. The student was wearing a pink t-shirt to school that day. David and Travis intervened in the incident and afterwards, they decided to take action to prevent future occurrences of such bullying in their school. They went out and purchased dozens of pink women's tank tops and took them to school the next day. The message was also being spread by social media and through other means and the next day, the school became a sea of pink with not dozens, but hundreds of students — 80 percent of the student body — standing in solidarity with the bullied student.

Travis explained his motivation in a recent television interview. To quote him: "For me it was like standing up for myself because I was bullied as well when I was a kid; throughout all of school, so it was a way for me to stand up for myself. It was a way for me to stand up for this grade 9 student. It was a way for me to really make a difference in my school."

"A way to make a difference in my school", Mr. Speaker — that's truly an understatement. Travis' and David's actions and those of their schoolmates have gone beyond — far beyond — their own school in rural Nova Scotia. In solidarity with David and Travis, Yukon schools participated in Sea of Pink in November of 2007 and have done so every year since then. Pink Shirt Day is now an annual event in Canada, observed in schools all across the country every February.

In 2012, the United Nations declared an annual anti-bullying day, which is now recognized in more than 25 countries worldwide and involves literally millions of people.

Of course we have the International Day of Pink, the second Wednesday in April, which we are honouring here today. While pink may have specific gender connotations in North America, that's not true in every part of the world or in every culture, and it has certainly not been true throughout history.

In the 1980s, a pink suit — a silk suit — with floral embroidery would have been considered very masculine. Pink after all is a shade of red, a colour that has historically been seen as warlike. In a June 1918 edition of the trade publication *Earnshaw's Infants' Department*, a children's fashion magazine, we read this: "The generally accepted rule is pink for the boys, and blue for the girls. The reason is that pink, being a more decided and stronger color, is more suitable for the boy, while blue, which is more delicate and dainty, is prettier for the girl." For reasons unknown, the situation changed to the exact opposite in the 1940s when clothing manufacturers decided on pink for girls and blue for boys.

I mention all of this Mr. Speaker, to point out the powerful and changing societal associations with colour. The simple act of one student wearing a particular colour outside of a current norm triggered bullying behaviour at a school in Nova Scotia, and the single act of many students doing the same triggered an international movement to stand together against this kind of behaviour.

In closing I would like to acknowledge the very good work being done in Yukon schools by administrators, teachers

and students to build safe and caring school communities. Our safe and caring schools policy, available for all to read on the department website, is much more than words. To quote from the policy, “The Safe and Caring Schools policy is a commitment of the school community to plan, strategize and create a respectful, safe and nurturing educational environment for everyone. Incidents of bullying, harassment, discrimination, intimidation or any unwelcome behavior that degrade a person on the basis of personal characteristics, gender, sexual orientation, race or disability will be addressed in a timely, effective and consistent manner in order to...” ensure all students feel welcome at school.

I’m very proud of this, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that all members of this Legislature should be proud to be part of the process that implemented this policy in Yukon schools. I applaud all of you who have embraced the policy in spirit and in practice to make all of our schools safe and caring environments for Yukon children.

I leave members with this one final thought: a pink shirt doesn’t stop bullying; all of us do.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Introduction of visitors.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I rise to acknowledge in the gallery today Mr. Collin Young.

Mr. Collin Young is a chartered accountant. He owns a local business. He’s a constituent and to me, most importantly, he is a friend as well. Along with him is his brother Chris, who is, I’m sure, well known by all members of this Legislative Assembly. He works in our offices.

I would invite all members of this Legislature to welcome them.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I would like to introduce two people. First — this individual has already been recognized in the gallery — is David Whiteside, who is an incredible volunteer with United Way and a constituent of Porter Creek South. David, thank you for your tireless hours and welcome to the gallery. As well, a long-time friend of mine and a Health and Social Services employee working with residential youth treatment services and a constituent of Copperbelt South — a long-time friend, Ryan Hannah. Ryan, welcome to the gallery.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming two constituents to the gallery. Peter Wojtowicz has joined us here again today — welcome, Peter — and although he has already been introduced, I would like to also recognize Doug Caldwell, a constituent of many years. Doug and his wife, Chris, have lived in my riding for quite some time. Chris, as members will know, is a well-known local artist whose art can be found not only in homes and businesses across the territory, but on the coasters that we

have here in our Legislative Assembly on the desks of many members.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### **Bill No. 99: *Second Income Tax Amendments Act, 2016* — Introduction and First Reading**

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I move that Bill No. 99, entitled *Second Income Tax Amendments Act, 2016*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 99, entitled *Second Income Tax Amendments Act, 2016*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 99 agreed to*

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

##### **Bill No. 97: *Chartered Professional Accountants Act* — Introduction and First Reading**

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** I move that Bill No. 97, entitled *Chartered Professional Accountants Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 97, entitled *Chartered Professional Accountants Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 97 agreed to*

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

##### **Bill No. 201: *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act* — Introduction and First Reading**

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** I move that Bill No. 201, entitled *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that Bill No. 201, entitled *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 201 agreed to*

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

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Governor of the Bank of Canada to:

(1) in featuring iconic Canadian women on new banknotes, to include Martha Louise Black, known as “Yukon’s First Lady”, a champion of the territory, who was the first foreign-born woman to be elected to the House of Commons and the second woman in Canada to become a Member of Parliament;

(2) ensure Canadian women continue to be featured on Canadian banknotes in recognition of their many contributions to shaping history and life in Canada, including outstanding leadership, achievement or distinction in any field, benefitting the people of Canada, or in the service of Canada; and

(3) ensure Yukon and northern perspectives are taken into account by expanding the Bank of Canada’s Advisory Council to include representation from Yukon and northern women.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to commit to develop and invest in a territorial suicide prevention plan in collaboration with non-governmental organizations providing mental health services in communities, mental health professionals, First Nation governments, youth organizations and the public.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to take immediate steps to address the unacceptably long wait times for alcohol and drug services counselling.

**Speaker:** Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Government surplus

**Ms. Hanson:** When the Premier tabled his first budget in 2012, he forecast an \$80-million surplus. He touted strong Yukon Party economics and values to justify his agenda. Four years later, as he stood here in the Legislative Assembly, his surplus had dwindled down to \$1.25 million, almost \$79 million less than when he took office. The money went down the drain thanks to poor fiscal planning. We all know that Cabinet gives direction on the budget’s political priorities and, each year, the Yukon Party Cabinet has come up short-sighted and uninspired. We also know, thanks to indexed transfer payments from the federal government, how much money Yukon can expect to have several years in advance.

Mr. Speaker, what does the Premier have to say to Yukoners, whose \$80-million surplus he drained away?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Mr. Speaker, this gives me an opportunity to talk a little bit about the recent statement by the Yukon Chamber of Commerce. This is regarding our 2016-17 budget, a budget that is a result of 60 community meetings in

all communities across this territory, talking to hundreds of Yukoners. I want to thank those Yukoners for providing their input to help us with this budget. For example, investments in infrastructure — the chamber gives us a grade of A, saying that improvements to roads, airfields, and fibre optic and cellular infrastructure are excellent. Investments identified are all beneficial to the economy and the prudence of the government in both identifying and investigating capital expenditures should be commended.

Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of this budget.

**Ms. Hanson:** Mr. Speaker, this spring the Conference Board of Canada reminded all Canadians that Yukon’s gross domestic product shrank for the third straight year. Yukon is facing hard times, despite the Premier’s glossy glow. Those hard times are a direct result of this government’s inability to plan for the future and, in the process of not being able to plan, they have dwindled our territory’s \$80-million surplus.

How can the Premier claim to have any credibility on economic issues when he took office with a large surplus and stable revenue and is now leaving it with no surplus and three years of recession?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** We continue to hear that both the NDP and Liberals are living under a rock. This government continues to invest during this economic downturn. We continue to keep taxes low for Yukoners, keeping more money in their pockets.

To go back to the Yukon Chamber of Commerce — when they talk about investments in community, it is another A grade. The Yukon Chamber of Commerce is pleased with the level of capital investment in Yukon community facilities from water and sewer systems to subdivision planning and to fire halls. When it comes to taxation — another A; no tax increases for families or businesses. The Yukon currently has some of the lowest corporate tax rates in the country, which is positive for attracting and retaining business. We are listening to Yukoners and we are delivering for Yukoners.

**Ms. Hanson:** Mr. Speaker, I note he did not read the grade for procurement.

You know, we aren’t the only people with questions about the Yukon Party government’s strange approach to budgeting. The C.D. Howe Institute gave Yukon a failing grade in 2014 for consistently mismanaging the territory’s finances. The Auditor General has accused the Yukon Party government of lacking strategic planning and poor implementation of budget policy. These are well-respected and impartial economic bodies.

Will the Premier take the C.D. Howe Institute and the Auditor General’s words to heart and admit that the Yukon Party has failed to deliver an economic strategy for Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Leader of the NDP has brought up procurement because that was in fact the lowest mark that we had — an overall grade of B-plus, but we did get a C in procurement. Let me quote the chamber. It says that the government has recognized it has a problem here and is undertaking to do something about it.

When it comes to the C.D. Howe report, let me just tell you that they acknowledge the recent change in processes

made by Yukon by stating — and I quote: “Yukon also deserves a compliment. Its budgets are now consistent with public accounts, making it the one territory where our reader would be able to find the comparable numbers.” Those are changes that have occurred since I became Premier and Finance minister. At the end of the day, our fiscal position, our strong fiscal position, the envious position of this entire country, ultimately is the statement of our financial position. That continues to be very strong.

### Question re: School supplies funding

**Mr. Tredger:** Last week, the Yukon Party government tabled a budget flush with pre-election promises and giveaways targeted to help them buy another term in office. What takes the cake, though, is the fact that they plan to send Yukon families with children a cheque for \$100 for school supplies per child just weeks before an anticipated election call. That is over \$520,000 that could be better spent supporting strategically identified needs of students in the classroom.

Yukoners have told us that they’re tired of the ad hoc, cynical Yukon Party tactics. Does this government really think that Yukon families will let themselves be bought with token handouts while our children and teachers really need evidence-based, strategic investments in our schools?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I am really disappointed in the member opposite. In the first place, what we did is promise \$100 for every student in the school system. That money will go to school councils throughout the territory to be spent on school supplies.

We’ve responded to a request from the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees. In fact, I attended their meeting on Friday last week and was complimented because this is something that the association has asked for a number of times.

All members opposite have said that, during these difficult economic times, isn’t it great that we’re able to provide this money to school councils to ensure that every schoolchild receives adequate school supplies? I heard the member opposite just the other day saying “fair, equal territory”. This will make it fair and equal, because not only children attending schools in our territory, but those students being homeschooled will receive the same funding.

**Mr. Tredger:** It sounds good on paper. Many Yukon parents dread that annual list of school supplies. It always seems to get longer. We know that school supplies are one part of the classroom, but so are the people who help our children grow and learn. While government hands out vote-buying cheques to Yukon parents, fees for school essentials like field trips and educational activities remain significant barriers to some Yukon students. Often teachers will pay for these fees out-of-pocket when their students can’t afford to themselves.

Can the minister assure this Legislature that no student is denied the chance to go on a school-authorized field trip or take part in special projects due to a lack of funding?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Once again, the member opposite has shown how far out of touch he is with the Yukon school community. As I just stated, this money will be going to school councils throughout the territory.

Now, what we’ve also done is, in cooperation with the school councils in the territory, we will determine exactly what this money that will be allocated to each school may be used for. Over the next couple of weeks, we’ll determine the parameters for the spending, when the funding will be available to school councils, and how it can be dispensed — because what is a school supply to me or you may not be a school supply to someone else.

So all of the things, including school fees for specific events, will be discussed by the department and school councils in a cooperative manner as this government does throughout all of our dealings with the public, and we’ll try to ensure that the reasonable requests of students and teachers across the territory are met.

**Mr. Tredger:** That sounds like an administrative nightmare.

I worked in the Yukon’s educational system for several decades, and I know how much teachers and staff subsidize school activities and opportunities. Let’s hope some of this money finds a way to alleviate that.

The Auditor General of Canada has been very clear that this government has failed to do the strategic planning to support Yukon’s hard-working educators with a long-term vision. First Nations have raised concerns about the future of aboriginal language and cultural learning in public schools. The list goes on: mismanaged bus contracts; senior officials with phony credentials; cutting corners to assess special-needs students.

Mr. Speaker, does this government really believe that Yukon families will forget their poor track record on education because of a \$100 pre-election promise?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Mr. Speaker, I am extremely disappointed hearing these comments from the member opposite, especially when his own colleague stated just the other day what great school councils we have in the territory and how her husband, a teacher himself, had to — as many other teachers do — take funding out of his own pockets to assist students by buying school supplies.

Mr. Speaker, that’s what this funding will alleviate. We realize it will be an administrative burden to some schools, especially the larger schools around the territory; however, we believe that those school administrations will accept the challenge of receiving this funding from the school councils. I’m sure the school councils will give school administrations every ability to be included in the discussions leading up to how this money will be spent.

Mr. Speaker, some of the other comments the member opposite made such as we’re out of touch with First Nations — all we have to look at is the joint education action plan. All we have to look at are the number of agreements that we have signed with individual First Nations across this territory. We have to look at the changes in curriculum and we have to look at the cooperation — the excellent cooperation — we have



received from First Nations and people across the territory with the new vision.

**Question re: Economic growth**

**Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Premier. In early March, the Yukon Party had taxpayers pay for a flyer that was mailed across the territory. It was a report to Yukoners that tried to make the case that this government is growing our economy. Our economy has in fact shrunk over the last three years.

Taxpayers are also paying to promote the Premier's budget in ads on Facebook. In bold letters, there's a quote from the Premier: "Government needs to support the economy, not become the economy."

I couldn't agree more, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, just the opposite is happening in today's Yukon. Under the failed economic policies of this government, private sector jobs have dropped by 600 in the last year and private sector jobs have increased by 500. Under the Yukon Party government, the private sector is shrinking and the public sector is growing. The government's own statistics prove that.

Mr. Speaker, why are taxpayers covering the costs for these misleading ads?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** It is important for the government to communicate with citizens in this Yukon Territory, as the other two parties do on a regular basis as well, Mr. Speaker.

What the piece of literature that the Leader of the Liberal Party was talking about was really very important because what it did was stated to Yukoners and showed very graphically what we have delivered on all our campaign commitments from 2011. We have either completed them or we're doing them. Here is a party that not only talks the talk but walks the walk. I got into politics simply because — one of the reasons was I was tired of politicians who made lots of promises and then failed to deliver. This is a party that made commitments and has delivered on those commitments.

**Mr. Silver:** I got into politics too, Mr. Speaker, because of a rec centre promise to my community, but we'll save that for another day.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party likes to pretend that it's a champion for the private sector. When we go beyond that — the taxpayers' ads — the real story is plain to see. Last year, despite record spending from this government and record transfers from Ottawa, the number of private sector jobs dropped by 600 people. What is growing under this government's watch is the public sector — across the territory it is up 500 since this time last year. Over the same period the percentage of people working in the private sector has also dropped, while the percentage of people working for the government has increased. The public sector now employs 45.5 percent of working people in the Yukon. That's up from 43 percent just a year ago. Under the Yukon Party, the government is becoming the economy. No matter how many Facebook ads the government buys, it's not going to change that.

Why has this government failed to grow the private sector?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** What we heard is something that the public sector should get very fearful about. Look out, public sector. The public sector Yukoners want to know what jobs that the Liberal Party will cut when they come into power. Will it be teachers? Will it be nurses? Will it be people who look after our roads or our education assistants? That's what Yukoners want to know when it comes to the Liberal Party.

Let's also talk about long-term care. We heard yesterday that the Liberal leader would cancel the very much-needed long-term care facility in Whitehorse and what he would do is he will build one in all the communities. There are only two outcomes to that statement. One is the absolute bankruptcy of this government; the second one would be that he would just break his promise.

**Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier in both his budget speeches at the Chamber of Commerce and also his second budget speech here in the House is desperately clinging to this notion that this government is growing the economy and growing the private sector. Neither of these claims is backed up by the government's own stats.

The government's own economic forecast says that our economy has been in decline for three years in a row and that makes it the worst performing jurisdiction in all of Canada. Our economy has gotten smaller. Our private sector has gotten smaller as well. There are fewer private sector jobs than a year ago — 600 fewer — and the Premier will not address that issue.

Why won't the Premier simply level with Yukoners instead of continuing to pretend that the private sector is growing?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Mr. Speaker, I have already said it once today and here is an example. The Liberal leader is again living under a rock. Sadly he has no understanding of the economic forces that are at play.

This government continues to invest and is applauded by the Chamber of Commerce for our tremendous investment in capital to create jobs and build infrastructure for the future. They have just commended us on it.

We will continue to focus on our regulatory and permitting processes. We will continue to focus on diversifying our economy through the creation of a knowledge economy with fibre optic. With expansion of Yukon College, we'll continue to invest in all those infrastructure programs and training programs. We will come out of this downturn, Mr. Speaker, in a very good position and we're very confident and, as I said in the budget speech, my view of the territory's future is very, very optimistic under a Yukon Party government.

**Question re: Reconciliation with Yukon First Nations**

**Ms. White:** Last Friday, representatives from First Nations and the territorial and federal governments met for an intergovernmental forum. Representatives discussed the truth and reconciliation recommendations, infrastructure and the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women.

Mr. Speaker, reconciliation is a process that starts with the individual. Our choice of language is important when discussing the many injustices experienced by indigenous Canadians. For this reason, I was deeply disappointed to hear that the Premier state that the Yukon was — and I quote: “punching above its weight” on the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women. This is a territory suffering from distressingly high incidents of violence against women.

Mr. Speaker, there have been 39 missing or murdered indigenous women and girls identified in Yukon. This choice of phrase was inappropriate and victimizing in nature.

Does the Premier acknowledge that his language choice was offensive and contrary to the goals of reconciliation?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, this government is very proud of the work — the collaboration — that it has done over the past couple of years in respect to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. That is, in fact, why this government has worked very diligently and very hard in collaboration with Yukon aboriginal women’s organizations and Yukon First Nation governments.

Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite will recall, we were very proud to be able to host Yukon’s regional roundtable on this issue. We have hosted a number of respective family gatherings and have listened directly from the families themselves, and are acting collaboratively together and working with the Government of Canada to fulfill those recommendations made by those families.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, the issue is the Premier using the line, “punching above its weight.” On Monday, for the second time in less than a week, we heard the Premier undermine the goals of reconciliation through an inappropriate remark. When questioned about this government’s track record on reconciliation, the Premier stated — and I quote again: “There are many paths to reconciliation. I will give an example of one that occurred very recently. That was the 39<sup>th</sup> annual Native Hockey Tournament that the Minister of Education and I — I think we refereed 12 or 13 games each.”

Mr. Speaker, many were rightfully offended to hear the Premier’s comments. Stable funding and access to community sports programs that reflect the cultures and traditions and aboriginal peoples would be a step toward reconciliation by this government, but the Premier refereeing a hockey game is not.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier apologize to Yukoners for the disregard he showed for reconciliation through these comments?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I guess, when I brought up the 39<sup>th</sup> annual Native Hockey Tournament, there was a bit of plagiarism there, because I have to admit that the person who actually brought it up during our meeting with the federal minister and all the First Nation chiefs about what an example of reconciliation this was, was none other than Chief Doris Bill. She was the one who identified how important that Native Hockey Tournament was to this, and how it is indeed, as I have said many times, just one of the things that we need to do toward the path of reconciliation.

We are indeed very proud of the work that we have done on the issue of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. I’m very proud of the work of the Deputy Premier, the work of Chief Doris Bill and Chief Carl Sidney, and the leaders of the Yukon aboriginal women’s organizations, and the strength that we’ve had — the representation of Yukon families representing Yukon at the national roundtable. Yukon Territory has had two regional roundtables. We’ve had a family gathering. We have done some incredible work. They have done some incredible work that we very much support. I will very proudly again say we are the envy of this country when it comes to the progress that we’ve made on this issue.

**Ms. White:** It appears that this Premier is living under a rock. This government claims to support reconciliation; however, we see the goals of reconciliation undermined time and time again by this government and this Premier. Reconciliation —

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

#### Point of order

**Speaker:** Order, please.

The Government House Leader, on a point of order.

**Mr. Elias:** I just heard the member opposite personalize debate in addressing the Honourable Premier as undermining reconciliation. I believe that is out of order in this Assembly. It’s inflammatory language that is going to cause discord in this Assembly.

**Speaker:** The Official Opposition House Leader, on the point of order.

**Ms. Stick:** Mr. Speaker, I did not hear even a point of order in terms of which number was addressed here, but I really don’t think there was sudden discord in this Assembly, and I would say that this is just a dispute among members. Thank you.

#### Speaker’s statement

**Speaker:** I’ll take it under advisement and rule later, if it’s required.

Please continue.

**Ms. White:** This government claims to support reconciliation; however, we see the goals of reconciliation undermined time and time again by this very same government. Reconciliation must be a priority of this government and that starts with the individual actions of our Members of the Legislative Assembly.

When will the Premier apologize for the disregard he showed for reconciliation through his recent comments and choice of language?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** This government continues to work on a path to reconciliation through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s calls to action. Immediately upon those calls to action coming out, I tasked this government to do a review of where we are — what’s our progress report on what we’ve done so far? I shared that report with the Yukon First Nation leadership. From that, I also shared with them our desire that First Nations lead the

charge when it comes to finding the path forward to meet the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

At the meeting that we had last week with all the leadership and the federal minister, a proposal went forward to the Government of Canada — a proposal that was made by First Nation leadership on how we can move ahead to continue to deal with this. This is an issue that we all agree not only is the responsibility of the public government and First Nation governments, but all of us as individuals and all of us as organizations and service clubs. We'll continue down that path.

We continue to support the Yukon First Nation leadership as guiding the path in this process. We are very proud of the progress to date.

**Question re: Government surplus**

**Ms. Moorcroft:** In his budget speech, the Minister of Finance announced he had discovered the concept of innovative budgeting. Interesting.

When this version of the Yukon Party took responsibility for Yukon's financial well-being in 2012, the forecasted surplus was \$80 million. Now the 2015-16 supplementary budget forecasts our budget surplus at just \$1.2 million. Apparently, the idea behind innovative budgeting is to introduce ideas and concepts to make government more efficient in its use of public funds and allow for cost savings. This sounds a lot like results-based management, a concept being practised by many organizations and governments across Canada for years.

Mr. Speaker, why did the government wait until now, months before an election, to introduce the concept of results-based management?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Mr. Speaker, what I noted in my Budget Address is that we are seeing governments almost entirely across this country tabling deficits. I also took note to state that the net debt of the provinces and territories in this country is approximately \$600 billion. This territory has no net debt. We have money in the bank and, in fact, are the envy of this entire country.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Mr. Speaker, in his speech, the minister indicated this initiative would not result in layoffs or cuts in the level of services. Innovative budgeting is meant to be a process led by the public service to find efficiencies and reduce costs; however, the Premier did indicate that the government would be looking to save \$2 million in this fiscal year, but beyond this very few details seem to be available at this time.

Mr. Speaker, how did the Premier arrive at the \$2 million figure?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Mr. Speaker, this budget commitment on innovative budgeting is really a public service-led initiative aimed at fostering innovation in the Government of Yukon. We believe that innovation can improve services to Yukoners and save taxpayers' money without cutting any jobs or services. \$2 million is a very modest goal at this point when we look in the context of a budget that exceeds \$1.3 billion. Every dollar counts for this

government and we are confident that the public service-led initiative will be successful.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Well, Mr. Speaker, this is another vague non-answer.

As part of the innovative budgeting initiative, this government indicates that they will access any third-party funds available to carry out important infrastructure or other projects in Yukon. This government always communicates the contributions it receives from Canada and the financial partnerships with other third parties whenever a project is announced. Isn't this something the Yukon Party should have been consistently doing to aid in the development of projects that benefit Yukon and Canada as a whole?

What's new and innovative about accessing third-party funds?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Mr. Speaker, we continue to partner with the federal government and continue to partner with First Nations and we will always continue to do that. This is an initiative to look to innovation to create some savings without cutting jobs, without cutting services and that is the commitment that is done. We are very confident in the public service and being able to do this.

Of course, we again hear the NDP — but of course the Liberals as well — try to interpret this and try to create what I believe is misinformation for members of the public. Sadly, we've heard it many times. Let's look back at F.H. Collins, which wasn't going to have enough insulation. It was going to be built for 400 students. Mr. Speaker, it goes on and on and on.

We're very proud of our accomplishments. We are focused on the territory. We know — Yukoners know — there is only one party in this territory that is not encumbered to be affiliated with a federal party. It is the Yukon Party.

While the NDP and the Liberals will continue to stand up for such things as a tax on carbon, we will be there to stand up for Yukoners.

**Question re: Psychiatric services, Whitehorse General Hospital**

**Ms. Stick:** Last fall, we asked this government about the lack of psychiatric support for patients at Whitehorse General Hospital. At that time the hospital had gone five months without a psychiatrist and previously seven months with just one on-call psychiatrist. When questioned, the minister indicated that his department was working with the hospital on recruitment and retention.

In the 2015-16 budget, the government transferred over \$3 million to the Yukon Medical Association for physician recruitment and retention initiatives. Have these funds, or any of these funds, been used to recruit a psychiatrist for the Whitehorse General Hospital?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** In addressing the member opposite, it gives me an opportunity to highlight some of the work and the good relationship that we have, not only with the Yukon Hospital Corporation but also with the Yukon Medical Association.

I have just recently had a meeting with the president of the Yukon Medical Association, Alison O’Hearn, now Freeman. Those discussions and the retention and recruitment components continue to be a pressing issue in the hospital and we certainly are well aware of that. The Yukon Hospital Corporation will continue down a path on that recruitment piece.

Yukon currently has two resident psychiatrists. As well we have itinerant psychiatrists for children, youth and seniors who provide services for our residents. Mental Health Services certainly delivers a host of programs to our residents. We have partners and NGOs — like Many Rivers, and the list really goes on — providing a number of services to Yukoners both in the hospital and across the territory. This government is certainly appreciative of the work that is being carried out and we are appreciative of the positive working relationship that we have with YMA and Yukon Hospital Corporation.

**Ms. Stick:** But we still don’t have psychiatric services at Whitehorse General Hospital. Individuals going there do not receive the supports they require.

We do have the secure medical unit, but it’s not appropriate. It is there for a variety of people, not all psychiatric. To mix them, to include them, is not appropriate.

We have a gap. The chief of staff pointed this out. We have a gap in psychiatric services in hospitals, in communities, for people who are leaving the hospital. It’s not right and this has been going on for a long time.

Can the minister tell us what his department has done to address the lack of psychiatric care in Whitehorse General Hospital?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Again, it gives me the opportunity to highlight some of the work that is being done that I had discussed in my first response. We continue to work with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the Yukon Medical Association on the recruitment and retention piece.

Certainly we support a host of NGOs across the territory providing services. Just a couple of weeks ago we announced a continued relationship with Many Rivers to provide mental health services in the communities of Ross River and Faro. Just last week we announced a \$1-million add-on to the Department of Health and Social Services specifically for community-based mental health services.

As I indicated in my first response, we currently have two resident psychiatrists; we have itinerant psychiatrists who work with children, youth and seniors and who provide those types of services for our residents. We are very fortunate to have the relationships with the Hospital Corporation and YMA that we do, and we will continue on with those relationships, providing the good services to the people of Yukon.

**Ms. Stick:** Mr. Speaker, it still does not address my question. Visiting mental health nurses or counsellors in the communities are limited in what support they can provide due to travel and time constraints. These professionals work hard but they cannot provide emergency support. They cannot always be there to help individuals when they come back to the communities. Many individuals who leave Whitehorse

General Hospital after being treated, or come back from another institution Outside, are released to the communities without the appropriate supports and follow-up. Communities and families are often left struggling with an individual, unsure how to help them or support them.

What is this government’s plan for providing that coordinated and supportive after-care to individuals returning to their families, returning to their communities?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, again I thank the member opposite for her question. This is certainly an ongoing issue that we have had with Yukon Hospital Corporation. As I said before, we have a great working relationship with the Hospital Corporation and the Yukon Medical Association. We are working together with those entities to address the gaps in services that have been identified.

For the member opposite to indicate that there are no services at the hospital — certainly if there is not a psychiatrist on staff, the president of the Yukon Medical Association reaffirmed to me that there are services that they can access. Whether it is over the phone or online, I am not sure, but they certainly recognize that it has been very helpful for the staff at the hospital.

We will continue down the path with the recruitment and the retention. As the member opposite has indicated, this is certainly something that is very important to this government. We do appreciate the services and the support that are provided across the territory from many professionals, many NGOs, the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the Yukon Medical Association.

**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. 1133

**Clerk:** Motion No. 1133, standing in the name of Mr. Elias.

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

THAT this House urges the Parliament of Canada to recognize the importance of encouraging families to adopt healthy lifestyles by fully reinstating the children’s fitness tax credit and the children’s art tax credit.

**Mr. Elias:** Mr. Speaker, I’m honoured to rise today in support of this motion. I think it’s important to note that on our first Wednesday of private members’ business, our caucus was unanimous in supporting me putting forward this motion as it’s so important to so many of our citizens in our territory.

The federal government recently announced that they are cutting back both the children’s fitness and art tax credits to

50 percent for 2016 and eliminating them completely in 2017. Mr. Speaker, while some politicians may have called these “boutique tax credits”, they are in fact used and valued by many Yukoners.

My fellow Yukoners, it is my hope today to achieve unanimous approval by all of the members in the Assembly and send a united message to Ottawa about the importance of fitness and the arts to our children here in our territory.

Mr. Speaker, for the 2015 tax year, over 1,700 Yukoners claimed these tax credits. These credits were put in place not just to help parents financially, but to encourage children’s participation in sports and arts activities. These credits help to encourage families to adopt healthy lifestyles and participate in activities that teach life skills that last a lifetime.

That’s why we urge the Government of Canada to reinstate these credits. I am proud today to be able to say that our Premier, the Minister of Finance, has tabled legislation that will allow Yukoners to keep claiming these tax credits, even though the federal government is eliminating them. These tax credits support enrolment in everything from hockey to ballet to tutoring and many other programs. Our government believes in the differences that investing in sports and recreation can make to children, youth, families and our communities.

Just last week, the Minister of Community Services announced that we will be providing \$300,000 in core funding to Sport Yukon, Special Olympics Yukon, the Yukon Aboriginal Sport Circle and the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon with the passing of the 2016-17 budget. This frees up \$300,000 in funding for the Yukon Recreation Advisory Council to make available to other sport and recreation groups in the territory as these groups were previously funded out of that pot. These groups work tirelessly to see that the sports and recreation opportunities available in the Yukon are second to none.

Sport Yukon is made up of territorial sport governing bodies, clubs and associations that offer a variety of sport, recreation, and other community-based programs. They provide guidance to and facilitate communication between groups throughout the territory. They assist these groups by providing services and managing funds and resources. Sport Yukon also manages the Yukon Sports Hall of Fame and they contract to manage Team Yukon at events such as the Arctic Winter Games and Canada Games. Special Olympics Yukon is dedicated to enriching the lives, through sport, of Yukoners who have an intellectual disability.

Team Yukon and Special Olympics Yukon have seen many exceptional Yukoners take part in national and international sporting events. The Yukon Aboriginal Sport Circle is dedicated to advancing aboriginal recreation and sport throughout the Yukon. They have a variety of programs to increase participation and skill and are the sport governing body for Arctic sports, Dene games, archery and lacrosse. They too, have sent many exceptional Yukon athletes to national and international events.

Mr. Speaker, the Recreation and Parks Association of Yukon recently made the news, along with its partners in the

Northwest Territories and Nunavut, for winning the Arctic Inspiration Prize. These groups were awarded \$600,000 for their work on the tri-territorial recreation training project, which empowers people and communities by developing and delivering leadership training programs across the north. RPAY, as they are known, promotes healthier living in Yukon through active living, parks and recreation. They facilitate everything from activity promotion programs for children and adults, to leadership, fitness and professional development training for recreation leaders. These groups all do work that we can all be proud of as Yukoners. I am happy to be part of a government that supports all of these programs.

In 2015-16, more than \$1.7 million in annual funding was disbursed to Yukon athletes, sport and recreation groups. Revisions to Yukon’s recreation regulations in 2015 provided an increase in the annual community recreation assistance grant, providing over \$800,000 to Yukon’s unincorporated communities for sports and recreation funding. Believe me when I say, Mr. Speaker, my community is very thankful for this investment in our isolated northern community of Old Crow.

We continue to support the Arctic Winter Games, this past year spending more than \$1 million to support Team Yukon in Nuuk, Greenland. Yukon will once again host the Arctic Winter Games in 2020. We continue to help support our recreation facilities in Yukon with over \$160,000 across three government departments going to the Friends of Mount Sima Society to assist in their ability to open for an early season training facility. More and more skiing and snowboarding groups from across the country are coming to use Mount Sima for pre-season and other training. This is boosting Yukon’s reputation as a sports destination, as well as allowing Mount Sima to prosper.

The Yukon government has also focused on increased training and learning opportunities for recreation leaders in the Yukon. At the annual recreation gathering held at Marsh Lake last fall, the community recreation leaders’ guide was launched. This is a key training tool based on core competencies that will build leadership capacity in community recreation. Community Services has also developed a community recreation planning toolkit to go along with the leaders’ guide. This provides information and a checklist that will help communities in developing locally driven community recreation plans.

The Government of Yukon recently released a new *Yukon Sport Action Plan*. This plan aligns with the new Canadian Sport Policy, and will guide sporting direction, funding and focus for the next seven years across the territory. This plan will help build on our past successes, present strengths and future opportunities, and ensure that we develop sport across the Yukon that is inclusive, fun and fair. We will continue to invest in community leadership through our sport and recreation groups, which bring great benefit to athletes, coaches, officials, recreation enthusiasts and all Yukoners.

The government continues to support sport and recreation in schools. In 2013-14, the departments of Community Services and Education partnered with F.H. Collins Secondary

School and Sport Yukon on the first-ever Yukon sports school. The sports school had a very successful first year with 64 students registered. In 2015-16 it is still flourishing with 48 students enrolled. This program gives students in grades 10 to 12 opportunities to train and enhance physical performance to better excel in the sport of their choice. This program was developed from a very successful program in British Columbia. The sports school program allows Yukon students to improve both athletic and academic performance all within the school day. This year, we are providing \$10,000 for training, equipment and facility rental fees, guest presenters and workshops to the sports school program.

The Sport and Recreation branch of Community Services is also helping bring the Canadian Tire Active at School program to all of the Yukon in partnership with the Canadian Tire Corporation. Canadian Tire will contribute \$125,000 over three years in cash, equipment and in-kind support in order to promote physical activity for children and youth in our schools. In January of this year, every rural school was provided with a list of equipment that they could order for their school. The equipment arrived in Yukon in early February and each school's orders were distributed to them. The equipment ranged from mats to hockey sticks to snowshoes and much, much more.

Schools in Whitehorse will be given this opportunity next year. Our partners in sport, recreation and active living are providing training and assistance to teachers, ensuring the best use of the new equipment. Community Services continues to implement the renewed active living strategy by providing \$250,000 annually to support training, build rural community capacity and develop programs during and after school. This strategy is designed to promote and keep Yukon children, youth and adults active and healthy. We have also invested in infrastructure that benefits the sports community and all of Yukon. We delivered a brand new recreation centre in Ross River, which was completed in 2014. We have committed dollars to hockey arenas, skateboard parks and all manner of recreation infrastructure, both directly and through program funding such as the community development fund across the whole territory. In my own home community of Old Crow, this government has contributed \$2.7 million to support the construction of a new community and recreation centre.

I have personally experienced the difference that a connection to sport can make in a young person's life. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the new under-16 hockey program. This year Yukon hockey started an under-16 program where 15 athletes are enlisted, and it is in partnership with the Department of Education. Starting in September and continuing to June, every weekday at 7:00 a.m., the boys hit the ice and practice valuable skills. They are encouraged to be creative and open-minded with and without the puck for an hour and 15 minutes, and then they head off to school. They also participate in dryland strength and endurance training three times a week. They are coached by volunteer Martin Lawrie, and I want to thank Mr. Lawrie for his countless hours in making a positive difference in these boys' lives. He has done an excellent job in developing these young men into

a team — and I emphasize “team” — by holding his team of players accountable for their efforts, their attention to detail and, above all, their attitudes and the way they conduct themselves in public.

Mr. Speaker, I support this effort to promote and help build well-rounded men and women leaders through sport.

I don't want to start listing all of the under-16 hockey team's accomplishments but I will say that many of the U-16 team have been invited this year to BC's best ever competitions, national aboriginal competitions, and junior A and junior B identification camps throughout western Canada.

The primary focus of the program is to develop the long-term development of each of their athletes on the ice, in the classroom and throughout the community.

This May 13 to 15 is the under-16 identification camp and they will be seeking out motivated, passionate young hockey players to participate in a structured environment surrounded by what I consider to be world-class coaches, staff and support systems. I have said it before and I will say it again: I believe that elite athletes need to be challenged, supported and mentored in all aspects of their lives.

It's important to note as well that in this, the first year of the under-16 hockey program, the corporate community has recognized the value of the program and also supports the 15 athletes. I look forward to another successful year next year.

On a little bit of a personal note, my son Johnny participates in this U-16 program this year and every morning at about 6:50 a.m. or right around 7:00 a.m., a group of hockey dads sit around a table — there are about five of us — and we discuss the topics of the day, whether they're local, national or international, but I wanted to say that the group of five of us — we are pretty darn smart at 7:00 in the morning in solving problems. I've encouraged all my fellow hockey dads to run for territorial politics because we need smart forward-thinking people in here — a big “L”, a big “O” and a big “L”.

Anyway, I thought I would get that in there.

What I've said today — this is just another part of the reason that I support these tax credits. All families in Yukon should have the option to enrol their children in sports and arts programming. While we are already doing many things to help enable this and make these programs more affordable, the children's fitness and art tax credits are another piece of this puzzle.

As you've heard, sports and recreation are very important to this government and very important to Yukoners. This is why we're urging everyone in this House to support this motion.

I have focused on sports and fitness in my opening comments. My distinguished colleagues will also be discussing the importance of the arts in children's lives.

I'll end my opening comments with a quote: “Growing up, if I hadn't had sports, I don't know where I'd be. God only knows what street corners I'd have been standing on and God only knows what I'd have been doing, but instead I played hockey and went to school and stayed out of trouble.” That was from the great Bobby Orr.

**Ms. Stick:** I thank the member opposite for bringing forward this motion, but I'm a bit confused because the motion states, "... the importance of encouraging families to adopt healthy lifestyles..." and then it goes on to say, "... reinstating the children's fitness tax credit and the children's art tax credit..."

The member opposite mentioned that this is something that all families can benefit from, and that's not true, Mr. Speaker, because these tax credits are available to families, usually, of higher income. It leaves out those of lower income. It does not meet their needs. It does not put money in their pockets to be able to afford sports or art activities for their family members.

We saw in the last federal budget that the fitness tax credit and the art tax credit will be reduced and then eliminated by 2017. What they've put in place is the new Canada child benefit, starting in July of this year. Those two tax credits that will be eliminated — the federal government reduced the fitness tax credit to \$500 in 2016. They calculate using the lowest rate of 15 percent so a family could receive a maximum of \$150 per child, assuming that they had paid for a \$1,000 activity, and they could do that up to a grand total of \$500. The requirements for eligible activities — to be supervised. The limited financial support provided by the children's fitness tax credit and the need for sufficient taxable income, for it to be of any value, tells us that the tax credit had little benefit for low-income families and little impact on the physical activities of children in low-income families; yet it's precisely these families that we do want to target.

The same goes for the arts. With the new Canada child benefit, there are many more benefits to many more families through this universal benefit, and it will do more to encourage healthy lifestyles. It's tax-free. Low- and middle-income families will receive more benefits. Families will see an average increase of almost \$2,300. It will provide a maximum benefit of up to \$6,400 per child under the age of six. This will be putting money into people's bank accounts, into their wallets, so that they can afford a healthier lifestyle and so that they can put their children into those activities.

We know that the increases will be more than what we've seen previously with the old child tax credit, and this is all great news. It's good for families; it's good for low-income families and for middle-income families. These are the families that need the help.

But there's one outstanding question that we have not heard an answer for yet. Under current practices, this government considers the income from the federal child tax credit as income, and for those individuals on social assistance receiving it, it is taken back — it's clawed back. They did not or do not directly benefit from it. Under the new federal government, they've been very clear in laying out their expectations that provinces and territories will not do that with this new Canada child benefit. We haven't heard yet what this government's intentions are.

But how else could we encourage families to adopt healthy lifestyles? There are many ways. We heard a great list

from the member opposite of all the sports organizations and the funding that goes to them. But how does this impact families who don't have that kind of income? For a family to be healthy — to have a healthy lifestyle — they need to know that they have safe, secure, affordable, appropriate housing, and not have to worry about high rents and how they're going to pay.

Families, to be active and healthy, need access to healthy, affordable food. Families in the Yukon do not have a sense of food security when they're relying on a food bank. It's not — I mean, let's be clear: it's the working poor who are attending the food bank. It's families where parents are working but still struggle — choosing to pay a bill or for food. Families do not have a sense of food security with the high cost of healthy food in the north, and often have to make the choice to purchase the less expensive, less nutritious, less healthy foods for their family and children.

Wages — we need to talk about and have conversations about living wages, about raising the minimum wage, about people being paid well so that they can afford the basics for their families. It's critical that we start talking about those things, because without it, families cannot afford arts and sports.

We need to talk about access to affordable daycare, where families are not struggling with a decision of — even with a child supplement or a daycare allowance, they're still struggling and trying to decide whether it would just be better if one of the parents quit their job rather than pay daycare fees.

These are the types of things that give support to families so they can be healthy and they can choose healthy activities. We know sports and arts programs are important for children, so let's increase the amount of money available through the kids rec fund. Right now, \$400 per child for a year — that will support swim lessons, soccer, softball. Many different groups and activities — maybe even a pass at the Canada Games Centre. It does not cover those more expensive sports. It does not cover travel that is sometimes required even within the Yukon or outside of the Yukon. \$400 a year will cover maybe eight hours of music lessons for a whole year. That's not much.

So let's ensure that every student in our schools has access to regular music class and instructions — every school should have a vibrant program. Let's ensure that every child who wants to join a school band can afford the instrument of their choice. We know the link between music education and the beneficial impact on the developing brain of a child, so let's ensure we have a vibrant, active music and arts program in all our schools. There are some great examples out there of what music professionals and arts programming is going on in some of our schools, but let's make sure it's in every school; in every classroom from K to 12, because arts and sports are important.

It used to be just a real critical part of our school. I picked up a school music book the other day that had come into my bookstore and it was old — it was from the 1960s — and it was for K to 5. I was looking at it and remembering some of

the songs myself. We were taught how to read music and how to sing and perform in choirs. We can see what happens at the current Rotary Music Festival, where there are some great programs going on, but we need to ensure that's in every school — every class K to 5. I often ask my young nephew if he has learned any songs and what he is doing in his class, to find out what's going on.

We need to know that all communities have access to safe, accessible recreational facilities if we want to promote fitness and recreation. Every community deserves that — every community, every family and every child. We should be looking at our communities, what their needs are and fulfilling them. There are many ways that families can become active and there are many that don't cost anything. We have wonderful trails. We have paved trails, trails through the woods, RPAY programs that you can log into, public education campaigns, running clubs, biking clubs, bike lanes and trails galore. There are many things with just being here in the Yukon close to the wilderness and close to the infrastructure that's been built that really do make healthy, active families an easier option perhaps than in some places. I can't imagine trying to teach a three-year-old in Vancouver on the busy streets to learn how to ride a bicycle, where here we know we've got these wonderful trails that we can go out on with our children and feel safe and not worry.

I did find a few — the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives applauded the government's decision to take care to reallocate these funds and make available this money to families because it goes far. It provides money to low-income families and hopefully lifting these children out of poverty.

When a family is living in poverty and struggling, a \$150 or \$500 tax credit has no meaning. If their income is not at a certain level, it doesn't apply to them. The ability to get out of poverty and the ability to have money to be involved in these things is important, Mr. Speaker. The Caledon institution also supported this. This is a better way of closing that gap that we increasingly see across Canada. If we want healthy families and healthy children, we have to ensure that we are focusing on those families and children who need it the most.

Unless I hear differently from other colleagues, we will not be supporting this. We do have a tax credit here in the Yukon. I see that's part of the income tax legislation that is coming forward for sports and arts. That is great. We supported it when we debated it in the House previously, but we will not be supporting this at this time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Silver:** Thank you to the Member for Riverdale South for setting some context. I do agree with a lot of her comments. I want to maybe move a little bit further here past that context, just for some perspective here. We are almost being led to believe by the motion that somehow Yukon is missing out or losing because of what has happened in Ottawa, and I just want to clarify some things.

As part of the federal government's efforts to simplify the tax code and target support for families with children, the federal budget in 2016 proposed to reduce the maximum

eligible expenses for children's fitness and arts tax credits by half for 2016, and to eliminate both credits as of 2017. That much is true. The government's measures for families with children, combined with the middle class tax cuts, will provide these same families with additional net after-tax benefits of approximately \$14 billion during the 2015-16 to 2020-21 period. Now, the changes, in their entirety — this is important — means more money for families despite the elimination of the fitness and arts credits. As the Member for Riverdale South correctly pointed out, the focus is going to be on those who need the money the most.

The Government of Yukon has decided to continue for one year, at least — from what we can see so far — with its own portion of these two tax credits. The cost to the Government of Yukon, if I can remember correctly from the budget briefing, is \$125,000 per year. The motion today asks the Government of Canada to do more, which is interesting. This is a common refrain from the Yukon Party government these days — to blame everything under the sun on the new Government of Canada. Yet, in this particular case, I'm perplexed because the money, due to the simplification of the tax code, is going to bring in more money to Yukon families and it is going to target those who need it the most.

If the Yukon Party government really felt strongly about the negative impacts of this change, it could certainly have upped its contribution in the budget that is before us now in the Legislature. They chose not to. There is a surplus — and we keep on hearing about it from the Yukon Party government — in their bank account that they could have used. Instead of making that financial commitment, the government has chosen to wag its finger on a Wednesday afternoon and attack the Liberal government in Ottawa, whose changes, in their entirety mean more money for families, despite the elimination of the fitness and arts credit.

Mr. Speaker, I will agree with this motion. Record federal transfers, yes, and already more money from Ottawa for families — for sure; but let's ask for even more. If that's what the Yukon Party government wants to do, by all means.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** That was an interesting position by the Liberal leader. I'm honoured to rise in this House today in support of this motion by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. I want to thank him for bringing it forward, urging the Government of Canada to recognize the importance of encouraging families to adopt healthy lifestyles by fully reinstating the children's fitness and arts tax credits. I would first like to express my full support of this motion, which aims to fill a void that was impacted on families this year by the Government of Canada's plan to reduce the children's fitness and arts tax credits by 50 percent in 2016, and eliminate the credits entirely in 2017.

I appreciate the comments by the Member for Riverdale South, but this debate is not about the federal government's Canada child benefit; this debate is about the fitness and arts tax credits.

I also want to acknowledge the MLA for Riverdale South for speaking about children from families that are less



fortunate. It will be really interesting, Mr. Speaker, to see how the NDP and the Liberals explain to Yukoners how the cost of milk, the cost of diapers, the cost of heating oil, the cost of fuel for their vehicles and the cost of everything will go up when they support and implement a tax on carbon, but I will leave that for another day.

The impact of the federal government's decision to ultimately eliminate these important tax credits creates an air of uncertainty for those who have factored those credits into the decisions to register their children in sports or arts programming this year and in future years. These tax credits are important to Yukoners and they give families that additional amount to help their children attend dance, soccer or hockey. They help their children get tutoring for math, or take art lessons or attend art classes to give them an outlet for their creativity. The value these programs and classes have on our children is immense and ensuring they are more accessible to families of different financial backgrounds is key to the success of all children.

Yukon government has clearly and consistently been in support of these tax credits. In December 2007, the children's fitness tax credit was introduced, which allowed Yukon families to claim a credit for each child's fitness-related activities, up to a maximum of \$500 per year. In October 2012, this government introduced the complementary tax credit for programs related to music, arts and tutoring. These credits were welcomed and appreciated by Yukon families, and the fitness tax credit was doubled in October of 2014 to \$1,000 per year.

Another welcome change to the fitness tax credit was made in March 2015. In order to allow families whose incomes are too low to incur taxes to benefit from the credit, it was changed from being a non-refundable tax credit to a refundable tax credit. Parents know that the costs for sports, art and music programming can add up. To families with a child in any type of activity, every little bit of help that they can get to ease the financial burden associated with enrolment fees helps. For those families with more than one child, this burden can be felt exponentially.

We have heard in this House before that these tax credits only help those with disposable income. I would argue that there are a number of families who do subscribe to these tax credits who do not have the definition of "disposable income", but rather do what they can to ensure that their children are involved in programming and may forego other luxuries to keep their children enrolled in some sort of program or another.

**Some Hon. Members:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** It is really disappointing that the leaders of the other two political parties continue to talk and mock off-mic like schoolchildren, Mr. Speaker, almost — he described himself as a little girl, and that is disappointing and insulting to some people, I must admit.

Even those who enrol their children in more affordable, important programs such as swimming lessons are able to take advantage of this tax credit. The return may be small, but to some it means a lot. Mr. Speaker, every dollar counts. It

cannot be argued that the participation of children and youth in arts, music and sports can bring unlimited opportunities in their lifetime. The high program costs of many activities can be limiting to families who work hard to deliver even the necessities to their families. These tax credits provide alleviation to the parents who bear the brunt of the high costs of these activities. With approximately 1,700 families claiming the fitness credit and 650 claiming the arts credit, it is clear that these tax credits are being utilized by Yukon families and are helping to put money back into their pockets. It is estimated that these tax credits save Yukon taxpayers \$96,000, and \$25,000 annually. That is a huge savings.

The benefits extend far beyond a child learning to play a song on the piano or scoring a winning goal. They go beyond learning art techniques or becoming the most valuable player. Children who are presented with an opportunity to be involved in sports, music, arts and cultural activities are given the chance to harness their strengths and to steer their bodies and minds in a healthy direction. They are given the fundamental skills necessary to excel.

According to the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, young people need continuous exposure to positive experiences, settings, people, as well as abundant opportunities to refine their life skills, so that they have the means to move into productive jobs and other roles that build fulfilling relationships. The benefits don't stop there. Take a child who attends school full-time but also has swimming two nights a week and dance on Saturdays. I can tell you first-hand that, as a father of four, now grown children, that children with scheduled activities not only have no time for idle hands, they begin to get a hold on the life skills that they will require in adulthood. They learn prioritization; they learn organization; they learn punctuality and respect. They learn to set personal goals and they work hard and strive to meet those goals. They learn how to fail or to lose; they learn to take direction and criticism, and also to question and create. They can learn to work independently or as part of a team to achieve their goals.

Social cohesion is introduced. Self-esteem is fostered in extracurricular environments and, in turn, has positive effects on mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. The benefits are never ending.

The 2009 Active Healthy Kids Canada report card on physical activity for children and youth states that children who are more physically active are more academically fit resulting in better scores in math and reading, higher grades, greater perceptual skills and overall academic readiness.

I believe in this statement. I believe that physical literacy in a child can be a dominating factor in the overall success of an adult. There is much to be said of the importance to foster a healthy environment in which our children can grow and develop to their maximum potential. The positive impact of physical and creative activities on the health and development of our children is a direct factor in the creation of a healthy community.

I see incredible value in encouraging our young people to participate in activities that create a sense of common identity,

a sense of belonging and a sense of accomplishment. Being part of inclusive and fun activities in youth can provide opportunities for a lifetime. I truly believe that extracurricular activities promote important values of respect and fair play, therefore promoting ethical behaviour and accountability.

Equitable access to arts, sport and recreation remains a cornerstone of this government's values, and access for families to these tax credits is a step toward achieving this goal. This government has invested in a number of programs and strategies aimed at promoting a better quality of life for Yukoners. These include investments in sport, recreation and active living initiatives.

Yukon active living strategy through the Community Services Sport and Recreation branch is funded annually with \$250,000 to promote healthy living by a way of training, building rural community capacity, and program development.

This was contemplated by a 2014-15 funding agreement with the Public Health Agency of Canada for \$2 million over five years to create the Yukon northern wellness project. Together with Yukon active living strategy, the northern wellness project provides active living opportunities for all Yukoners. The focus of implementation is during the after-school time period as well as the promotion of active-at-school options and resources for teachers to provide in-school opportunities.

Another important initiative geared toward healthy living is the Canadian Tire Active at School program, a partnership between Canadian Tire Corporation and the Sport and Recreation branch.

As part of this program, Canadian Tire will contribute \$125,000 over three years, beginning in cash, equipment and support to promote physical activity in schools for our Yukon students. Students are provided with equipment and assistance in using its equipment to its best potential. In addition, Yukon government is providing funding for after-school programs to enhance sports skills and awareness. Physical literacy has been a key aspect in program design and delivery.

2013-14 marked the partnership between the Department of Education, F.H. Collins Secondary School and Sport Yukon for the Yukon sports school and physical literacy project.

The sport school has enjoyed immense success and provides students the opportunity to participate in physical performance enhancement and training in the sport of their choice. The program provides students both a place to develop further in their chosen sport or gives them the groundwork to pursue the sport outside of school hours.

The idea of physical literacy has been branched into rural communities with goals of developing awareness of physical activity and healthy living, developing fundamental movement and sports skills, and building capacity of community leaders. The Yukon framework for physical literacy was developed in April 2015 to implement further the idea of physical literacy in communities and school curricula. These programs and initiatives are just a sample of the work that the Government of Yukon has done to support active living and healthy lifestyles in our children.

In 2015-16, over \$1.7 million was provided in support of Yukon athletes and sport and recreation groups. The importance of healthy, active living remains a priority for our government and we continue to deliver on programming and initiatives to promote a healthy path for our children.

I would also like to take a moment to touch on some of the programming that the Department of Education offers to Yukon students in regard to arts and music. Yukon Arts Ed-Venture, funded by the Department of Education, works to assist teachers in developing and delivering curriculum content that pertains to our students' variety of educational needs, reflective of cultures and languages. Artists work directly with teachers to develop rich cultural materials to ensure students are meeting the prescribed outcomes in the Yukon curriculum. These artists engage students in learning at the elementary school level by way of using art to deliver curriculum and provide teachers with tools to ensure the needs of the child are being met.

The Music, Arts and Drama — or MAD — program is offered to students in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 and focuses on providing students with a solid foundation in creative dramatics, acting, stage craft, music, dance and playwriting fundamentals. This highly successful program provides students with a solid foundation to pursue further education in theatre and professional opportunities beyond that.

The children's art tax credit is a helpful benefit to encourage young people to explore the arts.

The Government of Yukon supports a number of programs through the Department of Tourism and Culture that assist our Yukon artists, organizations and art collectives in delivering their arts and programs to our communities. The awards and funding programs available directly support all types of arts — performing, visual and literary in Yukon. While programming strategies and initiatives relating to sports, arts and culture are a key focus of our government and community, it is important for families to have the initiative to provide further opportunities to their children. These tax credits are a way to provide families with a financial benefit to investing in their children's health and futures. The importance of harnessing the abilities of our children, and providing them with a platform in which to grow those abilities, is great and every family could use a credit to ease the financial impact of the high program and associated fees.

In closing, a priority of this government is to ensure Yukon youth can continue to enjoy the benefits of physical activity and participation in arts and culture.

The changes announced by the federal *Income Tax Act* last month are not in line with this priority. The federal government's elimination of the children's fitness credit and the children's art tax credit would be detrimental to Yukon families. My desire would be to have the full reinstatement of those important credits.

The Yukon Party government will do its part by amending the *Income Tax Act* to retain the Yukon portion of these two important tax credits.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I am certainly pleased to have the opportunity to rise in the Legislature today to provide my response to the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin's motion and certainly would like to extend my thanks to him for bringing this motion forward today.

The member's motion urges the Government of Canada to recognize the importance of encouraging families to adopt healthy lifestyles by fully reinstating the children's fitness and art tax credit. This motion resonates with me in many ways, Mr. Speaker. It resonates with me as father of children who I work tirelessly for, ensuring that they are involved in activities that provide them a positive opportunity for mental and physical growth. It also resonates with me as the MLA for Porter Creek South as the former Minister of Tourism and Culture and in my current role as Minister of Health and Social Services.

Now, as the MLA for Porter Creek South, my constituents continuously emphasize to me how important it is to ensure that families, and particularly children and youth, have every opportunity to lead healthy lifestyles. My constituents don't just talk the talk on healthy living; they also walk the walk. I've taken many opportunities to run — literally run — through my amazing riding over the past several years. I've had the opportunity to speak to and to see many of my constituents. I see how many families and children are out riding bikes, playing catch, throwing Frisbees, playing road hockey or just spending time with their neighbours. I'm encouraged and I'm motivated by my constituents in many ways, and healthy living is certainly no exception. It's important to me that I ensure that my family and I maintain the healthy lifestyle that we have worked to create for ourselves. I am thankful that my family, friends and my constituents keep me honest with my running schedule. This support has reminded me what I've learned over the years, Mr. Speaker. Healthy living is about more than the individual. It's about a community network that we can encourage, support, ensuring that we all hold each other accountable to be individually healthy, but also that we remain healthy as a Yukon population.

Speaking of my constituents — whether it is at the doorstep in my office, at the rink, the dance studio, the track, the gymnastics club or any number of venues, they tell me about their priorities. They tell me that ensuring their families and their children have access to mentally and physically healthy activities is one of the most important things to them. They also tell me how disappointed they are in the Liberal government for their intent to reduce and eventually eliminate the children's fitness and arts tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand today and say that ensuring that Yukon families have every opportunity to engage in a healthy lifestyle in our great territory has been, and will continue to be, a priority of this Yukon Party government. Our government introduced the children's fitness tax credit in December of 2007, which enabled families to claim a credit related to children's physical activities up to \$500 per year. In 2012, our government introduced a similar credit for children enrolled in arts activities. In October of

2014, the maximum amount per child that could be claimed for the fitness credit was doubled to \$1,000 per year. Parents with children with disabilities are entitled to additional amounts when claiming either credit. Currently, there are approximately 1,700 families claiming the fitness credit and 600 families claiming the arts credit. These credits enable Yukoners to keep their hard-earned money in their pockets.

That's not all this government has done to ensure Yukoners have access to arts, to physical activity and to healthy living opportunities in this territory. As former Minister of Tourism and Culture and in my current role as Minister of Health and Social Services, I've had the great privilege to be a part of several investment initiatives that assisted Yukoners in their healthy lifestyle and encouraged others to seek one.

In 2013, I was happy to announce a partnership between Yukon government with the visual arts and crafts sector to develop a strategy to grow and expand the industry to benefit Yukon's economy and our way of life. This strategy signalled to Yukoners that the arts are alive and well in the territory and are a great option for youth, for adults and for seniors but, more importantly, for families alike.

The Yukon visual arts and crafts strategy followed the original strategy created in 2001. The 2013 strategy outlined the sector's mandate to facilitate career development and economic viability for those working in the sector and to contribute to Yukon's social and economic well-being.

Mr. Speaker, artisans play a key role in creating the vibrant culture scene that makes Yukon a great place to visit and to call home. The strategy is part of the government's ongoing commitment to support the talented individuals working in this dynamic sector. The strategy was developed by a steering committee, comprising 15 arts and crafts organizations with two visual artists. At a cost of \$65,000, the project was led by the Yukon Art Society and funded by the departments of Economic Development and Tourism and Culture.

In August of 2014, I was honoured to announce funding for eight arts projects totalling \$109,000 through the Yukon arts fund. This encouraged the development of the arts for the benefit of all Yukoners. The arts fund is instrumental in supporting groups and organizations in the development of the literary, visual and performing arts in Yukon. The groups that are awarded funding through this fund not only serve their membership, but also serve as a role model for individuals and groups alike who may want to pursue interests.

I was fortunate at that point in time to award the Yukon Film Society \$22,000, as well as the Yukon Educational Theatre Society, \$20,000; Fiddleheads Yukon organization, \$19,000; Suzuki Strings Association of the Yukon, \$16,000; Association franco-yukonnaise, \$9,000; Northern Lights School of Dance, \$8,295; Bringing Youth Towards Equality, \$8,190; and SingAlong Messiah Collective, \$7,500. All of these organizations provide opportunities for youth to engage in the arts. These organizations, as well as the families and youth who take part in the activities they offer, rely on governments to ensure there are minimal barriers. So while a

Liberal government has taken a stance to increase these barriers, your Yukon Party government will continue to fulfill our commitment to Yukoners — and we will reduce them.

As Minister of Health and Social Services, I want to start by underlining why healthy living, especially for our youth, is so very important. The health benefits of physical activity are well-documented. Healthy living and physical activity makes it less likely that risk factors for chronic diseases, such as heart disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis will develop later in life.

Healthy living and physical activity also assist young people to develop healthy musculoskeletal tissue, develop a healthy cardiovascular system, develop neuromuscular awareness and maintain a healthy body weight. Physical activity and healthy living has also been associated with mental health benefits in young people by improving their control over symptoms of anxiety and depression.

I have the great pleasure to be a part of many initiatives and many investments in my time as Minister of Health and Social Services. Many of these contribute to physical activity and mental well-being, or wellness, in our Yukon youth. As members are aware, the wellness plan for Yukon's children and families was released in 2014 and brings with it several activities that support wellness for children and families in our territory.

The wellness plan sets out three pathways for achieving wellness and preventing illness. The three pathways are: (1) getting a good start in life with nurturing adults in safe, stimulating surroundings; (2) raising kids who flourish by creating opportunities for children and young people to develop confidence, interest and positive relationships; and finally, (3) healthy living for all by making health choices easier and equipping all people with information, skills and opportunities to make good decisions. The Pathways to Wellness website provides evidence-based information on wellness and provides weekly e-tips for living a healthy life. Also under the wellness plan for Yukon's children and family is an interdepartmental committee within Yukon government. They meet regularly to coordinate initiatives related to healthy living in our territory. The wellness plan is available online at [www.yukonwellness.ca](http://www.yukonwellness.ca).

Personal choice, the decisions we make and the actions that we take are important, but there are other influences that make it easier or harder to make lifestyle changes. Eating well, keeping active and productive, getting a good night's sleep are examples of how we keep ourselves and our families healthier. On paper this sounds straightforward, but in practice — I can tell you from first-hand experience — it is far more complex. The decisions we make every day are important, but not everyone has the same choices or the same chances to be healthy. We are also influenced by genetics and biology, how we are raised, our immediate environment and broader factors, such as educational opportunities, historic events and our economy. Taken together, these factors help explain why we got to this point in time in our lives and even more importantly, where we can go from here.

Now luck and coincidence also play a role in our lives, but we cannot control or plan for this. The best we can do is be open to opportunities that come our way and make the most of them, and this government doesn't believe in being a barrier to those opportunities.

This Yukon Party continues to invest in Yukoners. In fact, just last December I was happy to award more than \$19,850 through the health investment fund to the Boys and Club of Yukon, to the Yukon Academy of Martial Arts and to the Yukon Home Educators Society. The health investment fund is intended to provide financial support for short-term projects aimed at promoting well-being in order to strengthen communities and make them and their residents healthier. The organizations that received the funding through the health investment fund help to provide healthy lifestyle opportunities to youth in Yukon.

Healthy living is an important part of life in our territory. Our amazing outdoor wilderness and the many groups and organizations that build their activities around it are one of the biggest reasons why many people choose to remain or to relocate here.

Now I can say personally that because of organizations like the Polarettes Gymnastics Club, the All-City Band, the Northern Lights School of Dance, Whitehorse Minor Hockey Association, the Yukon Soccer Association and many, many more, healthy living is alive and very well in Yukon. My family is one of many that have utilized the children's fitness and art tax credits in the past. I hear from constituents about how this cut and elimination will affect not only their children's short-term physical health, but their long-term health and mental well-being.

I am thankful to be part of the government that stands up for Yukon families. This government will continue to advocate for the health and well-being of Yukon families and Yukon youth.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I've spoken at great length about how your Yukon Party government continues to invest in opportunities for Yukon youth, but let's give credit where credit is due. I would like to thank the Yukon moms and dads, the grandparents, aunts and uncles you see at the sidelines, cheering from the benches or watching from a gallery as their son or daughter, granddaughter or grandson plays, performs, and challenges themselves. Thank you so very much for keeping your children active.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to the motion today.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I would like to thank my colleague from Old Crow — Vuntut Gwitchin — for introducing this very important motion that is before the Assembly here today and also to my colleagues for their earlier comments in support of the motion.

It's a really timely motion and speaks to the very importance of active living, recreation, and the very importance of our cultural sectors in our territory. Over the weekend, as I may have alluded to in the budget address a couple of days ago, I had the opportunity to spend a

substantive amount of time at the Canada Games Centre. If one wants to have an appreciation of any given day in the territory, spend some time at that particular facility. We had just concluded our year-end hockey tournament for our particular division. Throughout the whole weekend, it was incredible — the number of families and friends sitting on the benches and being able to participate. To be able to actually see your children participate in the game of hockey — a game that we all love and subscribe to from time to time. I have to say that there are costs associated with participation in hockey, just like there are costs for participating in soccer and in swimming, but I guess the point that has been made over the course of the last hour is that there have been tremendous efforts made, thanks to the fantastic volunteers and organizations and the collaborative partnerships that have been garnered through the Government of Yukon with these organizations over the past number of years.

There were comments earlier about the active living strategy. That really sets a framework in the renewed active living strategy that came about in 2012 — and with that new investment of \$250,000 each and every year in support of active living grants in our schools, in our communities, capital grants and supportive after-school programs as well.

Earlier this year, I was really honoured to be able to join a number of community members from the territory to help celebrate the Arctic Inspiration Prize. That was an annual allotment of dollars that is awarded to organizations across the north. I know, Mr. Speaker, you too were part of that amazing ceremony that took place in Ottawa. I was really proud to be able to join individuals like Zach Bell, Olympian cyclist from my hometown of Watson Lake, and to be able to join individuals like him and other members of the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon and to be able to witness first-hand their organization being awarded some \$600,000 in funding.

Again, that was really in support of developing and delivering meaningful learning and sustainable training to be made available throughout the territory in our communities. The purpose of these dollars, in addition to dollars that are allotted to RPAY through the active living strategy and through other funding mechanisms, is to really build capacity in our communities — to provide that enhanced training, that delivery of skills to those community recreation leaders in our communities, whether it's recreation coordinators, volunteer leaders, directors, youth leaders, board members, coaches, fitness leaders, camp counsellors, after-school leaders throughout the territory. As a result of this additional funding and investment in this particular organization, it's going to really enhance the strengthening of the competencies of our staff and volunteers to help them better support our own kids, to help them better support our youth and adults in finding their own opportunities for social, physical and artistic expression to improve the health and to be able to socialize and interact with others — learning new skills, promoting fun and being able to find that life balance. In doing so, we're able to better engage each other in organizing and delivering better sport and recreation programs available for all.

I can't say enough — because I am the mother of an 11-year-old boy and I have seen first-hand the opportunities over the last 11 years — just what is available in our territory. To the coaches of my son's hockey team, to the coaches of my son's soccer team and to the dance instructors — the delivery of programs made available through organizations like Northern Lights School of Dance and Leaping Feats.

There are so many different organizations that are delivering programs available to thousands of children throughout the territory. Most of these individuals are volunteers. They do it because they love their community. They want to better their community. They want to assist kids in our communities and they do a great job.

As has already been stated, there is a significant amount of funding made available to different organizations, whether it's through Sport Yukon or RPAY, whether it's through the Aboriginal Sport Circle. That was something we heard directly through our 60-some meetings with hundreds of Yukoners over the past year — to have more dollars available to that particular organization to better enhance the delivery of programs available through our schools, a better reach.

We've heard that over the years, as well, in terms of making more opportunities on the cultural side in our schools and outside of the schools. I'm very proud to be part of a government that — since 2007, arts funding administered by my own Department of Tourism and Culture alone has increased by well over 60 percent. Arts organizations across the territory, whether it's the Northern Cultural Expressions Society, Dawson City Arts Society, the Yukon Art Centre and their delivery of programming through the Old Fire Hall's animation of the wharf — it all benefits each and every one of us.

Each and every year, we dedicate just shy of \$2 million to individual artists, arts organizations and artistic projects through our various arts funding programs. I was really proud to be able to deliver an increase to that funding a number of years ago and to incorporate new programs, like the touring artist fund through the artist in the school program. That was a program that traditionally received some \$25,000. We were able to increase that to \$100,000 a year. Again, it supports artists to be able to travel and contribute to schools throughout the territory to deliver arts programming. That is coupled with the programs delivered through the Department of Education.

We also know there are increased tutoring programs available through the Department of Education. I know one recently came about in Whitehorse Elementary School. I know that because an e-mail came our way to our family, promoting free tutoring made available, thanks to F.H. Collins French immersion students who are now giving back to elementary students in our school and others, to promote excellence in scholastics — in this case, in math and other subjects. What a great program — to be able to inspire leadership in our secondary school students and enhance the delivery of programming for those younger.

Through arts operating funds, we have been able to see increased assistance made available through a number of different programs. All City Band Society — I know I always

look forward to their annual concerts a couple times a year at the Yukon Arts Centre. It's amazing to see all the young musical minds within our territory and the collaboration between more senior, mature artists working again with our younger musicians and being able to celebrate those talents with the rest of the territory.

We've been able to again provide funding to other organizations, which in turn help promote the arts and sports and recreation to others throughout the territory, all of which is to say is that when it comes to delivering these particular programs they are of significant importance to our government, have been over the last number of years and will continue to be so.

This particular motion really speaks about enhancing those opportunities, ensuring that we continue to have those opportunities. So while we talk about tax credits for fitness or arts, to be clear, it's not the only suite of programs that this government is offering. In fact, to the contrary, it is but one of many different programs made available to our youth and to individuals across the territory.

It's something that makes us a very attractive place to live, to do business and to raise a family, and is something that I continue to hear at the door step. Last night, at the doorstep, I continued to hear — we've been able to promote our budget and speak to other initiatives — for example, the \$100 per child made available for school supplies. I shared that with a dad who was at the door — an oil burner mechanic; he's working hard to make a living for his family of three younger children. \$300 toward school supplies is a big deal. I said to him, "What do you think about that?" He appreciated that. He said, "You know what?" — and I said, "I recognize this is a small expenditure," and he said, "You know what, for three kids, it's \$300. It's a big deal for me."

I think we can't underestimate the importance of expenditures such as this. I know we may not always agree in this Assembly, but I thought I would share that.

Likewise, it came up — and I didn't even raise this at the door last night, but another family who had a smaller child as well was asking, "Is your government not reinstating or continuing on with these tax credits in support of kids and recreation programs?" and I said, "Yeah, in fact it's great of you to raise that because that's something that we will be debating in the Assembly tomorrow." They said, "Well, we strongly encourage that. First of all, we appreciate that you're continuing those programs and, second of all, do anything that you can to encourage the Government of Canada to continue to carry on these programs because they mean something to us."

That is not to say that every family in this territory subscribes to these programs, but the point is that anything that we can do to help keep our kids active, even in the after-school programs delivered through the Boys and Girls Club of Yukon — they do an amazing job. There are many different organizations that provide active living programs after school. That is really what our renewed funding that was delivered a number of years ago when we renewed that strategy was for — it's to keep our kids active.

They say that from 3:00 to 6:00 in the afternoon is the most at-risk time for our kids because that is when kids are more susceptible to doing screen time, to watching television or maybe just doing other things. Any time that we can help fill that void with after-school programs that are more affordable — the Boys and Girls program is but one that comes readily to mind — through active living, school grants and being able to acquire capital, sports equipment or other equipment in support of active living, the better off our kids are going to be. There is always room for improvement.

There is always going to be more work to be done, but I want to congratulate and I want to thank the many individuals who are involved in the Rotary Music Festival that is going on this week. To those individuals who volunteer — again, as I mentioned, we will see lots of soccer teams on our school fields here in due time through the Whitehorse Minor Soccer Association and through hockey, and the list goes on. I want to say thank you very much to the many individuals who are really keeping our kids active and enhancing the skill sets of our children and adding to the quality of life that makes this such a great territory in this country and in the world.

To the individuals who are working hard in our departments like Community Services and the Sport and Recreation branch and also in our own Department of Tourism and Culture Cultural Services branch — they work directly with these organizations each and every day — and individual artists and individual athletes in improving the skill set, really adding to our workforce and enhancing our workforce. We talk about diversification; through many of these programs that were started, an individual like Zach Bell is now a world Olympian and is contributing on a whole different scale — an international scale to this day — assisting women cyclists. These programs are very important for our kids, but also through the whole spectrum of life.

I very much support this motion. I want to thank my colleague from Old Crow for bringing it forward and for all of the comments that have been made here today. Certainly I commend this motion to the rest of the House and look forward to hearing the final results.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Community Services and therefore the minister responsible for sport and recreation, I am very pleased to rise and speak in favour of this motion today. I would join my colleagues in thanking the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing it forward and for his words in opening debate on the subject.

I have appreciated hearing from my colleagues today about their thoughts on this particular motion and some of its relevance to not only them and their families, but to their constituents and a wide variety of Yukoners alike. Sport, of course, is very important to me, Mr. Speaker, and active lifestyles and fitness are all key goals of my department and are things that we have been working on very hard over the last number of years.

To that end, I was pleased to release recently the *Yukon Sport Action Plan*. That was something we released not too long ago and I believe that this motion and the actions

explained therein fit nicely within the sport action plan. Of course, the *Yukon Sport Action Plan* was developed and provided a vision for 2015 to 2022 and it was done in partnership with territorial sport organizations to map out our priorities in conjunction with the new Canadian sport policy. That plan will guide direction, funding, and focus for the future of sport in Yukon. Most importantly, that plan will help us build the type of sport we want to see in our territory, which is inclusive, fun and fair. From supporting community recreation to providing funding for the development of athletes, coaches and officials, we are committed to improving the opportunities for sport, recreation and active living available to Yukoners. As we act to deliver this plan, we'll continue to work collaboratively with our partners to build healthy, active Yukon communities. I think that, as I said earlier, this motion and the action requested in it fit very much within the priorities of the sport action plan.

Underpinning the sport action plan are six particular principles that form the philosophical basis of how we in the Department of Community Services develop and deliver and pursue excellence in sport in Yukon. Those are as follows: first, sport promotes ethical behaviour and the values of respect, fair play, and fun; second, sport for life, based on the long-term athletic development framework, promotes opportunities to participate, perform and excel over the lifespan, whether in the playground, the podium or the park; third, inclusion, equitable access and sport development in Yukon's rural and remote communities are essential elements of Yukon's sport system; fourth, partnerships and collaboration within the sport system strengthen capacity and impact sport deliver and success; fifth, quality sport requires capacity and training for athletes, coaches, officials, and volunteers; and finally, sixth, sustainability in our sport system demands accountability, monitoring and evaluation.

Those are the principles that underpin our *Yukon Sport Action Plan*. Of course, encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy choices for our youth is very important and that's why I thought the original children's fitness tax credit was an excellent idea.

Of course, there has been some discussion about the broader changes to the tax system that are being made by the federal government and some changes that go to a more universal style of support for families. While I appreciate that and think there's some merit to that, I do feel that it needs to be pointed out that, lost in that change, is the focus and promotion of sport and the focus and promotion of fitness.

While I appreciate the comments from the Leader of the Liberal Party about the broader implications of, at the federal level, his party's choices on the tax system, I respectfully disagree because of the removal of the promotion of active lifestyles and fitness and, of course, the arts as well. I'll focus my comments, I should note, Mr. Speaker, on the fitness side, because that's more my purview and I know that my colleagues have already spoken about the importance of the arts aspect of this.

The promotion of fitness and sports is very important, and it's disappointing to see the federal government move away

from that encouraging promotion of fitness through their tax changes. That being said, I am very proud to see the Premier and Finance minister put forward changes to the *Income Tax Act* earlier today that will see Yukon continue with our portion of these credits.

As the bill tabled by the Premier notes, the federal Minister of Finance introduced a notice of ways and means motion to amend the *Income Tax Act* of Canada. Among those proposed measures are the reduction of the federal personal income tax credits for children's arts and fitness programs for 2016 and their elimination for 2017 and later taxation years.

As we know, and as has been discussed already, Yukon's own children's fitness and children's arts tax credits are currently based on their federal counterparts in such a way that the proposed federal measures would automatically reduce and then eliminate Yukon's tax credits. Thankfully this bill that was tabled earlier today prevents that result and the bill amends the relevant Yukon *Income Tax Act* provisions.

Once that bill passes this House, the provisions will refer to the version of the federal rules that applied for the 2015 taxation year. That, of course, preserves the Yukon children's arts and fitness tax credits in their current form. The amendments apply for the 2016 and subsequent taxation years. However, because the federal legislation may not be enacted before this bill is assented to, the bill will come into force only on the proclamation by the Commissioner in Executive Council.

Mr. Speaker, as you see, the Yukon government is continuing with our portion of these changes because we recognize the importance of promoting healthy lifestyles through measures including the tax system. Again, while I said earlier that I appreciate that this particular change at the federal level is part of a broader change, I again wanted to reiterate my disagreement with the fact that we are moving away from encouraging healthy lifestyles and participation in sport and fitness by removing that tax credit.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would heartily endorse the motion brought forward by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. I look forward to sharing the motion with members of the sports community here in the territory, once it has passed, assuming it is passed today. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I'll be sure to share the bill tabled by the Premier and Finance minister earlier today as evidence to groups and individuals, both my constituents and citizens otherwise, of our commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles, fitness and arts in the Yukon.

So with that I will conclude my remarks and commend this motion as we move forward.

**Ms. White:** I'm always grateful for the opportunity to add my two cents. I'm just going to break this down in different terms and is just something that for me just brings it back to kind of real-life situations.

I'm not going to pretend to be a tax maven and I go see someone and they help me with my taxes because I look at the forms and it's overwhelming. I think the first thing we need to talk about is what a tax credit is, because a tax credit is a

deduction from taxes owing. Providing that the tax credit can be used, each taxpayer receives the same tax relief of the tax credit regardless of his or her particular tax bracket.

If you spend the money then you can have that money — it can go toward that deduction. I think that's important. It is knowing that you need to have the money to spend first, which is I think the point we were trying to make on this side. It's great. No one's going to deny that recreation is a fantastic thing.

In April 2012, we debated Motion No. 162 in this House, and that's when the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin put forward a motion that urged the Yukon government to establish a tax credit for parents or guardians of children involved in music, arts or tutoring. We debated that motion and we heard a lot of similar arguments today that we did back in 2012. So this got created and that's good. The Minister of Finance pointed out that this year we put forward \$96,000 and that's what that will mean. He said that in 2015 — and I hope get these numbers right because I was listening, but I wasn't really listening that intently — so that 1,700 families or 1,700 people accessed the sports deduction and 650 kids accessed the arts deduction. These both represent numbers of children that accessed things through the program, so a total of 2,350 individuals — young people and their families — were able to access those tax credits.

For \$96,000, that means that each of those 2,350 individuals — their families — received \$40.81, which goes not very far to paying for \$400 dance lessons or \$400 bike programs or bicycles or hockey equipment.

I think that there is another number that we need to look at and we need to look at the Yukon census. In December 2015 — we have the list of all the children — and between zero- and four-year-olds, there were 2,130; between five- and nine-year-olds there were 2,049; between 10- to 14-year-olds there were 1,918; and between 15- and 19-year-olds there were 1,960. So that means in December there were 8,048 kids in the territory. Out of that, only 2,350 were able to qualify for that tax relief for their families. So what does it mean about the other kids? What happened to those kids?

I am a huge supporter of the kids recreation fund. I think that is a phenomenal program and, in 2012, I was really adamant in our caucus room that we talk about the increase to the kids rec fund because that is actually putting money in people's pockets to access recreation. We look at the amount of money — so it has been pretty stagnant. Right now, if your family qualifies — if they meet the financial means — each kid qualifies for up to \$400 in recreational funding. It's really interesting because this money funnels directly through to the sport organization or the store that is selling the sporting equipment, or those things. A parent identifies that they want a kid to cross-country ski; they'll go to the store, they'll find the skis, they'll put them aside. The kids recreation fund pays for the skis and the family picks it up, so I mean it's an economic driver as well.

We heard the Minister of Health and Social Services talk about personal choice, right? And it's true. We all have choices that we can make, but if you look at — I'm going to

look at a family of three because it's easy for me, two parents and three kids — so you're working, both people have jobs and I certainly hope that they make more than what the kids recreation fund says you have to make to access the funding. So in the kids recreation fund it's the net income, so that means it's your wages prior to any deductions. So if you make \$40,500 as your net income, with one child, it means that you make \$46,575 a year and that would mean if you were a single person working full-time, 40 hours a week, four weeks a month, 12 months a year, you would be making \$24.26 an hour. That is substantially more, we know, than minimum wage, which has just crested \$11. We know that is substantially more than what we — well, we on this side — consider a better wage, which would be \$15 an hour.

We know that if two parents were working and they qualified for that, it means that they would be making just over \$12 an hour, and that is a tough reality. So within that money, they would be paying rent, they would be paying food, they would be paying utilities and they would be paying things like — let's hope that they have some form of communication — so maybe a cellphone or a landline or whatever they choose and then on top of that, they're hoping that their child can participate in activities. So if they meet that requirement, then that one child can access \$400 entire dollars for an entire 12-month span for recreation. It doesn't seem like very much.

I know that a bike program that I participate in, where we ride with kids twice a week for two and a half months, is about \$385, and that is without the bike. Parents are going to tell you that's good value for money. Their kids ride for two hours with instructors. They get instruction; they have the best time ever — but that eats up almost the entire \$400 that you can access with the kids recreation fund.

Now, if we're talking about the next one — if you have two children, then you can earn more money. You can earn up to \$55,930 a year before taxes, which is not a lot — not a lot at all. So those two kids then also have the ability to get the \$400 per child for recreation.

What we're looking at for sports that they can afford — we're looking at indoor soccer, we're looking at softball — we might be looking at swimming lessons, but we're probably more looking at swim club, but even that's going to be close. We're certainly not talking about dance lessons all year-round. We are talking about picking one and hopefully you can scrape your pennies together to pay for the other stuff.

When we talk about personal choice, instead of looking at it like a family's choice about how they are going to try to juggle that money, we can talk about the personal choice of government. Right now, what we are saying is that we would like to ask the federal government to make sure that we can access that extra funding. By that extra funding, I mean you have to be able to spend the money before you can get that tax credit. You have to be able to spend the \$1,000 to access the maximum. You have to be able to spend the \$500 to access the maximum. I can tell you with great confidence, based on my own family, that my sister and her husband, with three children, work two full-time jobs, and to spend that kind of



money for their kids to recreate is almost an impossibility. It is not because they don't want to; it is because they can't. The interesting thing is that even they, who are making good fiscal decisions, can't access the kids recreation fund based on their earnings because they make too much to access that. I would suggest that maybe it is something that we can re-evaluate so that all kids have access to recreation because, as it stands right now, out of the 8,048 kids who were documented as living in the territory in December 2015, only 2,350 of them were able to access the Yukon's tax deductions — only 2,350 of them. Then I ask: Where are all the other kids in those numbers? We go through the census pages and try to figure out — in recreation, how many kids are participating in sport? They don't have those numbers.

The Member from Vuntut Gwitchin and all the other members who spoke about their involvement — I mean recreation is huge. I played outdoor soccer and indoor soccer when I was a kid, and I highland danced and all these things. When I discovered snowboarding as a teenager, I mean that is the reason why I graduated from high school. I had something to do on the weekend that was way more positive than what I could have been doing. I absolutely fundamentally believe that recreation is important, but a snowboard costs a bare minimum of \$400 and they cost typically a lot more than that. A season's pass is \$550, and you are not talking about bindings, boots, helmets, jackets or pants. How do we say that we think that recreation is so important that every kid should be able to participate when it is just financially not possible for many families to do that? It is just not possible. So then you do what you can for them on the side.

My nephew Kemper turns nine this year. He outgrew the bicycle that I bought him two years ago. Now I have to figure out a way that this kid doesn't think he is going to get a bicycle every birthday because that is essentially what it feels like. He is going to come and hang out with me and he is going to rake my lawn or something, and I am going to make him feel like he is working on it for a while because, right now, the bicycle is something that I will pick up because I am able to afford it more than his parents. That is a hard position to be in. That is a hard position, but I told my sister back when she was a single parent with one child that is the role that I would take. I would not buy clothes, I would not buy toys, but I would take care of things like bicycles and hockey equipment, because I want to make sure that my nephews have that opportunity.

But what if you don't have that ability to depend on your family to help you with those payments? You're certainly not going to be able to access the tax credit because you have to be able to spend that money before you get that small amount of money back. It's not an instant give and take. You have to spend that money, and then you put your tax forms in the next year, and then you see that little bit of difference on your tax rebate — hopefully you get an income tax rebate.

When we talk about personal choice, we could look at expanding the kids recreation fund. We could look at spreading that out so more kids could access it. We could look at expanding it, so maybe you had \$400 for the first six

months of this year and you had \$400 for the second part. That would mean that kids could participate in summer sports and winter sports; they could participate in sport all year-round.

Looking right now, I was online and I was trying to figure out what you could afford for \$400 a year for recreation, and I can tell you that you would have to be pretty creative. If we were talking about choice, I would have loved to talk about what we as the Yukon government could do for Yukon citizens, how we could make our decisions on how the money that we have to distribute could go. Instead of saying that we're looking outside for a little bit of help for parents, why couldn't we make a decision to offer a lot more help inside.

The kids recreation fund — if you have one child, you can't earn more than \$46,575 a year as a household income. That's not a lot. That's not a mortgage payment; that's living pretty tight. I think that's pretty small. I think you would have to be quite creative with that budgeting. If you have two children, you can't earn more than \$55,930 as a household. If you have three children, you can't earn more than \$63,262 as a household, and if you have four children or more, you can't earn more than \$70,000 to access that money.

We all know that kids are expensive and we know that keeping kids in clothes that fit and shoes that fit is one thing — making sure that they have healthy food to eat, making sure they have a roof over their heads. Just meeting those basic needs is going to be expensive, and that's not even talking about the ability to put them into recreation.

We're lucky that we live in this place where kids can go outside and they can play for free, and we're lucky that we live in a community where we have parks in every neighbourhood, but that's still not talking about the benefits that the members across were talking about, the benefits of organized sport, the benefits of coaching, the benefits of that leadership — because if you don't have the money to put your kid into organized sport, then you don't have the opportunity for them to see that and to experience that.

I think almost everyone in this Chamber has had a chance to play on a sports team, and you know how important it is — many of us have. It wasn't until I started snowboarding as a teenager that I realized that I wasn't really — I mean, I like team sports and I like teams, but I realized that I really liked doing sports on my own with other people around, which is why now I really like bicycles because I can go ride bikes with my friends, but it's just me on my bike.

I appreciate the point of this. What I don't understand is why we weren't looking at what we could do in Yukon for Yukoners. What I don't understand is why we're not looking at what role Yukon government can play to make sure that every kid in the Yukon has a chance to participate in recreation in whichever way they choose — whether you want to play the violin or you want to play the piano, go to singing lessons or go to dance lessons, or whether you want to play soccer or you want to bike camp, or maybe you want to go to the tennis and bike camp. This doesn't address that. This doesn't address how we can make sure that every kid has access to those things, which I think are really important.

When I talk about personal choice, I think every family realizes how important sport is and understands the value of sport, art and recreation. But I don't think every family has the ability to actually make that happen on the level that we've heard about today. What I would have really liked to have seen is how Yukon government was going to make sure that Yukon kids all had a chance to participate.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** I'm pleased to rise to debate the motion put forward by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin: "THAT this House urges the Parliament of Canada to recognize the importance of encouraging families to adopt healthy lifestyles by fully reinstating the children's fitness tax credit and the children's art tax credit."

Let me start by stating that the Yukon New Democrats support healthy lifestyles. Do you know what government introduced the healthy families program, which does much good work to this day in Health and Social Services? It was a Yukon NDP government.

We support sports and arts programs for children. Again, do you know what government introduced a kids recreation fund? It was a previous Yukon New Democratic government.

There is no question that the Yukon New Democrats support and have demonstrated that support for healthy lifestyles and for sports and arts programs.

There are, however, better ways to make them happen than a tax credit that serves no benefit to poor families. If a family is too poor to pay taxes in the first place, then that family will not be eligible for a tax credit for sports or arts.

The Premier in his debate said that this motion had nothing to do with the new federal budget's Canada child benefit and I want to argue that the Premier is mistaken in that. Taxes and tax regimes are about political choices. The new Canada child benefit is a political choice of the federal government. That's what governments do — make budget choices. This is not a cut, as the Minister of Health and Social Services suggested. In fact the new Canada child benefit is supported by the alternate federal budget from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and Choices. The new Canada child benefit is supported by the Caledon Institute, and the new Canada child benefit is supported by the Yukon NDP on the floor of the Legislative Assembly today.

The Harper Conservatives' tax regime that this motion buys into and urges us to go back to for child benefits was one that boosted child payments for the middle- and high-income voters. I want to briefly make reference to a document from the Caledon Institute from June 2015 by Ken Battle. It's called *Renewing Canada's Social Architecture — Child Benefits in Canada — Politics Versus Policy*.

The policy objective stated is for child benefits in our social architecture to build a single, streamlined and progressive support with a strong poverty-reduction impact and improved income security for modest- and middle-income families. The article states that the Harper Conservatives' tax benefits related to meeting children's needs were a classic case of social policy by stealth. The benefits that were in place were subject to federal and provincial/territorial income taxes,

so most families did not end up with the full annual amount per child. The new Canada child benefit is not taxable.

Just to outline the introduction of the Canada child benefit, looking at the budget statement, the benefits are: that it will be simpler; that families will receive a single payment every month; that it will be tax-free and families will not have to pay back part of the amount received when they file their tax returns; that it would be better targeted to those who most need it; low- and middle-income families will receive more benefits, and those with the higher incomes, generally over \$150,000 in taxable income, will receive lower benefits than under the current system. The new Canada child benefit is also much more generous. Families benefiting will see an average increase in child benefits of almost \$2,300 in the 2016-17 benefit year.

The Canada child benefit will provide a maximum annual benefit of up to \$6,400 per child under the age of six and up to \$5,400 per child for those of ages six through 17. Families earning less than \$30,000 in net income will receive the maximum benefit.

The first speaker from the opposition asked the government whether the Yukon Party government will be clawing back this Canada child benefit. Several ministers spoke to the motion and none of them have indicated whether this government will be clawing that back. Certainly the federal government has clearly set out that it hopes provinces and territories will not claw back this new Canada child benefit, which will see lower-income families getting more financial support.

Some of the things we can do to promote arts, music and recreation are to ensure that there are music programs in all of our schools and, as the Member for Takhini-Kopper King talked about, to look at what the kids recreation fund can do and how it might offer more in the way of support for low-income families.

What would be most effective of all to help support healthy living is to end poverty. If it's interested in poverty-reduction strategies, the Yukon Party can do a lot better than ask Ottawa for limited tax credits that aren't available to low-income families that can't afford to pay for music lessons or sports activities. A tax credit won't help a family that doesn't pay taxes because their income is too low. If they can't afford to pay taxes, they can't afford to pay for art classes, for music lessons or for sports.

How do we address poverty? We look at income equality, we look at pay equity — women in Canada still earn 75 cents on the dollar to their male counterparts — and we look at a higher minimum wage. We've seen campaigns for the federal government to adopt a \$15-per-hour minimum wage for federal workers. We offer better health and social programs by recognizing the social determinants of health — again, income inequality, inadequate housing, precarious employment, unemployment and underemployment, and access to basic, nutritious food.

I want to return to pay equity for a moment. When women get equal pay for work of equal value, they will be more likely to have a good enough income to support their

family's participation in sports, arts or whatever their priorities are.

Let's just look for a minute at the social income statistics. Last fall, the Minister of Health and Social Services provided those numbers to the House. There are 157 families with 293 children on social assistance. Those are families most in need, and those are families that will not be eligible for the tax credits that this motion urges us to ask the federal government to bring back.

Governments can't do everything. The federal government has chosen to take the money that was in the tax credit programs and reallocate them to a more generous Canada child benefits plan — a more progressive plan.

We've laid out our reasons for not being in support of this motion, and we urge this government to do more to address poverty and inequality.

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

**Mr. Elias:** I thank everybody today who stood up and spoke on the motion debate today.

I guess my intention here was to enhance and promote the opportunity for Yukon youth to live healthy lifestyles, in mind and body, through a fitness and art tax credit from the federal government. It wasn't meant to be all-encompassing or to capture everything with regard to fitness and art in the territory. I wanted to keep this piece of the puzzle available to well over 2,000 Yukoners who utilize the program.

I respectfully disagree with the assertions from the New Democratic Party with regard to who can and who can't benefit from these tax credits. It's just simply not my understanding and not the understanding of many of my colleagues on this side of the House.

For the Leader of the Yukon Liberal Party to suggest that I was somehow blaming the federal government with simply urging them to reinstate the children's fitness tax credit and the children's art tax credit, he seems to be a bit sensitive. I'm on record urging the federal Conservative government on a vast array of motions in this Assembly. It doesn't matter to me who holds the power in Ottawa. I'm never going to shirk or shy away from being a voice for my constituents and my fellow Yukoners.

It's important to mention that so many of our Yukon schools around the territory are becoming partners with local clubs, whether it be soccer, curling, swimming or other sports teams — hockey for that matter — in our own capital city. All of the students are able to access those types of sports, and so I don't see anything wrong with that. It's good to hear that the Liberal leader actually supports this motion. I hope that it gets to a vote because it's important to so many Yukoners.

I think that it's important. Mr. Speaker, the Stanley Cup playoffs start tonight and I, for one, would love to see a Yukoner battling for the hardest sports championship on this planet to win. These are the types of efforts that could possibly bear fruit one day. Thank you again for everyone who spoke today, and I look forward to a vote.

**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. Moorcroft:** Disagree.

**Ms. White:** Disagree.

**Mr. Tredger:** Disagree.

**Mr. Barr:** Disagree.

**Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 12 yeas and six nays.

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

*Motion No. 1033 agreed to*

#### Motion No. 1134

**Clerk:** Motion No. 1134, standing in the name of Mr. Elias.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America to recognize the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian as the offshore northern maritime boundary between Canada and the United States of America.

**Mr. Elias:** Mr. Speaker, Canada and the United States share a maritime boundary in the Beaufort Sea that extends seaward from boundary monument No. 1 near Demarcation Point located on the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian in the northern part of my riding. Both states agree on the beginning point of the boundary, Boundary Monument No. 1, but that is where the agreement ends. Both states dispute the other's claim as to the seaward extension of the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian land boundary. The settlement of this boundary remains as one of the major boundary issues between Canada and the United States. Canada maintains that the boundary was established as the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian during the 1903 Alaska boundary arbitration. The United States contends that the boundary follows the equidistant line from the Yukon and Alaska coastlines. There is considerable history behind this dispute.

In 1825, Russia and Great Britain signed a treaty covering the territory of Alaska that limited the expansion of Russia southward and defined the possessions of each state. The boundary to the Beaufort Sea was defined in article 3 of the treaty as — and I quote: “... the line of demarcation shall follow the summit of the mountains situated parallel to the coast, as far as the point of intersection of the 141st degree of west longitude (of the same meridian); and, finally, from the said point of intersection, the said meridian-line of the 141st degree, in its prolongation as far as the Frozen Ocean, shall form the limit between the Russian and British possessions on the continent of America to the north-west.”

In 1867, in the same year of Canadian federation, Russia seceded all of its North American possessions to the United States. In the treaty of secession, the eastern boundaries of Alaska were defined by simply quoting articles 2, 3 and 4 of the 1825 Russia-Great Britain treaty.

In the Beaufort Sea region, Canada, acting in its own right, made the first indication as to what the seaward boundaries should be in the Arctic region in 1897. In that year, the sector principle was introduced as an order-in-council, establishing Canada’s Arctic region as delineated by an area between the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian on the west and the 60<sup>th</sup> meridian on the east. Canada thus extended its jurisdiction and state sovereignty to cover all of the Arctic regions to the North Pole between the two longitudes.

Further use of the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian as the international boundary between Canada and Alaska occurred in 1898 with the creation of the Yukon Territory. The boundary of the Yukon Territory was described as — and I quote: “Beginning at the intersection of the 141st meridian of west longitude from Greenwich with a point on the Arctic Sea, which is approximate north latitude, 69° 39’, and named on the Admiralty charts ‘Demarcation Point;’ thence due south, on said meridian (which is also the boundary line between Canada and Alaska) for a distance...”

Although an acceptance of the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian as the international boundary for part of the Alaska-Canada border, the land boundary had been accepted by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a dispute did arise in 1903 that required an arbitrated decision as to what the Canada-Alaska boundary truly was.

On October 20, 1903, a decision was rendered by the Alaska Boundary Tribunal that was seen as accepting the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian as the western boundary. This tribunal was established by Great Britain-Canada and the United States through a convention to resolve the whole Alaska boundary issue.

Throughout the hearings, the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian was accepted by all as the westward limit of Alaska and the wording of the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1825. For example — and I quote: “as far as the frozen Ocean” gave rise to no dispute with respect to the northward extension of this line. The land boundary was subsequently surveyed and monumented in 1906 with the beginning point of the boundary, boundary monument No. 1, established on the coast of the Beaufort Sea.

Following Canada’s endorsement of the sector principle as the maritime boundary in the Beaufort Sea, there was no concerted effort to further define or negotiate a seaward extension to the boundary. The United States, for its part, has never agreed to the sector theory or other national claims to the Arctic basin. In 1929, the United States government asked its navy if it was advisable to convene a conference on dividing the Arctic into five national sectors. The answer was unequivocal: a division of this kind would in fact constitute claims for sovereignty over the high seas and a novel attempt to artificially create a closed area, thereby infringing on the rights of all nations to the free use of the area.

The emergence of Arctic Ocean issues and in particular, pollution problems in the 1960s, prompted Canada to enact the *Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act* in 1970. When oil was discovered in 1968 at Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, and in 1969, the Government of Canada began granting exploration permits in the Beaufort Sea — once again using the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian in defining the territory available for oil leases. By 1970, the Canadian government had issued offshore oil and gas exploration permits covering approximately 150 million acres in the Arctic. Some of these permits covered tracts more than 140 miles off the coast and in waters more than 2,600 metres deep. Canada was using the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian as the dividing line while extending its control and sovereignty and began hydrographic activity in 1969 off the Yukon coast that continued until the mid-1980s. The United States has adamantly refused to accept the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian as claimed by Canada and instead insists the equidistant line is the proper offshore boundary line.

The establishment of a line by the equidistant principles is fully accepted as an equitable solution by international law. Canada, for its part, has agreed to an equidistant line in a treaty with Denmark and has supported the equidistant line for two of the other three US boundaries; for example, the Dixon Entrance and the Juan de Fuca Strait. One aspect of international law, however, supports the sector theory and hence, the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian as a dividing line. It is known as the *Grisbadarna Principle*. This principle originated from a dispute between Norway and Sweden that was settled by the Permanent Court of Arbitration that decided the maritime boundary between the two countries over the *Grisbadarna* lobster bank.

The *Grisbadarna Principle* — and I quote: “... is a settled principle of the law of nations that a state of things which actually exists and has existed for a long time should be changed as little as possible; and this rule is especially applicable in a case of private interests which, if once neglected, cannot be effectively safeguarded by any manner of sacrifice on the part of the Government of which the interested parties are subjects”. The application of this principle in the Beaufort Sea would be based on the United States’ acquiescence to the historical claim of Canada’s use of the sector principle — Canada’s hydrographic work in the area and it’s granting of oil and gas leases for the area.

Using the equidistant formula and based on the shape of the two countries respective coastlines bulging northward on

the Alaska side and indented on the Canadian side would give the United States control over a triangle-shaped 21,500 square kilometre wedge of Yukon waters in the Beaufort that Canada claims for itself. But the joint Canada-US seabed surveys in 2009 and 2009 showed each country's claims could extend much further toward the North Pole than previously imagined, doubling or even tripling the ultimate size of the dispute zone once continental shelf submissions are made. Under the US equidistant formula for determining the Maritime boundary, the presence of Canada's Banks Island on the Beaufort's eastern side radically alters where the border between the two countries would be drawn in areas further out to sea.

A bizarre development in the long-standing Beaufort Sea border dispute came to light following a conference in Alaska in 2010 involving Canadian and US experts on Arctic politics and international law. What emerged from the meeting was the realization that a large swath of ocean north of Alaska in the central and northern Beaufort would come under Canadian jurisdiction using the controversial American formula for drawing the international boundary. In effect, the dispute over a Lake-Ontario-sized section of the Beaufort in what should be Yukon offshore waters could grow to include a northern overlap zone as big as Lake Superior, potentially quadrupling the area of contested waters. The issue came into focus because both Canada and the US are gathering geological data in a bid to gain undersea territorial extensions in the outer Beaufort, beyond each country's 370-kilometre economic zone under a UN treaty on continental shelves. Thus according to the US's equidistant formula position, Alaska's northward sloping coastline means the sea's southern Maritime boundary veers slightly eastward of the Yukon-Alaska land boundary, giving the US a greater amount of marine jurisdiction. However, the overlap in the northern expanse of the Beaufort would be much larger and reversed, with the boundary under the US formula swinging far to the west because of Banks Island, giving Canada a greater amount of Maritime jurisdiction.

Ironically, Canada's sector or longitude formula for determining the boundary would give the US more seabed territory in the outer Beaufort. This geographic anomaly flips each country's interests in the central and northern Beaufort and offers a potential win-win opportunity to resolve the boundary dispute, giving both Canada and the United States a greater share of potential resources than either country had previously imagined — including shipping lanes I might add.

To summarize, the US portion, when applied to the central and northern parts of the Beaufort Sea, would favour Canada, pushing the boundary between the two countries on a roughly 45-degree angle farther to the northwest and eventually to a point 80 degrees north, where it would intersect with the US-Russia maritime boundary. Similarly, Canada's position would favour Yukon in the southern Beaufort, but entitle the US to more undersea territory at northern latitudes.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is an opportunity to resolve this long-standing dispute — a dispute that pre-dates Canadian

confederation. There is an old adage: strike while the iron is hot.

On March 10, 2016, Prime Minister Trudeau and President Obama jointly pledged to protect the Arctic from overfishing and development. They were silent on the disputed territory in the Beaufort Sea, while on March 15, 2016, the US Bureau of Ocean Energy Management released its five-year oil and gas program for 2017 to 2022. The program includes three potential lease sales off the coast of Alaska between 2020 and 2022, including one that includes a section of what should be Yukon waters.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States to agree that the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian is an international offshore boundary in the Beaufort Sea that is a win-win for both countries, and I urge them to resolve this dispute prior to the next US federal election to be held in November 2016.

I commend this motion to all members of the House and look forward to further debate.

**Mr. Tredger:** It gives me pleasure to rise to speak to the motion brought forward by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, which is that the House urges the Government of Canada and the Government of United States of America to recognize 141<sup>st</sup> meridian as the offshore northern maritime boundary between Canada and the United States of America.

Given the obvious complexity and history of this issue and the attention being paid to it by both our federal government and the US federal government, I'm not sure what our debate and discussion can add to this issue, but I will proceed.

The 141<sup>st</sup> boundary dispute is over a section of the Beaufort Sea, just north of Yukon and Alaska. The Government of Canada asserts that the maritime boundary ought to follow the borderline between Alaska and the Yukon, based on the 1825 treaty Britain had signed with Russia. The 1825 treaty states that the border should extend as far as the frozen ocean, but does this mean that it ends where the ocean begins? Does it mean that it ends once it hits the Arctic sea ice? These are shifting targets. What does it mean when there may be no more ice? Again, it's difficult to know. The ambiguity in this line has led to the difference in claims.

The United States argues that the line should stop at the frozen ocean, while Canada believes it should carry on into the ocean. Because the United States believes that the line stops at the ocean, they claim an equidistant line should be set that accounts for the southerly slope of the Canadian shoreline. The equidistance principle is a well-established protocol for settling marine boundary disputes.

Into this mixture, seabed surveys of Beaufort Sea have revealed that there are significant oil and gas potential reserves underneath the seafloor, making the disputed area very valuable. Both nations have taken advantage of this by selling drilling and exploration rights to several major oil companies. One outstanding issue is that in 1984, the western Inuvialuit land claim settlement region is based on the Canadian position. Canada has been referencing this

agreement as evidence for their claim. This leads us to a wider issue that I would like to touch on when it comes to Arctic sovereignty: the history of using Canada's indigenous peoples as a tools for making sovereignty claims.

I will reflect a little on the experience of the Inuit and the use of their claims for Arctic sovereignty. The influence of the Inuit on Canada's Arctic sovereignty goes back to the earliest Arctic disputes. In 1930, Norwegian fishermen and hunters applied to Canada to exploit the areas around the Sverdrup Islands for commercial purposes. In response, Canada said it would willingly grant natural resource exploration rights; however, by order-in-council, Canada was required to deny the Norwegian request "... to protect the Arctic areas as hunting and trapping preserves for the sole use of the aboriginal population of the Northwest Territories, in order to avert the danger of want and starvation through the exploitation of the wild life by white hunters and traders." The Norwegian government acknowledged the obligations of the Canadian government and accepted the rejection of their application. This set out the precedent of using indigenous use and occupation to claim Arctic sovereignty.

As the debate surrounding the Arctic increased in the 1980s, Canada claimed that waterways were internal waters after drawing straight baselines around the archipelago. Once again, Canada's claim emphasized the Inuit by using their hundreds of years of Arctic inhabitation as an example of use and occupancy.

The most tragic contribution that the Inuit have made toward Canada's claim to Arctic sovereignty was the High Arctic relocation when 17 families were moved from northern Quebec to settlements in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay. These families were promised assistance and plentiful hunting grounds. However, there was no snow for them to make igloos. The area was unsuitable for their hunting techniques. The relocated Inuit suffered greatly but, in the winters following their relocation, they were able to adapt to the location, climate and food sources.

The High Arctic relocation is and has been a contentious issue between Canada and the Inuit. Though it was never described as such, the relocation was almost certainly done to assert Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic, as it coincided with a perceived threat from Denmark and the United States. The relocation, which bolstered Canada's sovereignty claim through Inuit use and occupation, has led some to call the peoples of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay as human flagpoles.

It is obvious that the history, use and occupation of Canada's indigenous peoples in the Arctic forms one of Canada's strongest claims for Arctic sovereignty, but for far too long this has been a fact only brought up during boundary disputes. The Inuit and the Inuvialuit are Canadians, but our governments have only recognized this fact when it benefits them.

The boundary dispute over the Beaufort Sea region is an example that highlights the generally peaceful nature of all Arctic territorial disputes. In fact, as far as respectful boundary disputes go, this is a model that all countries should aspire to. Former Prime Minister Harper enjoyed touring the

Arctic and pledging financial support for the Armed Forces to counter threats. His fear-based approach to engaging Canadians was not only morally wrong, but it was factually incorrect.

President Barack Obama commented — and I quote: "The Arctic region is peaceful, stable, and free of conflict." All of the parties in the Arctic have had good relations, and the perception of strained relations among Arctic nations over territorial claims was cultivated from a prime minister and a political party more concerned about domestic image than international boundary disputes. Canada and the United States have been working together to find a solution about the disputed area.

Recently, Canadian and American icebreakers have been working together to map the sea floor. Canada and the United States are in an excellent position to resolve this dispute. There is a precedent for working together in the Beaufort Sea. In fact, in 1977 both countries had agreed to share the cost of development and the profits associated with the development of hydrocarbons in the disputed area. Though this never occurred, it would have allowed them to develop the area without worrying about the boundary dispute.

This brings up a point of real concern. I hope that the Yukon Party's sudden interest in this dispute is not an underhanded way to pursue Yukon Party support for an outdated oil and gas industry. I will quote from the Premier: "Work with the Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories to resolve the outstanding offshore jurisdictional boundary issues between the NWT and Yukon including the right of the Government of Yukon to share the government revenues derived from oil and gas development in what should be recognized as the Yukon's portion of the Beaufort Sea."

Working out this boundary dispute to access the oil and gas in the Beaufort Sea is beyond naïve. There are simply no assurances that can be provided at this time to make sure that the drilling that occurs can be done safely. In fact, this was recently noted by our Premier — and I'll quote: "At this point there isn't an appetite for such drilling offshore and for the Americans to be putting leases in what we feel is Canadian jurisdiction, at a time when there's still so much uncertainty around the safety of offshore drilling, this is a real issue."

It sounds to me like the Premier means that it's safe for us to drill, but not for the United States. This provides another example of the Yukon Party talking about protecting the environment when it's convenient, but ignoring concerns otherwise. What we need is a government that will say what they mean and mean what they say.

We saw recently that Canada doesn't have the capacity to adequately respond to a spill in Vancouver's English Bay. Mitigating spills or wellhead leaks in the Arctic would be impossible with our current spill-response regime. Imagine a wellhead leak, like the Deepwater Horizon incident that occurred in the Gulf of Mexico that leaked before it was capped. Imagine that, instead of being in an accessible, forgiving location, it was in the Arctic, and then remember that Arctic ecosystems are far more fragile and that oil takes

longer to break down in cold water. Only after considering these facts does one start to understand the recklessness that developing oil and gas deposits in the area carries.

It is also important to understand that if we were to argue that this territory is ours, due to the deep ties to the land of Canada's indigenous peoples, it would be disingenuous to then pursue development that would put their way of life, their culture, and their traditional practices at risk. The Government of Canada and Yukon must work with the Arctic Council and indigenous peoples of the north to ensure that their rights and voices in the north remain strong and that the Arctic and their way of life remain viable.

Mr. Speaker, the world does not need more oil. The world is awash in oil and gas. Science tells us that we cannot burn what we have already discovered and developed. Across southern Canada, productive wells are being shut in and decommissioned. There are tens of thousands of unemployed, skilled oil and gas workers. Investing our time in fossil fuels when the rest of world is divesting is wrong-headed. The economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be based on green, renewable industry. The science is clear, the economics are clear, and the people of Yukon have been clear.

To invest time and money in oil and gas plays that will come online just as our agreements to create a low carbon economy are being realized is wrong-headed.

The Yukon Party's recognition of climate change and endorsement of the COP agreements in Paris at the same time as pursuing oil and gas development is an example of what George Orwell would call "double think" — that is the ability to hold two conflicting statements in one's mind at the same time.

We will support this motion but we will also insist that this government work with the Government of Canada and the indigenous governments and peoples to ensure the preservation and protection of the Arctic for all peoples now and in the future in a spirit of neighbours and cooperation.

**Speaker:** Sir, were you proposing a motion or an amendment?

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

**Speaker:** It was just the way it was phrased.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I am pleased to rise here today in support of this motion. I would like to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing it forward. Certainly one of the things leading up to raising this issue once again, although not for the first time on the national and international agenda, was the recent move by the United States to indicate an interest in issuing oil and gas leases offshore in the disputed area and, with those potential lease sales by the US Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and releasing their five-year program, it caused some concern and the desire for us to express what will hopefully be a unanimous statement to the Government of Canada and to the Government of the United States, and once again raising this issue on the international agenda.

In preparation for debate, I looked through a number of documents, including Yukon government legal opinions

dating back to the 1990s regarding interpretation of the agreements and the statutes dating all the way back to 1825. In the treaty that my colleague, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, referenced between Russia and Great Britain, which covered the territory of Alaska and limited the expansion of Russia southwards and identified the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian as the dividing line between Russia and British possessions — and, of course, the Russian possessions were then subsequently sold to the United States government and then became the State of Alaska.

This issue, from my perspective, is about several things including, first and foremost, sovereignty. It's about management of offshore waters and the environment and resources in those areas, including the ability of the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon to ensure that we are protecting our interests and the interests of the people of Canada and the people of the Yukon Territory.

As my colleague noted, the line began with the 1825 recognition in the treaty between Russia and Great Britain covering the territory of Alaska that defined the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian as the border.

In the Beaufort Sea region, Canada, acting in its own right, made the first indication as to what the seaward boundary should be in the Arctic region in 1897 — that for the reason of the fact that the original treaty made reference to the land interests and the border between Russia and Britain but was not as specific about the ocean boundaries, other than its references to the frozen ocean and the boundary between Russian and British possessions on a continent of America to the northwest.

In 1897, the year before the Yukon was created as a territory, the sector principle — that being the argument that the dividing line between Canada's and the United States' interests offshore follow the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian, just as the onshore land boundary does between Canada and the United States — Canada introduced that sector principle in an order-in-council establishing Canada's authority over the Arctic in 1897 and delineated that area as an area between the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian on the west and the 60<sup>th</sup> meridian on the east. Canada thus extended its jurisdiction and sovereignty to cover all of the Arctic region to the North Pole between those two longitudes.

I should also note that, as many members will be aware, at the time of the Klondike Gold Rush — of course, at the beginning of it, the Yukon did not exist as a territory on its own. It was created following the significant increase in population due to the Klondike Gold Rush. At one point in the early stages of the gold rush, the boundary line had not been firmly established and accepted by the United States government, and it was, in part, through the work of the North-West Mounted Police and the famous Sam Steele that the boundary was established through asserting our sovereignty through the installation of customs posts at the White Pass and the Chilkoot passes.

Although an acceptance of the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian as the international boundary for part of the Alaska-Canada border, the land boundary had been accepted by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>

century. As my colleague referenced, a dispute did arise in 1903 that resulted in an arbitrated decision. A panel jointly established by Great Britain, Canada and United States — and on October 20, 1903, the decision rendered by the Alaska boundary tribunal accepted the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian as the western boundary.

I would again just very briefly reference the comments made by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin rightly noting that the principle in international law known as the Grisbadarna Principle does establish that, after a certain amount of time, the claim of a country to an area is strengthened simply by using it and that historical claim and usage of the area.

Therefore, I would note that this issue has been discussed by Canada and the United States previously. It has not been fully resolved. It is something that we believe does need to be resolved and should be resolved — recognizing the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian as the boundary between Canada and the United States in our offshore waters — and in fact, in doing so, as I noted, that has, from my perspective, the benefits to Canada and to the Yukon of clearly establishing our sovereignty in the area for all purposes, including economic sovereignty, usage, environmental protection and resource management. It establishes our legal ability to make regulations and to legislate — and I'm referring to “we” as both the Government of Canada and the Yukon government — in the offshore area if we have clearly established that boundary.

In the event of the likely increase in activity in the Arctic Ocean as the result of global warming and increased interest by a number of countries — including but not limited to Russia — in using the area, the importance of establishing our sovereignty and continuing to assert it within that area is something that, in my opinion, should be important to Canadians whatever their political stripe is or whatever their philosophy is — whether you are interested in using it for resource development and oil and gas revenues, or interested more in protecting the environment and managing shipping. For all of those reasons, it is important that the Government of Canada and the Yukon government have our authority to make decisions in that area clearly recognized.

I won't spend a lot of time talking about the issues between Yukon and the Northwest Territories, but I would just make a few comments in reference to those who have argued, as some have, that the Yukon, when it was created, was only carved out as the land portion of that area and that all of the offshore waters are the Northwest Territories', not Yukon's. In fact, there are a number of things — including the legal opinions that the Yukon government consistently has had throughout the years under governments of every political stripe going back to the 1990s interpreting the treaties in this area as well as Supreme Court of Canada reference cases. The further recognition of the Government of Canada and confirmation of who owns what includes a letter from then-Prime Minister Mulroney to then-Premier of the Yukon, Tony Penikett, in 1990 that referenced the offshore area. It includes the 1993 accord on oil and gas revenue sharing and resource management — the official title is *The Canada Yukon Oil and Gas Accord*, the accord between the

Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon on oil and gas revenue sharing and management. It was further strengthened and confirmed by the memorandum of understanding between Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Yukon Energy, Mines and Resources signed by Deputy Minister Angus Robertson in 2008 during which time I was actually minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources.

The point that I am making is for clarifying this and particularly for the Official Opposition. The member who spoke seemed to be questioning the timing of this and the intent behind this. I would argue that, just as with Yukon's constitutional development and devolution within our land area, there has been a consistent trend in Yukon since the establishment of responsible government that, regardless of political party, governments of all stripes have consistently supported increased control for Yukon citizens within our own territory and supported the strengthening of our powers under the Constitution and the recognition of the rights of the Yukon government and the Yukon people to make decisions within our boundaries.

I will again just briefly quote from a few excerpts — and again, when I refer to the recognition by the Government of Canada that the jurisdiction for the offshore waters was not in fact, as some have asserted, transferred to the NWT and solely to the NWT. The letter from March 28, 1990, addressed to then-Premier Penikett, signed by Prime Minister Mulroney notes — and I quote: “In your letter of October 27, 1989, you raised the issue of the Yukon-Northwest Territories boundary.

“The Northern Accord agreements-in-principle reflect this government's commitment to the political evolution of the North within the Canadian federation and its recognition of the interest of Yukon and the Northwest Territories in participating in the management and development of offshore oil and gas. The Government, you may rest assured, is committed to ensuring that both territories will share equitably in the benefits arising from such development.

“Although the Northern Accord agreements-in-principle recognize the common interest of both territories in the Beaufort Sea and in the development of Beaufort oil and gas, jurisdiction in the offshore will be retained by the federal government.”

I will move on to another part of a letter that makes reference to a bill then before the Parliament of Canada, Bill C-39, the *Canadian Laws Offshore Application Act*, and the Prime Minister then confirms in the letter that the bill is neutral with respect to territorial boundaries, but the bill has been drafted in a way to allow the Government in Council, which is the federal Cabinet, if it is enacted, to apply Yukon laws throughout an offshore area adjacent to its coast.

Again, what I am attempting to clarify for members and for the public record in this area is that our view is that the letter from the Prime Minister to the Premier of the day makes it clear that offshore waters had not been transferred to either territory, but it provides the indication that Yukon and the Northwest Territories could, in future, enact laws to apply adjacent to the coast, and then it further indicates the



opportunity and the interest of both territories in federal waters beyond the immediate offshore area.

Again, a few other references I would just make with regard to the issue of Yukon's waters offshore is that, if members refer to the current legislation that sets out the boundaries of the Northwest Territories — that being the *Northwest Territories Act*, which, like the *Yukon Act*, is the federal legislation that effectively establishes the constitution and the legislative authority for the territories. The current *Northwest Territories Act* defines Northwest Territories as follows: “*Northwest Territories*’ means that part of Canada that is north of the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel of north latitude, west of the boundary described in Schedule I to the *Nunavut Act* and not within Yukon.”

Also among the definitions includes that “*onshore*’ means that part of Canada that is north of the 60th parallel of north latitude, west of the boundary described in Schedule I to the *Nunavut Act* and not within Yukon that consists of the following lands: “(a) lands, including lands under water, that lie landward of the low-waterline...” — some of this gets fairly lengthy.

Members can read it at their own discretion, but I will simply note that section A of the definition of onshore makes it clear that it applies to land and land underwater that is on the landward side of the low-water line, or the low-tide line. It makes reference also to the power over — land that is referenced in the NWT act includes land underwater within small, enclosed bays on the seacoast or by naturally occurring permanent islands. It also covers land, including land underwater that is on the land side of the low-water line. It clarifies, in referring to its definition of land — it again refers to land onshore.

I would note that, in the definition of “waters” — in the *Northwest Territories Act*, it defines it as “any inland waters — whether in a liquid or frozen state — that are on or below the surface of lands that are situated on the onshore.”

In referencing powers transferred to the NWT government, again in referring to the definition of the power to make regulation over water, there also is no indication that they have transferred all authority to water offshore. So again it is our view that the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian has long been established, though not recognized by the United States, as the boundary between first Russia and Great Britain, and then established by Canada through order-in-council over a hundred years ago in 1897. That remained uncontested for some time by the United States government.

In the case of the offshore, it is also our view that a number of things, including the letter from the then-Prime Minister to the then-Premier of the Yukon in 1990, as well as the 1993 accord on oil and gas revenue sharing and resource management and the 2008 MOU that was signed regarding the interim provisions of the Canada-Yukon oil and gas report in relation to the offshore — all of those documents, in our view, reinforce the Yukon's contention that, in fact, we clearly do have offshore waters and offshore interests. I think that covers the issue between the Yukon and the NWT border.

I understand my time is short and I would hope that this will reach a vote today and hope that all members will join us in voting for this and sending a unanimous indication to the federal government of the importance to both federal governments of Canada and the United States of resolving that long-standing border dispute for the purpose of ensuring that the Government of Canada, as well as the Government of Yukon, and the people of both Yukon and Canada, have the ability to effectively manage that offshore area for reasons including sovereignty, environmental protection and the revenue from resources.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will wrap up my comments and commend this motion to the House.

**Mr. Silver:** I'll be brief, Mr. Speaker. Essentially this is a matter for the Government of Canada to address, as a few different people have said today, including the Member for Lake Laberge.

There are legitimately unresolved issues because of the uncertainty surrounding our border with Alaska, with of course the main issue being offshore drilling.

Mr. Speaker, it was a campaign commitment of the Yukon Party in both 2006 and in 2011 to address this issue with the former Conservative government of Ottawa. The fact is that no progress has been made. It seems like an odd commitment for a territorial party to make but, nonetheless, the Yukon Party did make it — not once, but twice. I guess in that aspect, after 14 years in office, the commitment remains unfulfilled.

As noted, resolving this issue is absolutely important and is absolutely necessary, so I will be supporting the motion.

**Ms. Hanson:** I will be almost equally as brief as the Member for Klondike.

When this motion came forward, I was reminded of the Madison lecture about five or six years ago when Michael Byers was invited to speak. As people recall, he's an author of *Who Owns the Arctic?: Understanding Sovereignty Disputes in the North*, and he's also a Canada research chair in global politics and international law. He's very, very well regarded.

Mr. Byers has made the case numerous times over the years in many academic papers, as well as the *Globe and Mail* and other places, that the relationship between Canada and the US, when it comes to the Arctic — and actually among all of the Arctic nations — has been remarkable, in the sense that the notion of cooperation in the Arctic — because as much as the US would like to suggest, and we've seen, of course, that the US has already leased a number of seabed oil and gas interests in the Beaufort area, because they view and see the hydrocarbon potential there, but they have no presence.

The US, as the greatest naval power in the world, has very limited capabilities in the Arctic, so they do have to work with the Russians, with Canada and with other Arctic states.

We, of course, do support the motion brought forward by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin — and I thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for also setting some of the context for this

issue — but the reality is there has been no settlement to date because the US has signed, but not ratified, the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*.

If and when that treaty is ratified, it is understood that the issue would likely be settled at a tribunal, so this is not a matter — it's highly contentious — but it is, given the politics of the United States, that's what we're seeing. We have a senate that is staunchly opposed, as they are to almost anything that comes forward from the current president — and my goodness, one can't even guess what will come out of the slate that's currently before the media.

Despite that, the UNCLOS is still seen as a crucial instrument — I guess you would say — of international Maritime law, although Canada, among others — you know, this has been on the table for a very, very long time.

We will support this, but I would caution against holding your breath that there is going to be imminent change; that the US is going to be able to suddenly say: “Bob's your uncle. We agree.” They have internal politics that will mitigate against that.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I too would like to rise to speak in support of this motion. I would like to thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this motion forward to ensure that the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian is recognized as the offshore northern boundary between Yukon and the State of Alaska. It is an issue that appears, as we have heard, in the Yukon Party's 2011 election platform, “Moving Forward Together”, and, in fact, it has been part of our platform for awhile.

I would like to just say that this is an issue that, as Premier, I have raised at the federal level. I have spoken with the former Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, about this a number of times and I have formally written to both former Prime Minister Stephen Harper and to Prime Minister Trudeau on this issue. I have actually raised it with the former Canadian Ambassador to the United States as well.

As already noted, it is an issue that predates the Canadian Confederation of 1867 and it predates the creation of the Yukon Territory in 1898. Canada's claim that the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian should be recognized as an offshore northern boundary in the Beaufort Sea between the United States and Canada stems from the 1825 treaty between Russia and Great Britain. Article 3 of that treaty states in part — and I quote: “... the said Meridian Line of the 141st Degree, in its prolongation as far as the Frozen Ocean, shall form the limit between the Russian and British Possessions on the Continent of America to the North West.” In 1867, the same year as Canadian Confederation, Russia ceded all of its North American possessions to the United States.

In the *Treaty of Cession*, the eastern boundary of Alaska was defined by quoting from the 1825 treaty between Russia and Great Britain. In 1898, prior to the creation of the Yukon Territory, Canada, acting on its own, made its first indication as to what the seaward boundary in the Arctic should be. In that year, the sector principle was introduced as an order-in-council establishing Canada's Arctic region as delineated by an area between the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian on the west and the 60<sup>th</sup>

meridian in the east. In this, Canada extended its jurisdiction and state sovereignty to cover all of the Yukon region to the North Pole between those two longitudes.

The creation of the Yukon Territory in 1898 was a further recognition of the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian as the international boundary between Canada and Alaska. While the land boundary had been accepted by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a dispute did arise in 1903 that required an arbitration decision as to what the Canada-Alaska land boundary truly was. Throughout the hearings, the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian was accepted by all as the westward limit of Alaska, and the wording of the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1825 as far as the “Frozen Ocean” was not disputed as the northward extension of the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian.

Boundary Monument No. 1 was established in 1906 on the coast of the Beaufort Sea. The United States has adamantly refused to accept the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian, as claimed by Canada, and instead insists the equidistant line is the proper offshore boundary line.

Canada, for its part, supports the sector principle making the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian the international offshore boundary, based on historic treaties. It must be acknowledged that the establishment of a line by the equidistant principle is fully accepted as an equitable solution by international law, and that two of three other offshore boundary disputes between Canada and the United States have been resolved by using the equidistant principle.

The emergence of Arctic Ocean issues — in particular pollution problems — in the 1960s promoted Canada to enact the *Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act* in 1970. Oil was discovered in 1968 in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, and in 1969, Canada began granting exploration permits in the Beaufort Sea, using the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian in defining the territory available for leases. The dispute continues to this day. The US uses the equidistant formula, while Canada maintains the sector principle.

In 2010, however, the development occurred that could lead to a resolution of the long-standing issue by making the US more likely to accept Canada's 141<sup>st</sup> meridian sector principle. It was discovered that, by using the US' equidistant principle, a large area of the ocean north of Alaska, in central and northern Beaufort, would come under Canadian jurisdiction. While Canada would lose a section of the Beaufort in what should be Yukon waters, it would gain much more area on what Canada would recognize as American waters. Ironically, by accepting Canada's sector principle, the US gains more seabed territory in the outer Beaufort.

After all these years, a resolution may be possible, as using Canada's sector principles is a win-win for both countries. I urge the Prime Minister to use his good relationship with the President to meet and resolve this matter as soon as possible.

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

**Mr. Elias:** I thank all the members who spoke to this motion here today. This 141<sup>st</sup> meridian is a long outstanding

issue. It is within my riding and I think it's going to bode well for the Arctic offshore, should the United States government and our federal government come to an agreement that the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian be the boundary between our two countries — between our two sovereign nations. As the Arctic changes over the years, it's my hope that future generations and those yet unborn don't have to deal with this issue.

**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:** Agree.

**Ms. Stick:** Agree.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Mr. Tredger:** Agree.

**Mr. Barr:** Agree.

**Mr. Silver:** Agree.

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

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

*Motion No. 1134 agreed to*

**Mr. Elias:** I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

*Motion agreed to*

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

*The House adjourned at 5:19 p.m.*