



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 257

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, April 20, 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
Hon. Darrell Pasloski	Mountainview	Premier Minister responsible for Finance; Executive Council Office
Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Tourism and Culture; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Justice; Yukon Development Corporation/ Yukon Energy Corporation
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Education
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Highways and Public Works
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Community Services; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Environment
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation

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Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Government House Leader Vuntut Gwitchin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
Patti McLeod	Watson Lake

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New Democratic Party

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

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 20, 2016 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of a matter regarding the Order Paper. Motion No. 1144, notice of which was given yesterday by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, was not placed on today's Notice Paper as the motion is not in order.

Annotation 565 on page 174 of the sixth edition of *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms* says, in part: "A motion should be neither argumentative, nor in the style of a speech, nor contain unnecessary provisions or objectionable words."

The motion begins with the assertion that the Official Opposition has chosen not to work collaboratively with regard to the amendments to the *Elections Act*. The motion supports the assertion by listing instances where proposed amendments to the *Elections Act* could have been raised. The chair takes no position with regard to the validity of the issue raised in the motion; however, it is the Chair's view that the motion, taken as a whole, is written in a style of a speech.

The Chair also notes that the motion urges the Leader of the Official Opposition to explain the conduct of her party with regard to the proposed amendments to the *Elections Act*. The Chair would remind all members that each member of the Assembly has the right to propose amendments to legislation. Members should consider whether this, rather than the substance of the bill, is proper matter for a stand-alone debate. If the method that a member used to develop a bill is truly of concern to a member, the member can raise the issue should the bill be brought forward for second reading.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Biodiversity Awareness Month

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I rise today to pay tribute to Biodiversity Awareness Month. Biodiversity is the variety of life found on Earth.

Here in the Yukon, we are surrounded by a diverse array of plants, habitat and wildlife. The Yukon government observes Biodiversity Awareness Month every April as a way to celebrate the plants, fish, birds and animals that call Yukon home. The north is a biologically diverse place and Biodiversity Awareness Month is meant to recognize and protect each of these organisms that keep our ecosystem healthy.

Our government has an important role to play in educating residents and visitors on the richness of biodiversity in the Yukon through experts in Environment Yukon's Fish and Wildlife branch, our conservation and park officers and programs such as the Conservation Action Team, summer camp and the Yukon Youth Conservation Corps and, of course, we are helping to foster an appreciation for biodiversity in Yukon.

The Yukon government is celebrating Biodiversity Awareness Month in 2016 by hosting the annual Celebration of Swans, recognizing Earth Day, along with offering a suite of outreach activities coordinated by Environment Yukon. A listing of nearly 20 events can be found in the annual springtime guide on the Department of Environment's website. These offerings aim to celebrate biodiversity in the Yukon, but our efforts extend beyond these areas. Each year, the Yukon government works together with our partners to protect and promote biodiversity in the territory, and we certainly are rich in biodiversity. Within the territory, we boast 38 fish species, 66 mammal species, 227 bird species, over 1,600 types of plants and well over 6,000 insect species. I would like to recognize the many people and organizations involved in making these events possible.

They are far too many to list, but I would like to give a few examples to show the diversity in our partners: the Kluane First Nation, the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, the City of Whitehorse, the Town of Faro, the Whitehorse United Church, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Environment Canada, Girl Guides of Canada, the Marsh Lake Community Society, the Society of Yukon Bird Observatories, the Yukon Bird Club, Yukon College and Yukon Energy. I would also like to mention that the Yukon Wildlife Preserve is a unique institution that encourages Yukoners to appreciate the territory's biodiversity with woodland caribou, Canadian lynx, Rocky Mountain elk, mountain goats, Alaska/Yukon moose, mule deer, muskox and wood bison, two varieties of thinhorn sheep, several bird species, red foxes and Arctic foxes, cared for in the habitats suited to each species.

Of course we know the Wildlife Preserve showcases some of the best and most unique mammal species that call the Yukon home, and I definitely applaud the staff at the Wildlife Preserve for the spirit of the work that they do and their contribution to fostering a sense of appreciation for biodiversity in the Yukon. If members haven't had the opportunity to see the Wildlife Preserve and tour it, I would definitely recommend it.

Mr. Speaker, Yukoners increasingly recognize the importance of maintaining and protecting biodiversity both in the Yukon and around the world, and this means ensuring that habitat remains healthy for the widest variety of species. We are fortunate to host thousands of plant and animal species in the Yukon, and some of these are found nowhere else in the world. I would like to encourage everyone in this House to take a moment to reflect on the living organisms and take the time to enjoy some of the biodiversity in the Yukon this coming summer. I know I will.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to celebrate the wonder of biodiversity.

Everything on the planet is interconnected. We are part of a much bigger picture than just ourselves. We are all part of the human family. Biodiversity encompasses all things and is the relationship between all things: ecosystems, genetic and cultural diversity, and the connections between all species on Earth. Our decisions and our actions here cause a ripple effect that is felt on the other side of the planet. What affects one thing will ultimately affect another.

I have said it before and I will say it again: our planet is facing a biodiversity crisis. Right here at home and around the world, it is clear that our biodiversity is under threat, from competing land uses, from pollution, from population growth and human activities. The potential losses are staggering — 32 percent of all amphibians, 12 percent of all birds and 23 percent of all mammals are facing extinction. That works out to 16,000 individual species. It doesn't have to be this way. As legislators, we could be a positive piece in the world biodiversity puzzle by creating our own stand-alone species at risk legislation that would help protect the valuable biodiversity within our borders for the good of the planet, but we all know that this leadership has not happened yet.

I would like to think that, when it is all said and done, we would have done everything in our power to protect the planet we share with others — that those generations that are yet to come still have the chance to experience the wonders of the world in person by touch and by smell instead of looking at images in a book and lamenting what was lost.

Mr. Speaker, I will end with a poem written by my friend Lawrence Alvarez to his goddaughter just after her birth:

Dear small human,

Your cells are like evolutionary singing bells, they write a song of right in a world that's been made wrong. It was never a fight, but a negotiation of our own heights. We took our gifts from the ground, spun them around and found we'd made waste.

In our haste to level up, to fill from an emptying cup, we drove faster.

In our speed to fulfill our need, we lost those who came last.

In our drive to create a beautiful human hive, free from loss and pride, we sold our souls for our goal.

When you've learned to form words will you ask, "why, if we reached so high did we instead focus on what was mine, forgetting our humanity in moments we'd regret?" Maybe you'll know we tried.

But I would instead like you to know that in my lifetime we sowed seeds to feed our worldwide family. We realized our fate is shared, that nothing mattered until we cared, and that we weren't scared to hold hands, play in one giant band, and speak with one collective voice the only right choice.

Mr. Silver: I would like to rise on behalf of the Liberal caucus to also pay tribute to Biodiversity Awareness Month.

April is a month of great change in the Yukon. The snow melts — or in this year's case a bit earlier — buds begin to open and animals come out of hibernation. It is a grand display of our territory's biodiversity. Biodiversity defines many stages of biological interaction within species, between species and between ecosystems. It is an ever-changing balance with time and is greatly affected by human activity. As individuals, we all have a part to play in ensuring that our actions do not have a negative effect on the flora and fauna, but instead promote healthy human interaction with them.

Occurring this month is the Celebration of Swans on Marsh Lake where Yukoners can peacefully view the monumental migration of swans northward for the summer months. This April, the birds are closer to the beach than in previous years due to the early melting and the viewing is particularly spectacular.

The interpretive centre at Swan Haven is a museum of information on the swans' migration and houses many family-friendly activities for visitors to enjoy. Migrations of birds and other animals within and from outside the Yukon is only one example of our biodiversity. The Yukon Invasive Species Council is a group of Yukoners working toward the management of invasive species in the Yukon. Their recent forum brought up many Yukon issues, noting that an increase in public education and government involvement are key to combatting invasive species that threaten our ecosystem.

The Department of Environment has put time and effort into educating the public about biodiversity, including putting together a booklet for middle-school-aged children, which is a much-needed, education-based resource.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all persons who engage and educate the public about biodiversity in the Yukon and what we can do to protect our ecosystem.

In recognition of National Oral Health Month

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise in the House today on behalf of all members to pay tribute to National Oral Health Month. Each April, the Canadian Dental Association celebrates dental health month to highlight the importance of good oral health and its role in maintaining overall health and well-being. Your oral health can offer clues about your overall health, and problems in your mouth can affect the rest of your body. Oral diseases are linked to health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and stroke, certain kinds of pneumonia, and even premature and low birth weight in babies. Dental problems can also be a sign of oral cancer, a disease that approximately 3,200 Canadians are diagnosed with annually.

While you would likely visit a doctor for an irritation or a pain elsewhere in your body, people often delay visiting their dentist if they have bleeding or tender gums. We have to shift our thinking and take our oral health as seriously as we take the health of other parts of our body. Brushing and flossing, following a healthy diet and visiting a dentist regularly are all part of ongoing oral health care for healthy teeth and gums.

Yukon Health and Social Services helps to ensure Yukon children have a good start on having a healthy mouth. Since 1969, the Yukon children's dental program has provided

diagnostic, preventive and restorative dental services to Yukon children at no cost to the family. This unique program ensures that preschool and school-aged children receive necessary oral care. While the dental program has evolved over the years, it has remained focused on ensuring good dental health for Yukon children and youth.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Yukoners to brush up on their oral health and schedule regular dental checkups for themselves and their children and, if they have any undiagnosed oral pain, to visit a dentist to have it diagnosed. Oral Health Month is a reminder that we should give oral health the importance it deserves.

In recognition of Yukon Young Authors' Conference and Yukon Writers' Festival

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to the 36th annual Yukon Young Authors' Conference and the talented young writers of Yukon.

Live Words, the Yukon Writers' Festival 2016, is an annual literary festival produced by the Yukon Public Libraries branch, Public Schools, and the Yukon Science Institute. A number of mini-festivals under the broad umbrella of the Yukon Writers' Festival occur each year. This year, Reading and Reception, Reading and Talk, Reading, Storied Science and the Young Authors' Conference are all part of the writers' festival.

Each year, the Young Authors' Conference brings dozens of aspiring grades 8 to 12 Yukon students together at the F.H. Collins school library, and this year, 2016, will be the first year that the new F.H. Collins school is hosting this conference.

This year students will work together with professional writers: Dr. Sandy Marie Bonny, Bob Hayes, Heather O'Neill and Noah Richler. Each visiting writer will perform a reading at the school, both tomorrow and on Friday — April 21 and 22. These readings are open to the public, Mr. Speaker, for anyone who wishes to attend.

I would also like to take the opportunity to recognize the people who have worked together year after year since 1980 to put this excellent program together. Terry Burns, Irma Bourassa, Marg Healy, Marion Noone, Val Ross, Marg Wicken, Scott Henderson, Joyce Sward and Clare McDowell have demonstrated remarkable commitment to the art of writing and to the students of Yukon.

The Young Authors' Conference is, as I said before, part of the Yukon Writers' Festival and it has been happening all week. I encourage all Yukoners, especially those in Whitehorse, to take in the various festival events that are happening throughout the territory this week. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity of congratulating F.H. Collins Secondary School for hosting the event this year.

Most importantly though, I want to recognize the young writers and educators who inspire themselves to chase their dreams. Writing helps young people to express themselves, to engage their imaginations and to develop critical thinking and communication skills. The Young Authors' Conference

nurtures the young talent of Yukon, inspiring the authors of tomorrow.

I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing these writers an excellent conference tomorrow and on Friday. I encourage everyone to learn more about the Young Authors' Conference, as well as the Yukon Writers' Festival, which has been going on all this week, with events lined up until April 24.

Congratulations to all of the folks involved with this program.

Mr. Tredger: It gives me great pleasure to rise in the Legislature to pay tribute to the Young Authors' Conference and the Yukon Writers' Festival. I speak on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition and the Third Party and pay tribute to the festivals.

The Yukon Young Authors' Conference, held annually, gives aspiring student writers the opportunity to work with professionally published authors and the opportunity to share writing and ideas with each other. Each year, published writers from across Canada visit the territory for a two-day conference. The purpose of the conference is to encourage students who have interest and potential in writing to pursue their interest and develop their potential, to make students more aware of Canadian writers and the vast array of their stories, to introduce students to successful Canadian writers, and to introduce young Yukon writers to each other.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Young Authors' Conference is much more than that. I can tell you that it has had a significant influence on many, many young people. This is truly an idea that has grown.

The first Young Authors' Conference was held in 1980. It was the brainchild of Mr. Terry Burns, who was then the librarian at F.H. Collins Senior Secondary School. He created the Young Authors' Conference to be the local cornerstone of a Canada-wide National Writers' Festival.

The first conference had 33 students from five schools working with three visiting authors. Terry Burns was the overall conference organizer for the next 10 years. The conference was then taken over by Joyce Sward, who was the main organizer for the next 20 years. Now, even in retirement, she works with Clare McDowell.

Mr. Speaker, the conference has become nationally known and respected. The following story speaks of connections and familiarity. A young aspiring student from one of our communities had participated in several Young Authors' Conferences and was attending UBC. Having enjoyed the Yukon Young Authors' Conference and maintaining an interest in literature, he attended the annual Vancouver Writers Fest on Robson Street on Granville Island.

The next time he returned home and saw his teacher, he remarked on how much he had enjoyed the fest, how he recognized and remembered the names of the authors who were presenting. He also mentioned how much he appreciated the intimacy of the Yukon conference, the small workshops, the time each participant had to spend and the relationships built. He noted the exceptional opportunity to meet and learn from practising writers in the Yukon.

For me, past names like Ivan Coyote, Patti Flather, Donna Morrissey stand out, a credit to the organizers for building on Yukon strengths, including authors with Yukon connections and bringing authors from across the country.

This year's authors are Heather O'Neill, Sandy Marie Bonny, Noah Richler, Dianne Whelan and Bob Hayes. Most impressively about the Yukon Young Authors' Conference, one of the things that affected me most was the way the conference went out of its way to ensure students from communities had the opportunity. More than the opportunity, they were encouraged to attend. Shy, reluctant students from communities were invited in and made to feel a part. As principal, I saw first-hand the effect this conference had not only on the students attending, but their classmates.

I taught in Pelly Crossing. It was a wonderful, supportive community, but it was small and it was isolated. It was through programs like the Young Authors' Conference that community students were able to expand their horizons. Last year in my tribute, I spoke of the positive and lasting effect the conference had on a student from Pelly Crossing.

Mr. Speaker, I was introduced and encouraged to have students from Eliza Van Bibber participate by Terry Burns and a teacher from Mayo, Linda MacGregor. Linda taught English and Language Arts at J.V. Clark. Linda's students were initially reluctant to participate. Why would they want to go to a writers' conference? One could only imagine their comments, but Linda persisted, and several students attended in 1990. They had a positive experience and discovered a new concept: writing and reading can be rewarding and fun.

The next year, there was a lineup to attend the conference. Mrs. MacGregor was able to incorporate writing, rigor and submissions into the application process. Students were hooked and recognized the seriousness and work good writing entailed. For the next 20 years until her retirement from teaching, Mrs. MacGregor took students from J.V. Clark to the Young Authors' Conference.

It is thanks to the inspiration of organizers like Terry Burns and Joyce Sward and teachers like Linda MacGregor that many rural schools over the years had writing units built around the Young Authors' Conference. Students learned the strength of their stories. It gave them a voice and, for some, a broader audience. They gained a sense of themselves as being important — and the power of language. Sometimes we don't realize the effects of our ideas and how they can build our society into a better place.

I would like to say thank you to all the teachers, all the student participants and all the volunteers who have made the Young Authors' Conference a success in so many ways — and a special thank you for including the communities and students from the communities. I encourage everyone to attend many of the events happening around our territory, in Whitehorse and in the communities, over the next week.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Kent: I have for tabling the Yukon Resource Gateway Project application for national infrastructure component funding, dated January 2016, and appended to that is a summary document of that application.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I have for tabling today a complete list of projects submitted for approval by the Yukon government to the Government of Canada for the New Building Canada fund. More specifically, this includes projects under the national/regional projects fund and the small communities fund.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions to be presented?

PETITIONS

Petition No. 24

Ms. Hanson: I have for presentation a petition. The petition reads as follows:

This petition of the undersigned shows:

THAT in a number of formal agreements since 1997 between the Government of Yukon and the Kaska (including the Kaska represented by Ross River Dena Council), the Yukon government has repeatedly acknowledged that the Kaska have aboriginal title, and other rights, in and to the Kaska Traditional Territory in the Yukon;

THAT the Kaska Traditional Territory in the Yukon — to which the Yukon government has acknowledged that the Kaska have aboriginal title — includes a tract of land known as the Ross River Area that is of particular importance to the Ross River Dena Council;

THAT the Supreme Court of Canada has confirmed that aboriginal title includes the right to the exclusive use and occupancy of land subject to that title;

THAT, despite the fact that the Yukon government has acknowledged that the Kaska have aboriginal title in and to the Ross River Area, the Yukon government has issued and is continuing to issue hunting licences and seals (more commonly referred to as "tags") to sport hunters which, among other things, allows those sport hunters to hunt big game in the Ross River Area;

THAT the Ross River Dena Council has demanded in writing that the Ross River Area be immediately be designated as a "permit-only area" for purposes of sport hunting in order to respect — and to provide the basis for accommodation of — the aboriginal title of the Ross River Dena Council (and other Kaska) in and to that area, but the Yukon government has refused to respond to, much less comply with, this request.

THEREFORE, the undersigned ask the Yukon Legislative Assembly to request that the Executive Council immediately designate the Ross River Area as a permit-only area for purposes of sport hunting in order to respect — and to provide the basis for accommodation of — the aboriginal title of the Ross River Dena Council (and other Kaska) in and to that area.

There are five signatories to this petition.

Speaker: Are there any further petitions for presentation?

Petition No. 25

Mr. Tredger: I have for presentation a petition regarding the Hot Springs Road local area plan and the implication of lot development on that plan.

THAT the undersigned ask the Yukon Legislative Assembly to request that the Member for Lake Laberge make the necessary inquiries and thereafter report to the Yukon Legislative Assembly in respect to the following issues:

(1) whether the terms of Schedule “B” of the *Amended Development Agreement* dated February 17, 2015, which provide for the transfer of residential development potential to Lot 1533, Lot 1536 and Lot 1095 which exceeds the maximum of two residences per lot permitted under the CMT designation were subjected to community consultation and rezoning in accordance with the terms of Policy 5.17 of the *Hot Springs Road Local Area Plan*; and,

(2) if the aforementioned terms of Schedule “B” of the *Amended Development Agreement* regarding the transfer of residential development potential to Lots 1533, 1536 and 1095 were in fact subjected to community consultation and rezoning, then specifically when, how and by what means did such community consultation and rezoning occur?

That is signed by about 12 people.

Speaker: Are there any further petitions for presentation?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2016-17 budget to invest \$1.2 million in continuing the successful domestic water well program, which has supported over 300 home water well projects since its inception.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2016-17 budget to invest \$593,000 to support the continuation of the licensed practical nursing program at Yukon College.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon of immediately accept and take steps to implement the recommendations identified as “highest priority” as described in the WildWise Yukon’s *Whitehorse Bear Hazard Assessment*.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Renewable energy strategy

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that ordinary Yukoners are facing tough economic times with three years of recession and counting and a government that is placing our hope of recovery in the boom and bust cycle of the global commodity market. This government has defined no clear path to real, long-term prosperity for all Yukoners.

Mining will always play a role in Yukon’s economy; however, anybody with a stock portfolio knows that you should never put all your eggs in one basket. The land of the midnight sun has serious potential as a green energy powerhouse. The technology to develop a green energy sector is becoming more affordable every year, and there is a growing local capacity for technology, like small-scale solar power projects.

Does the Premier agree that the green energy tech sector has massive potential to bolster Yukon’s fiscal stability?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, our government is certainly very proud of the work that we have done on the energy portfolio, especially the renewable energy portfolio. Of course the work of the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation on next generation hydro is a longer term vision, but in the short term and medium term we have the microgeneration program that provides funding and incentives for homeowners to sell excess renewable energy back into the grid. The IPP policy was released last year. A big component of that is renewable energy.

Most recently, we released the biomass strategy that will help to identify Yukon government buildings where we could use biomass energy for space heating on top of other aspects for biomass energy. Mr. Speaker, we only have to look at the main administration building here to see the energy-efficiency accomplishments that are underway. Of course, residential and commercial energy efficiency is continuing to be very successful programs that we have introduced as well.

When it comes to renewable energy, we are very proud of our track record — working with the Kluane First Nation on a windfarm. I know the Member for Kluane, the Minister of Environment, was just in Burwash Landing recently at an energy forum. There are lots of great things for us to talk about and celebrate on the renewable energy front.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, there are some good things going on. People are already hiring Yukon companies to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels. For instance, many Yukoners are taking steps to renewable energy sources by installing solar panels on their own homes, but the government does need to lead the way. Government infrastructure projects have been touted for many years as potential green energy projects, only to see the government backtrack on its commitments. The new F.H. Collins Secondary School building and the thwarting of the Whistle Bend subdivision geothermal district heating potential are glaring examples of failure.

When will this government finally really realize that Yukon’s path to economic prosperity needs deliberate and

positive government support for a local green energy technology sector?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, again, our government is very proud of our track record when it comes to renewable energy and investing in our facilities. I mentioned the retrofit to the main administration building — new windows and increased energy efficiency with insulation.

Let's talk about the commercial energy incentive program that we introduced in May of last year. So far, the lighting systems of 10 commercial buildings, including hotels, a curling rink and a vehicle service centre have been upgraded to LED lamps. These energy-efficient upgrades represent an approximate annual energy savings of 1.189 million kilowatt hours and an annual cost savings of \$143,000. The residential energy incentive program that we introduced in January of 2015 offers incentives to improve airtightness and insulation levels of existing homes to achieve an EnerGuide rating of 85 or better in new homes and to install renewable energy systems for generating electricity.

Mr. Speaker, with that program we have revolutionized the homebuilding industry here in the territory, where, in a normal year, only about 10 houses would be built to that energy-efficiency rating, and now we have upwards of 100 homes being built to that energy-efficiency rating.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to people installing solar panels and renewable systems on their homes, we offer up to a \$5,000 incentive, so we're investing in Yukoners for energy efficiency and renewable energy and, in turn, leading to private sector development and jobs.

Ms. Hanson: It's true — the studies are there. When the government invests in green technology to save energy and shift away from fossil fuels, we save money in the long term. Instead the government has chosen the path of one-off projects while it hopes for an eventual bounce back in commodity prices.

Mr. Speaker, green energy technology should be the new normal. We save money and diversify our local economy in the process.

The minister speaks of local projects. Note that the \$146-million continuing care facility explicitly excludes green energy technology in its new RFP. When will the Premier commit to incorporating green energy provisions into all new government building projects and all government retrofits?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: What we do know is that the NDP and the Liberals would have us shift away from carbon — at least in ideology or theory — by making it more expensive — by putting a new tax in this territory on carbon, which will make everything more expensive.

This government wants to do its part and we have a plan that actually will reduce our greenhouse gases and create jobs for Yukoners — but not making everything else more expensive. That is a plan for the Yukon Party. That is a plan that we know that Yukoners appreciate. We're investing to create jobs and we're going to ensure that we won't impose a new tax on Yukoners that will make everything more expensive.

Question re: Whistle Bend continuing care facility

Ms. Moorcroft: This government budgets \$41.4 million in 2016-17 for continuing care operation and maintenance. The \$41 million is split between program management, extended and complex care, and intermediate and community care. \$41 million in O&M covers the current 190 care beds available. This government has embarked on the construction of a new 150-bed facility in Whistle Bend that will add to the current inventory.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister give the House a clear answer — what are the estimated costs for the annual operation and maintenance of the new 150-bed facility in Whistle Bend?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I certainly extend my thanks to the member opposite for bringing this question to the floor of the Legislature. Speaking about jobs and continuing care is something that we're very proud to take on. We know a number of people in the health sector in the territory and in other provinces have already been calling to find out when they can apply to work at the new continuing care facility. We're kind of excited about that buzz. We're excited about the construction of the Whistle Bend continuing care facility, and we know that it will have a great impact on our wait-lists. At any given time, there can be 60 to 90 people waiting for a bed. Those are Yukoners; those are our neighbours, our friends and our family.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to jobs at the continuing care facility and the O&M costs — is something that this government is proud to take on and we're proud to be able to provide those new opportunities for our professionals here in the territory.

Ms. Moorcroft: We know the capital costs for the Whistle Bend facility are estimated at about \$146 million. What we continue to request are the operation and maintenance costs. By refusing to answer, is the minister telling Yukoners that this government is building a \$146-million facility without knowing how much it would cost to operate it? This would be a new low in fiscal management, even for this government.

Mr. Speaker, either the minister doesn't know the O&M costs or he refuses to tell Yukoners — neither is acceptable.

Would the minister tell us — does he now know the O&M costs of the new continuing care facility, or is he refusing to reveal what the costs are?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for bringing this to the floor of the Legislature. It gives me the opportunity to highlight not only the good work that we foresee in the future when the Whistle Bend continuing care facility is open, but it also gives me an opportunity to highlight some of the work and jobs that are offered currently in our current continuing care facilities.

I've been to all the facilities, Mr. Speaker, and I can tell you that people are very appreciative of the work that they have. As I mentioned in my first response, we're getting phone calls from people living in the territory and people from other provinces seeking employment in this new continuing

care facility, one that will be one of a kind in Canada in the service delivery.

As the department moves forward with working on the O&M costs of the continuing care facility and tightening up those numbers, we don't have an answer for the member opposite today, but I can tell the member opposite and assure Yukoners that the department is working very diligently on the programming that will be offered in the continuing care facility and the dollars that are needed on a more definitive basis to provide those services.

We're proud of the staff and the management that provide the care on a daily basis currently and, as I mentioned in my first response, we're very eager and are looking forward to opening the doors as a renewed government in two years.

Ms. Moorcroft: In 2014-15, the Department of Highways and Public Works contracted Partnerships BC to conduct a procurement options analysis of the Whistle Bend facility at a cost of \$45,000. Last year, the department once again contracted Partnerships BC for design/build procurement services for a cost of \$830,000. I will quote from the Highways and Public Works minister's response letter to my questions about the Partnerships BC contract regarding the Whistle Bend facility — and I quote: "During the planning and procurement stages, YG was focused on achieving strong value for money outcomes, especially on a project of this size." Value for money not only includes construction cost but it also would include life cycle costs, which reveal what the O&M are.

Mr. Speaker, will this government provide Yukoners the operating costs of this facility so we can get a clear idea of the total actual cost?

Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: What we actually have heard again is what we have heard many times — that the opposition would cancel this project.

Mr. Speaker, this government will continue to stand up for what is necessary and what is needed for Yukoners. We have focused on health care. We know there's a large demand for this continuing care facility. We have a long waiting list.

We are working with Partnerships BC to ensure that we do this in a manner that we get the best value for every dollar.

What the opposition failed to understand is that we have produced not only a budget for this year, but ongoing for multiple years that shows this government will be building this facility; we'll continue to have modest surpluses and we'll continue to have money in the bank.

Mr. Speaker, that is the difference between the Yukon Party and the NDP and the Liberals who would tax and spend Yukoners right back into where we were with the previous NDP and Liberal governments — a mass exodus of people and double-digit unemployment.

Question re: Whistle Bend continuing care facility

Mr. Silver: I also have a question for the Premier about the Whistle Bend seniors facility.

Yesterday in Question Period, the Premier said he put a great deal of stock in what the Auditor General of Canada has

to say about budgeting and Yukon's finances. In 2013, the Auditor General released a scathing report on the Yukon Party's fiscal mismanagement on the construction of two rural hospitals. In it, he was sharply critical of the decision to begin construction before knowing the operation and maintenance costs of these facilities. As the election looms, the Yukon Party is once again starting construction on a very large project — the Whistle Bend seniors facility — with no idea of what the operation and maintenance costs will be.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Yukon Party ignoring the advice of the Auditor General when it comes to financial management of projects?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As Yukoners know, there have been needs assessments done; there has been a business case done for this facility. We are looking after Yukoners. That is a priority for this government to do that, and we will do it in a fiscally responsible manner. Yukoners are comforted to know that, through good times and bad, this is a government that continues to see that we have money in the bank — the envy of the entire country that has massive amounts of debts, that has to put money every year into servicing debt, whereas this government continues to pay its way. We put all of the revenues that we have into programs, services and capital investment to create a better Yukon for everyone.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier said the Auditor General was his go-to guy for financial advice and today he won't even talk about him. Here's the actual advice that the Auditor General gave this government in 2013 — and I quote: "... the hospitals were designed and built without knowing the... operating costs — costs that should have been available to decision makers before approval for the projects was given".

It's obvious that the Yukon Party is more concerned about the upcoming election and getting construction going than it is about following the advice from the Auditor General. This is nothing new and it speaks to how politics trumps good financial management time and time again with this administration. The government is building a massive new facility, and with it comes new major operation and maintenance costs but the government doesn't know what they are, even though construction is already well underway.

Why is the Yukon Party once again ignoring the Auditor General?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, I thought that the Leader of the Liberal Party would shy away from the previous hospitals — the previous hospitals that we invested in in Watson Lake and Dawson that he was vehemently opposed to — the construction of those. I dare to ask the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Member for Klondike to ask his constituents today what they think of that investment.

I want to acknowledge the previous MLA for Klondike for his work and persistence in delivering one of many important projects that the former MLA, Steve Nordick, delivered for that riding.

The Auditor General is very clear. In the audit of our Public Accounts every year, they have said that we had an unqualified position and that we have net financial resources.

The best indicator of financial management is a party that runs a consistent, modest surplus — and the envy of the country by having money in the bank.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, my constituents know that I was not against the facilities, but against the fiscal mismanagement by this government of those facilities. It is funny to watch the government pick and choose which advice from the Auditor General that it wants to follow.

Not that long ago, the Auditor General criticized the government because it did not identify the operating costs of the two new hospitals until the new hospitals were under design and construction was well underway. That was my criticism.

It is straightforward advice: before you build something, know what it is going to cost before you operate. The government has not done that. It has released no information on O&M costs because they have been cancelled. The Premier said yesterday that he would always take the word of the Auditor General. In this case the government has done exactly the opposite of what the Auditor General has recommended. It is a lack of leadership, and it is a lack of planning, and the Premier refuses to address this issue.

Why did the government give the construction go-ahead without knowing the operation and maintenance costs? Would the Premier answer the question?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, we just heard again the lack of leadership with another flip-flop by the Leader of the Liberal Party. We will look forward to sharing with Yukoners some of the previous quotes the Liberal leader had with regard to the hospital in Dawson City. We will enjoy the reaction that people have if he wants to talk about leadership.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: What we are hearing off-mic — disruption that the Liberal leader will try to do.

Mr. Speaker, I have said it before and I will say it again — that the health and welfare of Yukoners is paramount for this government. We have invested in MRIs. We have invested in hospital expansion here. We have built two regional hospitals. We are investing in new alcohol and drug services with the Sarah Steele. We continue to keep health and welfare of Yukoners a priority and we do it by being responsible fiscally with their money. We are the envy of the rest of the country. Sadly, that is what the other two parties have to deal with.

Question re: Departmental recommendations to YESAB

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, earlier this month Environment Yukon and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources provided contradictory recommendations to YESAB on a proposed placer mine on the Judas Creek tributaries. Environment Yukon has recommended that the project be rejected because of the high risk it poses to caribou and caribou habitat and the risk to soil and water quality in the region. However, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has stated that the environmental impacts of the operation could be mitigated through reclamation work.

How does the government reconcile the opposite recommendations made by Environment Yukon and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources on the proposed placer mine on the Judas Creek tributaries?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I think, in fact, what we do hear and what Yukoners expect is that the departments within this government are doing their due diligence. The Department of Environment is doing their due diligence and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is doing their due diligence. Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the work of the non-partisan professional employees who work here, and we know that everyone is responsible for the jobs that they fulfill and we're confident that they'll continue to do that.

Ms. White: In its submission to YESAB, the Carcross/Tagish First Nation voiced opposition to the proposed placer mine. They expressed their concern that the proposed placer mine would compromise the Carcross caribou recovery program and the Southern Lakes caribou recovery program. Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that the Carcross/Tagish First Nation has voluntarily refrained from harvesting caribou in the area for 27 years. The Carcross caribou herd has been the focus of the recovery plan by all levels of government since the early 1990s when the herd population numbered just 400. With careful management, that herd has since grown to 800 animals.

Mr. Speaker, Environment Yukon has echoed the concerns that this project would threaten caribou and caribou habitat. Does this government accept Environment Yukon's assessment of the environmental risks of approving a placer mine on the Judas Lake tributaries and do they respect the opinions of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: What we do respect is the independent, transparent process that YESAA in fact is. As we know, this is still before the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board, and we will allow them to continue to do their due diligence. I am very proud of the work and the partnerships that exist between this government and First Nations on such things as wildlife monitoring. I am proud of the work that the departments are doing, representing their concerns from their individual departments. I am also very proud of the independent transparent process that YESAA is. This project is still before YESAB.

Ms. White: My concern is that this government has a track record of rejecting recommendations made by YESAB. Mr. Speaker, we have seen this before on a number of occasions where the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is seeking to open an area for development, while the Department of Environment is doing its best to protect land, water and wildlife. The Minister of Environment's role is to provide support to his officials, whom he relies on for their knowledge and expertise. He should strongly be advocating for the department's official stance when it comes to the Southern Lakes caribou herd.

Mr. Speaker, what concrete steps has the Minister of Environment taken to support his officials in their efforts to protect the Southern Lakes caribou herd and maintain the

hard-won successes of the Southern Lakes caribou herd recovery plan?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Today, what we have heard many times is that an NDP government would politically interfere in a process. Mr. Speaker, this government will not politically interfere in the work of the officials to represent their departments. This is the process that exists. This government will not politically interfere in that process.

Question re: Oil and gas development

Mr. Tredger: This year the Government of Yukon budget allocates \$369,000 for an oil and gas action plan. In a briefing, the opposition was informed that this money is to establish water monitoring wells in the Kotaneelee, focusing on collecting water data in an area with oil and gas potential, instead of establishing a much-needed comprehensive baseline data collection for all of Yukon.

Officials also indicated that this oil and gas action plan was created to meet the recommendations of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing.

Can the minister confirm that the oil and gas action plan was put in place in an attempt to satisfy the recommendations of the select committee, and will he commit to tabling this plan in this House?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I would like to thank members from this side of the House, as well as the other side of the House, including the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, for their work on the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing. That has led to the development of an action plan, accepting and responding to the recommendations. First is an engagement strategy. The goal is to lead a broad and balanced dialogue on the government's role in responsible oil and gas development. The second component is with respect to First Nation government-to-government engagement. The goal is to have discussions with First Nations about the development of oil and gas in their traditional territories.

There are technical projects that are part of this oil and gas action plan, as well as work on the regulatory regime. Again, Mr. Speaker, it's surprising to me that the member opposite, who was a member of the select committee, would now criticize the recommendations that the select committee made and that the government is responding to.

Again, I would thank him for his work on the committee and invite him to stop criticizing the results and the recommendations of that committee.

Mr. Tredger: I look forward to the minister tabling his action plan. A plan sets priorities and goals and assesses how resources are to be allocated in the long term. Presumably this plan has some long-term financial planning associated with it. This one component of the action plan only partially satisfies one of the 21 recommendations this government committed to meeting and is expected to cost over \$360,000 this year alone.

As a simple matter of principle, this government should tell Yukoners how much it plans to spend to pave the way for

a fracking industry in Yukon, an industry and practice that most Yukoners are opposed to.

Mr. Speaker, how much has this government budgeted to satisfy all the recommendations of the select committee on fracking?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Our response to the select committee's recommendations will be a multi-year project. I mentioned the components, including an engagement strategy, First Nation government-to-government engagement, some of the technical projects that are underway, as well as work on the regulatory regime.

Our government believes that Yukon's path to self-reliance includes safe and responsible natural resource development. Shale oil and gas resources are one part of that mix. We're very much interested in mineral development and ensuring — unlike the NDP and the Liberal Party, that we don't pick winners and losers when it comes to Yukoners looking for jobs and opportunities. We want to make sure that those Yukoners who work in the mining industry can have jobs here at home. We want to make sure that those Yukoners who are currently working outside of our borders in the oil and gas industry have the opportunity to come home and take advantage of opportunities here.

As we've mentioned, when it comes to shale gas development, we're focusing on a very small portion of the Yukon — a land mass of about four percent, the Liard Basin. Again, recent scientific studies released by, among other groups, our Yukon Geological Survey suggest that is the second-largest basin in North America for shale gas potential.

We're excited about that and we're excited to build upon the natural resource economy as well as tourism, IT and other sectors of our economic development.

Mr. Tredger: Yukoners are waiting for the minister to table his action plan.

One of the committee recommendations of the select committee on fracking was that the development would not go ahead without First Nation approval. This government allegedly accepted those recommendations. As far as we know, no First Nation has approved fracking on their traditional territory yet, once again — just like in the megahydro project — we have a government spending money to facilitate a project that doesn't have committed support from the most important partners.

A fiscally prudent government would get approval first, before spending the money. Why is this government once again spending public money on a project before getting First Nation approval?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, the member opposite — the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, who sat on the select committee, travelled to Yukon communities with government members and other members of the opposition — is now criticizing the recommendations of that committee.

Mr. Speaker, we made our position clear last year when it comes to shale gas development. We will only focus on the Liard Basin and we will not proceed without the support of the affected First Nations. There are the Kaska First Nations as well as the Acho Dene Koe.

Again, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun has a revisionist sense of history when it comes to the select committee and the work that they accomplished and the recommendations that they have made.

We know that the members opposite do not support natural resource development. We know the Liberal Party does not support shale gas development. They support some conventional oil and gas development, but I would be interested to hear what some of the people he has talked to in the oil and gas industry think about only conventional resource development in the Yukon.

Again, we're not going to pick winners and losers. We're investing in resource development. We're investing in tourism. We're investing in IT. We're investing in health care and education — jobs for Yukoners. We're not picking winners and losers as they would.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Silver: I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Eira Thomas of Kaminak in the gallery today.

Applause

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF PAPERS

Clerk: Motion for the Production of Papers No. 13, standing in the name of Mr. Silver.

Motion for the Production of Papers No. 13

Speaker: It is moved by the Leader of the Third Party:

THAT this House do order the return of all current applications for infrastructure funding that the Government of Yukon has submitted to the Government of Canada.

Mr. Silver: The motion today is quite simple, and I won't take a lot of time on it. We're looking for information from the government on what it has asked the Government of Canada for financial assistance with.

It's a direct attempt to get a straight answer and to determine what projects the government is actually pursuing and what projects it is just talking about but not necessarily really pushing forward.

Earlier the Government of Yukon had made a submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance and it said — and I quote: “We wish to highlight several projects to the Committee. We believe investments in these key projects will have positive economic and social impacts for Canada”.

It listed four projects at that time: (1) the Whistle Bend continuing care facility; (2) the Dempster fibre project; (3) the

Stewart-Keno transmission line project; and (4) the Yukon resource gateway project.

The submission noted that the resource gateway project had been submitted to Canada under the New Building Canada fund. It is interesting to see that the government was saying that the private sector was interested in committing over \$100 million to this project. I am curious to see what signed agreements are in place with the private sector confirming this commitment. I would also like to get a full copy of that application, Mr. Speaker.

The document doesn't say an application has been made on the Whistle Bend facility, but the government has confirmed in this House that indeed an application has been made to Canada. Perhaps the government — I see the minister shaking his head, but I do have documentation here — *Yukon's Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance* that states so and he can clear it up for me in his rebuttal.

Perhaps the government can inform Yukoners under what fund that application was made, if it was, and provide a copy of that as well.

The approach the government is taking on funding of this facility is interesting. With no assurances whatsoever that Ottawa will say yes, the government has decided to start construction anyway. It is a risky and very political approach to take — one that will tie the hands of the next government for years to come if that application is in fact unsuccessful.

Mr. Speaker, just today, I asked about the Auditor General's advice not to build things until you know what the costs will be to operate. The government has ignored that advice. I expect the Auditor General will also have some serious reservations about beginning construction without knowing where the money will come from to pay for this. Nonetheless, that is the situation that the Yukon Party has put itself in and also the Yukon taxpayers, for that matter. It will certainly be left to the next government to resolve these outstanding financial questions.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to note that despite the government saying that they're moving ahead on a fibre project, as far as we understand, no application has been made yet. In the Premier's report to Yukoners, the government again wants to take credit for moving this project along, but the fact is that the government hasn't submitted an application to Ottawa as far as we can tell for this. This project certainly falls under the IOU category. After 14 years of not addressing this issue, on the eve of an election, the government is anxious to look busy on this file. The reality is that people's phones still won't work when that line is cut because this government has not addressed that problem.

It's very curious to see that the Dawson Airport expansion is not on the list submitted to the federal finance committee and that no application for funding has been made to Ottawa. I believe this was confirmed this week by officials in the Department of Highways and Public Works. If this is true, it demonstrates how low on the priority list this project really is. After two years of talk, we now know that the

government isn't serious on moving forward and it will be left to the next government to have to address this issue.

With respect to the Keno power project, there is a proposal that has gone from costing approximately \$40 million to now \$80 million. It is another one that will fall to the next government to make a decision on.

These are Yukon-wide projects and I would now like to turn to the municipal, First Nation and community level projects. There has been conflict between this government and municipal leaders over infrastructure. Municipalities have noted that they make their requests to the Government of Yukon and are often surprised at the end at what actually gets approved. It would be helpful if the Government of Yukon actually releases what applications go forward to Canada, and that is what I am asking for here today.

The Minister of Community Services did release some documents today. They have not hit my desk yet, but I just sent them off to the office. I assume these are some of those projects and thank him for that. That is fine, I'm good. After informing the House that I would call this motion for debate, we finally get these documents. That is fantastic. It is a reactive approach as opposed to a proactive approach, and I really expect no more from this government. It would inform citizens and municipal leaders, First Nation governments and the private sector what the government was actually working on if it made these releases — these requests to Ottawa — routine, instead of refusing to release them as a matter of fact and a matter of course.

I hope all three parties can support this motion that I made for debate today. It is a straightforward request to make information on what the government is up to available to the public as a matter of course, not left for a motion for the production of papers in the Legislative Assembly to be the trigger to allow this government to release that information. It would also be a good step toward making the government more open and more accountable.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues today.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, earlier today I tabled a list of projects that have been submitted to Canada by the Yukon government for the New Building Canada fund. Those include projects under the three different components of the New Building Canada fund. As members will recall, those three components are: the small communities fund, the national and regional projects fund and the national infrastructure component fund — the very large piece.

My colleague, the Minister of Highways and Public Works tabled Yukon's submission for the national infrastructure component fund for the Yukon resource gateway project. It is a lengthy document, but I believe it meets the needs of members to understand that project, given its significant size. With regard to the smaller projects included in this list that I have tabled today, they include projects led by my department in collaboration with municipalities as well as some projects that are led specifically by the Department of Highways and Public

Works. In the cases where a project is going to be done in a municipality, the municipal governments took a significant role in working with us to develop these projects. This will come as no surprise to them, of course. I have met with every mayor and council and talked about which projects are going forward and talked about their priorities. This will come as no surprise to them, but of course the Third Party was not aware that they have taken such an important role in providing their priorities to us.

The list is here, Mr. Speaker — the list of small communities fund projects I should note have already been approved. Five of them are here. The MP and I had a chance to announce that they had been approved a few weeks ago. Only one of the other projects, the Burwash water treatment plant, has since been approved by Canada, and it's noted in this document that this is the case as well.

This document includes the list of projects, the eligible costs associated with those projects and a brief description about the projects themselves. I don't believe it's necessary for us to table the engineering drawings — or anything like that — that accompany the broader applications. I don't think that's a good use of the Legislature's time, but I think it's fine that we share the list of projects.

As far as I'm concerned, we've met the action required in this motion, so I don't see any need to pass it and I'll be voting against this motion.

Ms. Moorcroft: I'm pleased to rise to speak to the Member for Klondike's motion urging the government to table all requests that they have made — all current applications that this government has submitted to the Government of Canada for infrastructure funding. We will be supporting this motion.

We are a small jurisdiction and we rely heavily on federal streams of support for infrastructure investment. Under this government, we have become more and more reliant upon federal transfer money, because Yukon revenue has fallen, so these federal contributions become all that much more important.

This government hasn't been forthcoming with the House and the public on how these requests are made, when they are made and how they are incorporated into the budget.

Let me turn first to the national infrastructure component of the New Building Canada fund. The Yukon government's submission has a list of four priorities. Their requests on the submission were for the Whistle Bend care facility, the fibre optics line, resource access roads program and the Keno-to-Stewart transmission line.

The national infrastructure component of the New Building Canada fund sets out the following requirements for these infrastructure submissions: "To be considered nationally significant, projects must support one or more of the following objectives: Generate positive economic activity; reduce potential economic disruptions or foregone economic activity; generate productivity gains for the Canadian economy; or, provide benefits that extend beyond the provinces or territories where the project would be located.

“Eligible projects will be limited to those that provide the greatest economic impact under the following seven categories: highways and major roads, public transit, rail infrastructure, local and regional airports, port infrastructure, intelligent transportation systems (ITS), and disaster mitigation infrastructure.”

It further states that projects must have an estimated cost of \$100 million, but that projects can be less than that if they can demonstrate significant benefit to Canada. An initial reading of those conditions, compared to the projects that Yukon submitted, leads us to a number of questions.

This government has not put any evidence on the public record indicating that they have done comprehensive fiscal planning for the projects they have requested federal money for. With the first phase of the 300-bed Whistle Bend facility, this government has yet to show us that they've done a full life-cycle costing of the facility and that they cannot explain how they plan to pay for it, should federal money fall through.

Just today in Question Period, Mr. Speaker, we saw that the government was unable to answer questions on what the operation and maintenance costs would be after spending millions on the capital construction of a new continuing care facility.

There is the Stewart-Keno transmission line, which this document estimates will come with a price tag of \$86 million and it too seems to lack rudimentary financial due diligence. The project is being built to support mining in the area, but the minister responsible for Yukon Energy Corporation cannot point to any business case or economic analysis to support such a large investment. At the very least, this government would sign a power purchase agreement with the customers who they plan on providing electricity to, because if any of the planned mines fall through, this would be a very expensive project to provide more reliable electricity to approximately a dozen residents of Keno at a cost of \$86 million.

Yesterday in Question Period, when I asked the Minister of Highways and Public Works, he didn't indicate that they had conducted all of the economic analysis for the resource roads that their own resource roads framework requires them to do. Surely these requests for millions of dollars come with some additional documentation detailing how these projects will actually affect Yukon's and Canada's economy and how they arrived at their estimates for these projects.

Mr. Speaker, I noted that one of the areas covered under the projects for the New Building Canada fund relates to airports. In the past, this government has received significant funding from the airport capital assistance program. This is money that the federal government allocates to Yukon to improve our airports and aerodromes. Most notably, we saw \$3.5 million allocated to replace the Whitehorse apron runway panels and that was mismanaged by this government and is now deficient. If this government will be requesting ACAP money, or has requested ACAP money for projects like the work that will be identified through the Dawson City Airport functional plan, we would hope that they would be tabled as well.

Under the Building Canada fund for the communities, we saw in this year's budget that there is money earmarked for projects that haven't actually been approved yet. Generally it is good practice to have the money in hand before announcements are made about projects that are included in the budget. We have seen this lack of clarity around how the submissions are compiled, prioritized and sent to Ottawa lead to significant frustration from Yukon's municipalities, First Nations and communities that rely on this money to fund these projects. Mr. Speaker, it's about having respectful relationships with other orders of governments.

Then there's the national green energy infrastructure and the national social infrastructure. The new federal government has announced funding for social and renewable energy, so we're hopeful that this government is going to be a little more forthcoming if and when they make submissions under these funding streams.

The wider issue with this government is that there is a lack of clarity around the way that funding is being allocated for major projects. We are seeing projects being approved and money being earmarked in the budget that simply hasn't been approved yet.

Last week, the Minister of Community Services said that they hadn't received a response from the federal government on their submission requesting \$109 million for infrastructure, yet they were going ahead with the project. This raises questions. Is the government comfortable about not getting the money and going ahead regardless, or they need it and they're taking a major risk by beginning construction without having the money approved?

Government should be conducting long-term fiscal planning. The Auditor General has pointed that out repeatedly to this government. The government should have the money approved before they begin work on these projects whenever possible. This government should be transparent when it comes to providing Yukoners with information on how these projects will be paid for.

I do want to acknowledge that the government has tabled details on the Yukon resource gateway project, which we requested yesterday during Highways and Public Works debate. The government submitted a list of the national and regional projects fund applications and the applications under the small communities fund. That is a start but, as I've said on debate on this motion, we would like to see more information coming from the government. We would like them to be transparent. We would like to ask this government to submit any applications for infrastructure funding that they have put forward under the airports capital assistance program and any new funding streams that are available from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, we do support this motion.

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

Mr. Silver: I'm not surprised that the Yukon Party will not be supporting the motion to produce papers. It is a regular

occurrence for this government to say that all is good with communication with partner governments in the Yukon — between First Nation governments and municipal governments — and then us hearing the exact opposite when we do meet with these partner governments.

A good example — money flows from the feds to the Yukon territorial government, and First Nation governments don't get to see these agreements. In specific examples that I've been talking with First Nation governments about, some of these projects and some of these funding allocations — the top mandate is to advance economic development for those affected First Nations but the First Nations aren't allowed, by YTG, to see these agreements. Then they are told that they don't necessarily have the capacity for the projects. "Don't worry — we'll give you some jobs anyway in this particular envelope." But again, if the First Nation governments were involved from the start, they would be able to build their capacity to be able to complete these tasks with the support of YTG in conversations with the federal government.

Again, we hear that all is well here. We have heard it with municipalities as well — that everything is working fine when we talk to the Minister of Community Services and the Yukon Party government — but we do hear a different dialogue. I'm very much looking forward to AYC. I'm very much looking forward to these documents being discussed at the AYC in Watson Lake this year. Municipalities, as I mentioned, are often asked to provide their priorities, but what they find in the end is not necessarily the same ranking or the same issues, and it's good to have that dialogue. One way of doing that is to have a more open and transparent policy when it's going from partner governments in the Yukon to an ask in Ottawa and then coming back here with the pockets and envelopes of money.

I would like to thank my colleagues in the Official Opposition for their support on this bill and, again, I'm not surprised that the Yukon Party will not be supporting this motion.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Divison

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Disagree.

Mr. Elias: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are four yea, 10 nay.

Speaker: The nays have it. I declare the motion negatived.

Motion for the Production of Papers No. 13 negatived

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 1142

Clerk: Motion No. 1142, standing in the name of Ms. White.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to introduce amendments to the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* to allow domestic violence victims to:

- (1) terminate a lease early and without penalty; and
- (2) remove an abuser's name from a lease.

Ms. White: This is one of those motions that, when you start — and typically you are bringing forward a motion — and you say that it is a pleasure to rise to speak to it — I can honestly say that I wish this was not something we had to discuss and that I would not have to regurgitate the statistics for violence against women and the barriers that they face when they leave violence.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. White: Before I start, I would like acknowledge three people in the gallery. We have Hillary Aitken, Charlotte Hrenchuk and Esther Armstrong. These are three strong advocates who are joining us from the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre. I appreciate everything that you do on a daily basis because I know it never stops.

Applause

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, often we bring forward motions that we are happy to talk about and we are excited about — and we are trying to bring forward ideas. This is an important idea and it has positive ramifications, but I bring it forward because, despite the fact that it is 2016, life is not good for everyone in the territory. In the Yukon, violent crime against women is four times that of the national average. In the Yukon, intimate partner violence is 3.7 times that of the national average. What that means is that, despite the fact that we are in 2016, Yukon women — and especially Yukon aboriginal women — face a disproportionate risk of violence in their lives. Their stories — you can hear stories if you are willing to listen. They are not glamorous stories and they are not hopeful stories, often, but they have hopeful endings.

When I worked in Corrections, I worked in the women's unit. What I learned when I worked in Corrections was that no one ended up there without a catalyst. No one ended up in Corrections because things were always great. What I often learned was that the women I worked with in Corrections

were trying to deal with just crazy life situations. Whether they turned to an alcohol and drug dependency, whether they defended themselves violently — whatever the case was, women were often there and you could always go back to a root cause.

The thing I really learned while I was there is that one of the biggest things that they faced is that — like I have said before, I got to spend time with them when they were sober and things were going well. But you could see the stress escalate as they got closer to their release date because these women were not sure where they were going to go. Sometimes it was back to the partner that they had left when they came in; sometimes it was back to unsafe housing situations.

Sadly, you won't have the opportunity to go for lunch on a Wednesday at the women's centre, but for those of us who are able, you meet women from all sorts of walks of life and they are all there to support each other. If you go often enough, the stories become familiar. Although the players are different, the situations are similar.

It was a really exciting time in Alberta at the end of 2015, when Bill 204 was brought forward, which was the *Residential Tenancies (Safer Spaces for Victims of Domestic Violence) Amendment Act, 2015*. What we saw in the Alberta Legislature was unanimous support of a bill that gave women just one more tool to get out of a bad situation.

One thing that we know is that a woman fleeing violence — it typically takes multiple times of being abused before she goes and often she will leave more than one time. She will leave and there will be a cooling-off period and then she'll go back. Maybe it will be good for a while and then something will happen and then she'll leave again and then there'll be a cooling-off period and she goes back.

What I want to make sure of is that when a woman gets to that point — when she's done; when she is ready to move on — that we remove all the barriers in her way and we make it as easy as possible for her to take the next steps in her life.

I had some very quick conversations today and I'm grateful for the people I spoke to because I literally gave them four hours' notice. I had a conversation today with the staff at Kaushee's and they said that there was nothing but positive things that could be interpreted from this proposal. They said that all it would do is give women seeking safety one more tool and that, more than anything, it would help those women move forward and there would be more safety measures in place. I think it is important to note that even in the territory with a population as small as ours, in the 2013-14 calendar year, 2,088 women and 171 children were admitted to Kaushee's Place. That is an awful lot of people who needed that security.

In that same calendar year, they received 2,697 requests for support and services. So these are people who are living in situations that are unsafe and staff spent 771 hours helping people who weren't within their system — people who hadn't accessed their shelter.

I think that what this shows us is that despite that we continue to move on in calendar years, we haven't really

moved forward in the rights or in the protection of women. Every year, we have the 12 Days to End Violence Against Women Campaign and we talk about how important it is that we respect women and their choices and that we offer them the support when they go through awful times. Still, in society today, we still have to make sure that we give women a safe place to go.

The motion that I have put forward — my hope is that it just becomes fewer barriers to women to access what they need to take those safer steps forward.

I thank the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate and the Minister of Community Services because we had a conversation this morning; I appreciated that conversation. We'll be seeing a friendly amendment and I appreciate what that amendment is going to say as well. What we talked about briefly were the securities that are already in place and I acknowledge that there are securities in place. I think there was probably, at the time, fairly groundbreaking legislation when the *Family Violence Prevention Act* came forward. When I was speaking to Kaushee's, they actually mentioned the emergency intervention order and they said that this was a good emergency step; it just didn't take it far enough into the future, so it was a temporary reprieve but it didn't help those steps.

I just want to read the preamble because I think it's as relevant today as the day it was brought forward. It says:

"Recognising that family violence continues to be a serious problem in the Yukon;

"Recognising also that one difficulty victims of family violence face is that the abuser often forces them to leave their own home to escape the abuse;

"Recognising also that there must be effective legal procedures that victims of family violence can easily use to get immediate help and relief from the abuse."

That came forward at a time when government recognized that we needed to put more protections in place for people fleeing abuse. It's important that I say right now, Mr. Speaker, that the language is gender neutral because there are definitely men who are victims of spousal or intimate partner abuse and I'm not denying that fact; but what I do bring forward is that women are 3.7 times more likely to suffer at the hands of an intimate partner.

So the *Family Violence Prevention Act* has two securities in place that you can access: one is the emergency intervention order; and the second that I learned about today is admittedly maybe not used as much as it could be — the victim's assistance order. The reason I highlight that is if the ministers who I had the conversation with today acknowledge that one within the department has been recognized as not being used as a tool as often as it could be, then maybe that's something that we need to rectify. If it can help victims of violence take that step forward, then maybe it's a tool we need to use more often.

Mr. Speaker, Yukon Housing Corporation has a policy for victims of violence. What this policy does — there's a priority list and if you are a victim of violence, you actually can get taken from anywhere on that list or not on that list at

all and you can get put to the top. The policy is to provide the consideration for those persons who are able to demonstrate an immediate need for housing because they are at risk of abuse from a perpetrator with whom they have recently lived or currently live. So even within the Yukon Housing Corporation, we recognize that there can be abuse within a family unit and that it's important to make sure that we remove either the abuser or the victim from the situation.

When I was talking to the women's organizations today, they said it's incredibly important that we make sure that the verifier doesn't only have to be RCMP; they said that you can't force someone to only disclose what they're going through to the police in order for it to be accepted. We need to make sure that this barrier also of disclosure is one that isn't hindering that ability. Even within the Yukon Housing policy, they have the definition of "verifier". The verifier means a person who is a recognized, practising professional associated with an agency or organization and who is: (a) a police officer; (b) a medical or mental health professional such as a doctor, nurse, psychologist or psychiatrist; (c) a registered social worker or social service case manager; or (d) a Government of Yukon Victim Services worker, an executive director of a transition home, or other social service provider in the field of family violence prevention and intervention. So even within the current rules and regulations we have, we've already recognized that we need to make sure that the verifier isn't only through the RCMP. That was one thing that was highlighted by one of the women's groups.

Within the justice system, there are some securities, but then when we look at the new *Landlord and Tenant Act* — and it's interesting because the more familiar you become with legislation, the more you can sometimes see where there are gaps where you would like to kind of fill it a bit. This isn't a lot different from understanding that there were gaps for mobile homeowners. When you read it — I am going to reference the handbook as this is something that is really easy for people to access — it talks about changes of tenancy and it says, "Changes or deletions of standard terms in a tenancy agreement are not allowed (once an agreement is entered into)." However, "A landlord and tenant may make a change to a term that is not a standard term if both agree." But even when you go through the entire paragraphs to here, it doesn't lay out the exceptional.

What I'm hoping is that at one point in time in the territory, a woman or a man who has been abused by a partner who is in that cohabitation can go with their verifier to the Residential Tenancies Office. What can happen is that if his name is on the lease, it can be removed and her name can be added; or if you need to break a lease before the agreed-upon time or before the notification amount, there isn't a penalty that follows you for a long time. It is one thing to leave behind your security deposit, but it's another thing to leave behind your good name. We know that housing is not easy to come by in Yukon. One thing that you're always asked for is a person that can be contacted — you're asked for a reference.

One of the concerns in the Alberta legislation that women within shelters said is that they were afraid to put their names

on leases because what if they had to leave, and then that black mark follows them.

The hope is that this opens up a conversation in the community. We're really lucky to live in the community that we do, because we have women's organizations across the territory that are fierce; they've been having these conversations without us. They have been talking to their clients. They've been talking to their friends and they know what we need to do to make things easier for women.

After my conversation with the ministers this morning, my hope is that we take this conversation to the people who know best and we ask them for their suggestions, for their leadership and for their guidance because they already know the answers, so instead of necessarily just copying legislation that was in Alberta — although it is beautiful legislation because of what it does — in Yukon our reality is a bit different. But I think we can still make those changes that will make life substantially easier for someone who is ready to make those changes.

What I want to make sure of is that we are able to remove the barriers that prevent a woman from finally taking those steps forward. I want to make sure that she's safe. I want to make sure that she is in a place where she is comfortable. So if she were living in a house, I don't want her to have to leave it if she doesn't want to.

I look forward to statements from others and I look forward to the time when we take this outside the Chamber and get the advice that we need and make the changes that need to happen.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I would like to begin by thanking the member opposite for bringing this motion forward and engaging constructively with me and my colleagues in discussing it prior to right now.

We had a chance, as the Member for Takhini-Kopper King mentioned, to discuss the motion a little earlier today. I thought we had a productive discussion about what we may do going forward, so I have a few things I would like to say about the act itself, I have a few things I would like to say about what's in place now, and then, as the member indicated, I do have a friendly amendment that we can discuss in a few moments.

First of all, I should provide some context. As Minister of Community Services, I'm responsible for the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and its subsequent office, the Residential Tenancies Office. That office is relatively new and it is a creature of the new legislation. It's something we feel was a very positive development for managing the relationships between tenants and landlords in the territory.

As we've noted, Mr. Speaker, in bringing forward this legislation — it only came into force early this year, on January 1. We know that, while we went through a fairly comprehensive process to bring the legislation forward — which involved a number of people — there are some things that remain to be considered, whether or not they need to be tweaked.

Obviously the previous legislation that predated the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* was exceptionally dated. I believe it was 50-some odd years old and was in much need of updating, so I think all members were happy to see legislation of that nature come forward a few years ago.

I became minister in January of last year and had the pleasure of working on the regulations that were pursuant to the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, and was happy to see those brought into force last year as well. We've seen some fairly big changes with regard to the relationships between landlords and tenants through this legislation and through the regulations that are now in place.

As I've noted, we don't always get it 100-percent right the first time. I've acknowledged that previously in discussions with the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, in fact, around mobile homes and the need to perhaps reconsider the law as it pertains specifically to the relationship between a mobile homeowner and a mobile home park owner. We are in the process right now, as we speak, of having a consultation underway to seek input on that matter.

We are considering making changes to the legislation on that front and are looking forward to having input from interested stakeholders through the consultation that's underway currently. This is perhaps another issue, Mr. Speaker, where it's worth having further conversations. I'm not sure of what ultimately we may decide when it comes to whether or not legislative changes are needed to the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* or the *Family Violence Prevention Act*, or any other piece of legislation or regulation that perhaps we might want to consider, but I think there is certainly value in having those conversations. I think that's what this motion is about and I think the topic at hand today is extending that conversation a little bit further.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me speak a little bit about the RLTA. As I noted, as of January 1 of this year, the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* came into force. The new act provides a binding dispute resolution process for both landlords and tenants to access. It requires written tenancy agreements, adjusted notice periods and provides more clarity for both landlords and tenants. There are new minimum rental standards that will come into force on January 1, 2017. This will give landlords the opportunity to prepare for the new requirements. The Residential Tenancies Office helps settle disputes by educating landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities. It also provides dispute resolution services and issues final and binding decisions in orders.

But today we are speaking about safety in the context of domestic violence. As the member correctly noted, it is not an issue that is very fun to speak about, but it is most certainly a reality for many people. It's a very important issue, and measures to protect vulnerable individuals are necessary throughout the various pieces of legislation.

All tenants are currently able to terminate a tenancy agreement for any reason with a given period of time. In the case of a weekly tenancy agreement, one week's notice is required; in the case of monthly tenancies, one month's notice is required. In many jurisdictions, including Yukon, a landlord

can give 14 days' notice if a leaseholder, or someone permitted by the leaseholder, significantly interferes with or disturbs a tenant or other occupants, and/or seriously jeopardizes the health and/or safety of another occupant. The notice periods for tenants in Yukon are indeed shorter than those required in numerous other jurisdictions in Canada. The one-month termination notice for month-to-month tenancies, which already exists in our RLTA, is largely similar to Alberta's Bill 204, which the Member for Takhini-Kopper King referenced, which requires 28 days' notice to terminate an agreement in the event of domestic violence.

Speaking just a little bit about Bill 204, Mr. Speaker, to listeners who aren't familiar with that — the member provided a bit of an introduction — but it was brought forward last year by an MLA in Alberta after noting her own experience and experiences that she had heard of. When it was brought forward, I think it was only a day or day after that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King put forward a motion urging us to look at Bill 204. I don't remember the exact wording, but it was essentially urging us to look at Bill 204 and consider making changes based on that.

Following that motion, I had department officials conduct a review of Bill 204 and provide me with information about how our current legislation stacked up against Bill 204, and that provides some of the information I brought here today. Mr. Speaker, we're very cognizant of that bill and we appreciate being guided to it by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

That bill — Bill 204 in Alberta, which is not yet in force — requires a certificate confirming there are grounds for termination in order for someone to end a tenancy. In fact, in Alberta, the grounds of proof for the certificate, in order for a tenant to be released from a lease early — 28 days' notice in the case of domestic violence — often must include a restraining order or a peace bond — or something similar to an emergency prevention order that we have here in Yukon — to be issued first. These are all mechanisms that we have in Yukon to seek protection in cases of domestic abuse, and I can discuss those a bit further in a few moments.

Alternatively, Alberta has an option for a designated authority to confirm instances of domestic abuse. It is not clear at this time that there is yet an official listing of who these designated authorities are, so we assume that's something they will be dealing with probably through regulation in the coming months and years — something we will most certainly be following closely here in Yukon.

In a yearly tenancy arrangement in Yukon, tenants are still required to give three months' notice. This can be given at any time. In Alberta's *Residential Tenancies Act*, a notice to end a yearly tenancy agreement can only be served after the tenant has completed 10 months of the tenancy agreement, and then they must give 60 days' notice to the landlord.

Alberta's Bill 204 addresses the issue in Alberta that tenants in a yearly lease could not give immediate notice. In Yukon, any tenant can give their three months' notice to end a yearly tenancy immediately, unlike the case in Alberta. However, any tenants in any lease who are in domestic

violence situations can also seek an emergency intervention order under the *Family Violence Prevention Act*, which is an option for victims of domestic violence to quickly access safe housing in emergency situations.

The *Family Violence Prevention Act* recognizes that a major difficulty faced by victims of family violence is that they are often forced to leave their own homes to get immediate protection or safe accommodation. The act is meant to offer an accessible, legal option that victims of family violence can easily use to get immediate help and relief from the abuse.

This emergency intervention order could allow them to remain in their rented home for a prescribed length of time — a length of time designated by a Justice of the Peace. An emergency intervention order is conducted *ex parte*, meaning the victim does not have to face the alleged abuser in a hearing or other type of fora. This is meant to prevent the abusive person, if they are in a family, spousal or intimate relationship, from contacting the victim and can remove the abuser from the residence, allowing the victim and their dependents to stay in their own home.

Even if the alleged abuser is a joint lease holder, or the only name on the lease, they can be prevented from being at their rented home. The emergency prevention order can include a provision granting to the victim sole occupation of the home they are living in, even if that home is leased by the alleged abuser. An emergency intervention order is typically granted for short periods of time. That was something that was referenced by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King — that the EIO is often a short-term measure that we can use in emergency situations — but the *Family Violence Prevention Act* does not prescribe the length of time an order should last, but the intention is that it is meant to address the needs of a victim in an emergency period, as we've discussed.

While a victim of domestic violence holds an emergency intervention order, there are other avenues of support and enforceable protection that victims can seek for themselves and their dependents. An EIO can allow time to provide notice of termination of a tenancy, to explore options with the landlord and other housing options that may be appropriate. This can include accessing shelters or supportive housing, if necessary. We can return to some of the policies around Yukon Housing Corporation as well. That is often an avenue for these types of situations.

If the tenant chooses to maintain the sole occupation of the rented home for a long period, there are options available through the court like a peace bond, or the victim may choose to seek a no-contact condition for the accused. In addition to these options, a victim's assistance order — a VAO — can also be applied for under the *Family Violence Prevention Act*, which can extend the protection provision and grant the victim and any other family members exclusive occupation of the their home whether the alleged abuser is a joint leaseholder or not. Unlike an EIO, these orders require notice to the other party and take longer to be granted, ideally during the EIO period. The victim's assistance order does require a hearing,

but it can assist over the longer term until the three months' notice is over and the tenancy is terminated.

There are supports in place as well to help a victim proceed with the options available. Victim Services workers can assist a victim to seek an emergency intervention order for an immediate time frame and then can explore options with the victim, such as seeking a victim's assistance order or further help with the legal system. A peace bond, an option under the *Criminal Code*, might be sought by a victim as well, which would prevent an alleged abuser from having contact with the victim. These generally last for a year.

These mechanisms for protection and support are meant to be accessible and responsive in emergency situations when we know victims are particularly vulnerable. Victims can call or walk into Victim Services offices to explore options including emergency intervention orders and victim's assistance orders. A Justice of the Peace can issue an emergency intervention order over the phone without official charges having been laid against the alleged abuser.

I think it is important to note that if the abuser is the sole leaseholder, having that person removed from the lease would mean the victim and their dependents may have to move even if they did not want to. An emergency intervention order or other interim solutions may allow the victim to remain in the rented property, safely removed from the abuser, or allow time to find other safe accommodation.

The Residential Tenancies Office hearing process is meant to assist in resolving tenancy disputes taking into account the unique situation of each case, including those where safety is an immediate or serious concern. The Residential Tenancies Office — the RTO — is a resource for information offered to both tenants and landlords on provisions under the RLTA and other intergovernmental services that may help those affected by domestic abuse. They can lead individuals to appropriate resources and services that can provide immediate help.

As I have reviewed these provisions within Yukon government and other services in Yukon that help people in domestic abuse situations, it seems we have similar options as made available under Bill 204 in Alberta. Between the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and options like the emergency intervention order, as well as other victim services, we believe at this point Yukon does have responsive solutions for those who need to get out of a lease early while remaining safe and supported.

That being said, while we do have a number of supports and tools in place for these types of situations, we certainly acknowledge that perhaps further conversation is needed as to whether or not they are sufficient and whether or not people are aware of them. I think the Member for Takhini-Kopper King correctly noted that some of the information provided by the RTO through the handbook that she referenced could be one option for that. We have produced single-issue fact sheets that we have made available to the public at the RTO and one of the things that we talked about this morning at a meeting between a few of us was the possibility of having one

specifically for domestic abuse situations so that landlords and tenants can quickly find that information.

I think it's important to acknowledge that landlords themselves need to have access to this information as well so that they understand what their rights, roles and responsibilities with regard to dealing with these situations and they know what is available to themselves and to potential victims of domestic abuse situations.

Noting that those supports are in place and that we are most certainly willing to have a further conversation about this, I do have a friendly amendment that I would like to put forward. I will do that now and look forward to discussion about it.

Amendment proposed

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I move:

THAT Motion No. 1142 be amended by:

(1) removing the phrase “introduce amendments to the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*”; and

(2) replacing it with the phrase “consult with stakeholders about whether the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and regulations should be amended”.

I have that here Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The amendment is in order.

It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services

THAT Motion No. 1142 be amended by

(1) removing the phrase “introduce amendments to the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*”; and

(2) replacing it with the phrase “consult with stakeholders about whether the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and regulations should be amended”.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, I didn't bring a copy of the motion as amended or what it would look like as amended, but I think that the amendment is fairly self-explanatory.

I should note that when we discussed this, we talked about — under the piece where it says, “consult with stakeholders”, we talked about actually listing off some of the stakeholders and we realized that we were better off simply saying the general term “stakeholders” so as not to exclude anyone unintentionally — but I do anticipate that we will have a broad discussion with a number of groups — not the least of which, of course, are relevant women's groups or other advocacy groups and perhaps others from the landlord or tenant communities as well.

We talked also a little bit about what that consultation might look like and I don't think we're binding ourselves to any particular structure in consultation. I think we can be as formal or informal as we need to be for this particular case. I think that the starting point would be a conversation about what is in place now; whether or not what is in place now is sufficient; whether or not what is in place now is well understood by those who need to understand it; or whether or not further things are needed to add to our toolkit or add to our

toolkit or add to our available programs and services. I think it's worthwhile to have that conversation — to continue the conversation that we've had today about this — and to engage with the necessary stakeholders to have a discussion.

Mr. Speaker, I also should note that the motion does still limit itself to the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, which is fine, but I think that it's impossible to have this conversation without looking at any of the other programs and services and tools that are in place as well, whether they be policies in Yukon Housing Corporation or the *Family Violence Prevention Act*, but any of these overlapping — not necessarily overlapping — variety of tools, programs, policies, legislation and laws that are in place. I think that we can have a much broader discussion than just the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, but I hope it's well understood by members that we aren't limiting ourselves too much by just noting it here. That was the initial motion put forward by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King and I was happy to leave it as such, but I am certainly acknowledging that the conversation can be a little bit broader than that and that this motion won't limit that too much.

With that, I will conclude. I think that the motion to begin with was good and that it is improved by allowing us to consult on this, as the amendment suggests. I thank my colleagues — and I know that I won't be able to speak after, Mr. Speaker, so I will just say I look forward to hearing from colleagues from both sides of the floor on the issue, once we pass this amendment.

Mr. Silver: I will be very brief. I just want to speak on the amendment. Of course I will be supporting this amendment and if passed, the amended motion as well. As discussed, this is based on a private member's bill of the same name in the Alberta Legislature and, talking with my colleague from Copperbelt South, there is obviously other legislation that we can look at as well.

The amendment in the original motion could make it easier for the victims of domestic violence to escape that abuse. The amendment that was put forward by the Minister of Community Services is an important due-diligence piece. The motion, as amended, eventually will allow domestic violence victims to break their lease without penalty if they demonstrate that they or their children are in danger. It will also allow victims to take the alleged abuser off that lease altogether.

Mr. Speaker, the bill in Alberta is designed to create a new way to support those who need to leave unsafe environments because of the violence or the threat of that violence and their conversations have to be had, which speaks to the amendment put forth by the Minister of Community Services. By giving the survivor of violence a way to leave and a platform to seek out supports, we will be working to break that cycle of violence and to start a real conversation.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I will definitely be supporting the amendment and also — hopefully if that gets passed — the amended motion as well.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for bringing this forward. I am just going to say it again — no one in the communities understands the issue of violence against women better than the women's organizations. No one has more experience in the roadblocks that are put up for women leaving situations. No one understands what we need to do better.

I appreciate this is what was brought forward. I would like to be a fly on the wall when these organizations are given the ability to have a direct ear to government about the concerns they see with the legislation and what we can do to make it better.

I thank the minister for that amendment and I look forward to giving the women's organizations and stakeholders a platform to bring forward their concerns.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would like to thank the member opposite for bringing forth this particular motion. I too would also like to acknowledge our guests in the gallery and acknowledge the very ongoing and important work of the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre. They are an extremely important partner of the Yukon government and have just recently celebrated 40 years. It's a testament to the importance of their work to continue the ongoing efforts to enhance women's equality on many fronts and all fronts.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to reference the motion as per the proposed amendment before us. Again, as was referenced by my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, earlier today, we actually did reach out to the member opposite to discuss the work that has been undertaken by the Residential Tenancies Office and about the legislation that we currently have in place — the *Family Violence Prevention Act* or the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* — and, of course, bringing forth this particular amendment as a friendly amendment.

It really reflects an acknowledgement of this government's work over the last several years to address key barriers that really influence women's vulnerability and certainly speaks to the very issue — the unfortunate issue of violence against women — but also reflects the important work of our organizations that are, as the member opposite would refer to, the ones who are working with these individuals on a daily basis and are very familiar with the process from beginning to end.

The actual amendment that is before us speaks to the need of engaging with those stakeholders to seek clarity to determine what gaps are actually in place and where we can actually strengthen — whether it's regulations or legislation, whether it's other pieces of legislation before us that need to also be tweaked.

We received a somewhat brief briefing, given the time limitation this morning, by our respective departments — from the Women's Directorate, Community Services and, I know, the Department of Justice, through their work in administering the *Family Violence Prevention Act*.

I'm not going to go over what was referenced by the Minister of Community Services other than to say that we're

very much committed to continuing to work on these barriers and work to enhance those very factors that will increase women's independence and a life free of violence.

I will just perhaps leave it at that right now and look forward to the further comments from members opposite and from our side.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the amendment?

Amendment to Motion No. 1142 agreed to

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard on the motion, as amended?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'm certainly pleased to have the opportunity to rise in the Legislature today to provide my response to the member's motion, and I would like to thank her for bringing this motion forward and thank our member for the friendly amendment.

This motion speaks to supporting victims of domestic violence. As a father, as a devoted and supportive partner, and as an MLA — former Minister of Justice and, in my current role, as Minister of Health and Social Services — supporting victims of domestic violence is something that is deeply important to me. Members of this House, members of our great territory, Canadians across this nation and internationally, stand united to support not only victims of domestic violence, but those families and communities that also suffer.

Mr. Speaker, domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of abusive behaviour in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. It can involve a number of different behaviours.

Before I speak about the observable behaviours, I would like to highlight some of the work I've witnessed since taking office in 2011. In January 2015, as former Minister of Justice, I was proud to announce several initiatives designed to support victims of crime. These initiatives were all funded under the crime prevention and victim services trust fund. The fund has supported Yukon community groups since 1998. Proposals are reviewed by the Crime Prevention and Victim Services Trust Board of Trustees. Board members include community members and representatives from Yukon government, First Nations, women's organizations and the RCMP.

Some of the initiatives that were funded include — the Boys and Girls Club of Yukon received \$15,000 for a community stewardship campaign. This project encouraged community stewardship and community understanding by creating opportunities for youth to work with groups such as Mae Bachur Animal Shelter, Whitehorse Food Bank, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, the RCMP, City of Whitehorse and retirement homes. Incentives such as passes to the Canada Games Centre, Takhini Hot Springs, Equinox adventures and Mount Sima were awarded to participants.

Bringing Youth Towards Equality, or BYTE, received \$34,290 for rural violence prevention workshops and an annual Leaders in Training Conference. BYTE's multi-day sessions explore leadership skills, media, healthy relationships, gender stereotypes as well as violence. The project socially engages youth through interactive activities designed to build confidence.

The Town of Faro received \$2,738 for family dinner nights and training. This project brings the community together for family dinners once a month during the winter to increase community pride and safety. Funding also provided skills training for a recreational worker who runs programs for youth.

The Yukon Circle of Change received \$10,000 for restorative community conference projects. This project promotes healing after crime by encouraging conferences between offenders, victims and community members. Yukon Circle of Change coordinates conferencing with trained facilitators at no cost to community organizations or families in Whitehorse. Restorative community conferencing encourages offenders to be responsible and accountable for their crime and to repair the harm caused to victims and the community.

The Yukon Public Legal Education Association received \$27,000 for "It's Not Right". This project aimed to educate and engage bystanders to stop abuse of older adults. Workshops and information sessions in Whitehorse and in the communities taught neighbours, friends and family members to recognize warning signs and provide help in a safe and respectful way.

The Yukon Women's Transition Home Society received \$22,860 for Whitehorse safety protocol communications campaign. This project informed the public and social service providers about the Whitehorse safety protocol. In order to improve services for women, the Whitehorse safety protocol has been developed to build better, responsive relationships between RCMP and service providers. The project also created a third-party reporting program, an opportunity for victims of sexualized offences to report the offence anonymously.

Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Anda Ta Youth Centre received \$18,320 for their winter communications and outdoor skills training program. This program provides youth with access to counselling, skill development training and activities that empower youth to make healthy lifestyle and relationship choices. Youth will participate in sessions that discuss the impacts of drugs and alcohol and teach strategies to address domestic violence. The program also includes trips to Mount Sima and a week-long wilderness camp designed to teach modern and traditional wilderness skills.

Carcross/Tagish First Nation received \$50,000 for their Skills for Building, Skills for Life project. This project provides Carcross/Tagish men, 18 and older, with the training to develop employment and life skills. During the 10-week program, participants build log cabins and complete daily physical and emotional wellness activities.

That list may seem exhaustive; however, I can assure you that it is a drop in the bucket of what this government has been honoured to do as part of their role in preventing domestic violence.

In October 2014, while I served as the Minister of Justice, we presented eight Yukoners with community safety awards in recognition of their important role in building community safety. Many Yukoners continue to work diligently to make our territory a safe and better place to live.

The annual community safety awards are a great way to acknowledge individual contributions, as well as celebrate the collective efforts of the community. Innovative crime prevention initiatives, support services for victims of crime, volunteerism with at-risk youth and achievements in community policing were just some of the highlights among the 27 nominations received in 2014. These awards continue to remind us that we can all make a difference in our community.

I was also pleased as Minister of Justice to thank all of the nominees for their contributions and encourage others to support initiatives that promote community safety. As members in the Legislature are aware, award recipients are selected by the Community Safety Awards Nomination Committee, and I certainly thank the committee for their good work.

The Volunteer Award recipient, Tamara Horsey, told us that, being a victim of crime, she knows first-hand what it is like to feel that your voice is not being heard, but she could also tell us that after two years of diligently working to make changes with all the professionals and the peers she had been working with, that she felt her voice was indeed heard because she chose to speak up. She was very honoured to have received the award for outstanding volunteer in recognition of the hard work she had done. Tamara went on to say that we can all make change if we work together. I am proud of Tamara, Mr. Speaker, and I am proud of her for coming forward to share experience, not only as a victim of crime, but as a victim trying to navigate services to ensure her well-being.

I had the privilege of being part of the establishment of the Community Safety Awards in 2012 in response to a recommendation from the 2010 *Sharing Common Ground* report, which identified a need to recognize the contributions of Yukoners who promote community safety.

As Minister of Health and Social Services, I am thankful to be a part of our Yukon Party team for ensuring that victims of domestic violence have the supports they deserve. The Department of Health and Social Services funds several non-governmental organizations to provide programs and services to victims of domestic violence. I want to take a moment just to highlight some of the proposed 2016-17 financial transfers from the Department of Health and Social Services to various non-governmental organizations, otherwise known as NGOs. These NGOs provide support to Health and Social Services programming and assist many Yukoners, some of whom are victims of domestic violence. In the 2016-17 budget, there is \$2.365 million for transitional homes and second-stage

housing. There is \$1.45 million for emergency shelters and youth shelters and \$558,000 for public information and support. Also, in the 2016-17 proposed operation and maintenance funding, there is \$1.088 million allocated for family support.

As Minister of Health and Social Services, I was happy to announce funding of \$6,000 for the Home Educators Society, Yukon, under the health investment fund to offer the peaceful warrior program. The health investment fund is mandated under the Yukon *Health Act* 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 peaceful warrior program teaches children and their parents to build self-confidence, physical strength, agility and self-discipline, and to understand conflict. The funding will assist with registration fees for home-schooled students for weekly training and workshops during a six-month period.

In August of 2012, the Yukon Party government provided \$338,000 in annual operation and maintenance funding to the Dawson City Women's Shelter. This funding allowed for enhanced programming and shelter-bed capacity for women and children in abusive relationships. In 2013, the Yukon Party government was proud to help open Betty's Haven. Betty's Haven provides affordable and secure housing for up to 18 months as well as support programs. Currently, the Department of Health and Social Services provides ongoing funding for this important transitional home for women and children fleeing abuse.

This government also supports the Watson Lake shelter, Help and Hope for Families, with funding of \$492,000. The Help and Hope centre serves as emergency transitional housing for women and children in abusive and violent situations.

Domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of abusive behaviour in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. It can involve a number of different behaviours including: emotional abuse, which can involve such things as trying to lower the other person's self-esteem by constantly criticizing them; physical abuse, which not only involves physical violence, but also denying people medical care or getting them to take drugs against their will; psychological abuse, which could include any type of threatening behaviour that is used to instill fear in the other individual; sexual abuse, which involves coercing the other person to perform sexual acts or engage in sexual behaviours; and financial abuse, which occurs by making the other person financially dependent and then controlling their economic resources.

Domestic violence can also include things like using passive-aggressive behaviour to punish the other person. This would refer to a situation where the perpetrator masks their expression of anger and it can include things like deliberately forgetting to do things, unwillingness to be intimate, obstructive behaviour and deliberate lateness. Domestic violence can also include calling the other person insulting names, stalking the other person, intruding into the other

individual's personal life, making threats of violence or neglecting the other person.

Domestic violence has been described as a hidden face of addiction. This is due to the co-morbidity of the two conditions. Addiction and domestic abuse also share a number of characteristics including — they both involve loss of control; the individual continues with the behaviour even though it is leading to negative consequences in their life and the individual becomes preoccupied with their behaviour. Addiction and domestic violence have a negative impact on the family. The partner will usually find it difficult to abandon the person who is an addict or who is abusive.

Both conditions tend to involve a great deal of denial. Both the substance abuser and the domestic violence perpetrator abuse their own powers for personal gain. Addiction and domestic abuse lead to shame and reduced self-esteem for those who are involved. In the beginning the individual may be able to restrict their bad behaviour to the home, but certainly over time it often becomes more noticeable in other areas of their life.

There are a number of reasons why addiction and domestic violence tend to co-exist. Alcohol and drugs lower the individual's inhibitions, which means they are more likely to engage in bad behaviours. Inebriation makes people more impulsive. They will do things with no thought of the future consequences of their behaviour. When people are inebriated, their decision-making capacity is reduced. They are far more likely to make poor decisions as a result. Certain drugs such as stimulants can cause people to become paranoid. This paranoia may motivate extreme behaviours.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to announce in November 2015 that our Alcohol and Drug Services community addictions program was operational in Yukon communities. The Yukon Party government has been working on changing the way we approach services in the communities. The community addictions program was developed to address gaps identified by First Nations and highlighted the clinical services plan. I believe this approach will better serve the communities by providing a more diverse range of services.

Five community addiction workers now provide a continuum of services to all Yukon communities. Haines Junction, Watson Lake and Dawson City each have a community addictions worker, while two workers are based in Whitehorse and work with the surrounding communities. The community addictions worker provides prevention activities, community-based support, referrals, counselling services and after-care to those who have completed an inpatient treatment program. They also provide training to service providers and the public on substance abuse, problematic use and addictions.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, the community addictions program uses a collaborative community-approach outreach model and works closely with existing services, including First Nation programs, local service providers, social workers, community health and mental health services. This motion speaks to one of many, many elements of assisting or supporting those fleeing domestic violence.

I again thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for bringing this motion forward to the House this afternoon, again thank the Member for Copperbelt North for his friendly amendment and thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I won't spend too long here this afternoon in recognition of the time in the House and the comments that have already been made by three of my colleagues on this motion.

I would like to thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for bringing forward this idea. It is certainly a very interesting idea although — as my colleague, the Minister of Community Services noted, I believe, in his remarks — we just have finished the process of amending the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, following public consultation and also had consultation on the regulations. Those have been in force since the beginning of this year — but recognizing that this specific issue and ideas have come up from people who deal with victims of domestic violence regularly, we very much appreciate that and are interested in discussing that with them and with other stakeholders about whether changes should be made to the legislation and/or the regulations to better provide protection for victims of domestic violence, particularly when they are in a time of crisis.

Also, as noted, I believe, by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, she spoke to what she had heard from some people who deal with victims of violence, particularly women fleeing violence on a regular basis, and that some of the provisions under the *Family Violence Protection Act* related to emergency intervention orders were good immediate tools but didn't address some of the issues that would happen within the following weeks and challenges that women fleeing domestic violence might face in that situation.

I would just again welcome this idea. I note that although we've taken a number of steps to work with stakeholders, including Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, on strengthening the support network — both government and NGO — that is available to women, children and others fleeing domestic violence, we also recognize that there's more work that can be done and we are certainly open to good ideas about what can be done to build on the work to date.

Unfortunately, I see that some of the visitors we had here from Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre had to leave for other engagements, but I would like to thank them for coming here this afternoon. I would like to thank them, as well as all who work at Victoria Faulkner women's association and the many other NGOs that provide vital support services to Yukoners sometimes in crisis for the good work that they do.

Along with the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, I was pleased recently to announce the Yukon government's continued funding for the A Safe Place program provided by the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre. I would like to as well acknowledge that so far, although the program is new, it certainly seems to be delivering a very important service, particularly after-hours and on weekends when a number of the normal service providers — or the other service

providers, I should say; the government offices, et cetera — are closed and not available to provide that support to women when they need it during those hours. I would just like to thank them for that work as well as the many other things they do, including the rural pregnant mother's suite provided at the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre.

I would like to thank some of the other key NGO service providers, including Kaushee's place, Help and Hope in Watson Lake and the Dawson City Women's Shelter as well as other organizations like the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, which of course is hosting the women's legal advocate, which was another announcement that, along with the Minister for the Women's Directorate, we made within the past year of increased supports by government in partnership with NGOs for helping women, in that case, to understand their rights within the legal system and better navigate it.

I don't want to miss anybody in recognizing work that's done by NGOs, but a few others that come to mind include the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society and the good work that's done as well by the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council and the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle as well as the work done by the Yukon Status of Women Council.

I have the feeling that I'm forgetting someone in speaking without notes here, Mr. Speaker. I do just want to again thank the many within Yukon's NGO communities for the very vital services that they provide in Whitehorse and throughout the territory and the important role that they play, along with government service providers, in providing for people in times of crisis, including — and especially since it's our topic here with this motion — women who are fleeing domestic violence.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks and again thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for bringing forward this valuable idea and look forward to hearing from stakeholders about whether we should be taking additional steps to strengthen the legislation and regulation in this area.

Mr. Tredger: I would like to thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for bringing forward this motion. She is a champion and her championship is appreciated. I would also like to thank all members for their comments and for their willingness to work with the Member for Takhini-Kopper King on this.

I'll begin by mentioning a few of the statistics about violence against women in the Yukon. Yukon's rate of violent crime against women is four times the national average. In 2014, four percent of Canadians with a current or former spouse or common-law partner reported having been physically or sexually abused by their spouse during the preceding five years. That's compounded by the fact that these are underreported statistics. It's estimated that fewer than one-third of women who have experienced spousal and other forms of violence against women reported the incident. Fewer than one-third report incidents and bring them to the attention of the police.

Fifty-one percent of women reporting spousal violence fear for their lives. In the Yukon, we have the highest rates of police-reported family violence — 911 per 100,000 population. If the actual reporting is happening as estimated, that 911 per 100,000 would be around 2,700 per 100,000, or 900 incidents in the Yukon, roughly.

Those are statistics, Mr. Speaker. Those are statistics, like our words that roll off our tongues as we try to explain and come to grips. The statistics are frightening enough, but my hat goes to the teachers, the people in our women's shelters, and the women who were here today who have to deal with the faces and the reality of the situation.

As a principal and a teacher, I have seen and experienced the effect on families, on children and on our communities. I have seen children unavailable for learning because their basic need for safety is not being met.

I would agree with members that there is a need for a larger discussion. We as a society, we as legislators, we as men and women, we as neighbours need to have a larger discussion. We need to become more human in the way we deal, the way we work together, the way we support each other, the way we educate each other and the way we get our backs.

I'm concerned when we talk, though, of the need for a larger discussion — that in that, we neglect to deal with the immediate.

I thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for bringing forth this motion. It won't solve the larger problem, but it will help some of our neighbours in need, some of the survivors of violence, people — friends, neighbours — who have been beaten up physically. They may have been kicked, punched, sworn at; they could be ridiculed. They have been thrown out of their house. They have been beat up physically and mentally. These are some of the most extremely vulnerable neighbours in our society, as are their families. Yes, long-term, it involves discussion and it involves deep thinking, but mostly it involves compassion and it doesn't negate the need for immediate action to alleviate a daily tragedy for our neighbours.

Our stats show us that this violence is happening at an alarming and unacceptable rate.

I am fully in support of this motion and I would urge fast action on it. Don't wait for the big picture. The time for action is now, today, tonight, tomorrow. Our neighbours are in need of this, and again I thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for bringing this forward and thank you to the members for speaking to this motion and for listening to me.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I was really compelled to say a number of things in addition to the remarks that I stated earlier, which referred to the actual amendment that was proposed. I want to thank all members for their comments here today on this very important topic.

What I said earlier today is that, when it comes to violence against women, our government recognizes that this is indeed a significant issue that continues to be a huge barrier to women's equality here in the territory — and right across

the globe, for that matter. We know that rates of violence, particularly against aboriginal women, are very much higher in the north than the rest of the country. We're very acutely aware that more work on everyone's part is required to bring an end to violence in our communities.

Over the last decade and some, our government has been working to address those key barriers that influence women's vulnerability to this. We have been working on a number of initiatives over the past — really, dating back almost 14 years now. It has already been stated earlier — but working to enhance women's housing security through the creation of policies such as the victims of violence policy through the Yukon Housing Corporation that came about several years ago. It is something that was introduced and it provides victims of violence priority access to affordable housing.

It was already mentioned here today, but I think it's important to again state that our government has been working and continues to work with organizations such as the Yukon Women's Transition Home Society on initiatives such as Betty's Haven, a secure second-stage housing initiative in support of women and children who are fleeing abusive relationships — fleeing abuse, period. I was really proud of that particular initiative — that we were able to help open and to be able to see first-hand, to take a tour that, on the day that it was officially opened with other members of our community — including our Premier — and to see this beautiful facility with bright, spacious rooms with different rooms with two or three bedrooms. Of course this is going a great way as well in terms of assisting women and their families on the way to a life that is safe and free of violence, on a road of independence once again. Indeed, it is helping to reduce the incidence of violence against women.

Likewise, I have been able to work pretty closely with those who help to operate and provide direction to the Dawson City Women's Shelter. Diane Schroeder, for example, is the executive director for that particular facility and a long-standing member of the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues. Her term recently came to an end, and I want to thank Diane and her staff and her crew — the very great board of directors that they have — in working with Yukon Housing Corporation to expand their shelter and to be able to expand the level of programming available for women and children in that community. Likewise, the work of the Watson Lake Help and Hope for Families — I know the MLA for Watson Lake and I have met with them on many occasions in Watson Lake — with the board of directors and the staff. Through the community development fund we were able to see the second-stage housing initiative evolve in Watson Lake in collaboration with the shelter itself. It is another great facility in the community. I thank the board of directors and the staff for their hard work in working with the community, raising dollars, working with the respective departments and really serving the needs of many women and children from Watson Lake and the surrounding communities in the area to address the violence against women in southeast Yukon in particular. They have been able to grow their programs in the community by being creative and by being able to host

workshops to either enhance the skill sets of service providers at the shelter and beyond, but really enhancing the skill sets that are so important to be able to assist women who are fleeing those abusive relationships.

We were also able to work very strategically with a number of different departments in creating the multi-family housing initiative — the family-focused housing initiative in Riverdale. It specifically focuses on single-parent families, the lion's share of which happens to comprise women. There are also men who are there at the facility as well. I certainly want to recognize the great partnership that the Women's Directorate was able to just garner and sign off with the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre as well as the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition in assisting the Yukon government in managing that particular facility in terms of providing that outreach to the tenants — single-parent families — and to being able to work with other agencies throughout the territory in facilitating workshops, arranging information that meets specific needs and requests of those tenants. We took a survey of those tenants not long ago — it was about a year and a half to two years ago.

I went to a barbecue last early summer to hear some of the comments and suggestions that came forward from the tenants. One of those was more communication, but having that support in that facility. That is why we came up with that partnership between the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre and the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition to help facilitate those critical relationships, being able to respond to some of those specific needs that will lead to a life of independence and better years in their lives.

What makes that facility very distinct and very unique to that particular housing initiative is having that support on the ground there in that facility. It has made a huge difference. I know it has been very appreciated by the tenants and by the community itself.

I would again like to reference that facility alone as providing over 30 units with two and three bedrooms — a beautiful space for families.

Through the Women's Directorate over the years, we've worked to develop some creative and culturally relevant violence prevention initiatives in collaboration with the community, working to provide those better supports for women to advance women, whether it's through the workforce, through education and training, or working with each of our women's organizations.

We've worked pretty hard over the years to provide funding available through the women's equality fund, the violence against aboriginal women fund, and also, more recently, providing funding to help implement recommendations made throughout a couple of our Yukon aboriginal women's summits over the years. All of this is to say that we've enhanced those resources significantly. In fact, I think we're just under \$1 million in support of direct transfer payments to organizations in support of advancing work to advance equality on many different fronts.

I want to acknowledge this really important work. The Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre was but one organization

— we had representatives here in the gallery today. Having just celebrated 40 years is a significant accomplishment, and to see the number of programs that have grown in leaps and bounds over the years. A Safe Place — the Minister of Justice referenced that work earlier, work that is so critical in being able to especially reach those marginalized populations in our community — non-barrier, by making available a hot meal, having a warm, comfortable, secure and safe environment such as the facility at Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, and by being able to have those professional, trained counsellors on hand as well, should there be an appetite, willingness or desire to reach out to those resources as well.

It's one of many different programs offered by Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre. In fact they just launched, during their 40th anniversary celebration, a new website — a beautiful website, I might add — which really speaks to all of the many different programs that they deliver on a daily basis on behalf of our territory.

The women's advocate has been a long-standing position in this territory and we were able to help enhance funding available to that position. We were able to also provide Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre — in collaboration with Les EssentiElles and the many different organizations that they partner with every year on developing those very innovative campaigns such as the 12 Days to End Violence Against Women Campaign — an additional \$30,000 in ongoing support. All told, about a \$40,000 increase to that organization to really enhance the very critical work that they do each year — and the amazing partnerships and the leverage resources that they have been able to establish as a result of building that rapport, trust and respect among the different organizations serving our community.

Of course, as Government of Yukon, we have been working to improve our own response as an agent of change in our territory. I know that, through the Department of Justice, we have been working with them through the Women's Directorate and Justice, active members of the Sexual Assault Response Committee — an interagency committee that works to really improve that standard of care, social and justice system responses to victims.

We know that the majority of sexualized assaults are not reported to the police. We know that many victims of assault do not seek police, legal, or even medical supports for that matter. Acknowledging that many victims may not be ready to report an assault to the RCMP or to this committee, I want to acknowledge the importance of third-party reporting — the initiative that was really initiated and established by the Yukon Women's Transition Home Society through Kaushee's and was really supported by that society and it was supported with the Yukon RCMP. It enables those victims to anonymously report information about an assault to Kaushee's Place, which then will be able to share it with the RCMP. It then enables the RCMP to help track and create a profile of offenders in our territory. It's a really innovative approach. We actually supported a representative of Kaushee's Place to attend a TEDx talk and to be able to sit with other women and other organizations around the country in Winnipeg a year ago

during the federal/provincial/territorial status of women ministers meeting to be able to share that best practice and share that very innovative initiative.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention another innovative initiative that came about thanks to the *Sharing Common Ground* report of 2011 and the recommendations. One of the remaining recommendations was to look at examining the importance of a women's legal advocate. So we tasked the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues to do that consultation. They reached out to the communities and organizations on a number of occasions, and came up with a report and recommendations. They recommended that, instead of establishing a position in-house in the Yukon government, we actually work with an organization.

We put that out for a kind of request for proposals, and it was awarded to Skookum Jim Friendship Centre. It makes sense: they already provide a whole suite of different services on behalf of women and the broader public. It's to help women navigate those legal issues, including sexualized assault, and make those options and information available at an early stage so that women are fully informed as to what choices they have in reporting — that there are choices — and understand the full repercussions and outcomes of each individual choice.

Mr. Speaker, my gosh, how time flies in this Assembly — all of which is to say that any time we can speak to this issue, I think it's of great importance. It helps to raise awareness of the issues that are going on in our territory and that there is a lot more work to be done to address violence against women and children.

I also want to recognize the work of Yukon aboriginal women's organizations, our government and Yukon First Nations in addressing murdered and missing indigenous women and girls in this country and in our territory, and the work that we just recently undertook to host a Yukon regional roundtable, comprised of all the respective governments in this territory and organizations and family members. We also had asked the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle to host a family gathering — a number of recommendations made. That is the work of our group, recognizing that violence against women and our response is not just a government issue — it's all of our issues. We all have a very important role to play.

We continue to work through our advisory committee and our working group on those recommendations. We just recently had a meeting on go-forward steps. There is much work to be done, but the critical part of all of this is that we're at the table and we are discussing it; we're taking action; we're looking at the gaps that exist and working to enhance the work that is currently underway, as well as looking to new initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that my time is up. I do want to thank the member opposite, again, for bringing forward this motion. I want to also thank my colleague from Community Services for the amendment. I think it has been a good afternoon of collaboration and working together to find

potential further solutions to enhance the work, when it comes to addressing violence against women.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise in support of the motion and I would like to thank my colleague, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, for all of her diligence on working on the needs of everyone in the Yukon for housing and on her work in support of women's equality.

No one can be equal if they do not have shelter, food and safety in their lives. Those are some of the basic needs that everyone needs. So I thank all members for their remarks today in support of this motion to amend the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* to allow victims of domestic violence to terminate a lease early without penalty and to remove an abuser's name from the lease.

The Minister of Community Services brought forward an amendment, which has been supported, to undertake consultations in the community before bringing forward amendments and we have supported that and we appreciate the goodwill gesture of the ministers opposite meeting with the opposition to discuss the amendment before they brought it forward.

To be clear, this shouldn't be a contentious change to the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and it isn't to hinder a landlord's ability to rent, but it's designed to address a victim's ability to stay in their home and to be safe. We need to be sure that the steps we are asking victims of domestic violence to take aren't re-victimizing.

Let me start with speaking for a moment about laws. We're talking about amending one law — the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. Laws belong to the people; laws affect society; laws can draw attention to problems in the community and laws can change attitudes and behaviour. It's a matter of strong debate currently as to whether women have achieved their section 15 Charter rights to equality under the law and to the equal rights and benefit of the law.

In looking at laws that address violence against women, we most often think of the criminal justice system and there has been much written about the failures of the criminal justice system in responding to allegations of violence and responding in the way that the courts and police and other actors in the criminal justice system respond when women have reported a sexual assault or have reported violence.

I want to remind members opposite of what happened many, many years ago when the issue of violence against women in homes, from their partners, was first brought to public attention. Margaret Mitchell, who was a New Democrat Member of Parliament for Vancouver East, really found the spotlight in 1982 when she stood up and told the House of Commons that one in 10 Canadian husbands regularly beat his wife and the Members of Parliament laughed and shouted, and I remember hearing on the radio just how that sounded. Ms. Mitchell responded, "This is no laughing matter".

We saw the issue of violence against women in their homes and from their intimate partners become something on the national stage. We have come a fair ways in continuing to

have debate and in seeing more discussion and more action in the community.

Last night, Equal Voice Yukon hosted a conversation about encouraging more women to be involved in politics and, specifically, to seek political office in the territorial election. There was also discussion about the number of women who have been in leadership in municipal governments and in First Nation governments and about having more events to work on improving the representation of women in political decision-making, because there isn't equality yet.

Other members have spoken about the *Family Violence Prevention Act*, and as the sponsoring minister for that bill in the 1990s, we engaged in a consultation across Yukon about the need. We heard a lot from the members of the community and we put it into law that we recognized that family violence is and continues to be a serious problem in the Yukon. We recognize that one difficulty victims of family violence face is that the abuser often forces them to leave their own home to escape the abuse, and that there must be effective legal procedures victims of family violence can use easily to get immediate help and relief from the abuse. This discussion began because women who had been beaten themselves, women who were their friends and women who were active in community groups said that we have to stop this approach of taking women out of their home and building a safe shelter for women and children to flee to, so let's think about a different approach; let's allow women to stay in their home.

This proposal that is before us is to look at further amendments to *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* so that we can accommodate women being able to stay in their homes. It is based on a law recently introduced in Alberta that would allow domestic violence victims to break their lease without penalty if they demonstrate that they or their children are in danger. It would also allow victims to take the alleged abusers off the lease altogether. It's a civil remedy like the *Family Violence Prevention Act*, which was a civil remedy, because sometimes the criminal justice system does fail women who are abused.

In the present day, there are many campaigns to end violence and it's sad that by and large women still lead the drive for public education campaigns to end violence. However, Mr. Speaker, it is also really encouraging that men are taking leadership and responsibility for ending violence, because violence is a gendered crime.

When we look at the statistics, we know that not only are there much higher rates of violence against women in the Yukon, but much of the violence that is reported in the criminal justice statistics is against women. Half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16. On average, every six days a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner.

In 2011, from 89 police-reported spousal homicides, 76 of the victims — over 85 percent — were women. On any given night in Canada, about 3,300 women, along with their 3,000 children, are forced to sleep in an emergency shelter to escape domestic violence. Every night, about 200 women are turned away because the shelters are full, so shelters aren't the

only answer — having laws and measures in place so women can have safe housing is essential.

It is true that, like all violent crimes in Canada, the rates of domestic violence have fallen in recent years, but this decline is partly due to increased social equality and financial freedom for women, which makes it easier for them to leave abusive relationships at earlier stages.

Women, though, are more likely to be assaulted by someone they know than to be assaulted by a stranger. About half — 49 percent — of all female murder victims in Canada are killed by a former or current intimate partner. In contrast, only seven percent of male murder victims were killed by intimate partners. Men are more likely to initiate violence, while women are more likely to use violence in self-defence.

Eighty-three percent of all police-reported domestic assaults are against women, and that's a pattern that's consistent for every province and territory across Canada. Women are more likely to be physically injured, to get a restraining order and to fear for their lives.

In Yukon, our rate of violent crime is four times the national average. Fifty-one percent of women who report spousal violence fear for their lives and, in 2014, Yukon's rate of police-reported family violence was 3.7 times the national average.

At Kaushee's Place, the shelter in Whitehorse, 288 women and 171 children were admitted in 2013-14. Another 2014 statistic from Statistics Canada is that people self-identifying as aboriginal were more than twice as likely as non-aboriginal people to report experiencing spousal violence in the previous five years.

So we're fortunate, Mr. Speaker, that we have a number of organizations in the Yukon that have been working to resolve this problem and to support women facing violence for many years.

Earlier today Charlotte Hrenchuk from the Yukon Status of Women Council was in the gallery, and I remember speaking with her when she conducted a survey and wrote a report on rural women's voices a number of years ago. When she went out to talk to women in the communities, the problem of violence was so hidden that many wouldn't think to mention it until they were asked. But when women were asked about the violence that they and their friends were exposed to, there was lots of information that they had to offer and lots of suggestions that they had to offer for improvement.

In Watson Lake, the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society has taken a lead, and one of the activities going back over a decade was the Breaking the Silence on Family Violence Conference that was held there in 2004. That conference was held at the order of a judge who had given a suspended sentence to a community leader when he was convicted of abusing his wife. Women with bruised faces came and spoke.

We avert our gaze when we are exposed to that violence. That is the easiest thing to do. That's what many of us do. But women are able now to stand up and say, "We are here. We are people. We deserve safety. We deserve housing." We deserve to have legislators in this Assembly debating motions

like the one my colleague brought forward to improve our laws to help make women safe.

The Minister of Health and Social Services spoke about the *Sharing Common Ground* report that was completed after the review of Yukon's police force in 2010. I think one of the most significant aspects of that review was that a broad coalition of women's groups came together to insist on representation on the advisory committee to the review of Yukon's police force and to insist on there being attention paid to the problems when women report violence and they are not taken seriously by the people they report to. In particular they identified the problem where police didn't give what they felt was a good response.

So the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, Kaushee's Place, the Yukon's Status of Women Council, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, the Help and Hope shelter in Watson Lake, the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, Les EssentiElles, Elizabeth Fry Society Yukon, the regional women's committee of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the Dawson City shelter — women from all of those groups were part of discussions on how we could put forward our strong expression of the problems women face and our suggestions for improving policing and improving the criminal justice system's response to reports of violence against women.

Violence is deliberate. Violence is something that people can change — people can choose to not be violent — and violence is something that occurs across all aspects of society.

Before I close I want to speak about how important how we use language is when we're speaking about violence. Even the term "domestic violence" doesn't sound as serious as the actual problem is. We're not talking about something domestic — it's in a home; it could be associated with good things that happen in homes. But when you speak directly about violence against women — and it's largely women, but whether it's violence against women or men or children, it's deliberate violence against a person by another person. The choice of language that directly speaks to who does what to whom, and how we can stop the violence that men commit against their wives or partners, is what we need to be clear we're speaking about.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would just like to say that it has typically been women who bring attention to the difficult problems of violence, but I'm pleased that today we have had members from both sides of this Legislative Assembly speak in support of the motion brought forward by my colleague, to look at how our laws can continue to evolve and continue to improve, and how our laws can help make women safe, and how our laws can ensure that women have access to safe housing, even when they are beaten by someone who was close to them.

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

Ms. White: I thank my colleagues in the House for their thoughts on the matter and the willingness to kind of take

this forward. I am going to say it again. Yukon women's advocacy organizations are the experts that we have on the ground. I am looking forward to them having a voice to help strengthen the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* — that would empower their clients to be safer and things.

I just want to highlight a couple of things. When the Minister of Community Services was talking about the *Family Violence Prevention Act* and talked about some of the stipulations under the VOA, even that highlighted what some of the concerns were — that even if a woman went through the process and she faced her abuser, she could still be forced to leave the residence where she was staying. My hope is that what this motion does is — it doesn't undermine the ability of a landlord to have a tenant. It doesn't at all. What it does is it empowers the abused to be able to stay in that home and it gives that ability to change the lease or to remove someone from a lease who should not be there because of their actions.

My greatest hope is that this isn't just lip service to the issue; that when government says they will consult with the stakeholders on this issue, their intent is honest, that it is forthright and that it happens sooner than later.

I know that in quick conversations with women's groups they're concerned that when we say there will be a consultation with stakeholders that this will be like other ones, where they've entered into the process honestly and it has gone on and on and on. I really believe these are actions that are important. I believe that these are actions that don't undermine the strength of the legislation, and that they will actually strengthen the legislation.

So my hope is that we take our intentions here, which are good and which are honest, and we actually make them into actions. I thank everyone in the House for their comments and I really look forward to knowing that we've removed more barriers that exist for people fleeing violence, and that we actually give them that ability to move forward toward a safer life.

I look forward to the vote.

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

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

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. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 14 yeas, nil nays.

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

Motion No. 1142, as amended, agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

Do members wish to take a recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

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

Bill No. 23: *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

Department of Education

Hon. Mr. Graham: It's a pleasure for me to rise in the House today to present the 2016-17 budget for the Department of Education, but first I would like to introduce my ADM of Finance and Administration, Cyndy Dekuysscher. I know Cyndy doesn't need any introduction, as she has spent some time in the House over the last few years as head of Finance.

I'll start with the department's mission, which is to ensure the success of each student in Yukon and encourage the lifelong learning of Yukoners of all ages.

In 2015, the Premier announced a new vision for education in the Yukon. The new vision, as laid out by the Premier, will support the department's mission and find new ways of working together to support the learning experiences of students of all ages. We are working with our partners to shift our education system to improve learning outcomes for

all Yukoners, from early to adult learners. The new vision is rooted in the collective values and aspirations of the department and all of our partners in education. Our aim is for learners to develop the essential skills, knowledge and personal qualities that they need to succeed and to thrive throughout their education and beyond the classroom.

As we have said before, the new vision process is not about creating another report or strategy document for education. We are instead focused on actions based on the priorities of our partners that they are identifying for us, for our schools and for our programs. For example, our partners are interested in more trades and apprenticeship opportunities. In response, we planned and are running a dual-credit skills exploration pilot in Watson Lake with Yukon College, where secondary school students and adult learners are being introduced to five different trades.

We also heard from our partners that supporting students who pursue course upgrades should be a priority. We are exploring ways to provide more assistance so that students who choose to go this route will not face significant financial hardship. We have formed a steering committee to guide the new vision process and we monitor its progress. It is made up of representatives from many of our partners in education, including Yukon educators, Yukon College, parents and school councils, the Yukon francophone school board, the Catholic Education Association of Yukon, Yukon First Nations and the Department of Health and Social Services. They continue to make recommendations on priorities raised by our partners. For example, they have recommended that Yukon's curriculum include northern and Yukon context and cultures, as well as Yukon First Nations, perspectives at all levels. They have also strongly expressed the need to build capacity and support for Yukon educators to adapt and teach new curriculum, which we will be providing over the coming years. Together we will integrate Yukon and northern context in our kindergarten to grade 9 and in grades 10 to 12 courses. We will also be embedding Yukon First Nation perspectives and knowledge into our curriculum from kindergarten through grade 12.

The steering committee is currently discussing modern teaching and learning practices in other regions of Canada and globally. As learning shifts from what students know to how they learn, from memorizing content to developing competencies and skills, the committee is considering what this should look like in Yukon. The committee is also interested in how our schools and programs could be more holistic in their approach to students and their learning to address the social, cultural, emotional, physical and intellectual elements of learners and learning.

These are the kinds of priorities, actions and discussions underway through the new vision that this year's budget will be investing in for education. Our focus remains on improving outcomes for Yukon learners and giving them the skills and supports they need to thrive in life in and beyond school.

Laying this groundwork and making these changes will not happen in only one year. We expect this work to continue and to unfold over the next three to five years. This is just the

beginning for the new vision for education and we look forward to moving together with our partners. Throughout this budget, you can see the many ways we are investing in education and ensuring that we have the necessary infrastructure, technology and supports in place to enable our students to develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed and thrive.

The total budget for the Department of Education this year is \$173,713,000. With these investments, Yukon students will be ready for great careers and personal success when they eventually move on from school and training.

I'll begin, Madam Chair, with the capital budget estimates for 2016-17. The capital budget is \$13,369,000 and the capital budget is based on the need and the cash flow requirements for each project; therefore, the funding requested each year can vary significantly, as we have seen in the past three years. Our government is focused on ensuring that Yukon has the necessary infrastructure in place to meet the current and future needs of our education system.

As you know, in January of this year, the students of F.H. Collins Secondary School moved into a brand new building. We provided this beautiful, modern learning facility and now the school community is making it a true home for learning, from class art on the walls to Destination Imagination tournaments and extracurricular activities on the weekends. The students and staff of F.H. Collins Secondary are now creating new memories and enjoying the new learning opportunities that are possible in the new home of F.H. Collins Secondary School.

In our 2016-17 capital budget, we will continue other work in the general area. \$2,980,000 is being requested, as we proceed with the demolition of the old school building. That demolition has already begun, Madam Chair, and we expect it to be done this summer. These funds will allow for the hazardous materials remediation of the site, which was scheduled to begin this spring. It did that and the demolition of the old school building will then follow during the summer break.

We're also requesting \$3 million for the renovations of the technical education wing at F.H. Collins Secondary School. Upgrades to the wing are required for the continued use of these facilities. As the technical education wing is currently heated from the old F.H. Collins building, a new heating plant is required to service the wing after the demolition of the old building is complete.

Additional renovations include a new pedestrian entry, with barrier-free access, and upgrading of existing walls to meet current building code requirements, and changes to the washrooms. Classes are ongoing in the tech ed wing as we complete these essential renovations, section by section. The upgrades are expected to be completed by this summer.

In 2016-17, we will also continue to invest in French first language education for Yukon's francophone community. The Department of Education and the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon settlement committee continues to meet regularly to resolve the outstanding issues from the court case. As you know, there is a subcommittee discussing the

construction of a French first language high school in Whitehorse and optimal locations. \$400,000 is requested for the planning phase for the construction of the school, as the pre-designed functional program is nearly completed.

There is still work we have to do before we begin building a future home for French first language high schools in the Yukon; however, we are moving forward to establishing a first-class school that the francophone community can be truly proud of.

Additionally, \$600,000 is requested for the construction of a modular classroom for École Émilie Tremblay School. The modular classroom will be used to address the growth in enrolment at École Émilie Tremblay and will house an elementary classroom. This will allow the l'Académie Parhélie students to be reunited in a wing in the existing École Émilie Tremblay building. CSFY is a valued partner of the Department of Education and together we continue to work to provide high-quality French first language education in Yukon.

We have also been working very hard with Kluane First Nation over the last year. We signed an education agreement together in the fall of 2015. As part of this agreement, we are requesting \$40,000 to explore options for establishing a school in Burwash Landing. This is just one aspect of our agreement, as we work to find ways to improve learning outcomes for not only Kluane First Nation, but for all First Nation students across the territory.

Our government is committed to protecting the health and safety of all Yukoners, especially our children and students. In 2012, a tragedy occurred in our Watson Lake community. A young child was fatally injured by a moveable soccer goal and died. We want to make sure that this does not happen again and that all Yukon students and children can play safely on our soccer fields.

We have introduced a new regulation for the *Movable Soccer Goal Safety Act*, and I believe that it now has been approved and will be coming out. It will be published very soon. It will provide rules to ensure that all movable soccer goals in use in Yukon are secured with proper labelling, are regularly inspected and meet strict manufacturing requirements. These proposed regulations will come into effect on May 1. The manufacturing standards requirements for movable soccer goals in Yukon will come into effect on October 1, 2016. \$150,000 is being requested to replace movable soccer goals owned by the Department of Education because we want to ensure that all Yukoners can safely participate on the soccer fields around this territory.

\$1,123,000 is requested for Yukon College's Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, otherwise known as CNIM. CNIM is a truly made-in-Yukon initiative to build capacity and expertise in our region. It trains workers with the skills needed for the current and future anticipated labour shortages in the Yukon mining industry. The centre helps Yukoners and Yukon communities to position themselves to gain economic benefits from the mining activities in their areas. It helps us develop local skilled labour forces for the industry.

This is the final year of funding for Yukon College to complete the construction of a new building for this trades centre at the Ayamdigut Campus in Whitehorse. These funds will also support renovations to existing trade shops at the campus. Our government and CanNor are both contributing equally to the development of this facility. It is anticipated that this facility will be ready and operational by August 2016.

We will also be doing some work on Yukon schools this year. \$2,760,000 is requested for capital maintenance repairs at various schools. Capital maintenance is required to proactively replace or repair building components. Some of the larger capital maintenance repair projects planned for 2016-17 include: Watson Lake Secondary School, \$600,000 for roof repairs; Christ the King Elementary School boiler and burner replacement, \$150,000; Teslin School fuel tanks replacement, \$120,000; Tantalus School field rehabilitation and fencing, \$120,000; and Vanier Catholic Secondary School fuel tank replacement, \$120,000.

We are also requesting \$100,000 for the school revitalization plan in order to continue our work on the long-term renovation and replacement schedule for some of our older facilities.

The Department of Education is actively working with the Department of Highways and Public Works to address future renovation needs of our school buildings. This is the first step in ensuring that we anticipate and prepare for future renovation needs.

Part of our plan for the future of Yukon schools has also included supporting information technology upgrades and changes in our schools. \$1,852,000 is being requested for information technology projects in our schools. This includes \$452,000 to complete the implementation of the new student information system, Aspen. Aspen is web-based software that helps Yukon schools to collect and track student data, providing teachers with more reliable access to the data they need to support their students' learning.

We began training for school administrators, counsellors and office staff in the spring of 2015, with teacher training being completed in the fall of 2015. We are now training departmental staff on the system and we expect full implementation to be completed by the end of this school year.

I would also like to highlight the request for \$246,000 for the new one-to-one mobile device leasing program for Yukon teachers. As per the Yukon Teachers' Association collective agreement, we are pleased to offer this optional cost-sharing program between Yukon teachers and the Department of Education. Teachers lease a new Apple product, such as a MacBook or iPad, and share the leasing cost 50/50 with the Department of Education. This program began in 2015 with teachers signing up during the Summer Academy. This helps support teachers in obtaining the technology they need to complete their jobs inside and outside the classroom.

The remaining \$1,154,000 for information technology is for ongoing investments in school-based information technology, including upgrades of computer labs at many of

our schools and various other computer support and maintenance work.

Now I would like to speak to our 2016-17 operation and maintenance budget. The O&M budget for 2016-17 is \$160,344,000 to support the activities of the Public Schools, Advanced Education and Education Support Services branches, as well as Yukon College. A total of \$109,863,000 is requested for the O&M of Public Schools. As I mentioned earlier, we're working extensively with our partners on a new vision for Education. This year, there are four focus areas for the new vision: kindergarten to 12 curriculum, mental health and career counselling, flexible pathways for secondary students, and early learning.

\$190,000 is requested this year to support the ongoing development of the vision. It will go to the work of a new vision steering committee and the engagement of our partners across Yukon to further guide the direction of the new vision. With this funding, we'll develop and begin to implement the new vision throughout our education system in the territory, including building the capacity of our teachers. It will support in-service training for staff and collaboration for Yukon educators to work on curriculum, counselling and more.

We will also be aligning the work of our consultants with the vision as they support and coach leaders.

The funding will be an initial step in not only addressing the educational challenges we currently face, but also seizing the opportunity to enhance the learning experience of Yukon students.

Madam Chair, because I'm running out of time rapidly, I'll end there, and perhaps give the Member for Mayo-Tatchun a little time, and then I can continue on and complete the rest of my speaking notes later.

Mr. Tredger: Madam Chair, I thank the minister for his introduction to Education. I would also like to thank Cyndy Dekuysscher for sticking around this afternoon and taking part in the briefing. It is much appreciated.

I would like to recognize the importance of all of the partners in education: First Nation governments, parents, teachers and the Department of Education. Our *Education Act*, when brought forth, envisioned all partners working together in partnership with cooperation and respect. Research has shown us that the student-teacher relationship is of paramount importance. This is where the education occurs and where we must direct our support, our resources and our energies. For each budget item we discuss, we must ask how this will make a difference for our students. How will it improve their ability to learn successfully? Research has also shown that the closer to the teacher-student interaction in the classroom decisions are made the more effective and relevant those decisions are. We must ensure that decision-making relies on, and is informed by and in response to teachers, school and community input. School and community-based decision making is key to our success.

Studies have shown — research has shown — that First Nation and rural students consistently underperform when compared to the students in Whitehorse. I was encouraged to

see more First Nation involvement in the planning and production of our curriculum going forward, and I thank the minister for that. I would also thank the minister for his involvement in the schools and in the school communities and the time he has spent there.

As well, a special thank you to the minister and his deputy minister. The deputy minister has taken the time to visit every school in the territory. I'm not sure if she has made it to them all yet, but I know that's her goal and I think that's quite commendable.

Education, as I said, is an important aspect. It's good to see the communities getting involved. I will leave my questions for another time and I'll turn the floor back over to the minister so he can finish his introductions. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, as part of the Yukon Teachers' Association new collective agreement, \$450,000 is requested in this budget for the positive behaviour intervention support pilot project. This is a partnership with Yukon government and the YTA to address the development of behaviour supports in our schools. This proactive approach seeks to address behavioural issues and involves the collection of behaviour data to assess where and when behaviours occur. We have hired a positive behaviour intervention support coach to work with the 14 schools that are in the project for this year. A four-day training session will be provided in May for the 14 schools. The rest of the schools will be involved in the project next school year.

Another project related to the collective agreement is an early intervention literacy project. This pilot project began last fall and offers targeted literacy and school readiness supports to students over a three-year period from kindergarten to grade 2. I know I've spoken about this in the past, Madam Chair, but I believe it bears repeating. The pilot is being held in seven Yukon kindergarten classes in four different schools: Takhini Elementary School, Jack Hulland Elementary School, Elijah Smith Elementary School and Tantalus School.

Extra educational assistants are in each kindergarten classroom and will follow the students each year from kindergarten to grade 2. The pilot will strengthen the literacy-readiness skills of early learners in Yukon and work to improve oral language, self-regulation and the social and emotional skills of the students involved in the pilot project.

There is a request for \$368,000 to support the operations of Aurora Virtual School. The Aurora Virtual School was established to offer an inclusive and flexible learning community to support the learning styles of individual students. This school offers access to distance learning courses from approved schools, blended learning opportunities with other Yukon schools and course material and support for home education students. In its second year of operation, Aurora Virtual School is seeing an increase in interest from the students and home-schoolers who avail themselves of the school's services. This funding will help meet this increased demand for distributed learning and will go toward the purchase of more courses to offer to Yukon students. I follow the Aurora Virtual School particularly

closely, and I was very surprised to see that, over the two-week spring break, not only was the school open, but it was almost packed with students every single day. The students there consider themselves almost as a big family and they consider the instructors as part of that family. It's truly a great thing to see.

We also continue to invest in paraprofessionals, including educational assistants for all Yukon schools. For 2016-17, \$11,356,596 is being requested to continue to support the positive contributions of paraprofessionals in our schools. Since the 2011-12 school year, the number of paraprofessionals in the school system increased from 159 FTEs to 220 FTEs. This means we have added 59,780 extra hours of support for students in our school system. Overall, since 2011-12, we have increased funding for paraprofessionals by just over \$3 million. These investments allow for students who need more attention to get the support they need and help them reach their full potential in the classroom.

\$50,000 is also being requested to expand apprenticeship trades in our schools. Programs like the Watson Lake skills exploration project show that students are interested in learning more about trades and in more flexible pathways to learning. By providing more options for hands-on experience with trades, we can give our students exposure to areas that can lead to future careers in high-demand fields.

Madam Chair, I would also like to talk about the joint education action plan. JEAP is a blueprint to strengthen roots and close the education gap for Yukon First Nation students. This plan addresses the four priority areas for First Nation kindergarten-to-12 education in Yukon: recognizing the diversity of Yukon First Nation people and including the culture and linguistic heritage of Yukon First Nations in the kindergarten-to-grade-12 curriculum; sharing with Yukon First Nations authority, control and responsibility over the education delivered to First Nation students; ensuring that adequate funding is in place to sustainably support educational initiatives for First Nation students; and closing the academic achievement gap between Yukon First Nation and non-First Nation students.

This 10-year plan is a result of over 40 years of reports, studies and recommendations and is now being implemented to support the educational achievement of First Nation students. The Council of Yukon First Nations, along with Yukon First Nation governments, the Department of Education and other partners, plays an instrumental role in the implementation of the joint education action plan. \$210,000 is requested to support CYFN education initiatives under the JEAP, which represents an increase of \$40,000. This increase will ensure that CYFN's Education department, which is a critical component of JEAP, has the necessary funding in place to provide ongoing support and allow for the continued success of the joint education action plan.

Under CYFN, \$450,000 is also requested for the Yukon Native Language Centre, which represents an increase of some \$45,000. The work of the centre is essential to the JEAP as it increases opportunities and supports for First Nation

language fluency and the rejuvenation of First Nation language and cultural values. The funding will support First Nation language resources and the development of a process to share resources as First Nations look at the revitalization of their languages. The funding will ensure that the essential work of the Yukon Native Language Centre continues.

The First Nations Education Commission, FNEC, is another important component of the joint education action plan. It is the body for sharing information, addressing common issues and advancing First Nation education interests in a unified manner. \$160,000 is requested to provide the necessary support for a technical assistant researcher position and other associated costs to work on identified initiatives. This funding will support the important work they do in contributing to Yukon First Nation student success and is an important part of one of our main objectives of building First Nation partnerships.

Lastly, \$520,000 is requested to help families with the cost of school supplies next school year. This represents approximately \$100 in supplies for every student in the territory. It will alleviate some of the financial strain of the back-to-school season for families to afford school supplies and it will also ensure that students are well-positioned at the start of the school year with the supplies they need to learn.

This is a natural break in my notes and seeing the time, Madam Chair, I move that you report progress.

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

The House adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

The following documents were filed April 20, 2016:

33-1-125

Yukon Resource Gateway Project — Application for National Infrastructure Component Funding, and summary document (dated January 2016) (Kent)

33-1-126

Canada-Yukon NBCF Applications Tracker — National and Regional Projects Fund (NRP) – Projects Submitted for Approval (dated April 19, 2016) (Dixon)