



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 261

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, April 27, 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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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 27, 2016 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Administrative Professionals Week

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise today in recognition of Administrative Professionals Week and to pay tribute to the crucial role that administrative professionals play in the day-to-day operations of all businesses and organizations, including our Yukon government.

In 1952, the celebration was started as National Secretaries Week and has since expanded to recognize the changing role that administrative professionals play in our workplace. The work that administrative professionals perform is foundational to the smooth functioning of our organization. All of the programs and services that are crucial to the daily lives of Yukon citizens are supported by the work of our administrative professionals.

They are typically the person who greets us when we enter a government office or the voice that assists us on the other end of the phone line. Many of them work behind the scenes to ensure that the many tasks, both big and small, are completed so that our schools, hospitals, highway camps, emergency services, airports and other important program areas operate efficiently. Since 2015, the Yukon government has been hiring administrative staff from the AR06 to the AR09 level through a centralized recruitment process. For anyone who is looking to work for the Yukon government in the administrative area, I encourage you to visit the government's employment site to learn more about applying for one of these positions.

A career as an administrative professional can offer a lot of opportunity and variety. A person who has a strong administrative skill can find themselves working in almost any field and on a variety of different projects. Any manager will tell you that an administrative professional who is skilled, dedicated and has the trust of their colleagues is a precious commodity in any office.

Please join me in celebrating Administrative Professionals Week and to take a moment to thank administrative staff in your office for the amazing work that they do each and every day.

I would ask all members to join me in welcoming our incredible Yukon Party caucus administrative professionals. In the gallery we have Loretta Devries, Brianne Warner,

Harmony Istchenko, LJ London, Kelsey Hassard, Madison Pearson, Leah Kelly and Jessica Hall. Thank you very much.

Applause

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to this week and day for administrative professionals. It is celebrated every year on the last Wednesday of the last week in April in many countries around the world. Since National Professional Secretaries Week began in 1952, organizations have evolved and so too has the role of that person.

In 2000, the name was changed to Administrative Professionals Week and Day to reflect the complexity and new tasks these workers take on. The administrative professionals' work touches on technology, finance, customer service, vendors, the law, health care, human resources and taxes — all in one day. Anyone who works in an office environment for any length of time knows that it is these front-line people who make our offices function well.

We are fortunate in our office to have Maggie Larocque. She is new to this position, but already we know that she reflects who we are by being that friendly person to greet our visitors. She is the one who constituents are comfortable talking to, whether on the phone or face to face. She is also there to listen to and support each person in the office, whether caucus or staff. She maintains her smile throughout interruptions and constant course changes throughout the day. She is one of the spokes that keeps the wheel that is a caucus office balanced and turning every day.

This week it is our turn to officially recognize and thank the administrative professionals in our workplace for the work they do each and every day, for their support and encouragement, for their patience and insight, for their friendship, for the contributions they make to the success of our organizations, and especially for their contributions to each of our individual successes.

On behalf of the Yukon New Democrats, I encourage people to recognize and celebrate the contributions of the administrative professionals in their own workplaces. I hope they have an administrator as skilled and dedicated as the one whom the Official Opposition is privileged to have working with us.

I would like to ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming Maggie Larocque to the gallery today.

Applause

In recognition of Celebration of Swans

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I rise today to ask members of this House to join me in recognizing the unique opportunity in the Yukon that is the Celebration of Swans and the work of the wildlife viewing program at Environment Yukon for making this special and natural event available for the enjoyment of all Yukoners.

Every year, thousands of trumpeter swans and tundra swans use the shallow waters of M'Clintock Bay on Marsh Lake as a stopover ground on their long migration to northern nesting grounds. Swan Haven Interpretive Centre

gives Yukoners and visitors alike the opportunity to relax on the viewing deck, walk the 500-metre riverfront trail and educate themselves on swans and other migratory bird species that migrate north each spring. Throughout April and May, wildlife viewing staff hosts a Celebration of Swans at the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre.

I would like to turn your attention to the gallery, Mr. Speaker, in order to welcome and acknowledge our wildlife viewing technician, Scott Cameron, for his team's work in making this event possible each year. Mr. Cameron, as well as the other wildlife viewing staff, spend much of April and May at the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre facilitating free educational events for Yukoners and visitors alike, such as the bird banding and ID workshops, film screenings, new Yukoner day and many more. There are also fun community-building events like musical jam nights and open houses.

For the efforts Mr. Cameron and his team take to educate Yukoners in a fun and inclusive way, I would like to thank him and the rest of the wildlife viewing section.

As Minister of Environment, I encourage all members of this House to take the time to visit Swan Haven. It is a wonderful asset and one of many reminders of the beautiful place that we're fortunate enough to call home. It's only 40 kilometres south of Whitehorse. It is also an accessible excursion that can be enjoyed in the evening by the whole family.

To quote a former Minister of Environment, I would note that there are no baby swans to see at this time of year. If you see what looks like a baby, it's a duck.

Celebration of Swans, along with the other Yukon government wildlife viewing initiatives, works to foster an appreciation for wildlife and habitat in the territory. This in turn leads to recognition and support for the sustainable conservation practices that will allow future generations the same experience.

To close my remarks, I want to again thank Mr. Cameron. I had a chat with him earlier; apparently the swans came quite a bit earlier and there are not many left, so if you haven't been out, you should get out. I want to thank him for doing a wonderful job so please give a warm welcome to Mr. Cameron.

Applause

In recognition of Victoria Gold's Every Student, Every Day initiative

Hon. Mr. Graham: As it is Education Week this week, I'm honoured to rise today to pay tribute to the Victoria Gold Yukon Student Encouragement Society's Every Student, Every Day initiative, which works to raise awareness about and funds for grassroots student attendance programs across the territory. Five very committed volunteers lead Every Student, Every Day, and since the fund was established in the fall of 2012, they have raised and distributed over \$200,000 to support community-driven student attendance programs in our Yukon schools and communities.

From Old Crow to Watson Lake and from Ross River to Riverdale, 28 student attendance projects have been funded, and yesterday, another round of successful projects were awarded funding for the 2016-17 school year. I'm very proud that the Department of Education partners with the Every Student, Every Day team to administer the application process in Yukon schools. We appreciate the strong and innovative partnership we have with the Victoria Gold Yukon Student Encouragement Society and the many industry and community champions that come together each and every year to support our territory's students and help them stay engaged in our schools.

The private sector — particularly the mining, service and supply industries — have been steadfast partners from the very beginning. I would like to take the opportunity to make special mention of the Victoria Gold Corporation; Air North, Yukon's airline; and CKRW, The Rush for their acknowledgment of student attendance challenges in the territory and their commitment to addressing them. The Every Student, Every Day initiative is making tangible and positive attendance rate increases. It is helping to alleviate absenteeism through the programs it has funded with an approach that encourages individual educators and community groups to develop and implement projects that reflect the needs of their unique students.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the volunteer team that tirelessly leads the Every Student, Every Day initiative each year: Tara Christie, Amanda Leslie, Deb Ryan, Shena Shaw and Lenora Hobbs. I would also be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I didn't mention my colleague, the Minister of Highways and Public Works, who was Minister of Education when this program began. I take the opportunity to thank all of these people for the wonderful achievements.

I would also like to thank John McConnell, CEO of Victoria Gold, who, with my colleague, Minister Kent, initially discussed back in May 2012 the vital importance of helping Yukon students graduate and the links between success in schools and success in life. From conversations such as those, Every Student, Every Day was born.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I extend my sincere appreciation to the Victoria Gold Yukon Student Encouragement Society and its Every Student, Every Day initiative. It is through partnerships such as these that we are able to ensure our students are receiving the very most from their education here in the territory.

Thank you very much.

In recognition of Watson Lake rural experiential model

Ms. McLeod: I rise on behalf of all members today to pay tribute to the rural experiential model taking place this Education Week in the community of Watson Lake.

The rural experiential model brings together students in grades 10 to 12 and educators from six rural Yukon communities for an intensive week of learning and teaching in fine arts and applied skills. The Department of Education is committed to increasing the diversity of programming options

and improving learning outcomes for rural and First Nation students in the Yukon.

This initiative supports equity in education for rural students by delivering enhanced opportunities to the participants as those made available to urban students. Students from Carmacks, Dawson City, Pelly Crossing, Ross River, Teslin and Watson Lake work together in larger groups, practicing fine arts and applied skills along with rural teachers and local experts while learning about Yukon First Nation culture and traditions on the land.

There are several daytime session options and evening activities for students to choose from, allowing them to direct their learning toward their own interests. These session options include introduction to trapping, programming and game design, fashion exploration and more.

Students will also participate in three evening sessions of their choice, such as job-shadowing paramedics for a night, archery, Arctic sports, beading, a trip to the Liard Hot Springs, Dene games, music, hiking, yoga, bowling and movies. All of these opportunities have been developed and are being delivered by rural teachers, local experts and departmental support staff.

The rural experiential model is an excellent example of how successful collaboration between teachers, administrators, Public Schools branch staff, school councils, First Nations and rural communities can empower Yukon students. The success of the rural experiential model is a product of the dedication and efforts of many terrific teachers, administrators and department support staff who work together to create programs that engage learners.

The Department of Education is successfully offering opportunities for students and staff to connect with peers and colleagues from across the territory. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the community of Watson Lake for hosting the rural experiential model again this year, because last year was very successful for the community.

The Minister of Education and his good friend, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, are very much looking forward to visiting and participating with students in Watson Lake tomorrow.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I just wanted to point out in the gallery today — joining us is my mother, Dianna Raketti. I was just asking about the Mother's Day date and, in preparation for that, just wanted to say Happy Mother's Day to you.

She celebrated 50 years of being a resident of Watson Lake last year alone. She's a champion of tourism, a bookkeeper, obviously a long-time resident of the territory, and my number one advisor. Thank you.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions to be presented?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to table the preliminary findings from the Yukon FASD prevalence study.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to allow St. Paul's Anglican Church to participate, as it has for many years, in the 2016 spring litter pickup campaign.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explain why, after spending more than \$600,000 to develop a new Yukon visitor tracking program, it is "unable to provide an accurate estimate of total visitation to Yukon at this time", according to the 2015 Yukon tourism review.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to release a spring 2016 Yukon economic outlook.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Climate change action plan

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that one learns after many years in intergovernmental work is that the hardline positions rarely achieve positive outcomes. The Premier has demonstrated that he knows how to say "no". As a leader, the challenge is getting to "yes".

Has the Premier considered the implications to Yukon and to Yukon's economy if he takes his hardline "no" to the upcoming meetings with the Prime Minister on Canada's transition to a low-carbon economy?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This party is very adamant that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to dealing with the challenges of climate change. We do believe that we all have to do our part. The difference is that, in the north — and when I speak of this, I am talking not only about Yukon but also the governments of Nunavut and Northwest Territories that say that a carbon tax does not work in the north.

Our plan for Yukoners is very simple — where we actually will reduce greenhouse gases, put people to work and not make everything cost more expensive. That is — practical solutions to a problem, not just simply dealing with an ideology.

Ms. Hanson: It is not beyond the realm that the federal government will tie future federal funding for much-needed

infrastructure development to their efforts to institute a national carbon pricing system — infrastructure funding that this government has already signalled it needs.

The Prime Minister has made it clear that the transition to a low-carbon economy will happen. Industry understands this, other governments understand this, and Yukoners understand this. But the Premier doesn't seem to understand that his hardline, ideological stance could put at risk Yukon's opportunity to reap the real benefits that will flow from a national plan to transition to a low-carbon economy.

Is the Premier prepared to say "no" to future federal funding in order to maintain his ideological stance of "no" to any discussion of carbon pricing?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: What is clear is that both the NDP and the Liberals, if elected, would put a carbon tax in place to make everything in this territory more expensive: food, milk, diapers, clothing, home heating fuel and everything else. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party will stand up for what is best for Yukoners. We have a plan to create more employment, to reduce greenhouse gases and not make everything more expensive.

Ms. Hanson: The Premier was part of the Vancouver agreement, which did not exempt Yukon from the national dialogue on transitioning to a low-carbon economy. The Premier talks about being a net contributor to Canada and he now has the perfect opportunity to contribute in a positive manner to building that national low-carbon economy. Instead of slamming the door shut on dialogue, the Premier could show leadership. He could engage with Yukoners to discuss the elements of carbon pricing that would work for Yukoners. Yukon could show Canada that we are ready to engage as partners in this important national discussion; that we are ready to be part of the solution; and that we are ready to reap the economic benefits of the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Will the Premier commit to talking to Yukon citizens, prior to the First Ministers' Conference, and for the good of Yukon, will he commit to reflecting Yukoners' views, even —

Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, we will commit to finding real solutions to the challenges that face this territory — not making everything more expensive, which is exactly what the NDP — it's exactly what the Liberal Party would do. Canada contributes 1.6 percent of the global emissions and within Canada, Yukon contributes less than one percent. We already have 95 percent of our energy produced from renewables. Our largest contributors to greenhouse gases are buildings and transportation. Our plan would increase employment, create jobs and training opportunities, and would actually reduce greenhouse gases instead of making everything more expensive.

As I said in my budget speech, Mr. Speaker, the NDP and the Liberals are comforted at night with their carbon tax. For the rest of us, it's our furnace.

Question re: Physiotherapy wait times

Ms. Stick: Yesterday in Committee of the Whole, we heard the Minister of Health and Social Services confirm wait times of nine to 12 months for alcohol and drug services counselling. Wait times such as these are unacceptable. Unfortunately, they are not limited to alcohol and drug services. Yukoners without access to extended health or third-party coverage rely on Yukon health care to provide occupational therapy and physiotherapy. While urgent referrals may be seen within seven days, wait times for cases deemed non-urgent are significant. Yukoners can remain on these wait-lists for years.

Will the Minister of Health and Social Services tell us what the average wait time for occupational therapy and physiotherapy is for Yukoners not covered?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I certainly thank the member opposite for bringing this question forward on the floor of the Legislature this afternoon. Certainly we have many professions in the territory that provide those professional services to Yukoners — their services are greatly appreciated in the territory. We see physiotherapists at the continuing care facilities. We see them in the private sector with private businesses and we encourage and thank them for providing those services.

As for wait-lists, I am certainly not aware at this time that a senior in continuing care would be on a wait-list to see a physiotherapist, albeit that could very well be the case. We commend the staff at our continuing care facilities for assisting those seniors at a point in time in their life when they are not able to help themselves with those things. Again, I thank the member opposite for her question.

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, there was no criticism of physiotherapists or the hard-working occupational therapists, and I was not discussing those services in continuing care. This government is not meeting the needs of many Yukoners who cannot afford to pay for these therapies at private clinics. One senior constituent reported on being on the physiotherapy wait-list for four years. There supposedly are 600 people on this wait-list. Without treatment, this senior's condition has deteriorated. She now relies on a walker to get around and is now on a wait-list for surgery that could have been avoided. She has gone from requiring preventive services to now requiring surgery.

What action will this government take to cut the long wait times for occupational therapy and physiotherapy in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, certainly when it comes to access to health care across our territory, we see very similar challenges in Yukon, as do the other two territories and, in fact, many of the provinces across the country. Access to health care is certainly more than seeing a doctor. As I have indicated, there is a whole host of professions that provide a multitude of different services throughout our territory. It is about receiving quality care when needed by the appropriate provider and in the manner that is sustainable. This government believes in making those investments. We certainly recognize that those professions often have to triage their clients, and that is not something that I as a minister

would ever weigh into. Again, I thank those professionals for providing those services at the hospital, at the continuing care facilities and those in the private sector.

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, these wait times for occupational therapy and physiotherapy will result in long-term costs for our health care system that are not sustainable. Meanwhile, the quality of life of hundreds of Yukoners on these wait-lists suffers. The condition of patients who do not receive timely treatment deteriorates. As their conditions become worse, their treatment options become more serious and some will require costly surgeries.

Does this government realize that keeping patients on wait-lists for years affects their quality of life and increases the health care costs for all Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, in addressing the member opposite, as I mentioned earlier, access to health care is certainly more than just seeing a doctor. We certainly recognize the many professionals throughout the territory and across the country, for that matter, who provide these services on a daily basis. We also recognize that Yukon is not unlike other jurisdictions in Canada and across the north when it comes to the challenges that we face in recruitment and retention of these professionals, but when they are in the territory, we see the exceptional work that is done on the ground.

If the member opposite has a unique case that she wishes to write to me about, I would be happy to receive a letter, but we're very comfortable on this side of the Legislature with making those investments in health care and making health care in Yukon one of the best in the country.

Question re: Dawson City sewage treatment

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, earlier this year one of the worst kept secrets in Yukon was finally brought out in the open — the WTF in Dawson would not be handed over to the city as promised. The reason — also not a secret — has been obvious for years: the waste-water facility doesn't operate properly and the O&M is beyond the capacity of the city to manage. The Yukon Party and Yukon taxpayers have been left holding the proverbial bag. The City of Dawson has rightfully refused to take on this white elephant. In 2014 the government told Yukoners that this plant would cost \$340,000 per year to operate.

Can the minister please confirm for the record that the cost to operate the facility is now over \$2.4 million per year?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, indeed, the Yukon government has agreed to assume responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the waste-water treatment plant in Dawson City, including the facility's water licence. We are currently working on a service agreement with the City of Dawson regarding the long-term operation and maintenance of the plant.

We have retained Corix, a company that specializes in this, to do that work throughout the remainder of the warranty period as they were the company that originally constructed the project. Community Services continues to address deficiencies, warranty issues and training needs and we are

working with a contractor and consultants to develop a plan to improve treatment performance for this coming summer.

We acknowledge that the price to operate the plant is unacceptably high right now and we're working with our partners to bring that cost down. I believe the number referenced by the member opposite is close to correct. I don't know the exact amount off the top of my head but it is in that neighbourhood which, as I've noted, is unacceptably high, but we are doing our best to try to bring that cost down.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate the answer. After seven years of refusing to take "no" from the city, the Yukon Party was forced to agree to keep the keys to this project. Dawson is refusing to accept the WTF because it doesn't work and it costs millions of dollars to operate — millions more than advertised, Mr. Speaker.

The responsibility for this poor management and overbudget project will stay where it belongs with this government, which has been responsible for the oversight from the get-go. This government likes to talk about good fiscal management, but projects like this demonstrate that the facts don't match up with the talk. After spending \$25 million on a project that doesn't work and costs way more to operate than advertised, Yukoners have a very clear picture of this government's inability to manage these larger capital projects.

Is the government now prepared to admit what a disaster this project has been, virtually since day one?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I think what we have done is stepped up to the plate and offered assistance where it's needed. We had a unique situation in Dawson that has a very long story. I know the member knows it. Obviously there was originally a proposal for a sewage lagoon — that was voted down in a referendum. There have been court cases and there have been pleadings over the last decade or so that have played into the story but, ultimately, where we are today is we have a large and complex piece of infrastructure that is complex in nature and difficult to run. We're trying our best to get the costs down. We acknowledge that they are too high right now.

Through discussions with the City of Dawson, we have determined that Yukon government is in a better position to manage those complexities than the City of Dawson would be, so they have been very appreciative that we've been willing to step up and help them out with this and work with them collaboratively on it.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, I certainly acknowledge that the cost of the plant is excessively high to run and we are doing our best to bring that cost down. I'm told by the engineers in my department that it is possible to get those costs down. I don't know enough about it from a technical perspective to explain what those actions might be, but my understanding is that there is the possibility to bring the cost of operating the plant down and we're hopeful we can get those costs down.

If we're not able to, Mr. Speaker, we'll have to work with the contractor through our dispute resolution mechanisms to look at other options.

Mr. Silver: It's unfortunate that the minister refers to the referendum. He's taking a page from the previous

minister's ability to blame Dawson City residents, instead of taking responsibility for this project.

It's time for the government to level with the public and admit what a disaster this project is. The O&M is seven times what was promised on a \$25-million project that doesn't work — that actually won't work as designed. It is too bad that the government can't get the City of Dawson to take over the responsibility for this project. But it doesn't end there, Mr. Speaker. Last fall, the minister received a report that recommended two different expensive options to fix the WTF. The cost is another \$5 million to \$10 million, depending upon which option is used.

Is the company on the hook for these modifications or is the taxpayer expected to pay, once again?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: When I was commenting about the City of Dawson and their role over the years, I wasn't casting aspersions. I was simply quoting the former mayor. That's what the former mayor has said to both me and publicly about the role the Yukon government has taken and the leadership we've taken in taking on this project.

With regard to the specifics, my intention has been to direct officials in the government to find a way to get the costs down to operate this plant. If it's determined that the plant, as the member says, simply doesn't work and we simply have a lemon, then we will have to look at other options. Those include holding the company that constructed the plant to account. There is a range of opportunities for that, including the dispute resolution mechanisms we have in place in the contract. Obviously, no one wants to go down that road, Mr. Speaker, but if we have to, in the interest of taxpayers, we will. That is one option that, of course, remains on the table.

For now, we'll continue to work with the City of Dawson. We'll continue to work with the Water Board to try to take on the water licence and find a service agreement with the City of Dawson and ultimately hope to bring the costs of operating the plant down to a more sustainable level. If that's not possible, we'll have to look at other options.

Question re: Financial administration practices

Ms. Moorcroft: We have heard this government to continue to story-tell Yukoners about the amazing job they have done of managing the finances of the Yukon. The Premier even said — and I quote: "... a government that has been focused throughout its mandate on being responsible with Yukoners' money." An April 2016 C.D. Howe report on fiscal policy stated that Yukon and Nunavut have the worst records of all — and I quote: "Yukon and Nunavut's budget projections were the worst guides to results among all jurisdictions." Every year, we have seen a reduction in the surpluses that this government has presented in its record budgets.

Mr. Speaker, how can this government stand up and tell Yukoners that all is fine, when they have the second-worst budgeting record of all Canadian jurisdictions?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: We have gone over this. C.D. Howe acknowledged the recent changes in processes that Yukon has made by stating: "Yukon also deserves a

compliment. Its budgets are now consistent with its Public Accounts, making it the one territory where our reader would be able to find the comparable numbers." At the end of the day, the truest report card, when it comes to fiscal management, is that this is the only jurisdiction in the country that has money in the bank. We have net financial resources, Mr. Speaker — truly the envy of the entire country.

Ms. Moorcroft: Let's present another study. In 2013, the Auditor General drafted a scathing report on the mismanagement of capital projects in the Yukon by this Yukon Party government. That report stated — and I quote: "The Corporation did not analyze the ongoing financial resources needed to operate the hospitals before starting to build them. It might not be possible to obtain sufficient funding to operate the hospitals."

Mr. Speaker, did the government not learn from the 2013 Auditor General's report or will we need to wait for the next Auditor General's report to find out if the government had the true O&M costs before approving the construction of the Whistle Bend facility?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The Minister of Health and Social Services has been very articulate in describing how, in fact, we have budgeted. It's clear; it's there for the members opposite to see in our outbound years, where we continue to show in each year a modest surplus and money in the bank. It's also very clear, if you look at 2018-19, that the money for O&M is reflected in that year's budget. We continue to invest this year almost \$67 million in that facility. We might see that the federal government might be interested, and if they are, that would be wonderful because that would be a bunch of money that we have now that we can put in other projects as well, Mr. Speaker.

This is the one party that is focused on what is right for Yukoners. We will continue to do it in a responsible manner. Families and small businesses have to live within their means and Yukoners expect their government to do the same.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, this government is undertaking what is perhaps the largest capital project in Yukon with the Whistle Bend continuing care facility. We have asked for fact-based operation and maintenance numbers to be presented to this House — not assumed costs based on an existing facility with very different services. The minister opposite said — and I quote: "This project has met all policy and legislative obligations that were required as it moved forward."

Mr. Speaker, if this government has truly met all its obligations, why is this government giving us the runaround and not presenting the true O&M costs submitted to Management Board for the Whistle Bend continuing care facility?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite quoted a report earlier, and I wanted the opportunity to in fact quote another report, and this was dated this Monday. It says that Alberta's NDP government's credit rating will take another hit. Moody's Investors Service announced on Monday that it has downgraded Alberta's long-term debt rating to double-A1 from triple-A and has given it a negative outlook.

Mr. Speaker, it's the second downgrade from the rating services since the province released its budget less than two weeks ago, and it included the removal of a debt ceiling and a forecast of \$58 billion in debt by 2019.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that is focused on the economy, focused on health care, focused on education, focused on investing in infrastructure, creating opportunities for Yukoners, and we will do it by being fiscally strong managers and earning the opportunity again to govern this territory, to serve all Yukoners in a responsible manner. Yukoners have to live within their means and their government should do so.

These two parties would show us — and they have. We should remind all of the 6,000 new Yukoners who have moved here since the Yukon Party came into power of the history and the record of the previous NDP and Liberal governments — double-digit unemployment, mass exodus from the territory, Mr. Speaker.

Question re: Housing as a human right

Ms. White: Yesterday, the Minister of Health and Social Services told us that their most recent data shows that the government spends more than half-a-million dollars a year to house Yukoners in long-stay hotels over the winter months. As the tourism season draws closer, these same people can expect that they will again be asked to leave to make room for visitors to the territory.

Mr. Speaker, the community has been asking this government to find a way to reduce their dependence year after year on insecure housing like hotel rooms to house Yukoners receiving social assistance.

Why does the government continue to throw half-a-million dollars a winter at a problem that could be fixed by making that same yearly investment in low-barrier housing that would address the root cause of this issue — that of housing insecurity and homelessness?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for her question. In order to provide vulnerable Yukoners with stability, the income support unit is just one tool that we have that is enhancing outreach support services and collaborating with other government departments and agencies on housing stock issues.

We also continue to provide guidance to landlords who may need assistance supporting tenants with complex needs and to liaise with other government agencies. We have also seen other projects that this Yukon Party government has invested in, like the mental health housing, Options for Independence — just to name a couple. This Yukon Party government is proud of those investments and we certainly extend our appreciation to those professionals who are on the ground, working to ensure that the needs of these individuals — more vulnerable people — are met.

Ms. White: It sounds like another excuse for off-loading that responsibility.

A hotel room was never designed to be a long-term home. Most hotel rooms don't have kitchens or cooking facilities, they have less security than other multi-unit facilities and, as

we know, many long-stay hotel tenants must leave in the spring and seek other accommodations until the fall. This leaves those Yukoners in a constantly vulnerable housing situation. They have to move at least twice a year.

Mr. Speaker, this just isn't a question of financial management or program delivery. It's a question of human dignity. It's a question of believing in access to housing as a human right.

Mr. Speaker, what kind of community do we live in if our government leadership refuses to acknowledge housing as a human right? Mr. Speaker, does the Premier recognize housing as a human right?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: In addressing the member opposite, addressing homelessness is a challenge that is faced by many jurisdictions across Canada — and the world, for that manner — and our government remains committed to ensuring that housing needs for Yukoners are addressed, particularly those persons who are homeless or at the risk of being homeless.

A number of departments continue to work together to set priorities and to make recommendations for the housing action plan. This government has provided a 14-unit complex for individuals with FAS, which I talked about in my first response. We've provided the mental health housing on 4th Avenue. We're in the process of building new transitional housing with the partnership with Salvation Army, and we've expanded the new St. Elias group home for individuals with moderate to cognitive disabilities.

Contrary to what the member opposite is trying to indicate, this government stands proud of those investments, and I thank the men and women who are providing that support on the ground.

Ms. White: This is about values and this is about showing the difference between NDP values and Yukon Party values. I want those 6,000 new Yukoners to know where this government stands on the issue of housing as a human right, so I will ask the question again, Mr. Speaker: Will the Premier tell this House if he recognizes housing as a human right?

Hon. Mr. Hassard: This government definitely understands the importance of housing issues here in the Yukon. If you look at our record over the past few years, we see a continued investment all across the housing continuum — in excess of \$100 million in the last few years in housing projects here in the Yukon. We continue to work with First Nation governments, NGOs — lots of different organizations throughout the Yukon — to work on ways to better house all individuals.

We have programs through Yukon Housing Corporation to help homeowners, to help landlords and tenants. We continue to work very hard. We do understand the importance of housing in this great territory. We know the work is not completed but we continue to do the good work and the hard work that's needed to help as many Yukoners as we can.

Question re: Pelly Crossing airfield

Mr. Tredger: For years, residents of Pelly Crossing and I have been raising concerns about the Pelly Crossing airfield and its inability to handle medevac flights. Currently,

patients being evacuated from Pelly Crossing are taken by ambulance from Pelly to Stewart Crossing, where they are then transferred to the Mayo ambulance, which takes them to Mayo. From there they are finally medevaced to Whitehorse. This continues to be an unacceptable standard for the Yukon. We have heard several commitments from this government regarding the airfield, none of which have been followed through on. Once again, this year's budget does not have sufficient money allocated to upgrade the airstrip to be medevac-capable.

Why has this government once again failed to provide the necessary funds to allow safe, medevac flights from the Pelly Crossing airfield?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, I believe this issue actually came up in Highways and Public Works debate with the critic opposite. For the MLA for Mayo-Tatchun, I will repeat what I told her during debate. A project to resurface the existing runway in Pelly is underway, with materials moved to the site in the fall of last year. Resurfacing is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2016, subject of course to budget approval in this Legislature. The department plans to investigate the cost benefit of additional improvements such as extending the runway by approximately 1,000 feet, which would make it a gravel airstrip of 4,300 feet from its current 3,300-foot length. We are working with Health Services, the medevac carrier, and other users during the upcoming Yukon aviation system review that is currently underway to determine the best way to move forward in improving the Pelly Crossing airstrip.

Mr. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, after all these years, the airfield will still not be medevac-capable. Pelly Crossing is not alone in having problems with aerodrome capabilities. Other rural communities have raised concerns about medevac flights to this government and have been ignored. The people of Pelly want a straight answer from this government when it comes to medevacs from Pelly. They don't want any more empty commitments from ministers looking into it. Families often make it to Whitehorse before the patient because of the required ambulance transfer in Mayo before being medevaced to Whitehorse. This is unacceptable.

Why is providing a medevac-capable airfield to the people of Pelly Crossing not a priority of this government?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my previous response, the department plans to investigate the cost benefit of additional improvements such as extending the runway. We are working with Health Services, the medevac carrier, and other users during the upcoming Yukon aviation system review that will begin in 2016.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to medevacs, the carrier requires runway surface condition reports before they consider using the runway. Presently there is no program or trained staff available to provide inspection services on a routine basis in Pelly. In the wintertime, snow removal standards would also have to change to accommodate medevac flights.

As I mentioned, we will certainly work with all of the stakeholders, including the community. We don't want to see any unfortunate incidents occur because no medevac flights

are available in Pelly. We are working right now to — as the member opposite mentioned, we do transfer patients right now from Pelly to Mayo for medevac services. Again, we are doing our best with the resources that we have. We will look to make improvements if we can and if it makes sense for Yukon taxpayers to upgrade the Pelly Crossing airstrip so that we can accommodate medevac flights.

Mr. Tredger: Safety incidents have occurred and they continue to occur. This lack of action on the airfield is not lost on the people of Pelly. The pile of gravel waiting to be spread on the airfield has sat there so long that locals now refer to it as "Mount Paz".

When I first raised this issue four years ago, the previous Minister of Highways and Public Works said that they were looking at what needs to be done. Now we are hearing the same answers again. The people of Pelly are beginning to wonder what they did to deserve this government indifference.

Why is this government incapable of meeting the basic safety needs of a community seeking safe and reliable air medevac services?

Hon. Mr. Kent: One of the other issues with respect to the Pelly aerodrome that does not allow for medevac services — the site does not have certified weather observers or automated weather observation equipment available to provide aircraft with weather data normally available at fully supported medevac sites like Mayo. Mayo has a 24-hour human observation program and staffed presence that can support aircraft activity.

Mr. Speaker, all of the issues that I have identified with respect to the Pelly aerodrome that don't allow us to provide medevac service to that community will be considered in the system review that's just getting underway. I believe we have 28 or 29 airports and aerodromes throughout the territory. All of those aerodromes will be considered. We're making a number of improvements to aerodromes throughout the Yukon, including what I mentioned with respect to the Pelly aerodrome, which is scheduled to have resurfacing completed in the summer of this year.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming to the Assembly this afternoon the northern regional vice-president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada — Jack Bourassa.

Applause

Speaker: We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 1136

Clerk: Motion No. 1136, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Watson Lake: THAT this House urges the Governor of the Bank of Canada to:

(1) in featuring iconic Canadian women on new banknotes, consider Martha Louise Black, known as "Yukon's First Lady";

(2) ensure Canadian women will be featured on Canadian banknotes in recognition of their many contributions to shaping history and life in Canada; and

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

Ms. McLeod: I'm honoured today to rise in support of this motion. On International Women's Day this year, the federal government announced that the Bank of Canada would engage the public in consultation to select an iconic Canadian woman to be featured on a bank note in their next series to be issued in 2018.

Prior to the tabling of this motion, the Premier did write a letter to the Bank of Canada Governor Stephen Poloz in support of having Yukon trailblazer Martha Louise Black portrayed on a bank note. Our government recognizes that there have been many, many Yukon women throughout our history who have contributed to Yukon and Canada in immeasurable ways, making it very difficult to make one recommendation.

One of the great things about this consultation is that it was entirely open to the public, so I'm sure that Yukoners took notice and put forward the names of other notable Yukon women.

Although Martha Black was not Canadian by birth, she was a staunch champion for the Yukon as part of Canada's identity and went on to become a permanent figure in Yukon's history. She was born Martha Louise Munger on February 24, 1866 in Mercer, Pennsylvania. Martha and her first husband, William Amon Purdy, were drawn to the north during the Klondike Gold Rush in 1898.

William and a pregnant Martha set off from Chicago, leaving their two small boys in Kansas with her family. Her family made the journey as far as Seattle when his plans fell through for the business he was going to open in the north and he opted to head south, presumably leaving Martha with the choice of returning home to her family in Kansas or following William. Truly a woman before her time, Martha wished to carry on with the group heading for the Klondike, which included her brother and a cousin. She joined thousands of other homesteaders, frontier men and women, and want-to-be

goldminers in the stampede to the Klondike. Like others who went before and after her, Martha hiked the infamous Chilkoot Trail with her party and floated down the Yukon River to Dawson City in a homemade boat.

Martha was recorded as the 631st woman in 1898 to have arrived at the North-West Mounted Police checkpoint in Tagish. Their group arrived in Dawson City on August 5, 1898. Martha went on to give birth to her third son in Dawson City on January 31, 1899. Upon having her baby, Martha's father arrived to take them both back to Kansas in the summer of 1899. She wasted no time in presenting a lecture about the far north to interested community members and she went on to write her first paper, entitled *A Few Dawson Prices* and read it before the Eureka, Kansas farmers' institute. This would begin Martha's life of lecturing and presenting about the Klondike and the north and becoming an unofficial tourism promoter for Dawson City and the Yukon.

Her next project was publishing a booklet entitled *Letters from Alaska and the Northwest*, using excerpts from letters she had sent home while on her Klondike journey.

With the Klondike still calling her name, Martha returned to Dawson City in the summer of 1900. Her parents and two of her sons followed in 1901 with all of the supplies and machinery needed to set up a sawmill and a two-stamp quartz mill. Martha's father set her up as the manager of the businesses, ensuring that she would be able to make a go of it alone in the Klondike with her young sons.

By 1904, Martha had met a young Dawson City lawyer named George Black, and they were married on August 1, 1904. George had become active in Yukon politics and helped form the first Conservative Party in the Yukon in 1904. During this time, Martha carried on being an ambassador for all that is Yukon.

Martha's love for gathering Yukon wildflowers led to her amassing a collection of over 460 different specimens. In a practice she called "artistic botany", Martha liked to press the flowers and fill in the backgrounds with watercolours. She went on to win a horticultural contest for best exhibit of native wildflowers, which was then displayed at the Yukon pavilion at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle in 1909.

George Black was appointed the seventh Commissioner of the Yukon in 1912, allowing the couple to move into what we know today as the Commissioner's Residence in Dawson City. Martha dedicated herself to the citizens and opened the doors of the Commissioner's Residence to anyone, regardless of their social position, earning her widespread affection and the title "Yukon's first lady". She went on to establish the first chapter of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire in Dawson City and assisted in organizing two more chapters. The IODE in the Yukon was instrumental in incredible fundraising efforts focused on World War I. Martha also helped organize the Patriotic Service League of Dawson City, which was affiliated with the Toronto Red Cross.

George Black established a contingent of Yukon men to go overseas to fight for England in World War I. When those men, including Martha's youngest son, and George went off to Victoria to take their place in basic training, Martha, of

course, went with them. While in Victoria, she split her time between lecturing about the Yukon and taking lessons under the St. John Ambulance Brigade. When the Yukon company was ready to ship off from Halifax, Martha managed to meet them there. Once in Halifax, she was able to convince the general in command of the Canadian transport that she should be able to go along with the transport ship bound for the UK, the sole woman with 1,500 men. The general's concerns that Martha would be unwelcome or not courageous enough for the journey were soon shown to be unfounded. They arrived in Liverpool in February of 1917.

Martha worked steadily in the Prisoners of War Department and, of course, kept up her volunteer work for the YMCA, the Red Cross, the Yukon comfort fund and many other causes. She continued to give lectures on the Klondike — sometimes two or three a day — under the Royal Geographical Society. During this time, Martha found herself the war correspondent for both the *Dawson Daily News* and the *Whitehorse Star*. Martha was so dedicated to the Yukon that even on the other side of the world, in the middle of World War I, she continued to market the Yukon to all.

Returning to Canada in 1919, Martha carried on giving lectures throughout Canada and the United States for many years. George Black was elected as Yukon's Member of Parliament in 1921 and went on to become Speaker of the House of Commons in Ottawa. When George became ill in 1935 and had to resign his seat as the Speaker, Martha carried on helping with his constituency issues.

Later that same year, Martha was nominated to represent the Yukon as an independent Conservative. She was elected on February 6, 1936 as the Yukon's Member of Parliament, making her the first American-born woman and only the second Canadian woman to be elected to Parliament. This also made her the Yukon's first female MP. Martha held that seat until 1940, when her husband returned to politics and won the Yukon riding once again. Martha Louise Black was a trailblazer for Yukon female politicians and her service to her community, the Yukon and Canada as a whole went far beyond Yukon's borders. This is something I'm sure we can all appreciate, regardless of political stripe.

We would also like to see the Bank of Canada ensure that Canadian women are featured on Canadian bank notes going forward. In the past, the only people who have been featured individually on Canadian bank notes have been past Prime Ministers or members of the Royal Family such as Queen Elizabeth II and King George VI. These bills have also featured Canadian landscapes, birds and, most recently, examples of Canada's culture, history and achievements.

While I do think that the most recent series of notes is an improvement and a better example of what Canada really is and what has influenced our culture, I also think that we're ready to shake some of this tradition and could feature Canadian women on bank notes and even Canadian men who are not Prime Ministers. There are so many notable Canadians in our history who have done so much for Canada and have worked so hard to help shape our country into what it is today. We have women in our history who have pioneered in their

fields from medicine to politics to aboriginal leadership. We have had artists and educators and businesswomen who have changed the place of women in the Canadian landscape.

Mr. Speaker, the last aspect of this motion, which is very important, is to urge the Bank of Canada to ensure that Yukon and northern perspectives are taken into account by expanding the Bank of Canada's independent bank note advisory council to include representation from Yukon and northern women.

I do think that the north is sometimes overlooked on these boards and advisory councils. We know that life in the north is somewhat more isolating and rural than life in most parts of the south. We're faced with different challenges and have different perspectives on life in Canada. When it comes to our history of the Yukon and northern Canada, ours is not well-known in southern provinces — that's for sure. Having a Yukon or northern woman on this board would provide valuable input, not only in decisions surrounding this specific call for input on women on bank notes, but going forward in helping inform future decisions regarding bank notes. The north has a rich history, but a lot of it goes unknown outside of our borders.

As Martha Black's history indicates, Yukoners are a tough, pioneering bunch. We persevered then as we do now. Admittedly, life in the Yukon is much more modern these days, but we still like to think that we're tougher than our southern counterparts. From 40 below to fly-in communities to trips by dog-sled, Canada's north is a unique place with unique history, rich in arts, culture and tradition.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members to support this motion today in the spirit of Yukon women — past, present and future.

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to stand here today and to speak to this motion. I want to thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this forward. It has certainly been in the news with regard to choices and recognizing women's contributions from across Canada and their recognition on the dollars.

The member opposite gave us a very good description of Martha Black and her accomplishments here in the Yukon and I would agree they are wonderful. I know that her biography — one was edited by Flo Whyard — is certainly popular. When it's in my bookstore it is always a good seller.

She wrote other books also, but to me one of my favourite treasures of hers is a very small, little book of maybe 30 pages of flowers of the Yukon. Some of the drawings are done by her — they're all black and white, so it kind of makes it difficult to identify them, but it's just a small treasure and any of the photographs in it were taken by George Black himself. Whenever I come across one of those, it's very popular. It's just one of those sweet little books that are nice to own. I am pleased to support — we're pleased to see that Martha Black's name is put forward.

Just before we came in to the House though, I thought I would go and look at the Bank of Canada and just read up on how this is all going to work in choosing women hopefully for the currency. It went on to describe how they were

undertaking public consultation and anyone could put forward names for consideration. The call for nominations closed on April 15 and they had a list. It is like some of those things we see on Facebook, like: “How many books have you read?” or “How many of these TV shows have you seen?” I thought I would go have a look. They did mention that there were over 26,000 submissions, and I wasn’t going to go through it, but the list they had on Facebook probably was over 100 but under 200, so I just thought I would cruise through and see who I knew.

There were many familiar names of women who we have known across the history of Yukon and Canada, but I was surprised there were other Yukon women on that list. The two who popped out that I immediately recognized was Angela Sidney and the other was Kate Carmack. I read this and I thought, “Wow, on this short list we have three Yukon women.” I’m not sure how we distinguish between supporting one and not the others. So I did a little research and thank goodness for Wikipedia and for having a bookstore and knowing some of these things.

Angela Sidney was a Tagish storyteller and she was born in 1902 and died in 1991. I’m pretty sure everyone here would be familiar with who Angela Sidney was and what she did. Interestingly enough, she received the Order of Canada, becoming the first First Nation woman from the Yukon to be so honoured. She was very instrumental in helping to create the Yukon International Storytelling Festival, which began in 1988 and ran for a number of years and she was always front and centre. She always had a story to share and made wonderful contributions to that festival. I wish it was still going on.

One of the biggest quotes from Angela Sidney is, “Well, I have no money to leave for my grandchildren. My stories are my wealth!” and I love that because that’s what she did. There were numerous books that were listed that she contributed to, and they include: *Place Names of the Tagish Region, Southern Yukon* and credit is given to her for that one; *Haa Shag’oon: Our Family History* — this one she did along with Julie Cruikshank; *Tagish Tlaagú: Tagish Stories* — another one with Julie Cruikshank; and probably one of the best reads on Yukon First Nation history and women would be *My Stories Are My Wealth*, which is a wonderful read. I highly recommend it to everyone and, again, available at my bookstore.

Going on, Kate Carmack — I will talk about her because she’s important too in the whole history of the Yukon, which, we will acknowledge, started long before the gold rush. Kate Carmack was a Tagish First Nation woman — another Tagish one — born near Bennett Lake, where she grew up with her parents, seven sisters and brothers. In 1887, along with her brother Keish — Skookum Jim Mason — and her nephew Dawson Charlie, they started a packing, hunting and prospecting partnership with George Washington Carmack, an American who had come to the Yukon and was a prospector and a trader. Within a year of coming to know George Carmack, Kate became his common-law wife and took the name Kate Carmack. Before then she went by Shaaw Tláa.

It was Kate and her husband fishing for salmon at the mouth of the Klondike River in August 1896, and it was with a party led by her brother and including two nephews who came looking for her and discovered gold in Rabbit Creek. Some would say it was actually Kate Carmack herself who found the first gold. Others will argue yes or no, and I wasn’t there so I can’t confirm or deny that.

But I think it’s great. I think it’s wonderful that we have three Yukon women who have been nominated and are on a list on a website to become one of the first women on our paper currency. I think that, if I was given a choice, I couldn’t make that — between the three. Maybe I could, but I will just leave it at that. I think all three deserve recognition and I believe that, in light of reconciliation and recognition of the contribution of First Nations to the whole history of the Yukon, these names should be included.

I didn’t have the chance to speak with others before this, but I would like to make what I believe is a friendly amendment.

Amendment proposed

Ms. Stick: I move:

THAT Motion No. 1136 be amended by adding the phrase, “Shaaw Tláa (Kate Carmack), and Angela Sidney, Tagish storyteller,” immediately after the phrase, “consider Martha Louise Black, known as ‘Yukon’s First Lady.’”

Speaker: Order, please.

The amendment is in order. It has been moved by the Member for Riverdale South:

THAT Motion No. 1136 be amended by adding the phrase, “Shaaw Tláa (Kate Carmack), and Angela Sidney, Tagish storyteller,” immediately after the phrase, “consider Martha Louise Black, known as ‘Yukon’s First Lady.’”

Ms. Stick: I will just read the first line or first two lines of the motion, so it is:

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

“(1) in featuring iconic Canadian women on new bank notes, consider Martha Louise Black, known as ‘Yukon’s First Lady,’ Shaaw Tláa (Kate Carmack), and Angela Sidney, Tagish storyteller.”

Then the other two clauses in the motion would follow. The second one is to ensure that Canadian women will be featured on Canadian banknotes in recognition of their many contributions to shaping history and life in Canada. I think all three women are deserving of this consideration by the Bank of Canada. I think it’s an honour that, on the list that we see on the website for the Bank of Canada, there are at least three Yukon women’s names. There may be more I didn’t recognize, but those were certainly the ones I did.

I think it’s important that we give them three options — that we recognize that there are many, many Yukon women whose names could be on that list. We have three right now. Let’s honour all of them by encouraging the Bank of Canada to consider all three.

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard on the amendment? Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the amendment carried.

Amendment to Motion No. 1136 agreed to

Speaker: Minister of Environment, on the motion as amended.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It is an honour for me to rise today in support of the motion as amended. As we know, on International Women's Day this year, the federal government announced that the Bank of Canada would engage the public in consultation to select a great Canadian woman to be featured on a bank note in their next series to be issued in 2018.

Prior to the tabling of this motion, we know that the Premier did write a letter to the Governor of the Bank of Canada in support of having the Yukon trailblazer Martha Louise Black portrayed on the bank note. I recognize that many Yukon women throughout our history have contributed to the Yukon and our great country, and it's hard to make just one recommendation. The consultation was entirely open to the public so I'm sure that Yukoners took notice and put forward names — I think we've spoken a little bit about that in the House today — and I will speak of a couple of other notable women later, Mr. Speaker.

We know Martha Louise Munger was born on February 24, 1866, in Mercer, Pennsylvania. It didn't take her long, with her husband, William, to find a love for the Yukon and travel here in 1898. She joined other gold miners and

stampedeers to the Klondike, hiking the Chilkoot Trail and floating down the Yukon River to Dawson. Can you just imagine, Mr. Speaker, how hard and challenging that was with the technologies that we have today and what they didn't have back then? She fell in love with the Klondike and would travel south to tell all she could about the north. This would begin Martha's life of lecturing and presenting about the Klondike and the north to become — she was like our unofficial tourism promoter for Dawson City and the Yukon back then.

With the Klondike still calling her name, she did return in 1900, when she met a young Dawson City lawyer named George Black. They were married in 1904. George had become active in Yukon politics and helped form the first Conservative Party in the Yukon in 1904. I know my fellow colleague spoke a little bit about this, but I want to highlight a few things out of there.

During this time, Martha carried on being an ambassador for all things Yukon. I was amazed at some of her accomplishments, such as the gathering of wildflowers. When George was appointed the seventh Commissioner of the Yukon in 1912, she dedicated herself to the citizens and opened the doors of the residence to anyone, regardless of their social position, earning her widespread affection and her title, "Yukon's First Lady".

She established the first Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire in Dawson City, and she also assisted in organizing a couple more chapters and was instrumental in incredible fundraising efforts focused on World War I. That's what tweaked my interest about Martha Black years ago — the fact that she helped organize the Patriotic Service League of Dawson City, and that was affiliated with the Toronto Red Cross, but this would come into play more when she went overseas.

George Black established a contingent of Yukon men to go overseas to fight for England in World War I. This year, Mr. Speaker, we were talking about this earlier — about the 100th anniversary of Joe Boyle and the team and the contribution of Yukoners who went to war. When those men, including Martha's young son, George, went off to Victoria to take part in the basic training, Martha went with them. Once they made it to Victoria, she began taking lessons under the St. John Ambulance Brigade and, when they shipped to Halifax, she managed to convince the general in command of Canadian transport — which is amazing — that she should go along and transport by ship — the sole woman in 1,500 men going across there. The general's concerns that Martha would be unwelcome or not courageous enough for the journey were soon shown to be unfounded. They arrived in Liverpool in 1917.

Martha worked steadily, as my fellow colleague said, in the Prisoner of War Department and kept up her volunteer work for the YMCA and the Red Cross and the Yukon comfort fund, and many other causes. She was so dedicated to the Yukon that, even on the other side of the world, in the middle of World War I, she continued to market the Yukon to all. Returning to Canada in 1919, Martha carried on giving

lectures throughout Canada and the United States for many years.

George Black was elected as Yukon's Member of Parliament in 1921 and went on to become Speaker of the House of Commons. When George became ill in 1935, Mr. Speaker, and had to resign his seat as the Speaker, Martha carried on in helping with his constituency business, and later the same year, Martha was nominated and represented the Yukon as an independent Conservative. She was elected on February 6, 1936 as the Yukon's Member of Parliament, making her the first American-born woman and only the second Canadian woman to be elected to Parliament. This also made her Yukon's first MP. She held the seat until the 1940 election when her husband returned to politics and won the Yukon riding once again.

Martha Louise Black was a trailblazer for Yukon female politicians, and her service to her community, Yukon and Canada as a whole went far beyond Yukon's borders. This is something that I'm sure we can all appreciate in this House, regardless of the political stripe, and she sure did pave the way.

I want to take a little time to talk about my grandmother, Hilda Pauline Watson. Hilda was a Canadian schoolteacher — and she came from the south for the love of the Yukon — and a politician from the Yukon Territory. She was the first woman in Canadian history to lead a political party that was successful in having its members elected. First elected to the Yukon Territorial Council in the 1970 election to represent the district of Carmacks-Kluane — now my riding, which is just Kluane — she was one of the first two councillors to be appointed to the new executive committee. This gave her ministerial responsibilities over education in the territory. She and her fellow executive councillor, Norm Chamberlist, built a voting bloc with two other non-executive councillors, which gave them effective control over virtually all council business.

My grandma was re-elected in the 1974 election, but the validity of the election was challenged in court by a former executive councillor, John Livesey, on the basis of allegations that 26 ineligible voters had cast ballots in the district — a number larger than her margin of victory over Livesey. So she resigned the seat and re-contested it in a by-election in which Livesey ran as her main challenger but, of course, my grandma won the by-election.

After the legislation authorizing the creation of the Legislative Assembly of the Yukon and the resulting establishment of political parties in the Yukon was passed in 1977, she won the leadership of the new Progressive Conservative Party over federal Member of Parliament Erik Nielsen. She did lead the party to victory in the 1978 territorial election, in which she was the party's candidate in the Electoral District of Kluane; however, she did lose her seat to Liberal opponent Alice McGuire and, therefore, did not become the government leader.

Mr. Speaker, another Yukon woman I would like to talk about a little bit — she's a public servant, a businesswoman and she was also the Commissioner of the Yukon. I want to talk a little bit about a friend of mine, Geraldine Van Bibber.

She was born in Dawson. She became a business partner in the family tourism company. She played a pivotal role in the development of Yukon's travel industry. She was also instrumental in the formation of the Yukon First Nations Tourism Association. She has been a member of a number of territorial and national tourism and small business-related boards, including the Canadian Tourism Commission, the Yukon tourism education council and the Yukon government's business development fund board. She has been a guest speaker, of course, at northern tourism symposiums in Canada, the US, Sweden and Finland. She has also been quite active with the Yukon Human Rights Commission, the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues, the Gathering of Traditions Potlach Society and the cancer care clinic where she also works with the Speaker.

She acted as an ambassador for Yukon and First Nation people and was the first native-born Yukoner to welcome Prince Charles on his visit to this region in April 2001. Of course, we all know that she became the Commissioner of Yukon in December of 2005.

Those are just two Yukon women — we could go on and on, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say that Martha Black paved the way for Yukon women like my grandmother, Hilda Watson, and like Geraldine Van Bibber, who in turn passed that way on for many other women in politics. We see proof of that by the members serving in this House today — on both sides, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to see the Bank of Canada ensure that our Canadian women are featured on Canadian bank notes. There are also many great Canadians in our past who have done so much for Canada. We have women in our history who have pioneered in their fields. We have politicians, artists, educators, business women — too many to list — who have changed the place of women in the Canadian landscape.

I think it was key that the Premier pushed this forward. It was very important to urge the Bank of Canada to ensure that the Yukon and the northern perspective are taken into account by expanding the Bank of Canada's independent bank note advisory council. That is just so we can include the representation from the Yukon and northern women.

The Yukon and northern Canada's history is not as well-known in some of our southern provinces, and that is a fact. The north does have a very rich history, but a lot of it is not known also in the south. To quote what my fellow colleagues said a little earlier today, as Martha Black's history indicates, Yukoners are a tough, pioneering bunch. We persevered then as we do now. Admittedly, life in the Yukon is much more modern these days, but we do still like to think that we are just a little bit tougher than our southern counterparts. I am pretty sure that goes for all of us when we have the opportunity to talk to people from the south.

Like the Member for Watson Lake said, from 40 below to fly-in communities to trips by dog-sled, Canada's north is a unique place with a unique history, rich in arts, culture and tradition. I do hope all members support this motion. I am glad it was brought forward. The friendly amendment was also good. I want to thank everybody for this opportunity.

Mr. Silver: It is a pleasure to rise to speak on this motion as amended. I did reach out to a lot of folks in the Klondike to get some content for today's motion. I did get most of the content on Martha Black because, of course, we didn't know it would be amended at this time. I do share the Member for Riverdale South's voice for the many other women who clearly should be on this list as well for consideration. I was happy to hear that amendment.

I have a long list of quotes and honours and things to put on the record for Martha Black that come from information in my community. I would like to start — just for the Member for Kluane, I think he might have failed to mention that Mount Martha Black was named in her honour in August 1990. That is in the St. Elias mountain range west of Haines Junction. On June 18, 1917, in London, she was elected a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society — a notable honour for a woman at that time.

In the Dominion Day Honours of 1948, Martha Black was awarded the OBE, which is the Order of the British Empire, for cultural and social contributions to the Yukon. A coast guard ship — a high-endurance, mid-tasks vessel — *Martha L. Black* was named in her honour in 1986. It was her quote — and I'm quoting here: "It is better to wear out than to rust out."

While in London she and George visited the British House of Commons. She — and I quote: "found it the greatest difficulty getting into the House of Commons", and when she did, the unfeeling officials dragged her — her husband who was in khaki was given a privileged place while she was borne away to a stuffy cell concealed behind iron gatherings. This was in the day before the famous grill was removed. Regarding the performance she remarked, "It's rather curious how in Dawson you have to protect the women from the men; while over here they apparently find it necessary to protect the men from our women." She had a lot of gusto.

A Canadian postage stamp also honoured Martha Black. It was released in September 26, 1997. On November 5, 1987 Martha Louise Black was deemed of natural historic significance by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. A plaque in her honour mounted on a rock of the Commissioner's Residence in Dawson City was unveiled on July 17, 1993.

Just moving on to some more points here, Martha Black was an American who came to the Yukon during the Klondike Gold Rush as many others. She embraced her new country and became a prominent figure in the social life and community in Yukon. She was a staunch champion for Yukon as part of the Canadian northern identity, speaking out about her beloved adopted home whenever she had the opportunity. In her later years, her identity and that of the Yukon seemed to become one and the same. Constantly defying convention, she had the common touch that made her as comfortable with people at the bottom of the social scale as with those at the top. She was active in politics, becoming only the second woman and the first immigrant woman elected in the House of Commons.

An active collector of Yukon wildflowers, she was recognized for her work by the Royal Geographical Society — as mentioned as well — and of course the award from the Order of the British Empire.

She was born in Pennsylvania and her father made a fortune in the laundry business. My father was also in the laundry business — did not make a fortune.

Martha departed Seattle for the Klondike with her brothers and five others in 1898. Like thousands of others in the stampede to the Klondike, she hiked the iconic Chilkoot Trail with her party and floated down the Yukon River to Dawson City in a homemade boat made at Bennett Lake. She was recorded as the 631st woman to arrive at the NWMP post at Tagish in 1898. Her party arrived in Dawson City August 5 of the same year.

The party she was with built a small log cabin on the hillside overlooking Klondike City, otherwise known as Lousetown, and she gave birth to her third son, Lyman, there on January 31, 1899. She returned to her family in Kansas later in 1899, but in the summer of 1900, she returned to Dawson. Her parents and two of her sons followed in 1901, bringing the machinery to establish a sawmill and a two-stamp quartz mill, which she managed. Although her father owned the business, he established Martha as manager so that she could have an income as single mother, raising her young sons alone in the far north.

She divorced her first husband, Will Purdy, in the fall of 1903. When the divorce became final in June 1904, she married a Dawson lawyer named George Black, who she had met through her business. The marriage took place on August 1, 1904 at Millhouse, near the Ogilvie bridge, Dawson City. Martha said about her marriage to George Black — and I quote: "I am a firm believer in the principle that married couples, from the beginning, should be in complete harmony in religion, in country, and in politics. So immediately after my marriage, without compunction, I became an Anglican, an Imperialist and a Conservative." There was a quote back then of the day, Mr. Speaker, that in the town, there were Liberals and then there were the Blacks.

Martha became an active participant in the social life in Dawson City for many years. George became active in Yukon politics and helped establish the Conservative Party in Yukon in 1904. Martha supported him all the way. Martha's favourite hobby was gathering wildflowers, as mentioned, and she collected over 460 different specimens. She developed a method for preserving and displaying them, called "artistic botany." After winning a Yukon government contest for the best exhibit of native wildflowers, she had them displayed at the Arctic Yukon's Pacific Exposition in Seattle in 1909 and also at the Yukon Pavilion. She went on to receive a commission from the Canadian Pacific Railway to gather and display wildflowers of the Rocky Mountains.

In 1912, George Black was appointed seventh Commissioner to the Yukon. It was the first time that the government had chosen a long-time resident of the community and not someone outside from the government. They became the most famous residents of the Commissioner's Residence

with Martha as its chatelaine. She embarked upon fixing up a “house of the people” as she described it. At the first reception they threw open the doors of the Commissioner’s Residence to anyone who wanted to attend, irrespective of their social position.

She was instrumental in establishing the first three IODE chapters in Dawson — the first one in February 1913 — was known as the George M. Dawson Chapter. In January 1914, she helped organize the Inspector F.J. Fitzgerald Chapter. The IODE, which of course of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, as it was known at the time — the Yukon was instrumental in the incredible fundraising efforts for the patriotic efforts of World War I. A third chapter, the Klondike Chapter, was organized in January 1950. A fourth chapter was named in her honour.

Ms. Black also helped organize the Patriotic Services League in Dawson, which was affiliated with the Toronto Red Cross. She was patron of the first corps of the Girl Guides in Yukon, established in March 1914, in Dawson City. During World War I, Martha accompanied her husband and 225 other men from the Yukon Infantry Company to England aboard the SS Canada in February 1917. She was the only woman among 1,500 men on that voyage. While her husband George was preparing for war, she was actively volunteering her services with the Red Cross, she visited wounded and homesick Yukon soldiers and she administered the Yukon comfort fund.

Mr. Speaker, while she was in London during the war, she continued to write letters to friends in Dawson and submitted articles to the *Dawson Daily News* and the *Whitehorse Star*. When George was unable to run in the 1935 election, Martha ran in his place and was elected. She was only the second woman to be elected to the House of Commons as mentioned — quite impressive with her immigrant status as well.

Ms. Black wrote numerous articles for newspapers and magazines over the years. She also produced a book on Yukon wildflowers with her husband George and a series of small booklets and an autobiography — *My Seventy Years* — in 1938 that was later reprinted with an update by Flo Whyard, which was called *My Ninety Years*. Martha Black died on October 31, 1957 and she was buried in the Whitehorse cemetery on 6th Avenue.

There’s more I could go on here with and I have a whole bunch of pages, but I’m sure my time is running out. I did really want to mention my support for this motion. I certainly believe that Martha Black is a fine selection for this type of national recognition. It is worthy of note that we should be talking to all Yukoners to get names to bring forward. During this afternoon alone, we’ve heard some fantastic names. I understand that they have to be deceased to be considered for putting their face on a bill, but we do have an awful lot of more-than-worthy women in the Yukon that we should be talking about, not just Martha Black; however, seeing as I represent the Klondike, it would be a great opportunity for me to inform the House today of the wonderful achievements and the absolute support that I have for Martha Black being on one of our Canadian bills.

Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. With that, I will support this motion as amended.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, I’m honoured to rise today in support of this motion. I would like to acknowledge and thank our Member for Watson Lake for bringing it forward.

It’s wonderful to hear some of the stories that we have heard. I learned a few things more about Martha Black today and I also want to acknowledge the amended motion and what the Member for Riverdale South stated — that while it has been amended to three names, there are many other women who would be duly worthy of such recognition as well.

I will be brief — I was disappointed that the Member for Klondike stole a bit of my thunder with the Liberals and the Black comment. It was interesting at the time and I think she described herself as a pinch-hitter for George Black at the time, and there was one other quote I found interesting as well.

She mentioned some of her troubles, and she said that when she was going to put her name forward, there were younger women who said, “What can this damn old woman do for us in Ottawa?” That was hard to take, and she hurled back, “You’ll be lucky when you reach my age if you have my sturdy legs, my good stomach, my strong heart and what I call my headpiece.”

I thought that was an interesting comment from her as well.

I truly would like to see women who have made a significant historical contribution to our country featured on Canadian bank notes. I think that’s unanimous here within the House. We’ve had women throughout our history as a country who have helped us to define what it means to be Canadian. Canada is reflected by the notable achievements of leaders and role models today as well. It’s one thing to be born into royalty or elected into office, but being featured as a worthy individual on bank notes, based on one’s historical national contributions and dedication is another thing entirely. It reflects the country’s appreciation of a person for reasons that go beyond birthright or title.

I was pleased to nominate Martha Black as an outstanding individual and encouraged the Bank of Canada to not only continue the practice of placing notable Canadian women on bank notes, but to ensure to give consideration to women in the far reaches of Canada, such as here in the north. The north has been home to a great number of women with a broad range of historical contributions to Canada as we know it today.

For the record, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to include the letter that I did send to Governor Stephen Poloz of the Bank of Canada, which was dated February 25, 2016, and was an open letter on adding women to Canadian bank notes.

I wrote: “I am writing you in follow-up to Federal Finance Minister Bill Morneau’s recent comments in support of portraying notable women on Canadian bank notes. As Premier of Yukon, I would like to express my strong support for this initiative. Given that our territory is currently

celebrating our annual Sourdough Rendezvous festival in which we commemorate our heritage and local heroes, I would also like to provide my own recommendation for a notable Yukoner.

“Martha Louise Black, a staunch champion for the territory as part of Canada’s identity, was a trailblazer and prominent figure in Yukon history. Her influence in shaping the course of events in the territory along with her undying passion for Yukon make her a strong candidate for portrayal on our Canadian banknotes.

“Martha immigrated to Canada and visited Yukon in 1898 during the rise of the Klondike Gold Rush. She immediately fell in love with the North, writing numerous publications on its beauty and charm, and it was not long after that she decided to make Yukon her permanent home.

“Martha was a kind and passionate woman, incredibly devoted to the service of her community. In 1912, while her husband George served as the Commissioner of Yukon, Martha dedicated herself to the citizens and opened the doors of the Commissioner’s Residence in Dawson City to anyone, regardless of their social position, earning her widespread affection and the title ‘Yukon’s first lady’.

“During the First World War, Martha helped establish a number of supports for the Canadian troops, including the organization of a Patriotic Service League in Dawson City, and the development of a fund to provide relief to deployed soldiers and their families. When her family was sent overseas for the war, Martha took that as an opportunity to continue her service to the country from abroad. Martha committed herself to numerous volunteer organizations such as the British Red Cross and the YMCA, and spent her free time giving lectures about Canada and Yukon. When Martha returned to Canada, she continued her lectures and published a variety of articles about her beloved Yukon.

“In 1935, she continued to pursue her passion for public service and was elected Member of Parliament for Yukon. Not only was she just the second woman elected to Parliament but she holds the distinction of being the first foreign-born woman elected into the House of Commons.

“Martha passed away in 1957 but not before leaving a lasting mark on Yukon and Canada as a whole. She was made a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society, awarded an Order of the British Empire for her contributions to Yukon, and deemed of National Historical Significance by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. In addition, both a mountain and a large Canadian Coast Guard vessel have been named after her.

“These are but a few of the great things Mrs. Black has accomplished. Beyond commemorating an outstanding Canadian, I believe that featuring her on Canadian banknotes would give all Canadians the opportunity to appreciate the importance of individuals like Martha and the important role women have played in shaping our country and the North.

“I hope you take the time to consider my recommendation as she certainly deserves the recognition.”

It is signed by me, and a copy of this letter was also sent to the Minister of Finance, the Hon. Bill Morneau.

As we have heard, there certainly are a number of people who would be worthy. It is also important to note that all Canadians had the opportunity to put forward names for possible recognition or distinction in this manner.

I would again like to thank the Member for Watson Lake for putting forward this motion, which has now been amended. I am very happy and proud to be supporting it today.

Ms. Hanson: I am happy to stand here today to indicate support for the motion as amended. I think that the amended motion recognizes three women of distinction in the Yukon. I think the amended motion actually offers us a real opportunity as legislators, as Yukoners, to recognize and to build on the elements of reconciliation that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada called on us to do. I think we have heard today and acknowledged that Martha Black represents and really emphasises Yukon’s colonial history, and so the notion of inclusion of First Nation women into this nomination, or suggestion, to the Bank of Canada really does do a lot to begin to acknowledge, as the TRCC said — I am just going to quote, Mr. Speaker, that one of the things that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada pointed out is that typically we are taught that the history of Canada began when the first European explorers set foot in the new world. Nation-building had been the main theme of Canada’s history curricula for a long time. Aboriginal peoples, with few notable exceptions, were portrayed as bystanders, if not obstacles, to that enterprise.

I think that it is really interesting to see the juxtaposition in terms of the women that the Member for Riverdale South suggested be included in this recommendation to the Bank of Canada and the fact that both Angela Sidney and Shaaw Tláa — Kate Carmack — actually were part of that post-colonial history and have done much to contribute from a First Nation perspective, and both in their different and unique ways. They are linked in an interesting way and I want to talk about that in a bit.

Again, just to set the context for why I really do support this is — one of the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is number 79, which talks about revising the policies and the criteria of national programs of commemoration to integrate indigenous history and values and memory practices into what we would call our national history and heritage and history. That, in my mind, is epitomized or exemplified by the potential presence of an aboriginal woman on our currency.

When we speak about Angela Sidney — she came from a very traditional background. She was, as we all know, one of the last fluent speakers of the Tagish language. She really took it to heart to preserve those languages and the stories. I think many people in this Legislative Assembly will be familiar with — whether the stories or the books that she was part of. I have a personal affinity for some of these stories because one of the stories — as a Tagish matriarch, she told a story of Skookum Jim, who was her father’s cousin. These are all names familiar to Yukoners. He was one of the people

credited with starting the gold rush — so again, this goes back to why Martha Black even came up here in the Yukon.

In one of Angela Sidney's stories, Skookum Jim — and this story is apparently situated at Crag Lake, so the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes and I have been told this story by elders who would say that this is where the real origin of the gold rush occurred. It sounds kind of weird, but it goes like this: in one of her stories, Skookum Jim rescued a frog trapped in a ditch — and I have even been shown where that ditch was supposed to be — and the frog in turn heals Skookum Jim when he became injured. The spirit of the frog later came to Jim in a dream in the form of a beautiful woman, and she told him that he will find his luck down the Yukon River. A year later, Skookum Jim went down the river and discovered gold.

Now, Angela Sidney and her stories were the inspiration of many, many things, including a number of books, *My Stories are My Wealth* — and she said that: I don't have any money; my stories are my wealth. She worked with really well-known author and anthropologist Julie Cruikshank and also Catharine McClellan in the books *Life Lived Like a Story* and *My Stories Are My Wealth* — what I've just mentioned. She was the inspiration behind the Yukon Storytelling Festival, which she helped create almost 20 years ago.

One of the other, sort of prescient things that is interesting about Angela Sidney — when she was asked to give the new Whitehorse campus at the Yukon College a First Nation name, she began by describing how her father's people had built killer whale houses on the banks of the river. If you'll recall, Mr. Speaker, where was the original Yukon College? The old vocational school was on the banks of the Yukon River. Her father, when the whale house was there, had to move it when they realized that the house was too close to the riverbank. She saw the similarity between the killer whale house, the old Yukon vocational college, and the main campus, and so she named the college Ayamdigut, a Tlingit name for "she got up and went" — pretty straightforward.

I think that it's important — as we look at the trials and tribulations of these First Nation women as they made their place and, in one case, maintained the strong, strong commitment to the language and the history and the oral traditions of First Nation people — that we try to encourage the Governor of the Bank of Canada to look perhaps at — if we have to do an ascending priority, maybe we should be looking at ensuring that our original peoples are recognized first — our original women — and then those of us who have come to join Canada as settlers are represented on our currency.

I also just wanted to make a comment, as a woman and as a feminist, that it strikes me as unfortunate that, in 2016, we make a reference to a person being a "First Lady", which, in my mind, in this case is really a reference to her husband's position as Commissioner and MP. Martha Black was a Member of Parliament, she was a writer — we have heard so much today about her accomplishments as a naturalist. She was a businessperson, she was a survivor, and I think we should be emphasizing her own accomplishments. She's not

an add-on. She's not the auxiliary. She was a Member of Parliament in her own right; she was not an auxiliary to her husband. So I find it — the legacy of being Yukon's First Lady — it's Martha Black, Yukon Member of Parliament. We should be proud of that.

I stand in support of this motion, Mr. Speaker.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Ms. McLeod: I want to thank people for the comments — those who provided some.

I believe the motion, as I presented it originally, was very inclusive. I think that we could subamend this motion for the rest of the session if we went around the room and everybody put in a few names of everybody they thought worthy of this honour, but I take what the Member for Riverdale-South said. Clearly these women are very worthy in their own right — absolutely.

I guess that's all I wanted to say on this, other than to thank all the members for their support. I hope that Martha Black's name makes the short list at the end of the day and we see some forward action.

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. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yeas, nil nays.

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

Motion No. 1136, 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 Bill No. 202, *Act to Amend the Education Act*.

Do members wish to take a brief 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. 202: *Act to Amend the Education Act*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 202, *Act to Amend the Education Act*.

Hon. Mr. Graham: During second reading of this act, a number of questions were raised, so I thought, as an opening to the Committee of the Whole debate, I would attempt to answer the questions raised as best I can.

The first question was around the election process. The *Education Act* states that the Minister of Education will negotiate with each First Nation the number of guaranteed representatives, the process for appointing or electing the guaranteed representatives, and the length of term for the guaranteed representation to apply. All guaranteed representatives are currently appointed by the First Nation, and all terms expire at the end of the regular school council's term.

Some governments select an individual as their guaranteed representative — for example, the education director. Others solicit applications from their membership. I have in fact seen a couple of advertisements in the paper where a First Nation is advertising for a number of different boards and committees for which they are seeking members. They then pick a representative from those people who express interest. It is really up to the First Nation to determine an appropriate means of selecting their representative. There are any number of ways, I guess, that they could do it, because a Yukon First Nation could hold elections for its guaranteed representative if it was interested in doing so. If a First Nation government advised me that they were so interested, then I would discuss with either the Elections Office or with the First Nation government themselves how that election process would take place and when. There is a possibility that the

election of a First Nation guaranteed representative could coincide with the election of the regular members.

I guess the final thing is that the guaranteed representative seat is for an indefinite period of time unless the Yukon First Nation and the Minister of Education at the time agree to remove it from the school council.

There was also a question asked around funding for school councils. Honoraria for school council members and school board trustees are set out in the payments to members and trustees regulation under the *Education Act*. According to the regulation, members of school councils who attend a meeting of the council for not less than one hour shall be paid a per-meeting rate determined by the council. The rate is set by regulation as no more than \$62.50 for the chair and no more than \$50 for the council member. The department does provide funding on the basis of an anticipated 10 meetings per year per council.

If there was an interest from any school council in increasing the honoraria, we would be happy to discuss it. To date, to the best of my knowledge, we have not had that request. The department also provides school councils with an annual budget for operation and maintenance. It's on a sliding scale with the larger amount going to school councils with more than 200 students. Two examples I was given were: F.H. Collins, which is the largest school in the territory and gets approximately \$8,600; and Nelnah Bessie John School, which is one of the smaller schools in the territory and gets approximately \$4,600.

The other question that was raised was: How do we ensure parity of members? Also, is there a need to set a limit on the guaranteed representatives for First Nations? This question speaks to the representation of First Nation governments as well as people such as parents, former educators and community members who have an interest in how schools are operating. Currently 17 of the 26 school councils have guaranteed First Nation representatives.

Of those 17, five school councils have one guaranteed representative and, at the other end of the scale, five school councils have an equal number of elected members and guaranteed representatives.

First Nation citizens who are not guaranteed representatives — as I said during the second reading debate — are also welcome to run for elected positions on the school council in their area. On some school councils in the territory, all of the elected members and guaranteed representatives are First Nation citizens. If a school council or a First Nation government have concerns about the makeup of a school council, we have told everyone that we would be more than happy to discuss the matter with them and to make accommodations, if accommodations are called for or are necessary.

The next question: Are there current limits on the number of guaranteed representatives? Currently there are no limits on the number of guaranteed representatives; it's determined through negotiations between the Department of Education and the First Nation government and in consultation with the existing school council. At the present time, F.H. Collins has

the largest number of guaranteed representatives. They have four — three from Kwanlin Dün and one from Ta'an Kwäch'än' Council. In addition to the four guaranteed representatives, they have 11 elected school representatives.

The final question was: Will the amendments change how guaranteed representatives are appointed? The answer to that, quite simply, is no. The process for how guaranteed representatives are appointed will remain the same. As with the current act, if a First Nation government wants to change the process for the appointment of guaranteed representatives, I would be only too happy to sit down and discuss it with them.

That concludes the information regarding questions during second reading. I look forward to going through the legislation with members opposite and answering any further questions they have.

Mr. Tredger: Madam Chair, I thank the representatives for attending to this and for assisting the minister in bringing forth this act. I thank the minister for his comments and answering the questions. Again he's stolen a bit of my thunder — I'm not sure where we go now.

I want to thank also the Yukon Chief Electoral Officer as well as the departments of Education and Justice for bringing this forward. I think it's a fairly important issue; it resolves some ambiguity for our school councils and boards, which are such important parts of our system going forward.

The minister mentioned a bit about the process and he answered a couple of my questions. I believe he indicated that the terms of the guaranteed representatives are concurrent with the school council so that they would serve at the same time, and that this process is negotiated with each First Nation.

I'm not sure that my experience — and that was a number of years ago. But there was no formal process for that and some of the First Nations weren't sure exactly how many representatives they had and whether or not it was important to put it forward. I'm wondering if the minister would commit to an annual report or instigation of the process with the First Nations so that annually they would be informed of their rights, the numbers that they currently have, and whether or not they want to renegotiate that. The reason for that is, quite often the personnel involved change, and over a couple of years we end up relying on hearsay and what we think the process is. I have seen situations where there have been two guaranteed representatives filled and so they assume that it is how many that they have — so if the minister can identify or commit to having an annual process that would inform the First Nations and the school councils of that process.

Hon. Mr. Graham: To the best of my knowledge, the member opposite is correct in that we don't do an information exchange, shall we say, with First Nations each time there is a school council election. It seems to me to be a reasonable idea. We do advertise; we make sure that the public is aware, as much as possible, that the elections are taking place. We kind of assume, I think, many times that everyone knows, including First Nations. I will undertake, as the current minister anyway, that the department will reach out in the

future as just part of the outreach process that they normally do to First Nations to remind them that school elections are on and that their guaranteed representatives — or they should indicate to the department who their guaranteed representatives are. That way, hopefully, we'll have no confusion.

I have to tell you though that I receive, on a pretty regular basis, information from First Nations that let me know that they have this person who has been the guaranteed representative and they are no longer in the community, so they are replacing them with this person. We process those requests as soon as we get the letters from First Nations. It appears to me that many First Nations are on top of it but, just to be sure, this is a process that it wouldn't hurt us to implement.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that. It wasn't an implication that school councils or First Nations aren't aware of it, but sometimes a reminder as personnel changes — because if we're trying to do away with some of the ambiguity around school councils, that certainly would help — just a reminder of the process.

We're referring to anywhere between three and seven members on a school council or board — those are the elected members. How is that determined?

Have there been any redeterminations? Is the school community informed of the number — well, they would be in an election period, but how is that developed and is it clear for all schools or can that vary with time? I have been on school councils and, as I mentioned, last time — when a parent shows up and expresses an interest in being part of the school community, the school council has sent a request to the minister requesting that the person then be appointed to the school council. Is any school able to go to the maximum of seven or are there limits set in each school? Can that be changed?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, the number of members of a school council is set by the department after consultation with the school community and usually with the existing school council.

To give you an idea, Eliza Van Bibber School has always had, in the past, five members. They communicated with the department and requested that the number be reduced to three. We did that this year by regulation so there will only be three members at Eliza Van Bibber School.

I believe rural schools have — I will tell you: Old Crow school, five members, one guaranteed; Christ the King Elementary School, five members; Del Van Gorder School, five members; Elijah Smith Elementary School, three elected and three appointed; F.H. Collins Secondary School has seven and four, as I said before; Eliza Van Bibber School, three and two — and all five are First Nation because the three elected members are First Nation people as well; Ghùch Tlâ community school has five elected and three appointed; Golden Horn Elementary School, five elected; Grey Mountain Primary School, five; Hidden Valley School, five elected, one KDFN member; Holy Family School, five elected; J.V. Clark School, three elected — and so that's the only other school

that has three elected, but J.V. Clark School has three elected and three appointed or guaranteed representatives; Jack Hulland Elementary School has seven; Kluane Lake School has five and one guaranteed representative; Nelnah Bessie John has three and one from White River First Nation; Porter Creek Secondary School has seven and one guaranteed from KDFN, one guaranteed from Ta'an Kwäch'än; Robert Service School for some reason has six and two; Ross River School, five elected, two guaranteed; Selkirk Elementary School, five elected; St. Elias Community School, three elected and three appointed; Takhini Elementary School, five and one KDFN; Tantalus School in Carmacks, three elected and three appointed; Teslin School, three elected and three appointed; Vanier Catholic Secondary School, five elected; Watson Lake Secondary School has seven elected, two Liard First Nation and one Daylu Dena First Nation; Whitehorse Elementary School has five elected.

That's the whole list. They do vary between three and seven, and most of the communities where there is a strong First Nation presence, as well as non-First Nation, are three and three.

It seems to be working fairly well with taking the recommendation from the existing school council and putting that in regulation.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you to the minister for that. Do the changes affect in any way — or do they contemplate the ability or what happens when a school council or community wants to move from a school council to a school board?

Hon. Mr. Graham: That's an altogether different process, and it's clearly outlined in the *Education Act*, but it has nothing to do with this change at all. This one deals strictly with school councils and guaranteed representatives.

Mr. Tredger: So it doesn't affect if a school district or school wanted to move to a school board or, in the case of École Émilie Tremblay, this has no effect on school trustees.

Hon. Mr. Graham: That's correct, Madam Chair. We were very clear, hopefully, in pointing that out with EET — that this in no way has an impact on the school board.

Mr. Tredger: Could these changes raise potential issues regarding the number of guaranteed reps who can sit on a school council, whether it is desirable to legislate their maximum number, or is that entirely through negotiations? I believe that's how you answered it. Do you anticipate — or have you had conversations with various First Nations — that the legislation could lead to any significant growth or involvement of guaranteed representative appointments after clarifying that they don't count toward the ceiling for elected council members?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Yes, the member opposite is correct that the number of guaranteed representatives is completely open to negotiation between the minister and the First Nation. To date, all negotiations have gone well and we have never had a problem, to the best of my knowledge.

To go back to the francophone school board, there are currently no guaranteed First Nation representatives on the Yukon francophone school board and, as a result, this will not have an impact. But should a First Nation seek a guaranteed

representation on the francophone school board, it would then require me, as minister, to negotiate both with the First Nation and the school board, prior to determining what, if any, guaranteed representation there could be. Because it's a very hypothetical situation, we haven't addressed it any further than that.

It would require me to negotiate with both groups to determine if guaranteed representation should take place.

Mr. Tredger: I guess my concern was not so much with École Émilie Tremblay but whether a First Nation wanted to move to school board status.

I know that when the act was written it was assumed that many of the school councils would rapidly change to school boards. That was what the vision was, and in fact, that is not what has happened. Most of the school areas have stayed as school councils and have been quite content with that. I just wondered whether this had been contemplated — whether a First Nation or whether an area would take advantage of moving to a school board and what affect this would have on it. But the minister did answer that by saying that, to the best of his knowledge, it would not affect it.

Aside from the concerns raised by the Chief Electoral Officer, have there been any practical cases of ambiguity regarding the status of the guaranteed representatives where a council had more than seven members? Have there been concerns raised by others, other than the Chief Electoral Officer?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I have visited most school councils in the territory and not a single one of those school councils have brought this forward as a problem. To the best of my knowledge, after speaking with as many First Nations as I have in many of those communities, it isn't a problem for them either. They are very well aware of the fact that they can approach the department and increase the number of guaranteed representatives through negotiation, but as many First Nations have told me, they have enough trouble finding people to sit on the individual councils and committees as it is and they don't need more.

Mr. Tredger: That's all the questions I had. I would again thank the minister and both the departments of Education and Justice for bringing forth this bill. Having said that — thank you.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate? If not, we are going to proceed to clause-by-clause reading.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Clause 2 agreed to

On Clause 3

Clause 3 agreed to

On Clause 4

Clause 4 agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, I move that Bill No. 202, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Graham that Bill No. 202, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, be reported without amendment.

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. 202, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

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.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 202: *Act to Amend the Education Act* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 202, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Graham.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I move that Bill No. 202, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 202, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Graham: This bill came about as a result of a concern by the Chief Electoral Officer about the legality of appointing guaranteed representatives over the maximum number of school council members in the *Education Act*. As a result, we brought forward this act and we appreciate the fact that the Chief Electoral Officer brought forward her concerns. I also appreciate the cooperation of members opposite, because the reason we're bringing this forward here today for third reading is because the school council elections will take place next week and we would like to have it in place, even though I believe there were provisions that we could have extended further beyond — this is much cleaner and much simpler. I appreciate the cooperation of members opposite and I appreciate the concerns of the Chief Electoral Officer and, more than ever, Mr. Speaker, I just want to congratulate my

department and Justice drafters in their quick response to this issue.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for his introduction. As I have stated before, by acting on the Yukon Chief Electoral Officer's suggestions regarding the separate but equally important role of guaranteed representatives from First Nation communities on school council, Bill No. 202 supports a robust school system and ensures an ongoing role for First Nation school council representatives.

Again I compliment the Department of Education as well as the Department of Justice and the minister for acting on this expeditiously and thank them for that. I think it's important that we ensure First Nation participation and that their voice on the school council helps to achieve a balance in our communities. The minister alluded to this during Committee of the Whole, but anything we can do to ensure or to encourage parent and community involvement on our school councils and in our schools is welcomed by the NDP Official Opposition as well as the minister through his actions. I encourage this and thank the minister for bringing it forward and this act does have our support.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 16 yea, nil nay.

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

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 202 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 202 has passed this House.

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): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 10, Public Service Commission in Bill No. 23, *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

Do members wish to take a brief 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 10, Public Service Commission, in Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

Public Service Commission

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It's a pleasure to rise and speak today to the Public Service Commission's 2016-17 budget.

I'm joined today by our Public Service Commissioner Jim Connell, who is no stranger to the House.

I will start by talking a little bit about some of the budget points and then some of the more general context to the budget today, and then we'll have some time for questions and some discussion throughout the rest of the day.

The Public Service Commission — as members know — is the employer on behalf of the Yukon government under the *Public Service Act*. The department provides human resource direction, advice and support services to Yukon government departments and employees. PSC works with departments to uphold the key staffing principles of merit and employment equity while maintaining agreements that delegate hiring decisions to departmental deputy ministers.

In this role, the Public Service Commission delivers strategic human resource services, including the processes governing recruitment, classification and employee compensation, data analysis and human resource management systems, professional development and learning programs, labour relations, initiatives to achieve a representative public service, initiatives to promote respectful workplaces,

corporate human resource planning and policies, corporate health and safety and disability management services.

I will now provide an overview of both the operation and maintenance and capital budgets for the Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission's estimated budget for 2016-17 is \$46,846,000. This reflects a total increase of over \$2 million, or 5.4 percent, from the 2015-16 main estimates. This increase is largely in the operation and maintenance vote. The Public Service Commission received \$635,000 under the capital budget for the completion of development of an automated time, labour and leave system, and rolling it out government-wide. That is something we can discuss more specifically later on as well.

A phased approach to implementing the system government-wide is planned, with all employees anticipated to be using the online tool by March 31, 2017. As I said, that is something I look forward to discussing further later today. Some key benefits of this new system include up-to-date leave balances at any given time, which will eliminate the instances of wage recoveries from employees due to overpayments while on leave. It will also reduce data-entry workload, and it will strengthen Yukon government's time and leave management system as a whole. In 2015-16, this project was funded by a reallocation of funds within the department from the operation and maintenance vote to the capital vote. Branches affected include: Human Resource Management Systems, Organizational Development and Health, Safety and Disability Management. Reallocated funds have been reinstated to the branches in 2016-17.

As one turns the pages and looks at the various program areas, aside from the items just mentioned, most changes are small and reflect only the planned cost for the current staff complement. I will also note that the budget book provides comparison to the previous year's budget for both the main estimates and forecast. I will speak to the changes between the two years' main estimates. The workers' compensation fund shows a decrease of \$325,000, or six percent from previous estimates. This decrease is due to a reduction in WCB premium rates effective January 1, 2016. Our new premium rate is \$1.41 per \$100 of insurable earnings, down from \$1.52 per \$100 of insurable earnings the previous year. At the same time, the maximum assessable earnings for 2016 remain the same as 2015 at \$84,837. The employee future benefits budget is the largest line item in the Public Service Commission's budget. This item totals just about \$25 million and represents 53 percent of the Public Service Commission's budget. It is determined by an actuarial review of the estimated future obligations due to employees when they leave the government or retire. The amount reflected in each year's budget is the increase required for the liability. The estimate reflects a variety of actuarial factors such as demographics, accumulated service, wages, rates and the applicable discount rate. Change in the discount rate was a large factor in the budget increase for 2016-17. Essentially, when interest rates go down, you require more money today in order to meet your future obligations.

That covers off that piece of the budget that I wanted to discuss. I want to provide a little bit of context to the operations of the Public Service Commission.

We are in the last year of our five-year plan that spans from 2011 to 2016. That plan is something that has guided the department for the last number of years and we will be looking at reviewing and developing for the next number of years in the coming months and year.

The focus of the Public Service Commission's strategic plan has been to improve key areas of human resource management across the Yukon government. Ongoing efforts to retool the human resource function with the Yukon government are profiled in this year's plan and will continue to be a strategic focus of the commission in future years.

In addition, we are advancing priorities on several fronts that seek innovative ways to: attract, develop and engage talented people; promote a representative and diverse public service; support healthy, safe and respectful workplaces; and provide collaborative client-focused corporate human resource services and supporting systems.

Priority initiatives that the Public Service Commission is committed to pursue this year include the timely labour and leave management system I discussed earlier, but they also include the negotiation renewal of the collective agreement with the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the Yukon Employees Union and, as well, the fielding of and reporting on a government-wide employee engagement survey. They also include the continued collaboration with Yukon First Nations and Yukon government departments to implement the strategies of the final agreement representative of the public service plan.

Furthermore, our priorities for this year include piloting new online respectful workplace training. That's something that we can discuss later today as well.

Also, they include the development and delivery of: training on diversity and discrimination, including gender-diversity training and learning events that promote and support client-centred innovation in the public service; integration of the new core-competency framework into leadership development training; and the finalization of updates to the disability management framework are also a part of this year's priorities.

We will also begin the development of a methodology for conducting job hazard analysis of Yukon government positions and we'll continue to work with the French Language Services Directorate and departments to develop and implement a corporate bilingual staffing plan.

Finally, we will initiate a review of the conditions of employment for managers, legal officers and deputy ministers.

Those are just a few of the priorities that we have and that we will be moving on in this coming year.

I think it's worth also covering some of the strategic contexts within which the department operates. As members are probably aware, human resource management in a large organization like Yukon government is always a balancing act. Some of the challenges that Yukon government faces are

common to governments across Canada while others are unique to our northern jurisdiction.

As I will outline through the course of the day, and perhaps in future days, we have some significant factors that have influenced the development and direction of the department's plans. Those of course include demographics. As members will know, Yukon has a relatively older population. The number of retirements across the country and in Yukon is starting to increase, as more of the baby-boomer generation turns 65 years of age. Nationally there are pressures on pensions, owing in part to the economic downturn that followed the financial sector crisis of 2008. Some older workers are delaying retirement, while others who have already retired are returning to the workforce for life satisfaction or for economic reasons.

Another important influence on the operations of the department is the labour market. In addition to shortages due to projected increases in retirement, a strong Yukon economy and Canadian economy will steepen demand and competition for labour. Youth are a key source of new employees for government, and Yukon government may need to change some of its recruitment and employment practices to attract and retain this labour market segment.

Other new sources of workers may be found through immigration, as well as strategies to recruit and engage those with historically low workforce participation rates, such as First Nation people and people with disabilities. Another influencing factor is wellness and disabilities. Implications of the aging workforce and more retirements include increasing costs of benefit plans, including those for retirees, and disability insurance.

Yukon has a greater prevalence rate of higher cost disability claims. Better disability management, improved occupational safety practices and more effort aimed at prevention and wellness could all help to reduce injury, illness and disability among YG employees.

As well, Madam Chair, we're always focused on attraction and retention of employees. Not surprisingly, given the prevailing demographic and labour market trends, the top human capital challenges across Canada are attracting and retaining talent, optimizing performance and building capacity. Employee engagement is a key strategy to meet these challenges, thus will be an enduring human resource priority for Yukon government over the short and long term. Attracting new talent to the north will also be aided by quicker and more effective recruitment processes and improved supply of affordable rental and ownership housing in Whitehorse and in the rural communities.

Also, Madam Chair, we are always striving to be aware of and engage in the most recent technology and systems. As well as being an essential component for the working environment for staff, the use of technology can increase service quality and reduce the cost of government. Many governments across Canada are moving aggressively to the provision of government services through electronic portals. Automation of transactional activities frees staff to provide higher value services and perform more satisfying work.

We've seen examples of this throughout the departments — and I think it's worth highlighting the Department of Environment in particular for the work they've done around the movement of services to the electronic, or online, realm. They have had great success with hunting licences and other licences they issue being offered online, and we've heard very positive feedback not only from the officials who previously did that work, but from Yukoners who seek those types of services.

Also a key factor influencing the strategic context of the department is the need for diversity. Governments across Canada continue to emphasize the value of building a diverse public service that is representative of the population it serves. It certainly is a key feature here in the Yukon as well. Such a workforce provides a wider variety of perspectives and experience and has an increased ability to understand and empathize with clients and colleagues. In the Yukon, the drive to achieve a representative public service is reinforced by obligations set out in chapter 22 of First Nation final agreements. Implementation of a new final agreement representative public service plan, which was developed jointly with Yukon First Nations in 2011, is advancing this shared interest and commitment.

Madam Chair, women are highly represented in the Yukon public service, although there is still room for improvement at the most senior levels and in certain occupations. Yukon government is considered a leader in Canada in terms of hiring people with disabilities and boosting their representation levels; however, as with women, there are gaps to address at the higher classification levels and across the spectrum of occupational groups.

Finally, one of the important influencing features of our plan for the year is developing a strong organizational culture. There is a call from within Yukon government's human resource community from the Public Service Commission to adopt a more collaborative and client-centred approach, with an emphasis on problem-solving. The Public Service Commission is responsible for administering the *Public Service Act*, but has delegated many of its human resource functions to the departments. For this delegation to work well, the Public Service Commission must be responsive to constructive feedback on its leadership style and central agency role. That is something that we are always very well aware of in the Public Service Commission and we try to engage with those client departments and the officials within each of them as best we can and as positively as we can.

While there certainly are challenges that lie ahead for the Yukon public service — they include an aging workforce, labour market pressures and organizational culture issues — each of these require new approaches to human resource management. The Public Service Commission is committed to addressing these challenges and, in the process, finding ways to build on existing strengths as it explores new solutions through technology, service orientation, internal coordination and workforce diversity.

Madam Chair, I hope I have provided a good overview of the Public Service Commission and the context within which

we work and some of the priorities we have for the coming year, as well as some of the highlights that are in the budget for us, and I look forward to fielding questions from members at this time.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for that overview. It was helpful. I welcome the official to the Chamber as well.

Madam Chair, I couldn't agree more with the minister about the importance of the Public Service Commission as one of the key central agencies of the Government of Yukon. It has an incredibly important role to play to ensure that those individuals who choose to offer their services as members of the public service of Yukon do so in a work environment that is merit-based; that recognizes that public servants are selected based on merit; that they have a work environment that respects them as individuals and respects their professional integrity; and that provides a workplace free from intimidation and political interference.

I have a long history of working in the public service at the provincial, federal and municipal levels — aboriginal organizations — so I take very seriously the role of the public service. When I approach and ask the minister and his officials questions about the Public Service Commission, it's done in the context of how very important that role is and how, as he said, they need to be open to suggestions and sometimes criticisms from both within and without about how the public service is managed because the impact is ultimately felt by citizens. Public service implies service to the public. Public servants do not serve political masters; they serve the public by definition, so how we create the conditions for them to be able to serve with a sense of self-respect and integrity is really critical.

There a number of areas that I want to explore with the minister as we go through this budget of the Public Service Commission. He outlined some of the aspects of the five-year plan with respect to 2011 to 2016 and some of the areas that the Public Service Commission has been working toward improving in key areas. I have a number of questions with respect to those.

I would like to start with a couple of questions. It's unfortunate — I know that the officials intended to follow up, but the collapsing of the time frame meant that perhaps the information we requested during the briefing wasn't able to be provided. When we talk about the Public Service Commission, the minister mentioned the five-year plan, which spanned 2011-16.

One of the first questions I would ask is that to have an understanding of the changes in that workforce — if the minister could provide us with the actual FTE complement in 2011-12 when this government assumed power and what the current full-time equivalents, as of the end of March 31, 2015-16 — we just finished March 31, 2016 — including the auxiliaries-on-call and casual positions that are in the employ of the Yukon government. As my colleague for Copperbelt South is so fond of saying, we can't manage —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: Riverdale South — sorry. We can't manage what we can't measure so we need to know the

numbers in order to be able to measure and manage the effectiveness of what we're doing and to know the scope of what we're dealing with.

Along that line, within that complement, the number of aboriginal employees who are currently employed by the Yukon government — certainly we will come back in more detail to the representative workforce provisions under chapter 22 and I will have a number of questions with respect to that.

He made reference to the reality that senior management levels — and particularly at deputy ministerial levels and certainly with some changes that have occurred over the last couple of years. The most senior ranks seem to be rather male-dominated at this stage. I would be interested if the minister could tell the House how many of the deputy ministers currently in place are women and how that compares to the number of women who were deputy ministers in 2011-12. We do know that the minister is unable to release the specific information with respect to the individual costs for severances paid out to all deputy ministers who have been let go over the past several years, but I would ask the minister to tell the House how many deputy ministers have been released from their duties since 2011-12.

I will leave it at that, Madam Chair, so that we can get started on some of the questions.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Just a point of clarification, perhaps, from the member opposite — when she asked for the numbers from 2011 to now for FTEs, was she referring specifically to the Public Service Commission or just across government?

Ms. Hanson: I was asking because the Public Service Commission has the corporate central agency function, so I do know the number of FTEs directly with the Public Service Commission — I understand it's 90. I do know there are 90 HR specialists dispersed through government. What I am most interested in is that the Public Service Commission, in its central agency role, plans for and manages the whole of the public service, so I'm looking for that complement with respect to all government employees.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Just for expediency, I'll deal with these questions one by one, instead of trying to answer them all at once. I'll start with the question about the growth of the FTEs from 2011.

In terms of full-time equivalent workers, or FTEs, the Yukon government workforce grew by 6.6 percent from the fall of 2011 to the most recent data that we have in the fall of 2015. The increase in Yukon government FTEs is slightly higher than the growth rate of the Yukon population as a whole. From September 2011 to September 2015, the number of Yukoners increased by 4.2 percent. The overall increase from that time in 2011 to the fall of 2015 was 266.2 FTEs. I did want to note that, last year on June 1, I provided the most recent information I had at that date to both parties in a letter of June 1, which categorized those by department and demonstrated the FTE counts for Q1 of each year since 2011. There is that information available and it has been shared already.

With regard to AOCs, or auxiliary-on-call counts, the sum of department counts for AOC use in 2011 in Q1 was

679, and then for 2015, the auxiliary-on-call count for Q1 was 789. You see an increase there from the fall of 2011 to 2015. Again, that's taken from information that I provided to members six or seven months ago.

I guess we can turn back to these other questions. I have kind of forgotten the order, so I'll let the member opposite go.

Ms. Hanson: I had asked for the number of aboriginal employees employed by the Government of Yukon in all of the categories, as well as the number of deputy ministers who are currently deputy ministers versus the number of positions that were filled by women in 2011-12.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With regard to the representative public service plan, in 2011, the Public Service Commission and eight Yukon First Nations worked collaboratively to develop a new representative public service plan to begin to meet chapter 22 obligations of the Yukon First Nation final agreements. The plan is entering its fifth year of implementation and continues to be a Yukon government priority.

Noticeable progress has been made on each of the objectives and performance measures, including the use of recruitment options such as: preferential hiring; restricted competitions and exemptions; provision of training and capacity development opportunities for aboriginal employees; and making Yukon government a desirable place for aboriginal employees to work.

With regard to the percentages, I don't have the overall number here but I have the percentage so perhaps we can glean the answer from that.

According to the 2011 National Household Survey, aboriginal people represented approximately 23 percent of the Yukon population. Five years earlier in 2006, aboriginal people comprised 25 percent of Yukoners. Current aboriginal representation in the Yukon government workforce is approximately 14 percent. That's according to the most recent stats from the Yukon government workforce census, which relies on voluntary participation and self-identification.

I should note that those numbers do fluctuate through the year. We've had a number of discussions within the department but also with our partners at the table with First Nation governments about finding an appropriate target. To help us in that, we did conduct a labour market analysis a few years ago and have been sharing that information with First Nation governments.

Basically, I guess the 14 percent is obviously lower than the overall population of aboriginal people in Yukon. Therefore we have more work to do. But in terms of what work we need to do, that's something we continue to engage with First Nation governments on. The new plan for the representative public service plan that will come forward for the next set of years will help set a path for that.

With regard to female deputy ministers, I don't have the number for 2011 but, off the top of my head, I believe the deputy ministers of Education, Finance, Yukon Housing Corporation, Women's Directorate, Workers' Compensation — the president of the Workers' Compensation was up until recently a woman. I guess that changed now. I correct myself

— that switched over. Until July, the president of the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is a woman and then Mr. Dieckmann will take over.

I think maybe that could be it for female deputies. I stand to be corrected if I'm wrong, but I would have to check on what the case was in 2011.

Ms. Hanson: I appreciate the minister's undertaking to get that information.

One of the challenges in public service — and certainly it's not unique to the territorial government but, because of the unique arrangements we have with respect to representative public service for aboriginal population — as he mentioned, it arises out of chapter 22 — is ensuring that the representative public service also represents the strata within the public service. I'm interested in — of the 14 percent who are currently aboriginal, if we were to do a vertical slice of the public service, would we see that 14 percent at all levels, or is it skewed to any particular level and any particular occupation group within the Public Service Commission?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With regard to the First Nations' *Final Agreement Representative Public Service Plan*, there is an annual report published that details the activities of the Public Service Commission in implementing that plan annually. I will provide the member a copy of that because it does lay out an overview of the actions taken and reports on some of the details. It doesn't have the breakdown that she is looking for, but I can look into that as well — separate from that report.

I did want to note that the report is excellent. I think it does a great job of providing an overview of the actions that we are doing. It is something that I am very proud of. I know that it gets highlighted every year at the Aboriginal Employees Forum. Obviously, the Aboriginal Employees Forum is about the employees themselves and celebrating their contributions, but it is also an opportunity to really take stock of the implementation of that *Final Agreement Representative Public Service Plan*. I think it is well worth considering, so I will make sure to provide a copy of that annual report to the Leader of the Official Opposition and will endeavour to get a segment-by-segment breakdown. I don't have that here. I know that we have made some strides recently with regard to some of our deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers and directors taking on those roles — having people of aboriginal descent taking on those roles. We can talk about that at some point as well.

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

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Dixon 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.

We are now prepared to receive the Commissioner of Yukon, in his capacity as Lieutenant Governor, to grant assent to certain bills which have passed this House.

Commissioner Phillips enters the Chamber, announced by the Sergeant-at-Arms

ASSENT TO BILLS

Commissioner: Please be seated.

Speaker: Mr. Commissioner, the Assembly has, at its present session, passed certain bills to which, in the name and on behalf of the Assembly, I respectfully request your assent.

Clerk: *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2016-17; Act to Amend the Education Act.*

Commissioner: I hereby assent to the bills as enumerated by the Clerk.

Before I leave today, I had a first sign of spring — a real strong sign of spring today. When I arrived at my office, there appeared to be a flock of flamingos that were decorating my lawn. Fortunately, I arrived just as the culprits were departing and the rumour is that they appeared to be wearing RMCP uniforms — some of them — and so I immediately contacted Chief Superintendent Clark, and he assured me that he is going to carry out a thorough investigation and the culprits will be apprehended and prosecuted. I'm pleased that we'll finally get to the end of this.

I understand that, after my office, the flamingos ended up in front of the Justice building and I have no idea how they got there, but it was for a good cause for the Rotary Club, and I guess these birds have been making their way all around the Yukon, so it's a great cause.

I would like to remind members that the fourth annual Speaker's and Yukoners cancer care fundraiser is tomorrow evening at 5:30 p.m. I believe in the foyer of this building. It's a great fund that helps all Yukoners and I encourage all Yukoners to try and attend that event. Thank you.

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:02 p.m.