



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 8

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34th Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, May 3, 2017 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2017 Spring Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
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Hon. Sandy Silver	Klondike	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance
Hon. Ranj Pillai	Porter Creek South	Deputy Premier Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation
Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee	Riverdale South	Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice
Hon. John Streicker	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission
Hon. Pauline Frost	Vuntut Gwitchin	Minister of Health and Social Services; Environment; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation
Hon. Richard Mostyn	Whitehorse West	Minister of Highways and Public Works; the Public Service Commission
Hon. Jeanie Dendys	Mountainview	Minister of Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board; Women's Directorate

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Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Geraldine Van Bibber	Porter Creek North

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New Democratic Party

Liz Hanson	Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, May 3, 2017 — 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 remembrance of Jean Graham

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of all Members of the Legislative Assembly, it gives me great pleasure today to rise and pay tribute to Jean Graham.

Alma Jean Graham was born in Mayerthorpe, Alberta on July 8, 1926. She was the eldest of six children born to Bert and Hazel Whitney. In 1945, Jean married Gordon Graham and had four children before her 25th birthday: Donna, Russell, Douglas and Gloria. After she and Gordon moved to the Yukon in 1952, she had three more children — Darrell, Sharon and Kenneth.

Jean was a resourceful homemaker and the centre of the family's home life, while Gordon's domain was the garage. Family was paramount in her world and she was happiest when surrounded by any one of her seven children, 16 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, their spouses, ex-spouses, her siblings and their families. She welcomed her first great-great grandson five years ago.

She tirelessly attended and supported their schools, sports and artistic activities well into her 80s and even became a cub master of the first Porter Creek cub pack when no one else was available for the position. Jean was an avid sportsperson herself and was an accomplished curler until her eyesight failed. When I moved to Whitehorse, Jean invited me to curl on her team at several bonspiels. We had such fun. I still have a gold pan trophy from winning the A event at the old Takhini Curling Club, and Gloria was on that team as well.

She also played competitive fastball with her daughter and daughter-in-law well into her 40s. Again, I remember Jean and her family at Minto Park in Dawson City on Discovery Day weekend playing ball and cheering her team on.

Jean was Yukon's federal returning officer for 25 years and she also ran numerous municipal and First Nation elections around the territory.

She loved to travel and thought nothing of driving to Dawson City, Beaver Creek or Watson Lake to run an election or to visit family members in Hudson Hope, Fort McMurray, Nelson or Vancouver. When she was 83, she bragged about being the navigator for a young fellow driving to Vancouver for the first time, even though she was legally blind at that time. Despite her loss of sight, just hearing your voice, Jean

knew who you were and would launch into a story — usually about those grandkids.

Her network of friends and acquaintances was legendary. She had friends or family in every town in the territory and was always happy to make new friends wherever she went.

As a teenager, I knew Doug and Gloria. It seemed Mrs. Graham was everyone's mom. Jean passed on her love of life and her positive attitude to family members and friends alike. Her cheerful disposition and ready sense of humour will be missed.

I would like the House to join me in welcoming her family in the gallery: Donna and Ken Jones, Doug and Mayvor Graham, Marney Paradis, Richard Graham, Laura, Kanoa, Zarek, Christina Loughrey-Coxford.

Applause

In recognition of Mental Health Week

Hon. Ms. Frost: I rise in the House today to acknowledge this week as national Mental Health Week, which runs from May 1 to 7. I would like to also acknowledge the Mental Health Association of Yukon board members — Kim Solonick who is the vice-chair, Nathan Schultz the secretary, Darcy Tkachuk, executive director Tiffany Tasane, and Tamara Perzan whose really great work as Ms. Congeniality for Rendezvous — have worked tirelessly over the last number of years to advocate and do work to break down some of the barriers. I want to acknowledge you today for your dedication to make our society a better place.

I have just come back from part of the walk with many of the individuals in the gallery today who were out to support mental health week and Mental Health Association of Yukon's third annual walk — "Steps to positive mental health". I'm pleased that some of my colleagues were able to join the walk today. Canadians have been recognizing Mental Health Week for the past 66 years since it was introduced in 1951 by the Canadian Mental Health Association. Since then, Mental Health Week has been an annual initiative with intention to raise awareness on mental health issues, promote positive mental health and reduce associated stigmas.

May 7 also marks National Child and Youth Mental Health Day. This national campaign is in its 10th year and aims to engage young people and caring adults in the lives of children and youth.

Mental health is about much more than an absence of mental disorders. It is a fundamental part of health. Without mental health, there is no health at all. Mental Health Week encourages us all to take a moment to assess our own mental health and well-being. Mental health and well-being can be described in many different ways. Yukon captures the essence in just one word: "flourishing". To flourish is to be able to cope with life's difficulties, believe in others, feel you have a place in the world and enjoy life. Flourishing means you feel you have something to share with others. People who are flourishing generally have a sense of purpose and develop warm and trusting relationships and feel satisfied and interested in their lives.

We have just celebrated the first anniversary of the mental wellness strategy that aims to seamlessly provide mental health, trauma and substance use services to Yukoners in a collaborative manner. We also aim to work with Yukon First Nations to implement this strategy. The first two years of the strategy implementation focus on two important priority areas: child, youth and family-focused initiatives and building capacity in communities and increasing access to services throughout the territory.

I would like to conclude by expressing my gratitude and appreciation to all the organizations and individuals who have worked tirelessly toward improving mental health and ending the stigma. That was the message today: ending the stigma associated with mental health and mental wellness.

I call on each and every Yukoner to take steps to reduce the stigma so that we are all able to seek the care and resources we need without judgment and while being treated respectfully and equally, as all Yukoners deserve.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. McLeod: I am pleased to rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to tribute an area of our health care system that has been a silent epidemic that affects a large proportion of our population and has more recently become a topic that is tackled broadly — its importance being advocated across generations and communities.

This year marks the 66th annual Mental Health Week, championed by the Canadian Mental Health Association, and supported, in part, by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and countless organizations across the country. These groups are continuing their #GetLoud campaign, in which they encourage all Canadians to not just take this week to reflect upon their mental health, but to get loud about it.

The more we talk about the stigma around mental health, the closer we are to ending it. This week we raise our voices in support of mental wellness.

The importance of mental health issues and illnesses being diagnosed and treated as soon as possible is paramount. Mental illness can affect any person in our community at any time. In the Yukon, Statistics Canada shows that an estimated 65 percent of Yukoners reported very good or excellent mental health in 2013-14 as compared to 71 percent nationally. From these stats alone, one can see that mental health is a problem that needs addressing in Yukon.

I am pleased to hear that the Liberal government will continue with the implementation of the Yukon mental wellness strategy. This strategy was developed as a 10-year plan to address mental wellness in Yukon and provides the overall direction for system response and improvement. I appreciate the work of our mental health professionals and the work they do in providing treatment and support throughout our communities. I encourage all Yukoners to work together and #GetLoud to end the stigma around mental health.

Thank you.

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of the NDP caucus to add our voice to the important topic of

mental health and wellness. We appreciate that Canada recognizes the first week in May as Mental Health Awareness Week. Together we have come a long way in our efforts to destigmatize mental health and wellness, but we have much further to go. We don't question physical ailments, but how often do we question how someone is feeling?

On September 8, 2016, Kids Help Phone released a report that revealed that one in five teens in Canada had seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months. They also learned that although teens would search the Internet and social media about suicide, they rarely, if ever, spoke to anyone about it. Mental health must be considered on the same level as physical health. When you face a medical emergency, everyone knows to call 911, but what number do you call for a mental health emergency? Toll-free numbers are great, but how effective are they if you can't easily remember them in a time of crisis?

After reading the Kids Help Phone release, Canadian poet Shane Koyczan offered up a solution: have a three-digit phone number like 911. Not only would this help those in crisis, it would assist bystanders who might be able to effectively help if they had a number they could remember and call. He wrote this poem in response — it's called *152*:

One in five

today one in five
wondered if being alive
was worth the cost
of another day
wondering if 2 in 10
wondered when
there was finally going to be
a 911 for mental health

4 in 20 wondered if the wealth spent on the self-decided
salaries of politicians
who claim the children are our future
could pay for it

maybe 1 of the 8
of the 8 in 40
quit wondering
and started making plans

maybe 3 of the 16
of the 16 in 80
feel like unrecycled cans
that are just easier to throw away

Maybe one fifth of 160
is easier to say than 32
because 32 is starting to sound like a lot

a toll free number is not enough
give us a number
everyone knows by heart

so the next time we see someone's world falling apart
we can do more than just stand there

because the scars we can't see
require different care than the ones left there by crime or
by accident
sometimes there's no hint
to tell you where it hurts
it just hurts

sometimes our minds are red alerts
you can't see
even when you look us in the eye
sometimes we cry for what others would consider no
reason
sometimes the treason we commit
is against ourselves

it's hard enough
trying to find who we are
amid the overcrowded shelves of pills
meant to manage how we function

sometimes the junction box is broken
and we miss the connections
that others seem to make with ease

imagine
if you threw away the 1
of the 1 in 5 keys
that could open the door
to the room the world forgot we were locked in

if kindness makes us friends
let compassion make us kin
don't let us get lost in the numbers again

illness is illness

sometimes the cost to heal it
is an ear willing to listen
sometimes a shoulder
volunteering to be a crutch

people are not a price to be weighed against your budget

1 in 5
is 2 much.

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

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I rise today on behalf of all of my colleagues here in the Legislature to recognize Live Words, the 2017 edition of the Yukon Writers' Festival that is taking place this week all around the territory.

I would like to begin this tribute with the words of Tagish Elder Angela Sidney: "Reading makes you wise". Here I go:

"Hutaats'edezi k'e uts'in huts'inye". My thanks to the Native Language Centre, Mary Allison and, in particular, Elder Anne Ranigler, who helped me with that pronunciation — all faults are mine and all tributes to them.

I would like to also acknowledge that the member opposite, in her tribute, used a poem and I appreciate that as a poignant way of raising awareness around mental wellness.

We are already aware of the richness of Yukon's cultural scene that includes visual and performing arts as well as arts and crafts. That richness extends to literature and the spoken word as well.

Mr. Speaker, since 1990, the Yukon Writers' Festival has been inspiring and connecting Yukoners — readers and writers alike — to some of this country's best-known authors. This year, Yukon Public Libraries, through the Department of Community Services and the Department of Education, are partnering with other local groups, including Brave New Words to present some of today's more interesting local and national writers. This event supports the well-being of Yukoners and provides opportunities for people of all ages to develop an appetite for lifelong learning. The festival is a unique opportunity to interact with the authors at the various events. We know this is a popular event that draws a couple of hundred people from the communities across the territory each year.

Montreal author Kathleen Winter began her career writing scripts for *Sesame Street*. Since then she has gone on to write a number of award-winning novels and short stories, and her work has appeared in literary journals across Canada. Yukoner Kelly Milner has brought her work in journalism and wildlife management together in a media company, Shot in the Dark Productions, that tells stories and explores issues and ideas important to northerners.

Yukoners will know Kelly as the creator of the short film *Shift*, which showcased the mountain bike trail-building youth of Carcross and which won the Banff Mountain Film Festival People's Choice Award last year.

Author Jamie Bastedo is a biologist turned storyteller and lives in Yellowknife. He has written 12 award-winning books celebrating the north, including two teen climate-change thrillers. His latest book, *Cut Off*, tells the story of a teenage addicted to cyber games and finds healing in the northern wilderness.

As a guest of Brave New Words, Sheri-D Wilson will be joined by local musicians, local youth slam poets and high school students at a poetry salon in the Old Fire Hall this Friday. She's an advocate for social change and explores challenging topics, including social justice, lost languages, bullying, violence against women, and the Earth.

J.B. MacKinnon is based in Vancouver and is the co-author of *The 100-Mile Diet: A Year of Local Eating*. He has won numerous awards, including the international Green Prize for Sustainable Literature. In his latest book, *The Once and Future World*, he says: "Nature isn't gone. It's waiting." He calls for an age of rewilding the planet where animals can roam again.

A reading and reception hosted by Yukon Public Libraries is being held tonight at 7:00 p.m. at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre, and all five guest authors participating in this year's festival will be there. This will be a great opportunity for fans to meet them and discuss their works in a beautiful setting.

This week, the Department of Community Services has been hosting Vancouver-based author J.B. MacKinnon as he travels to libraries in Dawson City, Faro and Pelly Crossing. On Thursday night he will be at the Teslin library at 6:30 p.m. to read from his book, *The Once and Future World*. On Saturday evening, guest writers and musicians will perform at the Haines Junction library at 7:00 p.m. Fostering a love of literature among our young Yukoners is one of the great strengths of this festival. The Young Authors' Conference is sponsored by the Department of Education and will be held tomorrow and Friday at F.H. Collins Secondary School.

We give a warm Yukon welcome to all of these authors and thank them for sharing their expertise and inspiration with our writers. It is always our hope that they receive as much inspiration from this beautiful territory as we all do here. Reading makes you wise.

In recognition of World Press Freedom Day

Ms. Hanson: Today I rise on behalf of all members of this Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to World Press Freedom Day 2017. This international day to recognize the importance of press freedom was proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1993 following a recommendation adopted at the 26th Session of UNESCO's General Conference in 1991. It has been celebrated every year since.

On this day we honour journalists imprisoned or killed in the line of duty, and we take stock of press freedom around the world. There is an awful lot to take stock of. State censorship, governments imprisoning critics, Internet crackdowns and surveillance are all on the rise, which, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, has led to an upsurge of killings and imprisonment of journalists around the world. The Committee to Protect Journalist's *Attacks on the Press* report released last month tracked its highest number of jailed journalists around the world yet — 259. Over 1,200 journalists have been killed on the job in the past 25 years — from Mexico to Russia to Iraq and Syria. Daily, we hear news stories of reporters and media staff being incarcerated and killed around the world for trying to shine light on injustices.

It is important for us to pause and to consider how we support press freedom here today in Yukon and in Canada. Canada guarantees freedom of the press under our *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. However, circumstances faced by journalists in the last year say otherwise with respect to the exercise of those rights. Last year, the *World Press Freedom Index* ranked Canada as number 18 globally. This year it may not come as much of a surprise to know that we have since fallen to number 22, just below Samoa and ahead of the Czech Republic and Namibia. Several members of the

Canadian press have been under police surveillance in Quebec in an attempt to uncover internal leaks. A *Vice News* reporter is currently fighting a court order compelling him to hand over communications with his source to the RCMP. Another journalist for *The Independent* is facing up to 10 years in prison for his coverage of protests against a hydroelectric project in Labrador.

Journalists in this country are not currently protected by any shield law, and legislation, like the controversial Bill C-51, uses national security as an excuse to chill free speech and expression.

As legislators, we have within our power to call upon the federal government to fulfill the commitment made to Canadians to repeal Bill C-51. The recent passage of Bill S-231, journalistic sources protection act, a press shield law by the Senate is a good start. We can and should encourage the federal government to support it in Parliament. Freedom of the press matters not just because it's guaranteed in our *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* — in fact, an increase in the free press is associated with an increase in the rule of law and an improved international economic risk-taking.

Maintaining freedom of the press improves public trust in government, a relationship policy-makers — that's all of us here in this House — must always consider.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to break a bit of protocol here. When presidents of the United States no longer serve their term, they are still called "president", but in the Legislative Assembly, when you are no longer in the Legislative Assembly, we no longer call you "honourable". There's a man in the gallery who deserves to still be considered honourable: Doug Graham. To those of you who have worked with him in the Legislative Assembly and also for those who are new, we have used you as an example on this side of the House as to the type of minister to emulate. You always knew your work; you were passionate about your job. In the Legislative Assembly, you were fair but you were pretty tough to argue with — that's for sure. We want to recognize you being here today in the gallery. You're a true mentor to a lot of politicians in the Yukon, so thank you for your service.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would just like to acknowledge some of the great Community Services staff. This is part of our libraries crew, led by director Aimee Ellis. I don't know everybody's name and I apologize, but it's lovely to have you here and thank you for the work you're doing.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling the Yukon Law Foundation annual report, which is tabled pursuant to section 83(1) of the *Legal Profession Act*.

I also have for tabling the Yukon Judicial Council annual report, which is tabled pursuant to section 37(1) of the *Territorial Court Act*.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Mr. Hassard: I rise to give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:

THAT, recognizing the Minister of Highways and Public Works told this House on April 26, 2017 that he had spoken to hundreds of contractors, this House do issue an order for the return of a list of all consultations and the date they took place, that the minister has undertaken with contractors since December 3, 2016.

I also give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of a list of all consultations and correspondence between the Government of Yukon and Government of Canada regarding the Yukon Resource Gateway project since December 3, 2016.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to conduct and make public an analysis of the economic impacts of the carbon tax scheme that it has signed on to with Ottawa on Yukon's mining sector.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to conduct and make public an analysis of the economic impacts of the carbon tax scheme it has signed on to with Ottawa on Yukon's tourism sector.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to include the financial and economic impacts of the carbon tax scheme it has signed on to with Ottawa in budget forecasts.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to initiate a review of the medical travel program to ensure it is meeting the needs of all Yukoners.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to conduct and make public an analysis of the economic impacts of the carbon tax scheme it has agreed to with Ottawa on Yukon's outfitting industry.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Budget estimates and spending

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday when the Premier was asked whether he has tasked his Financial Advisory Panel to come up with a plan to get the Yukon out of the mountain of debt he was throwing us into, the Premier said this panel will come up with options. Yesterday we asked him in this House if those options would include layoffs of government employees. Surprisingly, the Premier didn't definitively rule that out as an option that might be considered by the panel.

If the Premier's panel is going to consider layoffs, will he consider adding a labour representative to sit on the panel?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There will be no layoffs.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased that the Premier has chosen to actually give a definitive answer to that question.

Yesterday, the Premier gave a very interesting answer when asked what his Financial Advisory Panel would be looking at. He said — and I quote: “Of course, we know what the options are”.

He goes on to say, “If there's any other information that the opposition needs as far as the Financial Advisory Panel — we're open and accountable. We want to give that information”.

Mr. Speaker, considering the Premier apparently knows what options the panel is looking at, and in the interest of being open and accountable, will the Premier tell this House today what those options are?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What I will do is reiterate why we find it important to have a Financial Advisory Panel moving forward.

We're in a current fiscal situation as a result of years of spending without planning. Without fully counting the costs of new building, the Yukon Party's inability to own up to the facts of these things is very truly concerning. Again, we've listed items that have never been accounted for before, such as \$4 million in pension solvency within the Yukon Hospital Corporation and Yukon College and \$2.6 million for cost overruns in the hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson City. We have also listed for the last fiscal year election-year expenses spent by the government not listed in last year's budget — severance packages for MLAs for example — over \$600,000 and costs for the royal visit. The member opposite,

the Leader of the Official Opposition suggested that we had the choice not to approve these amounts. Well, that's incorrect. That money had already been spent. It just wasn't accounted for.

Money had been spent on a collective bargaining agreement not accounted for; new hires in education spent but not accounted for; MacBride Museum, for example as well. Dollars were simply not accounted for in the 2016-17 budget. Thus we are paying for them now.

Again, we are putting forth this panel for good reason and that reason is to get us on a track that's going to get us out of this current fiscal situation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cathers: I have to remind the Premier — he knows full well that his government has authorized over \$8.2 million in new spending in the 2016-17 fiscal year — and of course to remind the member — as he knows — that for 14 years, the previous government received a clean bill of health from the Auditor General of Canada who approved Public Accounts as materially representing an accurate picture of the government's finances. This Premier had the rare luxury — the unprecedented luxury — of having \$100 million in the bank when he took office as Premier.

It was good earlier in Question Period to actually get an answer from the Premier, but one big concern we have with the Financial Advisory Panel is that the Premier didn't see fit to put a single member of the public service or any retired public servants on the panel. Since we're on a roll today, will the Premier commit that he will not go any further into debt than the \$216-million debt he is currently projecting?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I really do appreciate the question from the member opposite. We will stand up for the spending that we have put forward — absolutely. We will talk about this in Committee of the Whole, we'll go over it line by line and we will stand by these numbers. Kudos to the NDP for holding us to task for our priorities and what we put in the budget and what we didn't put in the budget. But again, will the Yukon Party stand up for their contribution to the situation we're in? I don't think so. I don't think they will.

We've also identified future year predictions that have never been accounted for before — \$36 million for Whistle Bend, no money allocated for the federal government's component of paving the runway in Dawson. The Yukon Party promised that and that was not in the budget, that wasn't planned for. There's no money for fibre optic redundancy, no plan for Shakwak — these are where we are because of these concerns. The lack of planning by the Yukon Party has taken us to where we are today.

The numbers that we put in the long-term plans reflect a budget that show the real cost of governing. There is no denying where we are today. There is no denying where we are today. It's the situation we are in and we must work together to consider the future.

We will work with Yukoners to make difficult decisions moving forward. We will establish the Financial Advisory Panel to reach out to Yukoners to understand what matters to

them most when we're planning the future. We have asked this panel to consider how to change the trajectory of government spending and how we can prudently meet the needs of Yukoners.

Question re: Budget estimates and spending

Mr. Istchenko: I have a question for the Premier. Regarding the Premier's Financial Advisory Panel, we've asked a number of questions on, of course, what options it will be looking at to reduce the Premier's debt. The Premier said he would be more than happy to provide us with that information, so will he tell us if the panel is looking at an option such as a privatization of public infrastructure?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We talked about the Financial Advisory Panel, who is on the panel and what they're tasked to do moving forward. We're excited to get down to that work. We had some great meetings internally with all of our departments talking about what our concerns are and we've had great meetings internally with the department, with the members who are on the Financial Advisory Panel, and we look forward to getting the terms of reference out to Yukoners and making sure that they're comfortable with how and when we are going to meet with Yukoners. I would reach out again to the members opposite. We need your help. As far as community work, you know your communities better than anybody else does in the Legislative Assembly — so making sure that any considerations on a community basis — it has to come from you. If you don't participate, well then, that would be to the detriment of your own communities.

We're looking forward to that process, Mr. Speaker, and more information to come.

Mr. Istchenko: I'm not sure why the Premier wouldn't just answer the question. I assume he knows what he has asked the panel to look at. He said he has been in conversations with them. In fact, he quoted in this House — saying that he knows what options the panel is looking at. Is one of the options he has asked the panel to look at privatization of public infrastructure?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Have I asked the panel to look into that? No, I haven't. In response to some questions about how the panel will meaningfully engage with Yukoners and organizations, given the tight timelines, there was a good consideration and good concern brought up by the Yukon Party yesterday, so thank you for that concern.

We are currently reaching out to representative samples of Yukoners to determine how they will be meaningfully engaged with the panel. This work will inform the panel to engage with Yukon residents, governments, businesses and organizations.

If the member opposite wants us to talk about privatization, we will add that to the list of concerns brought to us by the Member for Kluane. Thank you for that input.

In response to questions about making the panel's terms of reference public, I have already said that I have written each of the panelists confirming their appointment to the advisory panel and provided some direction to them. We will

make those letters available to the members opposite so you know exactly what we did and did not ask for.

Mr. Istchenko: Much like yesterday when we saw the Premier refuse to say whether or not his Financial Advisory Panel is looking at the options that include layoffs, we are getting a non-answer on whether or not his panel is looking at the privatization of public infrastructure. He just mentioned the word “businesses”.

Is one of the options that the panel is looking at whether or not the government should allow development of our oil and gas resources through hydraulic fracturing?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I can understand why the member opposite isn't used to hearing answers during Question Period in the Legislative Assembly, but we just did answer those questions. We answered your question about privatization that you put forward.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm sorry — it's hard to even hear myself talk with the House Leader talking over me off-mic.

We answered both the questions that the member opposite asked. I would suggest that, as opposed to just reading the question again in the Legislative Assembly, he listen to the answers. We have answered his questions. There is more information to come. Again, if the member opposite wants us to consider privatization, then he should probably give us a list of the things he wants us to privatize.

Question re: Post-traumatic stress disorder support

Ms. Hanson: In the 2016 campaign, this government promised to introduce presumptive PTSD, or PTSI, legislation for first responders. This would guarantee that a PTSD diagnosis would be assumed to be work-related for first responders. Currently, the onus is on the worker to prove that their diagnosis is work-related. I'm sure the minister agrees that this is an unfair burden on someone already struggling with PTSD.

We are pleased to see this commitment reiterated in the minister's mandate letter, as the Yukon NDP tabled a similar bill in the previous Legislature. However, when we tabled our bill, many workers' advocates pointed out that this kind of presumptive legislation shouldn't only apply to first responders, but rather to any worker exposed to a traumatic event.

Mr. Speaker, as they begin to develop PTSD-presumptive legislation, has this government considered expanding its provisions to all workers covered by workers' compensation?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that question. This is a high-priority area for our government, and we have done considerable work on this over the last couple of months, since coming into office. Yes, the *Workers' Compensation Act* will be amended to include presumptive coverage for post-traumatic stress disorder for first responders.

Yes, we agree, this is absolutely a first step in moving forward. The presumption replaces the need to decide a claim on a balance of probability for workers. I've had many

discussions. We have our staff working very hard on this and we will be introducing this legislation in the Fall Sitting.

It was really great to be at the event on Friday, where we had first responders speak directly to me, as minister, around the importance of this as being a first step, and we will be considering other options as we move forward.

Ms. Hanson: We've all seen the impacts of limiting presumptive PTSD legislation only to first responders in other jurisdictions. Ontario, for instance, has presumptive PTSD legislation for first responders, yet their legislation doesn't cover nurses or correctional officers, who are clearly subject to traumatic events that can lead to PTSD. These workers still have to prove that their PTSD diagnosis is work-related because the presumptive legislation applies to first responders only. This is an unfair burden on someone already struggling with PTSD.

Mr. Speaker, since the minister does agree that any worker exposed to a PTSD-inducing event should be covered by presumptive legislation, why is she limiting it to first responders only?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Thank you again for the follow-up question. Again, this is a very important issue for our government. Right now we have this matter before our legislative committee and we will be going out to consultation on this soon. We will be asking for feedback from the public, from organizations that are directly impacted, and we will be defining what we consider a first responder through that consultation process.

So I really encourage Yukoners to participate fully in the consultation and to make your voices heard, because we want to hear them.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that the minister agrees that it's important, but here's an opportunity for this government to do what it says it would do, which is to make decisions based on evidence — and we have evidence of best practices elsewhere, Mr. Speaker.

The Manitoba government is leading the way when it comes to presumptive legislation. Since January 1, 2016, all workers' compensation board-covered workers in that province benefit from PTSD presumptive legislation. The goal of this measure is to reduce the stigma around mental illness and to recognize that PTSD-triggering events can take place in any workplace. It just makes sense, Mr. Speaker.

Take for example the postal worker who could be first on-site, assisting the victims of a violent car crash. If PTSD presumptive legislation doesn't cover all workers, it means that the paramedics who assist the victims will be covered, but the postal worker, who assisted the very same victims, will not. Will the minister at least commit to reviewing Manitoba's PTSD presumptive legislation, which covers all workers?

Speaker: Order.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and thank you to the Leader of the Third Party for bringing this to the floor of the Legislative Assembly and thank you for her and her team's work in the 33rd Legislative Assembly for fighting, alongside with the Liberal Party for post-traumatic stress disorder being presumptive legislation. This is a huge

first step and I agree — it is a first step. We need to do the analysis piece. There is much more that we can do and I agree with the member opposite that Manitoba is the leading standard in Canada and I would like to see this continue and passed.

We need to do our due diligence on this side, so we are implementing the post-traumatic stress disorder legislation in the fall and we're going to take a look at the analysis piece. We need to do a lot more as far as breaking down a stoic culture as well, having special management teams, and working together with psychiatric people who are in the industry and the actual firefighters and the EMS workers to get to know the community better. There is so much that we can do from the period of today until the legislation and also then we need the analysis piece of this step to provide this very important legislation for our initial responders.

I'm not disagreeing with anything the member opposite is saying as far as the impact, but again we want to get some more evidence and we want to move forward on this jurisdiction's bold move forward when it comes to post-traumatic stress disorder legislation in the Yukon.

Question re: Privatization of health care services

Mr. Kent: I have some follow-up questions for the Premier with respect to his Financial Advisory Panel. We still have not received the terms of reference or the mandate letters that the Premier referred to earlier in Question Period today, so that begs more questions for us about the mandate that he has given to this panel.

Can the Premier inform the House regarding the options that they are looking at? Is allowing some privatization of our health care system one of those options that they are considering?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I'll add that to the list. If the member opposite wants us to privatize the health care system, then I'll add that to the list for him. We have been very clear as to why we're in the financial situation that we're in right now and why we are moving to a Financial Advisory Panel.

We had heard criticisms that somehow we don't trust our own Finance department to do this. It was a cooperative effort between the political wing of this new government and the Finance department that came to the decision that we need the Financial Advisory Panel. We're also improving the business management of our Finance department as well — lots of great steps moving forward.

If the member opposite wants us to consider privatizing health care, then he'll have his opportunity to speak to the panel as we engage the opposition and others.

Mr. Kent: So the Premier hasn't ruled out the privatization of health care as one of the options that his panel is considering. It usually takes a day. It took him a day to rule out layoffs unequivocally on the floor, so perhaps tomorrow he will rule out privatizing the health care system.

Here's another question for the Premier. Again, Mr. Speaker, that's our job as the Official Opposition — to ask questions of the government, to hold them to account.

Since the Premier has bragged about taxing visitors with his carbon tax, perhaps this is something that he has asked the panel to consider. Has the Premier tasked the panel with considering charging tolls on some of the roads or bridges in the Yukon Territory?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I believe in the media scrum yesterday, I was very unequivocal when it comes to layoffs, and I believe in the Legislative Assembly I also said nobody is considering layoffs. Those are your words, not mine. I believe that was also put forth.

So again, the opposition is reading the questions from their staff, but they're not listening to the answers. If the member opposite now wants us to consider tolls to highways and bridges — that is, again, a very bizarre request. We can talk to the Member for Lake Laberge if he wants to talk about privatizing the energy sector as well. I mean, all of these things, we could consider — absolutely, if that's what you want to put on the table; that's what you're putting on the table today — because this Financial Advisory Panel will come out and they will seek answers to these questions from businesses and from Yukon communities. So we've added that the Yukon Party wants us to consider toll bridges. They want us to consider privatization. Okay. So we'll add all those things to the list.

Mr. Kent: Again, we're not getting any answers from the Premier. He has not provided the mandate letters that he has provided to the panel. So again, we're left to ask questions on the floor of the Legislature here in Question Period about what the panel is considering.

These aren't requests that we're making of the Premier to give to the panel. We're trying to get to the bottom of what the mandate letters are that he has not provided to members of this House.

Again, Mr. Speaker, he hasn't ruled out the creation of toll roads. If he was to provide us with the mandate letters, maybe we would see that.

What about out-sourcing of Highways and Public Works' road crews? Would that be an option that the Premier has asked the panel to consider?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I do appreciate the question and all of the suggestions coming from the Yukon Party as far as what they would do. I guess I'm not really sure what exactly the intent of these questions is, but we've already said we will give you everything that you've asked for as far as those letters to the panel. I'm sorry, but there are other things happening in this government. We're very busy answering ATIPP requests and the like from the opposition.

We've committed to giving this information. The last item that the Yukon Party wants us to consider — we will also advise to the financial panel these requests from the Yukon Party. Thank you for participating in the advisory panel discussions so early in the mandate.

Question re: Mineral staking

Ms. McLeod: We are now in a situation where about 50 percent of the territory is off-limits to staking. Regarding the government's recent announcement that it will extend the

staking ban for another year, this is an important issue that will have significant implications for my riding.

It was reported in the *Yukon News* that the minister may have breached the confidentiality agreements associated with these negotiations. Did the minister's breach of the confidentiality agreements have any negative repercussions on the negotiations?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Before I start to answer the question, is there an accusation that has been made from the Member for Watson Lake? Would you like to substantiate that? I guess we'll get into answering the question.

Absolutely — we have now extended the moratorium on staking in the Watson Lake mining district. We're now looking at April 30, 2018. Certainly mining activity will continue to happen. There is a tremendous amount of activity happening actually in your riding and I would hope you would know that. We have one mine right now just outside of the Town of Watson Lake that's moving through the regulatory process.

Just today I had phone calls from two other companies that are excited about what is happening. There are actually some requests from the Kaska Nation as well as private business to work with the Yukon government.

As we look at the staking and continue that conversation — but looking at some other new infrastructure in Watson Lake — I think we have things going in the right direction to diversify the economy there. I know that didn't happen over the last five years or maybe 15 years, but I am committed to working with you on it. Certainly I think we're going to see some really strong mining activity in the Watson Lake area.

Ms. McLeod: So just going a little bit further with regard to the extension of the staking ban, I believe that in other areas some relief from assessment work was provided. I'm wondering if mining claim holders in the area will be provided with relief from assessment so that they don't lose claims. Is the minister able to provide us with details on how this relief will be provided and perhaps when the decision was or will be made?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: To the Member for Watson Lake, I will look into that. As you asked the question, my understanding in the current circumstance is there are a tremendous number of claim holders in the Watson Lake mining area. They will continue to do their advanced exploration.

What we're not going to have the ability to do — and it affects the prospectors, and that's where my tough conversations have to happen. What we're seeing are prospectors not having the opportunity to look into new ground. We found some great ground over the last couple of years in that area. What we have to look at is: (1) focusing on making sure we keep the conversation going, and (2) continuing to support companies that are doing exploration and are having good relationships with the Kaska — and then, for the more advanced projects, making sure that they have the supports to look at going through the regulatory regime.

On that note, I will make the commitment to you that I'll look into the first part of your question. If I've missed

something there, I'll make sure I work with the officials at Energy, Mines and Resources to get the answer to you on that.

Ms. McLeod: Previously the Premier stated that he's in favour of government compensation for individuals whose placer and quartz mining claims are negatively affected by government decisions. Can the minister tell us if their budget projections account for potential buyouts of claim holders?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: No, there's not. In this year's budget, there are not any monies put aside. I really don't see any processes that are underway right now where that conversation is going to happen.

In the Dawson area, where we've had some challenges — another situation that was inherited — what we've done is to reach out to an individual who previously worked with the department, is respected throughout the industry and is supported by the Klondike Placer Miners' Association, the municipality and the First Nation to go in and start having a discussion.

On those particular projects, we're still working through it. Other than that, I don't see any other hot topics. You can maybe educate me on it. I don't see any other hot topics right now where we're going to be in a situation to have that discussion.

First and foremost, I want to work through these situations, if possible, and come to some remedy, if possible, that doesn't have legal ramifications in those conversations. I would like to thank the member opposite for all those questions today.

Question re: Ross River infrastructure

Mr. Hassard: Today I would like to talk a little bit about Ross River. After breaking their promise to provide emergency housing to this community — and for a government that has said all communities matter — it doesn't appear that they've placed much priority on the community of Ross River.

Mr. Speaker, as most people here know, it's only a 4.5-hour drive to Ross River, so I'm curious: Can the minister explain why this government was able to get an engineer to inspect and get the Elijah Smith school open yesterday, but is unable to do the same thing for Ross River?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Speaker, in response to the question from the Leader of the Official Opposition, during our first visit to Ross River when the issue was brought to our attention, we immediately travelled to Ross River — myself and my colleagues. The Leader of the Official Opposition was present and given the opportunity to speak to the community and seek and hear their input.

The extension was there to participate in finding the solutions and engage in that process. Our team has been in regular contact with the community and with the chief and council. We have worked. We have an advanced team of health professionals working with the Ross River Dena Council and multiple trips to the community with the technical staff from Yukon Housing Corporation and Health and Social Services.

The community since January has been actively involved in seeking and finding solutions. As early as last week, we met with the new consultant from the Ross River Dena Council. We have given them housing units to accommodate the pressures that they're currently confronted with as they transition out of some of their houses that need retrofits.

Mr. Hassard: I appreciate the response from the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation, although the question was about the situation with the school. However, I will move on.

I know the previous government had committed to the community of Ross River to see a new lagoon built as the community has had concerns over the past couple of years about the sewage pit leaking.

I know that after a lengthy Water Board process, the new lagoon has been approved, but, as the season draws shorter, can the government please tell my constituents when they can see the construction of the new lagoon begin?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for the question. I will do my best to come up with a response.

Last week in this Legislature, we were asked about many water and waste-water projects that we are undertaking and the department was just about there when we hit an earthquake. In fact, part of the department that works on this had to close down their building, so there has been a slight delay. I will get some information for the Leader of the Official Opposition.

We did visit Ross River. We did look at the sewage pit area and we did have a conversation with chief and council about it. I will get him some specific details to his very specific question.

Mr. Hassard: I thank the minister for that response and I can certainly appreciate the difficulty that the department is having with the recent closure of their offices.

When the minister is speaking to those officials later, could he also please find out — I know he mentioned earlier in this Legislature that there was a possibility of continuing engineering that might need to take place before the bridge repairs can be completed on the Ross River bridge. Can the minister please tell us when this tender for finishing the repairs to the Ross River bridge may take place?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: There was some additional engineering work that was required. When we had a look, there were some concerns about the anchor points, so we had to go back and do a little bit more engineering. That work has been completed. We also made a commitment to chief and council that before the tender package goes out we will have a direct conversation with them. That conversation is underway right now.

It's difficult for me to give an exact sense of when the bridge will be completed or a date because it's going to go to an RFP process. We're still hopeful and confident that it will be this year. I will do my best to keep the members opposite informed.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 17

Clerk: Motion No. 17, standing in the name of Mr. Hutton.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun:

THAT this House supports the efforts of the Vuntut Gwitchin people and the Gwich'in people of the Northwest Territories and Alaska in lobbying the United States Congress for the protection of the sacred calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd in order to preserve the health of the herd and the well-being of northern communities.

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, today's motion is a very straightforward one that I hope all members will support. It is on a topic that this Legislature has discussed and debated several times over the years. It is back on the radar, so to speak, because of the results of the presidential election in November 2016. With President Obama in the White House for the last eight years, the calving grounds were under less threat. That changed in November. The Yukon government strongly supports protecting the Porcupine caribou herd calving grounds in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. A portion of the herd's most sensitive habitat in Yukon is protected from industrial development by Ivvavik National Park. The Yukon government stands with its First Nation and Inuvialuit partners in advocating for the protection of the calving grounds in Alaska.

Porcupine caribou are culturally important and provide an essential food source for many First Nation and Inuvialuit people. In November 2016 the barren-ground caribou were assessed as "threatened" by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. The next step is for the federal environment minister to determine whether to formally list the caribou as "threatened" under the *Species at Risk Act*. If listed as "threatened", there is a requirement to develop a recovery strategy and potentially identify critical habitat. Because of significant work with user groups and the Porcupine Caribou Management Board, including the ongoing application of the herd's harvest management plan and implementation plan, Yukon is in a good position to address these requirements.

Significant declines in barren-ground caribou populations across North America recently led to an assessment of "threatened" by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada in November 2016. The Porcupine caribou herd is the only large barren-ground caribou herd currently increasing in size in Canada. There is renewed interest by the United States government in opening ANWR to oil drilling

and development. The area has been closed to development, including drilling, since 1980. In January 2017, Alaskan Senator Murkowski introduced Senate Bill S.49, which is a first step to removing the existing legislative prohibition on oil and gas activity in ANWR. Senator Murkowski met with President Trump on March 17 to push her ANWR agenda. After her meeting, she told *Bloomberg News*: “What was very clear was a recognition that what Alaska has to offer is considerable, important, and we need to be working to undo much of what the Obama administration did in terms of locking up these resources”.

Yukon government’s relations with Alaska have a number of areas of mutual interest. However, the protection of the northernmost part of ANWR, south of Kaktovik, Alaska — also referred to as the “1002 lands” — is currently an area of disagreement. For many years, Yukon government has provided financial assistance to Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to support its advocacy efforts to protect ANWR. A \$50,000 contribution agreement is currently in place with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to support 2017-18 activities.

A Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation delegation was in Washington, DC, March 12 to 15, 2017, advocating for the protection of ANWR. The *1987 Agreement Between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America on the Conservation of the Porcupine Caribou Herd* outlined specific provisions for international engagement, including the creation of an international board. This board provides advice and makes recommendations to the parties to ensure conservation of the herd.

The Porcupine Caribou Management Board was established under the *Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement* and works to conserve the Porcupine caribou herd and its habitat in Canada. This board includes representation from Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in, the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, the Tetlit Gwich’in, Inuvialuit, Canada, Northwest Territories and Yukon.

In 2011, the parties to the PCMA approved a Porcupine caribou harvest management plan and an accompanying implementation plan. These documents guide the management actions in Canada and lay out a process to cooperatively manage harvest on an annual basis.

On November 24, 2016, Yukon Member of Parliament Larry Bagnell made a plea in the House of Commons for parliamentarians and all Canadians to make every effort to protect the calving grounds of the herd. Indigenous leaders from Alaska, Yukon and Northwest Territories are actively lobbying in Washington, DC to prevent drilling and other development. This is a continuation of a decades-long effort to protect the calving grounds of the herd in Yukon and Alaska.

Yukon continues to liaise with Global Affairs Canada, the Canadian Embassy in Washington, the Alaska State government, the US Congress, US federal government and American non-governmental organizations in order to monitor action and policy.

The herd is currently estimated at 197,000 caribou, up from an estimated 169,000 in 2010. This is one of the largest populations of barren-ground caribou in North America and

currently the only one that’s increasing. Regular monitoring since 1970 has indicated that the Porcupine caribou herd is primarily on the coastal plain of Alaska and Yukon during the calving period, but almost solely within Alaska for the critical one to 1.5 months afterward, the post-calving period.

In particular, the 1002 lands — the northernmost part of the ANWR lands — are where use is concentrated each year during this critical life stage. Although the Porcupine caribou herd has calved more regularly in Yukon over the past 13 years, in recent years, the herd has again shifted its calving activities back to the 1002 lands, signalling the ongoing importance of the entire calving range. The herd will continue to make its annual movement into the 1002 area of ANWR after calving each year.

Mr. Speaker, this has always been a non-partisan issue in this Chamber. Governments of all three political stripes have agreed on the importance of protecting this herd. Unanimous support of this motion would express this Legislature’s continued support for protecting ANWR. I sincerely hope all members can agree to support this motion.

Mr. Istchenko: I’m happy to rise to speak to this motion and to restate the Yukon Party’s commitment to lending its support to the Vuntut Gwitchin and the Gwich’in people in their efforts to protect the Porcupine caribou herd.

The way of life for the Gwich’in people has always been centred on the Porcupine caribou. They have maintained a healthy, balanced dependence on the herd for thousands of years.

The previous MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin eloquently — many times to me in private and in this House — described his relationship in the words of many Gwich’in elders: “Caribou are our life. Without caribou, we wouldn’t exist”. Those are great words, Mr. Speaker.

The reliance that people have had on the lands and on caribou has not changed with the introduction of our modern amenities over the years. I’ll speak more to that a little bit later. Rather, they have maintained the traditional way of life, passing on their knowledge of the dependence on the herd through generations.

Each spring, during the Porcupine caribou migration north to their calving grounds in northeast Alaska, there is further melt in the area, giving way to new growth of food for the caribou and their young.

I commend the efforts of the Gwich’in people to lobby the United States Congress in this area. There are other things that are near and dear to my heart that I have been lobbying for also. Shakwak is a good example. Protecting their caribou population is something that we can all support. The herd has been thriving and, while estimates tend to vary from year to year, the more recent counts put the herd — like we heard from the member opposite — at 200,000 strong.

I just want to give a little bit of previous history on the population of the caribou. Back in the early 1970s, there were about 100,000 and then we saw an increase in 1985. We were up to just 140,000. Then, in 1990, it peaked at 175,000 caribou. Then we saw a little bit of a decline back in 2001. I

think we were just around 125,000. Like the member opposite said, we're at 197,000 caribou with the last census that was done in 2013. I know that the Department of Environment works closely with the Porcupine Caribou Management Board. I know the International Porcupine Caribou Board was re-established — and other bodies like the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) — to ensure the conservation of that herd. The reason I'm speaking to this today — and I know the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin is probably aware of all this — I will throw in a little history of my past couple of years as the Environment minister with the caribou and with the harvest opportunities and some of the challenges that we found. Just for her — I'm sure it's probably on her radar already.

As we know, the harvest of the herd is considerably higher in years when the herd spends the winter along the Dempster Highway, and we've seen that. During those years, there is greater demand placed on our conservation officers. What I can say is — you get a briefing note that comes to you and says that the caribou are there and, oh my god, there are hunters. Everybody is out there hunting. So our conservation officers are tasked out there. You have to bring them in from other areas. They have to work overtime. They do a wonderful job. They get up there. Having their presence and having the conservation officers' vehicles there usually cleans up a lot of the issues that they've had along the highway with the wastage of meat and ethical treatment of how you go about hunting. It's not the practices of Yukoners. It's the practices of those who come across the line in the Northwest Territories more than in the Yukon, from what I understand.

When I was the previous minister, any time I had a chance to meet with the Minister of Environment from the Northwest Territories, that was a conversation. Let's work, let's educate and let's work together so we can have the proper harvest and harvesting done within the rules, regulations and laws that we have in the Yukon Territory.

We know that licensed harvest averages about 250 caribou, but it can range from a very low harvest to over 400 per year, depending on if they are on the lower Dempster Highway. I think the harvest in 2015-16 was approximately 219, but we saw a huge increase when the caribou came. At the 2016 harvest meeting in February, the data was available from all parties for the fourth year in a row. The total Canadian harvest was estimated at 749 caribou. This is extremely low, but then we will see the harvest go up. For example, it can go up much higher — 4,000 to 6,000 — as the caribou were in Canada and accessible from the Dempster. So Alaska's harvest is going to be lower when the caribou are there. It's going to be important for us to monitor that and keep an eye on that.

I was very interested to look at the new technology, some of the stuff that they have there. The collaborative effort between the departments — the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. They're great with this too — and the federal jurisdictions such as Environment Canada and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Monitoring priorities are set by agencies on an as-needed basis and are agreed to by the Porcupine Caribou Technical Committee, which includes representatives from the agencies. Monitoring is generally led by a specific agency and supported by others, as needed, to ensure success.

A few of the things that they focus on — and I believe that it's important — are the number of collars deployed, the range, the wide aerial telemetry — and I have had an opportunity to look at the telemetry and see over the years with the technology, the aerial photos, the better photos — the new population estimate, in collaboration with Alaska Fish and Game — as I said earlier, communicating and engaging with hunters on the Dempster Highway.

Another one that is near and dear to my heart is our youth, so working with our schools to enable mentorship, education, communication and opportunities of the local communities there to be directly involved in the monitoring — getting that opportunity to go out, fly, have a look and count is incredible and it's an incredible opportunity. It can tweak a youth's interest into — maybe that's the direction they would like to move to in the future. That's for the communities in the Yukon but in the Mackenzie Delta also. I think that hunter education and conservation of the herd, some of the workshops that they hold and other initiatives identified are also great.

We're fortunate and proud to be home to such an important living, breathing resource and, of course, we want to see it valued as such. The new United States government and administration has focused on opening hydrocarbon development in the Arctic area. We certainly think any decision should be made in the north by the people who live there — not Washington and not Ottawa.

This area has been a subject of a call from the Gwich'in Nation and the Vuntut Gwitchin people to protect the unspoiled wilderness. It is this unspoiled wilderness that is home to so many species of wildlife in addition to being the calving grounds of the Porcupine herd. If the people of the north are calling for the land to be managed a certain way, then our respective governments need to listen. With the Alaska Congressional Delegation calling for the coastal area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to be opened to deployment, it is a critical topic for those people who depend on the vulnerable coast area that is a favoured calving ground.

We also need to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that we are looking at evidence and science on how to support the caribou herd.

I would like to thank our previous MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin for all of his hard work and dedication to the preservation of the Porcupine caribou herd, and to this government. It is certainly a worthy goal. We urge the Government of Yukon to continue its support to our northern people to protect the herd and ensure the well-being of their communities.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for bringing forth this motion to reiterate the support — and I will use the word “reiterate” — of this House with respect to the efforts of the Vuntut

Gwitchin and the Gwich'in people of the Northwest Territories and Alaska in their efforts to lobby the United States Congress for the protection of the sacred calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd.

There is no question that the New Democratic caucus supports this motion, and we do it for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that we all see what is happening in the United States — as the Member for Mayo-Tatchun pointed out — post-November 8, 2016 and the incredible press to open all natural areas across North America to extractive industries, particularly the North Slope, to oil extraction.

It was good to see a passing of the torch, in a way, with the delegation that went from Old Crow to Washington this spring — to see a veteran, Lorraine Netro — was Peters — a former member of this Legislative Assembly, providing her guidance to a couple of young ones: Sophia Linklater-Flather and Dana Tizya-Tramm — two upcoming leaders in that community — to allow them the opportunity to see the enormity of, first of all, the lobbying industry in Washington, DC and what they're up against when they go to Washington to knock on the doors of politicians around that town — and to build on the cumulative work that has been done by previous MLAs and delegates from Old Crow.

People will say, "What's Old Crow like?", and you say, as an outsider, that it's a community of a couple hundred people, but it's probably the best-travelled couple hundred people in the world in terms of their political acumen and understanding of political processes, having had to deal with the challenges of protecting this herd, as the original peoples of this area — Alaska, Yukon and Northwest Territories. We established the borders post-contact, but those caribou have been going back and forth for many thousands of years.

It's important — as we look at the work of groups like the delegation who went there — to try to ensure that the 1002 lands, ANWR, are protected. It's also to look at the reality that the Porcupine caribou, as a herd and as a species, face — and those charged with the responsibility of their management — in particular, the Porcupine Caribou Management Board.

I note, when I look at the website for the Porcupine Caribou Management Board, that the board has been quite clear that, for the most part, the range of where that herd goes is largely undeveloped, but there are a few critical locations, they say, where development activities are increasing and may pose challenges to the herd. Those are obligations and challenges that will be faced by both Yukon and Alaska, the peoples within those borders — the Gwich'in people — as well as the territorial government and the Alaskan Gwich'in and the Alaska government, in addition to the federal government in the States.

I note, Mr. Speaker, that we're focusing today on ANWR, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, but the caribou management board has identified — and this is really important, because we talk about this holistic approach in this Legislative Assembly. I've heard it from the members opposite and I applaud that. They have identified that there are things on the horizon and that are currently occurring that need to be looked at in a more comprehensive way. In

addition to the 1002 lands, they've identified in the Eagle Plains area the historic — in the sense that we're looking back 50, 60 years — the oil and gas exploration activity that has been going on there since the 1950s. They note that increasing interest in developing oil and gas resources over this past decade has meant more activity in the range.

They also note the impact of the Dempster Highway, in terms of the increased traffic that goes up and down there, and how, as the Member for Kluane pointed out, the proximity of the caribou to the highway as they cross can mean there's increased hunting and the impact on that and the potential for that traffic to not only accidentally kill caribou, but deliberately, and/or disturb migration patterns.

They also note — again within this broad area for the Porcupine caribou — the fact that the Peel River watershed is part of the Porcupine caribou herd's winter range. They note that this area is currently the focus of mineral exploration.

Mr. Speaker, I looked at that and I looked further at what the board's strategic plan for 2016 through to 2020 was. There is concern expressed about the tendency of our environmental and regulatory bodies to take and be focused, by mandate, on a project-by-project approach. The whole issue, if we're looking at the sustained life of a herd like this that has been around forever, is that we need to work together — not just put the onus on the Porcupine Caribou Management Board — to figure out an approach to deal with cumulative impacts. They currently don't do that under YESAA.

We need to, if these four large issues of the 1002 lands, the Peel Plateau, the Dempster and Eagle Plains — caribou don't just sort of have one thing happening to them in one area and then it doesn't have an impact if they try to move on. The combination of current and future activities, along with climate change — we need to be thinking about how that may impact this sustained existence of this very important herd.

We think that, as the NDP, we would of course support this motion, so it's not just that we're sort of standing on the sidelines passively supporting the Vuntut Gwitchin in their efforts to lobby another body — another government — but it's actually that we need to take responsibility as legislators for what we're doing to think through the issues of cumulative impact and how we're going to make that a reality, so that we avoid what the Member for Mayo-Tatchun mentioned at the outset. I think he referenced that if nothing is done, they can become possibly threatened and placed on a species-at-risk list. Guess what — we don't have species-at-risk legislation in this territory. We rely upon the federal listing. We don't want to go there. I think we have an obligation and responsibility. I know that Yukoners are up to that. We look forward to not only supporting the efforts of the Vuntut Gwitchin and the Gwich'in across the Northwest Territories and Alaska in their lobbying effort, but we put the challenge to this government and to all of us as legislators to deal with the bigger issues as well. It's not just about those in Washington doing something. We have an obligation to get active and proactive here too.

Hon. Ms. Frost: As the Minister of Environment and as the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin, I'm honoured to speak

today on the protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and to speak on the significance of the Porcupine caribou herd to the Vuntut Gwitchin people and to the Gwich'in Nation across northern Canada and in the US.

Thank you to the members for your passionate voice in terms of the significance of the caribou. The connection and the relationship of the Porcupine caribou to the Vuntut Gwitchin people goes back decades, goes back a lot of years, as expressed by the Member for Kluane.

Your experience as Minister of Environment in protecting and doing what you can as a previous government to engage with Vuntut Gwitchin on the issue of the Arctic refuge — what I can say is that we need to do better. We need to do more.

The Leader of the Third Party highlighted, and I think he gave some really strong words around the legislative processes. We have put this burden and this responsibility on the Gwich'in Nation to lobby efforts and the statistics that were provided earlier — we've seen highs and lows of the herd.

When times are stressed, the caribou is stressed. Pressure is stressing the caribou — environmental pressures, industrial pressures. We see the herd decline and we react. The Vuntut Gwitchin people have lived this. If you want to go to our community, you'll see that. You go to the grocery store and you buy a jug of milk for \$14 or you get a dozen eggs for \$8. You have to rely on what the land is able — we rely on the environment. We rely on the caribou. It sustains us as a people and it sustains the nation. It's our culture. I wore my vest today because I want to signify that this is who we are as a Gwich'in Nation, Gwich'in people. We use every bit of the animal to signify our dignity and our pride, and our culture and what we stand for as a Gwich'in Nation.

Now, I've been told that I like to tell stories, but I do because that's how I've been taught. You share by storytelling and there are messages in the stories. As a young adult early on in my life, my mother, Alice Frost, being the first chief of our community, was a strong advocate when this *Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement* and the international agreement came about. She advocated, she was front and centre, she took time away from her family to travel and lobby in the United States with members from our community. She pushed us — every one of her children — to leave our community for three to six weeks travelling in the city, travelling in New York, travelling in New Jersey, travelling wherever we can to get the voice out — get the message out — the significance and why. We have significant support across the nation. Is that enough? We're relying on United States citizens to provide and lobby on our behalf. As Canadians and as Yukoners, we have not done that. We have not done enough. We have not supported the Gwich'in Nation to influence the changes that we require, holding at bay the United States government from drilling in the Arctic refuge.

We have seen significant changes in climate and pressures in the wintering grounds of the caribou herd. We have seen Northern Cross coming into our traditional area. We have seen other oil and gas pressures with the requirement

through the YESAA process — which, by the way, derives from the self-government agreement. Those tools were put there to protect the significance of the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan*. All of these initiatives were put in place — the Ivvavik, the Vuntut National Park — by way of the Vuntut Gwitchin people to protect the herd and do our part to protect the Arctic refuge.

Just last summer, our young people at the Biennial Gwich'in Gathering crafted and wrote their values and principles in their mission statement and their vision for the future. They tooled it and defined it as the *Ni'inlii Declaration* — and I'll provide that spelling. It means — it's who we are as a people. The young people crafted this because they saw that we needed to put some action — something in place. They took that just recently. The Member for Mayo-Tatchun spoke about the young people travelling to Washington to lobby most recently. They took their declaration. These are the young people who are now advocating. It hasn't stopped from when I was a young child. They're still there, they're still advocating and they're still looking at what we can do, how we can influence so we can designate the Arctic refuge in a monument status or wilderness designation. Whatever we can get to protect the refuge is the goal. That's our end goal.

I'm going to highlight something. In November 2016, our Member of Parliament submitted to the House of Commons a plea to make every effort to protect the calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd. I'm making that plea today here in this Legislature — that we do the same — that the Yukon government puts forward, as all members and all parties, an effort to protect the calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd.

The question around caribou management strategies in our processes and our legislation, in the wintering grounds in our jurisdiction and in our territories — that we have an obligation to control — is ensuring that we have legislation. We hold the companies accountable to that, as well — that they have an obligation to design the necessary strategies to manage the herd in a way that is conducive to the needs of the communities. The communities, through local traditional processes and knowledge, need to feed into that.

The pressure right now is that we have a really strong herd. We have a thriving herd, a herd that we see as not being threatened, but if things continue as they are, they will eventually fall back down. Those are statistics revealed by the Member for Kluane. It will decline, and where will we be when that happens? We need to have a management plan and a formal strategy in place.

Our agreement with aboriginal governments is to strengthen our abilities to protect and conserve this very important herd. We want to be able to look at the crucial areas of the Porcupine caribou — all areas they use — and look at designing management measures and plans that will protect the herd.

The Government of Yukon will continue to work with all partners, including the Porcupine Caribou Management Board, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the

Inuvialuit. As well, as the Minister of Environment, I commit to working with the United States government and the State of Alaska and working for the continued protection of this iconic herd. The partnerships are essential. It's essential that we bridge those gaps and we hold them to account as well, because they have an obligation, through the international management process, that they have not efficiently implemented.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Silver: It's an absolute honour to rise today to speak in favour of this motion. I want to thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for introducing it and for his words. He has done an excellent job of outlining the urgency involving ANWR since the election of President Trump in November 2016. We also heard the very passionate voice of the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin, who has made an excellent case as to why these issues matter so much to her community. We know that it is an issue that all Yukoners are concerned about. I thank the Official Opposition and the Third Party for their words today as well and for their continuing support of this process.

The future of the calving grounds is always an issue. When I travelled to the community of Old Crow — and Chief Charlie has brought it up as well in our meetings. I want to publicly acknowledge the work of the Vuntut Gwitchin who has consistently taken the lead on this issue. In March of this year, five Yukoners participated in lobbying efforts in Washington: Sophia Linklater-Flather, Lorraine Netro, Dana Tizya-Tramm, Jeneen Njootli and Chris Statnyk. I will get those names for Hansard. They made their case, as they have done for many years. As the Leader of the Third Party has mentioned, Ms. Netro, a former member of this House, has been a tireless advocate of protecting the herd. The other Vuntut citizens — well, they are all our youth, and they are there representing the next generation. They go hand in hand with the wisdom of our elders and the knowledge that the future is in their hands. I wish them well. I know Dana Tizya-Tramm is a tireless advocate as well for his community of Old Crow. When we were up on the campaign trail, he definitely grilled us on a lot questions. I tell you, knowing these young individuals of Vuntut, Old Crow is in good hands as we look to the future.

I also want to thank our Member of Parliament Mr. Larry Bagnell for his continuing efforts on this file. I know also that for my community of Dawson, the Porcupine caribou herd is a source of food and indeed a source of pride.

I want to share with the House today that we are certainly not alone in trying to preserve this treasure. We have allies across the north. We have an ally in the Government of Canada. When I recently met with the Prime Minister, he raised the issue of the calving grounds before I did. He is well-aware of the importance it holds for us in the north and also for all of Canada.

When I am in Washington later this spring, it will be an issue that I will raise with American legislators and also with officials at the Canadian embassy. This is an important issue to Yukoners and to our Liberal government as well. This is

why we are debating this topic at the very earliest opportunity that we have. It is our first private members' day of the very first Sitting. I am very pleased to see that the opposition will be voting with us in favour of this motion. I appreciate everybody's comments today.

Speaker: Is there any further debate?

Mr. Hutton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank everyone in the House here who spoke on this today. I would like to thank the members of the Official Opposition and the Third Party for indicating their support for this. I really want to thank the people of Vuntut Gwitchin because it is really them who have taken the lead and protected this herd for all of us for the past three decades at least.

People from my community have had an opportunity over the last few years to travel over to the Dempster Highway and participate with Tr'ondëk Hwëch' in people on something they call the "first hunt". It's an opportunity for young people from Dawson, Mayo, Old Crow and other places to go out and do their first hunt of the caribou on the Dempster and they learn from the elders all the important things about respecting the land, respecting the wildlife and using every bit of that caribou. Thank you to the people of Vuntut Gwitchin, the people of Old Crow, for looking after that resource for us.

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. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

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

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

Motion No. 17 agreed to

Motion No. 20

Clerk: Motion No. 20, standing in the name of Mr. Gallina.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Porter Creek Centre:

THAT this House commends the generosity of RyanWood Exploration and the northern exploration and sport development fund for contributing \$70,000 to Yukon athletes on their journey to the Olympics to compete in cross-country skiing.

Mr. Gallina: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to present Motion No. 20 to the House.

RyanWood Exploration is contributing \$70,000 to three local cross-country skiing athletes as they work toward their goal of competing in the 2018 Olympics in South Korea.

The northern exploration and sport development fund is fully funded by RyanWood Exploration, a company operating out of Dawson City and owned by Shawn Ryan and Cathy Wood. Dabria Beatty, Knute Johnsgaard and Emily Nishikawa are slated to be the first recipients of this funding, which will allow the athletes to start their dryland season without worrying about how to pay for training camps and racing on the World Cup circuit in Europe. Rather than offering these athletes a lump sum of money, Cathy and Shawn asked each athlete to submit a budget for the season. They took this approach in order to best quantify what the athletes needed so that they can focus on doing the job of committing 100 percent to their training.

A brief history of cross-country skiing in the Yukon — Whitehorse cross-country skiing's humble beginnings in Yukon was dominated by new arrivals of Scandinavian descent. In 1883, when a Finn named Sammy Rido arrived in the North, he fashioned himself a pair of skis and proceeded to ski to the region where Dawson City now lies. Years later, in 1934, a Norwegian named Arnie Anderson managed to get a track cleared on the descent from the Midnight Sun Dome down to Dawson and, soon afterwards, people were racing downhill.

Skiing began to take off in Whitehorse in 1942, when Anderson moved to the once small town in the southern Yukon, which was then booming due to the construction of the Alaska Highway. That year, Anderson managed to get a ski jump built behind the hospital. In the meantime, a ski chalet was constructed and the Yukon Ski Runners were formed. The club served both cross-country and downhill skiers. In 1948, Anderson was the aggregate champion for an international competition in Alaska consisting of cross-country skiing, jumping and giant slalom.

1950 saw the establishment of a rival ski club. This one, run by the Royal Canadian Air Force, was called the Roundell Ski Club. The new club constructed a ski hill and rope tow on a hill behind the Valleyview subdivision, known today as Telemark Hill. The two clubs merged in the 1960s, becoming the Whitehorse Ski Club and opening another ski hill on Haeckel Hill.

While downhill skiing seemed to be making significant inroads in Whitehorse, cross-country skiing slowly gathered steam. A major promoter of cross-country skiing was Gordon Ryder, who was greatly involved in both competitive and backcountry skiing. In addition to travelling to various competitions across Canada, he organized numerous multi-day trips. These included trips up to Fish Lake as well as tours from Carcross and Log Cabin to Skagway.

While downhill competitions were held on the various ski hills, a number of cross-country ski competitions also occurred through the winter, such as the Rendezvous cross-country ski races. During Rendezvous of 1968, a 15-kilometre ski race started from the Bishop Coudert Residence and went roughly halfway up Grey Mountain. Gordon Ryder won this race with a time of 39 minutes and four seconds.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, events were transpiring in other parts of northern Canada that would impact Whitehorse and leave a cross-country skiing legacy that is difficult to ignore decades later. In 1955, Catholic missionary Father Jean-Marie Mouchet and RCMP Officer P.A. Robin started a cross-country skiing program as a way of instilling physical education among the Gwitchin of Old Crow. The two believed that this type of physical activity was fundamental to the Gwitchin people's survival. It did not take long for the Old Crow skiers to get a taste of international success in March 1962, as they travelled to Fairbanks, Alaska for the all-Alaska cross-country ski races. In these races, Old Crow skiers Ben Charlie and Erwin Linklater were first and third, respectively in the men's race, while Susie Linklater and Alice Frost — Minister Pauline Frost's mother — were first and second in the women's race.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Mr. Cathers: I'm sure it wasn't intentional — I just wanted to point out that the Member for Porter Creek Centre just mentioned a member by name, which, of course, is contrary to our Standing Orders.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Please confine your comments in identifying members in the Assembly to their ridings or their ministerial responsibilities.

Mr. Gallina: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will confine references to members of the House by their riding or ministerial stature.

Speaker: Thank you; continue.

Mr. Gallina: In February 1970, Minister Frost's sisters, Mary and Shirley, both 14 years old, and Glenna, 13 years old, as well as her cousin Agnes Charlie, 15 years old, competed in the five-kilometre course at the Canadian Junior Nordic Ski Championships in Manitoba, sweeping the top four places in the race. These four Gwitchin women are trailblazers and part of the fabric that makes up the history of cross-country skiing in Yukon.

The success of the ski program did not go unnoticed and Father Mouchet was invited by the Northwest Territories recreation department to develop an outdoor education program in Inuvik. From this, the territorial experimental ski training — TEST program — was born. In 1967, the program in Inuvik was taken over by Bjorger Pettersen, who would later be highly influential in bringing the World Cup to Whitehorse.

In Father Mouchet's absence from the territory, cross-country skiing in the Yukon suffered a setback. An editorial in the *Whitehorse Star* appeared on January 15, 1968, lamenting that: "Due to a lack of funds for physical fitness and Father Mouchet being promoted to the NWT, no skiers from Old Crow were present at the Olympic trials in Quebec".

Regarding the forthcoming Arctic Winter Games, the newspaper warned: "Let's make sure the Yukon is ready this time." As this editorial appeared, plans were already well underway to re-establish a skiing program in the Yukon.

A cross-country skiing program had started up again in Old Crow in 1966. In addition to Father Mouchet's efforts, the program was helped along by teachers Beth-Anne Exham and Irene Brekke, as well as the principal of the school, Dave Brekke. In 1968, the TEST program made its first inroads in Whitehorse. The Brekkes had moved to Whitehorse and, with Father Mouchet, undertook an experiment to see if the program would take root in the city. The experiment was run out of Takhini Elementary School.

The topography of the area lent itself well to the creation of challenging ski trails, and Dave Brekke was the school principal. As a result, a three-kilometre loop was cut and, during the winter of 1968-69, Whitehorse saw its first of many TEST participants, whereby skiers earned badges for training in extremely cold temperatures.

Over the winter, the new trails played host to a number of events. In January, an invitational race was held for skiers from Old Crow. Additionally, the Gordon Taylor Memorial Race was hosted on the trails named in honour of Charlie and Betty Taylor's son. The TEST program also hosted a long-distance ski tour called the Skiathon, and eventually Saturday races became the norm. These events saw skiers from Alaska and western Canada.

The goal of the TEST program was to develop kids at an age when their muscles were developing. To fulfill this goal, a great amount of volunteer and community spirit was required. As the cross-country ski trail system expanded, Whitehorse hosted more events. In 1972, the city hosted the Arctic Winter Games. Consequently, a ski stadium needed to be constructed and the buildings were required. Gordon Ryder provided many materials to get the job done, and the Yukon government donated old buildings as a ski shack. After hosting the AWG, the TEST ski trails were the site for numerous other large competitions.

In 1974, the Canadian Junior Cross-Country Ski Championships came to Whitehorse, an event for athletes 19 years of age and younger. Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau was designated honorary patron of the event.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few moments to mention Yukon cross-country skiers who have contributed to the history of sport and who have been inducted into Sport Yukon's Hall of Fame: Lucy Steele in 2000, Jane Vincent in 1997, Ron McFayden in 1996, Selwyn Hughes in 1995, Monique Waterreus in 1991, Ed Schiffkorn in 1998, Don Sumanik in 1983, Father Mouchet in 1980 and Martha Benjamin in 1989.

The performance of these athletes has impacted the sport in general and the recipients of the RyanWood Exploration funding specifically. I would be remiss if I did not mention two of the coaches who have contributed to the sport over the years. Alain Masson is the longest-serving ski coach the Yukon ski team has had. Prior to coaching, Masson was a multi-sport Olympian who competed in the 1988 Olympics in Calgary and the 1992 Olympics in Albertville.

In 1995, he replaced Alain Parent as the coach of the Yukon ski team. As he was living in Whitehorse at the time, this marked the first time that the Yukon ski team had hired a coach as a local. With Masson at the helm, the Yukon ski team has experienced remarkable success, including many medals at national championships and Canada Games, as well as multiple Yukoners representing Canada at various international events, such as the World Junior Championships.

Mike Gladish has become synonymous with cross-country skiing and the Whitehorse Cross Country Ski Club. After moving to Whitehorse in 1981, he immediately became involved with the club and he spent most of the 1980s volunteering as a coach and jackrabbit leader. In addition to this, he served on the Whitehorse Cross Country Ski Club board and in 1988 became president. That was short-lived, as a manager's position opened up at the ski club, which he took. In addition to his paid duties with the club, he has put in many volunteer hours for the club and, between his paid duties and his volunteer work, Mike is considered to be a significant contributor to the club.

This brings us to the recipients of the RyanWood Exploration funding. All three of these athletes are born and raised Yukoners who have successfully competed in their sport. Through hard work, training and support from the Yukon community, Dahria Beatty is a 23-year-old athlete who has competed internationally for Canada at the FIS Nordic World Ski championships in 2017 in Lahti, Finland. Knute Johnsgaard is 24 years old and he recently won a World Cup bronze medal as part of Canada's men's cross-country ski team, qualifying him to race in the next winter Olympics. Emily Nishikawa is 27 years old and she competed at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, where she finished 42nd in the 15-kilometre skiathlon.

These athletes are a source of pride for Yukoners and, as they represent a sport enjoyed by many, they, along with the Frost family, are role models to other young Yukoners who aspire to set goals and to reach them through hard work, persistence and steadfast determination.

In conclusion, I would like to recognize and thank Cathy Wood and Shawn Ryan for their generous contribution to these elite Yukon athletes who will be representing our

territory in the 2018 Olympics in South Korea. I look forward to hearing from others here in the Assembly today and listening to their ideas with regard to Motion No. 20.

Mr. Kent: It is my pleasure to rise to speak to Motion No. 20, introduced by the Member for Porter Creek Centre. I would like to thank that member for bringing this motion forward to the floor of the House and for his remarks that provided a good snapshot on the cross-country skiing history here in the territory and some of those individuals who have developed and done a great job of growing the sport here in the territory.

I too would like to echo his thanks to RyanWood Exploration. I have known Shawn and Cathy for a number of years — about 15 or 16 years now, back to their early days in Dawson City. To see their growth and what they have been able to contribute to the Yukon mining sector and giving back, not only to these three elite athletes, but also their support of soccer and other sporting events and teams — I am sure the list would go on and on. They are great individuals and we couldn't be prouder to have them as citizens of the Yukon. This contribution of \$70,000 to Dahria, Knute and Emily has been something that they require and something that is very much appreciated by athletes who are competing at that level, I'm sure.

I am going to take a different tack. I know the member obviously did thank RyanWood and did go through that cross-country skiing history for us here in the territory, but often these types of issues would be discussed under the Daily Routine on Tributes, but I thank the member for bringing this forward as a motion because it gives us an opportunity to thank some of the other companies that have played a key role — sponsorship-wise. I'm going to touch on a few of them. As some members know, I have had a history of being involved in not-for-profit organizations, particularly on the fundraising side, whether it be the Yukon Hospital Foundation or the Canadian Cancer Society or a host of other initiatives that I've either volunteered at or went to.

I'm just going to pick a company and a few events to just highlight some of the other great things that the Yukon business community and Yukon individuals are doing to support our athletes and support our community in general. I believe there are a few other speakers on our side who will weigh in with their personal experiences when it comes to this type of activity.

Before I begin, just some of the names that were mentioned by the member opposite — particularly Father Mouchet and the TEST program. Like many young Yukoners who grew up here, I was also a member of the TEST group from grade 6 to 9, starting at Selkirk school and concluding at what is now Vanier senior secondary, but at the time it was Jeckell junior high.

There are two individuals who were teachers and instructors of the program at those schools, the first being the late Brian Hunt. He passed away in the past few years and was a tremendous mentor. I think we all have our favourite teacher from when we were growing up, and he was my grade 6

teacher and TEST instructor, and he was my favourite teacher. During the last mandate, I did pay a brief tribute to him in the House. This gives me an opportunity to reflect — the names the member opposite started to mention. It brought back those memories to me of Mr. Hunt. Again, condolences to his family and friends, as I'm sure there are still many who reside here in the Yukon.

The other name the Member for Porter Creek Centre mentioned was Selwyn Hughes. He was my instructor in Jeckell junior high when I attended there. Again, he was a fantastic teacher and a fantastic cross-country skiing instructor. It was tough love, I guess, on those of us who were in his class, but he taught us a lot about being leaders and volunteers in the community. I learned a lot from both Brian and Selwyn, as well as Father Mouchet, and I thank them for their guidance in my life as a young Yukoner and as I grew up.

The other name mentioned by the Member for Porter Creek Centre that is familiar to me is Lucy Steele. He mentioned her as a Yukon cross-country skiing Hall of Fame inductee. I was fortunate enough to go to school and graduate from F.H. Collins awhile ago with Lucy, in the mid-1980s. I thank him for mentioning those people. It just quickly brought back a number of memories for me.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk a little bit, as I mentioned, about some of the other companies that have played an important role in events that are important and are well-supported by the business community here in the Yukon — not in the footsteps of RyanWood Exploration but alongside companies like RyanWood Exploration when they make such generous donations.

When I saw this motion and when the member first introduced this motion and I saw that he was calling it for debate here today, it reminded me of Pelly Construction — Keith and Gwen Byram and Jennifer Byram have been long-time philanthropists through their company here in the territory. My time with Pelly Construction goes back to the early days of the Yukon Hospital Foundation. For those who don't know, Pelly Construction is a mining contractor. They're the contractor at the Minto mine. They have other contracts on their resumés such as the Faro mine site remediation. They worked at the Golden Bear mine in northern British Columbia. You can't drive north or south from Whitehorse on the Alaska Highway — or many of the other roads — without passing over some of the road construction that they have done over the years. They have also been active in Alaska with road construction. They are a partner with the Vuntut Gwitchin, I believe, and Porcupine Enterprises Ltd. as well as partners with First Nations in the River's Edge Condos here in Whitehorse.

For those lucky enough to visit Keith and Gwen's home out at Marsh Lake, I think one of their crowning achievements was their work in Antarctica. They built an airstrip and they built a hangar down there for the British government at one of the research stations. I believe the name of the station was Rothera, and they did some tremendous work down there. It really put them on the map. Keith and Gwen have some

fantastic stories, as do Jennifer, Karen and Lori — Keith and Gwen's daughters — about their time there.

I was able to attend an anniversary party of that a number of years ago, and there are many recognizable names in the Yukon that went down to Antarctica over two seasons to work on that project with Keith and Gwen. The fact that they were able to be successful there and be successful business people has led to the ability for them to make some significant donations to our community, much like the ones that RyanWood Exploration has done.

Just to name a few, the Yukon Hospital Foundation — a couple of naming opportunities that they have taken there. The first was with the intensive care unit, which was dedicated in honour of the Byram family and Pelly Construction. I believe that was in 2005. As recently as 2011, the emergency room was dedicated on behalf of Pelly Construction and their employees.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other initiatives that they have supported — from Special Olympics and attending other events throughout the community. No one is surprised to see Pelly Construction's logo on an event — anything from small events to some of the larger ones — as I mentioned, the Northwestel Festival of Trees and the Yukon Hospital Foundation events.

A couple of sporting-related activities that they have done — they sponsored the new chairlift at Mount Sima. They were the title sponsor on that important piece of infrastructure. The ski hill is located in my riding of Copperbelt South, but it's something that is used and enjoyed by so many residents — and visitors as well, with some of the early season training that they have been able to take advantage of at that particular facility.

The one thing in, I believe, April 2008 that jumped out at me and was very similar to the motion that we're discussing here today was a \$50,000 contribution to Yukon Olympic athlete Jeane Lassen. There was a reception that Pelly Construction hosted — I believe it was at the MacBride Museum — and Keith and Pelly Construction presented a cheque, as I mentioned, to Jeane for \$50,000 at that event. This is tremendous that Yukon businesses are stepping up the way they do.

Just before I turn my attention to some of the other events where Yukon businesses are providing support throughout our community, I heard Keith speak at — I think it was a Yukon Hospital Corporation AGM a couple of years ago. He mentioned to those gathered there — many health care professionals, board members and others — that none of this would be possible if it weren't for the mining industry. I think that's something that we can all get behind — the importance of that industry throughout the territory and the importance of that industry for these companies like Pelly that provide donations and support to local organizations.

I really wanted to thank those mining companies and the service and supply companies that support so many different events, whether it's minor hockey, minor soccer, the arts, the Rotary Music Festival — whatever they choose to be involved

with — from events like that up to, as I mentioned, some of the larger events.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk briefly about three of the events that I have had some personal involvement with and to thank some of those companies that were involved. I'll start with the Yukon Hospital Foundation and then move on to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and then the Every Student, Every Day initiative that Victoria Gold is the title sponsor of.

From 2009 until my election in 2011, I was the president of the Yukon Hospital Foundation, and prior to that I sat on the board, so I was very much involved with a lot of the activities and events. Those would not have been possible without the generous support of so many businesses and individuals here in town. I'm just going to go through what I found on the Yukon Hospital Foundation website as far as the supporters.

I'm sure that my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek North, will also touch on some of the individuals there, as her involvement with the Yukoners cancer care fund is also part of the Yukon Hospital Foundation umbrella. Of course, Northwestel is the title sponsor of the Northwestel Festival of Trees. Most recently, I believe they re-upped, as far as the naming partner for the centre for medical imaging in the hospital. I saw a photo in the newspaper of executives from Northwestel, as well as the Premier and other representatives of the government and the Yukon Hospital Corporation and Yukon Hospital Foundation — a big thank you to Northwestel for their support there and across the communities that they serve. They are a true partner in what we're trying to do here in the Yukon. Paul Flaherty and his team at Northwestel do a great job of sponsorship.

I know the Member for Porter Creek Centre would have some first-hand knowledge of all that Northwestel has contributed to the community.

I mentioned Pelly Construction as a foundation supporter. Alkan Air is the title sponsor at the grand ball. Wendy Taylor and her team up at Alkan Air — their name and logo can be found in many different events, no matter what you're attending, so a big thank you to Alkan Air as they celebrate their 40th anniversary this year.

Skookum Asphalt — I believe they still sponsor the Santa breakfast at the Festival of Trees, but they also sponsor the annual pro-am golf tournament that takes place every July at Mountainview Golf and Country Club — one of the signature events for the Yukon Hospital Foundation that brings in money to purchase much-needed medical equipment. I think this year they're fundraising for a fluoroscopy machine.

Capstone Mining and the Minto mine — a long-time sponsor, and also had naming recognition at one of the units in the Whitehorse General Hospital. I'm not sure if they are still a sponsor of the lab — but key sponsors. Ron Light, a tireless volunteer — we've heard his name in the Legislature already during the brief amount of time we've been here this Sitting. He's associated with Women in Mining; he's also with the Chamber of Mines. He has been a tremendous community advocate and I thank him for his efforts as well.

Air North, Yukon's airline plays a pivotal role in supporting the foundation. Canadian Freightways, First Nation health program — I should also mention — going back to Air North, Yukon's airline — that this is also their 40th anniversary and they have a number of celebrations that have been planned or have taken place. I thank them for their efforts. You can't find a raffle or any type of event without a couple of Air North, Yukon's airline tickets associated with it in some way, or even broader sponsorship, as they have been a tremendous booster of the local not-for-profit community.

Northern Vision Development, Nuway Crushing and the Adams family — huge sponsors of many different events that we have here in the territory, including sponsorship at Alkan Air's Grand Ball every year. Rod and Carol Adams and their children have really become incredible members of our community and are very engaged in a number of philanthropic endeavours throughout the Yukon.

The *Yukon News* and the *Whitehorse Star* have been long-time supporters of the foundation. Builders Supplyland — I think the member mentioned one of the Ryder family members — of course Builders Supplyland is owned by Mr. Ryder, and they have been a long-timer supporter — CKRW — The Rush, Canadian Tire, Inkspirationz Graphix, P.S. Sidhu Trucking and a couple of service clubs, the Whitehorse Elks Lodge and the Whitehorse Lions Club, have long been supporters. BMO Bank of Montreal, CIBC, City of Whitehorse, the Lake Laberge Lions Club, Matco, Pacific Northwest Group, the RBC Foundation, Shoppers Drug Mart, Westcan Bulk Transport, ATCO Electric Yukon, Yukon Engineering Services, Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Order of Pioneers — just to mention a few. This was downloaded from the website today, but I am sure there are others that have participated, whether they are sponsoring trees at the Northwestel Festival of Trees or providing sponsorship at the pro-am golf tournament. I may have missed some, and for that I apologize. I certainly appreciate the efforts that you have put forward with respect to being a strong community supporter and a strong supporter of everything that we are trying to accomplish here in the territory.

There are couple of other events that I have some association with over the past number of years. The first one is the Yukon Imagination Library. For those who don't know, this program offers a book per month for children from birth to the age of five years when they enter kindergarten. My son — and I am sure the children of many others in here — was a member of this initiative. Our little guy just got his good luck in kindergarten book, which I am assuming is the last instalment. It did coincide with his fifth birthday. He is no longer eligible, but there are some great books from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library with the support of the Yukon Imagination Library.

This organization does have a number of sponsors as well. Many of these names I will repeat, but they are certainly still very much involved, and this is a tremendous effort that we see. The Rendezvous Rotary Club has been there from the start with this group. Each year, the Yukon Chamber of

Mines, at their annual geoscience banquet has silent and live auctions, with the proceeds going to the Imagination Library. The Yukon government has been there with them from the beginning as well in providing matching donations. I believe it is up to \$50,000 a year in matching donations. I may stand to be corrected, but I think that's what it was.

Two individuals from Vancouver from CIBC Wood Gundy, Dean Knoblauch and Tyson Boychuk, have been long-time supporters of this event and this organization. The Carmacks Development Corporation is a partner, as is the Yukon Indian Development Corporation, Alkan Air, which I've mentioned before. Yukon College, the Yukon Literacy Coalition, Derome and Associates, Tintina Consultants, Con Lattin, Kluane Drilling Ltd. and PROLOG Canada are also listed on the website as being champions. All these individual companies are supporting an organization that has volunteers and a volunteer board. I just quickly want to mention those individuals who are volunteers. According to information I received from the website: Dr. Karen Barnes, Claire Derome — who was really one of the driving forces and the initiator of this. I know literacy is something that's extremely important to Claire, and she grabbed this one by the horns and really introduced this program to the Yukon — Susan Craig from Tintina Consultants; Con Lattin, Kells Boland, Karen Fortin; Cory Bellmore, the CEO of the Village of Carmacks; Wendy Tayler, Alkan Air; and Joanne VanderMeulen. Thank you all for all that you do with respect to the Imagination Library and the important things that it's able to provide to our community.

The final event I want to mention — again, it's something that's important to me, as it was started during my time as Minister of Education in the previous government — is Victoria Gold's Every Student, Every Day initiative. When I was a minister, I received a call from John McConnell, the CEO of Victoria Gold, looking for something their company could get behind.

At the time, I was reading a briefing note that some students, by the time they reach grade 8, have up to two years in unexcused absences from school, so they've missed two years of learning. This is something that really caught my attention and, fortunately enough, I received a call from John and the team at Victoria Gold about something they could get behind. They really ran with this. I know the current Minister of Education did a tribute to this during Education Week and mentioned one of the projects — I think it was the makerspace project in Watson Lake that was recently funded.

These types of initiatives aren't possible without generous support of some of the companies we have in town. The Yukon government Department of Education does a matching program. I believe it's up to \$25,000 per year matching for this initiative. Legacy partners — I've mentioned Victoria Gold a couple of times — Victoria Gold Corp. as the title and lead sponsor of this event — a big thank you to John McConnell and Mark Ayranto and all those who are involved with this organization.

Legacy partners include: CKRW, the Rush and Air North, Yukon's Airline. The gold sponsors are: Alkan Air Ltd. —

again, thank you to Wendy and her team — Finning; Pelly Construction; Yukon Education; Cobalt Construction; the Goldcorp Coffee project; Ewing Transport; Mosaic Communications; what's referred to as the student motivator Allnorth; Chief Isaac Group of Companies; Northern Vision Development; JDS Energy and Mining Inc.; SMS Equipment Komat'su; and Kluane Drilling. There are also a number of friends of the society: Business Television BTV; the Casino mining project; G-P Distributing; K&K Truck Rentals; Northwestel; SGS; Triple J Hotel and Cabins; the Wheelhouse Restaurant; and Yukon Brewing. Those are champions for the 2016-17 year. Others have gone before and a huge thank you to those individuals who not only sponsor this, but also the individuals who give of their time. I believe that Tara Christie is the president of this organization and she has a tremendous board backing her up. Again, a big thank you to the Victoria Gold Yukon Student Encouragement Society and the Every Student, Every Day initiative for all that they do to help with student attendance.

I invite individuals to go to the website and take a look. They have funded a total of almost \$186,000-worth of initiatives since they started giving money to those who applied back in 2013. It's over a four-year period. I'm not sure if that includes the ones that were recently funded this year —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. White: Thank you. I just noticed we have Mr. Dave Brekke in the gallery. Mr. Brekke, I'm not sure if you had the opportunity to hear what was said about you, but it was really nice. I didn't realize that you were so integral in the creation of cross-country skiing in the Yukon. Thank you for coming. I'm sure you will be able to see it in Hansard. You're a wonder on all sorts of different levels, so thank you for being here.

Applause

Mr. Kent: That was good timing by the Third Party House Leader. I was just about to wrap up my comments. Again, I thank the Member for Porter Creek Centre for bringing forward this as a motion. It gives us that opportunity to recognize other events and other individuals.

A big thank you to Shawn and Cathy and RyanWood Exploration for what they've done to support these elite athletes and the best of luck to Dahria, Knute and Emily as they look to own the podium in the next winter Olympics. I'm sure the generosity that was exhibited by RyanWood Exploration will certainly help them along that way.

Thank you and we look forward to supporting this motion when it comes to a vote later on today.

Ms. White: I'll echo the comments of my colleague in thanking the Member for Porter Creek Centre for bringing this motion. It's not often that we get to celebrate people's generosity in this way, so that's fantastic.

I want to thank RyanWood for the contribution to these three skiers and echo their hopes that they can encourage

mining exploration companies to make the fund an ongoing legacy project. It will also be fascinating to see which athletes can be supported this way in the future, so we thank them very much for this generous contribution.

We're happy to have Dave Brekke in the gallery and we look forward to being able to celebrate other accomplishments like this in the House.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Today we're here in recognition of RyanWood Exploration, a company run by Cathy Wood and Shawn Ryan, as we've heard, out of Dawson City. This company has recently established a northern exploration sport development fund to support Yukon's elite athletes. As the Minister of Community Services, but also responsible for sport and recreation, I would like to take a moment to thank them for this incredibly generous gesture.

Here in the Yukon we are blessed to have some amazing sporting facilities across the territory, ranging from Mount McIntyre ski trails, to the Canada Games Centre here in Whitehorse, to the Singletrack to Success mountain bike trails in beautiful Carcross, which I was talking about earlier today, to the Mount Maichen ski hill in Watson Lake. We have world-class athletes who have competed across the globe in many difference disciplines — skiing, weightlifting, cycling, hockey, curling, softball, slo-pitch and many more.

On that note, Whitehorse is hosting the 2017 Men's World Softball Championship this July, and I hope all my colleagues in this House will come out and enjoy a game in the sunshine this summer. Listening on the news today, we have the 2018 North American Orienteering Championships coming next year.

Being from the north, Yukoners know that there is an added financial burden for our athletes and their families when it comes to sport. It's often much more expensive for our athletes to attend competitions in southern Canada or the rest of the world. Many parents and children have spent countless hours volunteering and fundraising to raise money for sporting trips to send our youth across the country. When we talk about those who make it to an elite level of sport, the financial challenge becomes all the more acute and it takes a much higher level of financing to support a career.

This year, RyanWood provided \$70,000 to support cross-country skiers Knute Jonsgaard, Emily Nishikawa and Dahria Beatty. These three skiers are on the national cross-country ski team, and I have to say that having run my own community ski loppet for the past decade or so, I remember these skiers when I was young and their names are up on the wall at the Marsh Lake Community Centre as winners in the Marsh Lake Classic Ski Loppet.

Knute qualified for the Olympics with his daring bronze medal finish in the World Cup relay in Sweden last season, and I think we all watched that video. It was pretty great.

Dahria and Emily will be attempting to qualify for the Olympics in the coming season. All three skiers will compete on the World Cup circuit next season and will spend much of their season racing in Europe. Thanks to RyanWood

Exploration, these elite skiers can focus all their efforts on their training, rather than worrying about their finances.

Shawn and Cathy are hoping the fund will continue to grow with support from other mineral exploration companies that are active in the Yukon and have committed that the fund will be available to all of Yukon's elite athletes in upcoming years. This company is a wonderful example of a local company giving back to the community, and we hope that this is the start of an exciting trend for sport in Yukon.

One of the Yukon Liberals' enduring priorities is to create healthier, happier lives. As the Minister of Community Services, a key part of keeping Yukon active and vibrant is to continue to support our athletes of all ages. More than just exercise, sport is vital in developing teamwork and camaraderie and creating shared experiences that last a lifetime. Sport is vital in all our communities because it teaches our youth about the importance of practice, dedication and fun.

The success of our elite athletes demonstrates to Yukon youth that northerners can achieve just as much success in sport as our southern counterparts, and it is thanks to the support of the entire community that makes this potential achievement a reality.

The Department of Community Services supports sports in the territory in several ways. The Sport and Recreation branch continues to implement the Yukon active living strategy through annual funding that supports training, builds rural community capacity and develops ongoing programs for all Yukoners, with a focus on youth.

I just want to add a little additional information from the Department of Community Services. I had been preparing this for the budget response, and I would like to acknowledge the advocacy by the members opposite for investment in sport. I thank them for that interest.

Here are a few things: the Yukon Recreation Advisory Committee — which has been given funding for various sports — \$655,000, including \$100,000 for cross-country skiing; Yukon Sport for Life funding, \$420,000 — including \$58,000 for cross-country skiing; special recreation groups funding, \$145,000; we also have high-performance grant allocations to individual athletes, and that's \$108,000; we fund officials because we need them to help put on the races, \$110,000; elite athlete funding, \$48,000. This totals \$1.5 million.

The government will also be supporting several major games this year: \$825,000 in support for the Canada 55+ Games — which I am just about eligible for; just shy — the 2017 Canada Summer Games and the 2017 North American Indigenous Games; and, coming up, the 2018 Arctic Winter Games. By the way, I know that my colleague, the Minister of Tourism and Culture, will be going with me to the North American Indigenous Games. I'm going on to the Canada Summer Games. If any of the members opposite are hoping to go, please let me know. I would love to be there with you.

There is more than \$1.9 million to support 29 Yukon sport-governing bodies, five special recreation groups for sport development, recreation programming, coach

development and athlete development. This includes both high-performance and elite athlete funding, as well as rural and aboriginal sport development. It's incredibly important that we invest in our youth.

Thank you so much to RyanWood Exploration. Yukon's top skiers are now able to go and create their own memories on an international scale to compete for both Canada and the Yukon. We wish them the best of luck.

Mr. Istchenko: It is a pleasure to rise to talk to this motion today. I do want to thank the Member for Porter Creek Centre for bringing it forward. When I read the motion, it really got me thinking back to my community in the day. When I first met Shawn Ryan — I never met Shawn Ryan until I got into politics and ventured to Dawson for stag parties, birthdays and a few other things where the Premier and I probably hung out together — maybe a couple of times. When I got to know him, he had just become prospector of the year. I was really impressed. I met with him in Vancouver at the first Roundup I went to, and when he came in to meet with me, I was the Minister of Highways and Public Works. We never met in the same building as everybody else. We picked our own separate building where it wasn't so stuffy — 800 people in one room with ties on. It wasn't good all day — I am sure the ministers today can speak to sitting in meetings all day long. We met in a hotel a few blocks away, and when Shawn Ryan came in, I was expecting someone in a suit and tie, but that is not what I got. I got somebody kind of dressed like me actually. I was impressed with how he carried on about his passion for the industry.

Today, seeing the motion come forward — and I had heard that he had put \$70,000 forward. He took his passion and he gave back. In my community, we sort of had that when I was a kid. We didn't have a lot growing up, and I am sure most of us in rural Yukon and in Whitehorse, for that matter — I can remember playing in the old Stan McGowan Arena. I think there are three or four sheets of ice in town now, so we are a lot better off. When the 100th birthday of Canada came in 1967, in my community there was funding from Ottawa to build a community centre, so we did build a community centre. Except there wasn't enough money to finish the community centre, so folks like Bill Brewster — a previous MLA in this House — my grandfather Ronald Watson, Al Tomlin — a business owner — and Ed Karman — I could go on about community members and there are quite a few of them — went to town to the bank and signed on the dotted line. They put their houses up so they could secure the rest of the funding so they could build our community centre. Bill Brewster was an outfitter. Vic Hotte was another outfitter. They donated a hunt so we could raise money. One of the guides back in the day, Billy Sam — I remember him — Vic's son had told me that he had asked, "Why are you giving something away? Why would you give a free hunt away?" "Well, you are going to get paid, Billy, but it is about the community and about having a place for us to get together and for our community spirit." They raised money, and they had community dances. Wednesday was payday in the

community for all the government employees who were there, and on that Saturday night there was a big dance.

People came and the business community was there, their wives, my mom — lots of people volunteering their time so they could make enough money to keep those payments going on so they could complete the facility. The Bill Brewster Arena is named after Bill Brewster — the time and effort that he put into it. John Bakke is another name in our community — he is the founder of our community. He put a lot of time and effort into it. They took from their success in business and they gave back to their community. That was always near and dear to me as a young man working in our store — Watson's Department Store. We would get a deal on stuff from down south when we shipped out of Alberta Grocers. We would maybe order too much stuff, so it was good that we had an item to donate — something to donate to someone.

To see the donations to someone heading off to the Olympics — I think that's just incredible for cross-country skiing. I know in my community, before we had our national park, community members and the business community — all the ski trails that you see in the front range of our Kluane National Park were built by community members. Volunteering their time, businessmen were out there with whatever equipment we had. There wasn't the fancy equipment we have today — lots of labour. I'm hoping that the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin gets up to speak because there is a stoic history of cross-country skiing in her riding too.

I don't want to take too much time, Mr. Speaker, but I just wanted to bring to light today that it's great to see that people are giving back to their community.

In my community, we have an event coming up shortly. We have our annual four-wheeler poker run, fun-run. The Lions Club raises money for our drivers' education school, the library and other community youth projects. On Friday we'll be in Whitehorse, talking to businesses like we do every year, asking them for a donation and they're more than willing and open to donating. I think that's great to see from our business community. I think it's just wonderful and I think it's important too. Your community is only as good as the community members and what everybody gives back to the community. I know in my community I could go on — our business community is great. They are the organizers of a lot of events — our second annual Rendezvous. Everybody got tired of going to Whitehorse for Rendezvous, so they have a mini-Rendezvous in Haines Junction and we call it a fever reliever. You know, it's getting light out now and we're outside and we find a use for all the pallets that Highways and Public Works has for a big fire and throw axes and tugs-of-war and the kids' events, but that's the business community. It's those people who have succeeded in life who are donating back to their community.

I guess, in closing, I don't have a whole bunch more to say. I caught a video the other day — I was actually doing some research for a tribute I'll be doing later in the House for the 100th anniversary of the Lions Club International — and I came across a quote. It was something that Denzel

Washington had said and it piqued my interest and it really made me think that if everyone was like that in our community — and the majority of people are; I'm not saying they're not. This is what makes our community so vibrant and great today — and his quote was: "At the end of the day, it's not about what you have or even what you've accomplished. It's about what you've done with those accomplishments. It's about who you've lifted up, who you've made better. It's about what you've given back."

I believe that, and I want to again thank the Member for Porter Creek for bringing this motion forward. I look forward to actually listening to members in this House talk about some of the successes and some of the great people in their ridings.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I stand here today in support of the motion, Motion No. 20 — that this House commends the generosity of RyanWood Exploration and the northern exploration and sport development fund for contributing \$70,000 to Yukon athletes on their journey to the Olympics to compete in cross-country skiing.

RyanWood Exploration is a private mineral and exploration company based out of Dawson City. This company, owned by Shawn Ryan and his wife Cathy Wood, has been in operation since 2004 and it is predecessor to GroundTruth Exploration, which began in 2010.

You might say Shawn Ryan is a local celebrity. He is well-known globally and in the prospecting and mineral development sector. He made the cover of *The New York Times Magazine* in May 2011 with his story *Gold Mania in the Yukon*. In this story, he was labelled as "... the king of a new Yukon gold rush, the biggest since the legendary Klondike stampede a century ago." I think that's certainly quite a big deal. I think for many of us, we remember — I certainly do — the excitement around him winning the award and all the excitement that came around the PDAC — the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada conference in Toronto that year. I can still remember seeing him being interviewed by Peter Mansbridge, and certainly what we're seeing here today when you think back to that early work and really his innovation — we're seeing the fruits of that now in White Gold and we've seen that over the last number of years.

Not only are his discoveries worthy of worldwide attention, but also the means to his exploration. He has used technology to his advantage — drones, software and other equipment. The technology he has developed reduces the environmental impacts and costs for exploration. This eliminates much of the need for obtaining permits and cuts down the time spent in the field substantially.

I'll share a quote here with you from Shawn: "What used to take us two field seasons in the Yukon and roughly 500,000 bucks to trench and drill a target that we found in soil sampling, we can actually do in two weeks now for roughly 25 cents on the dollar."

GroundTruth Exploration, which is owned in partnership with Isaac Fage and Tao Henderson, was recognized for this work in 2014 when they won the 2014 Leckie Award for responsible and innovative exploration in mining practices in

the quartz mining sectors. Certainly just mentioning both Isaac and Tao — unbelievably innovative individuals, although Shawn has always been the leader in that organization. I think the Premier can probably speak to this better than I can, as they are all very close friends of his, but I think when you look at his support to those young men as they came up through the company, giving them the support and ability to be innovative and to take chances and to look at these amazing ways to do things — I don't think anybody even understood over the last number of years the magnitude of what was happening there and the economy they built in Dawson City, when 20, 30 or 40 people were coming in over some years for their training.

This year, just talking to Isaac — now we have this company that's based in Dawson, but is reaching out across northern Canada in some of the work — and even broader than that. Mr. Ryan is responsible for a number of property deals with major mining companies in the Yukon, including Kinross Gold Corp. and Agnico Eagle in the White Gold district, just to name a few.

I appreciate the Opposition House Leader's approach to this conversation today. Certainly we're looking at two amazing people and, as touched upon, in minor soccer — I remember them donating, maybe to the Selects in the Yukon — an unbelievable amount of philanthropic work they have contributed to in the Yukon.

It's also interesting — it's so important. I really appreciate the listing off of all the companies that are here. One thing you start to learn, when you're in the private sector or you start to put these events on, is that although government tends to be there — we talked about this the other day that we need this robust and growing private sector. That's one thing that the Member for Lake Laberge and I were agreeing on this week. These are the people who donate the money. Whether it's the Northwestel Festival of Trees, as the Member for Copperbelt South touched on, or a series of sporting events, they're the people — whether it's good times or bad — who are always there to cut the cheques.

What comes to mind as we talk about sporting events — I think cross-country skiers in the Yukon have always been exceptional, whether it be my colleague and her family, as we've seen things move through, it's interesting to see how things transpire and what companies can do.

About 16 years ago, a close friend came to me and talked about the fact that there was no hockey school in the Yukon. There had been once or twice things such as that, but how could you build advanced sport excellence in hockey? How could you bring people to the Yukon? How could you afford to do that? Was there enough interest to do that? How could you give these kids an opportunity to get these extra opportunities? It's extremely difficult to try to do that without corporate sponsorship and help. When I think back — and I'll bring this through to today — we sat down, three of us, and said we can make this happen, we can put this hockey school together. We had many people from across the country we had good relationships with, and we could reach out to them and bring them here to the Yukon, but we needed the support.

I'll never forget, just two buildings over was NMI — essentially Northwestel — walking in to sit with them. They were absolutely — they understood. It was amazing — the same way that Northwestel, to this day, continues to support all of these events and continues to do work at the hospital and in other areas.

They put money on the table right away. Right out of the chute, we had an opportunity to bring kids together. The Member for Kluane touched on it — the Stan McCowan rink. That's where it was, actually. It's funny. I think back to the individuals in the first couple of years. An individual who was sitting here not too long ago — I can say it now; he's not in the House — Mr. Currie Dixon. He was a coach who was brought for some of the young players who were in the community — a number of other players who were probably 16 or 17 years old — but it was essentially Northwestel and also these other great companies that were starting to do work in the Yukon. ATCO was there at the table, but also, as the member opposite said, Pelly Construction, as always, putting up the appropriate money to make that happen. That led to just amazing opportunities.

At that point, there were one or two players from the Yukon who were playing outside the Yukon at any level. We know some of the names of players over the years who certainly went on to play junior hockey — some fantastic players — and even to the NHL level. Certainly at that point, there were one or two. Through that corporate investment and support within that first year, the hockey school was completed and we had brought in coaches who were associated with the women's Olympic team. So Crystal MacEachern was the first individual. So within three weeks of that hockey school, she had an opportunity to be on the Olympic ice training centre in Calgary with the women's Olympic team.

Over the years, Northwestel continued to be committed to it and we worked through a series of different ways to move the school — and then players that we hear about today. It's interesting. When I go through the roster of the Coy Cup and I think about all the players who went through the program — so they went through the program. They either evolved into coaches who got paid in the summer to be part of the process, or got recruited to go on to have great university hockey careers. When I think about players now — now they're back here. They have amazing careers. A couple of them are accountants working in the corporate field, but also individuals who have gone on to starting their lives here but also are the guys who just won the Coy Cup, which is interesting — so talk about going full circle.

I think about a time when there wasn't a lot of opportunity. People like Rob Warner, who is now a chartered accountant here in town, or Ted Stevens — skating on ice first in the old days at Stan McCowan, then at Takhini. Certainly, once again, because of these corporate donations, we could bring in the former coach of the year for the NHL, Ted Nolan, or a coach who had just won a couple of Memorial Cups at Sault Ste. Marie — you know, very well-established coaches. They had an opportunity to see all these young men and

women and basically had an opportunity to give them chances to move on: Ted going on and playing junior hockey in Moncton and then that leading on to his university career at St. Francis Xavier University; Rob Warner, the player who also went to St. Francis Xavier and won a Canadian academic and athletic award for his good work; Adam Henderson, who was our coach every summer — and Adam, of course, went on and had a great career in Alaska; and the Campbells, driving in from outside of town and having the opportunity to be a part of this.

I can't say enough. There's one thing we'll all agree on in this House: these events happened because of the private sector. I just wanted to give you a snapshot — not to get into a big story — about summer hockey. If there wasn't corporate money available, these people wouldn't have had the opportunity to go on and have these experiences in university that helped to shape them as individuals and as leaders in our communities. Watching them — to this day, they are still individuals who are mentors.

I think back to Pelly Construction. It struck a chord. During Hockey Day in Canada and working with George Arcand on that project, Pelly Construction was there, but also a company that has been known in the Yukon and is back doing their good work — and that's Golden Predator. Companies like that in the mining sector, if they weren't available to come to the table when things are busy, and they have that extra ability to provide funding — when I think back to that, it was always the *Whitehorse Star*. I apologize to the House Leader if I'm duplicating any names, but there is Integraphics, Air North — as always, getting people in and out — Igloo Building Supplies — at that point they were having a bit of a footprint here — and the Yukon Convention Bureau.

Those events — you get what is the equivalent of millions of dollars in publicity for your community and an amazing impact, but it doesn't happen if not for the private sector. I will commend the House Leader across the way, because he did a good job of rallying these businesses over the years. I've always had great respect for that. The Member for Porter Creek North, with her work, is constantly volunteering but also rallying people. I think we touched on it this week through her work with the Yukon Cancer Society.

When there's resistance to this, the industries of resource extraction, people have to take into consideration what these companies do. I know we'll have lots of conversations about the impact of resource development, and I look forward to those conversations. What I think I've learned is that there were situations that occurred years back and what we're seeing now are these companies that are doing things right, like Shawn and Cathy.

I can remember sitting on a couch having a discussion with him about it, and when he started to articulate how they were going to do exploration — understanding that you're not going in with the same methodology, and you're not going to have the same impact, and understanding where this world is going when it comes to impact and what's happening with class 1 and the challenging discussions that we're going to

have about class 1 notification and impact and what can happen in a class 1.

For a person who is that innovative to figure out a way to do things, partnering with First Nations across the Yukon on some of these projects, his energy is paramount.

All the stories about Shawn, I love. Who else goes and buys a helicopter to figure out how to make sure that he has a more efficient way to extract mushrooms from the forest and get them to market? He is certainly just an amazing individual.

Mr. Speaker, I hope we have more conversations like this. I think the private sector needs more support and there needs to be more information shared. I know from being at Northern Vision that the phone rings — it doesn't stop — and it's constantly different organizations that are all trying to do good things and they are there asking for dollars.

I appreciate the motion from the Member for Porter Creek Centre and I would like us to have more times where we champion and talk about the attributes and good work of our amazing private sector and innovative people who are here. I thank Cathy and Shawn for continuing that work and, hopefully, like was said across the way, giving other people who have the extra means and understanding that they are seeing profitability because of hard-working Yukoners using their businesses or because of the great wealth of resources we have here, of giving back. Certainly I can look toward what happens next — if we look to other games being hosted here. I sure hope that all these companies that my friends across my way and I have been mentioning are all ready to commit to helping us make sure that we have more phenomenal regional and national games like we've had in the past.

Ms. Van Bibber: I beg the House's pardon for my stumbling after all these eloquent speakers. I'm still feeling my rookie nerves, so bear with me.

On this side of the House — because the Member for Porter Creek Centre has opened up a discussion on businesses who give and people who volunteer, and then with the Member for Porter Creek South giving me a segue into being able to speak about volunteers and how much they give to our communities — volunteerism is what makes our communities, villages and hamlets thrive. Without them and their time and energy, we certainly wouldn't get things done. I think many of our communities — especially small communities — would just sink with disrepair and neglect. There would be no pots of money in some magic place to fund every clean-up, event or building that needs help, or even our living spaces. Here is where volunteers step up to the plate.

I recently had an interview about why I volunteer and I'm going to take a note from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin and also rely on my storytelling. As the Member for Klondike will note, all my stories are based from where I grew up in Dawson City.

Growing up in that dusty little town, we all volunteered. It was just the way of the world. As a brownie or guide, we served teas, we cleaned up the yards. As members of the Anglican Church, we cleaned and dusted the pews,

straightened the hymn books and folded clothes in the thrift shop. There was even a small campground in Dawson before tourism was really a big thing. It is where the helicopter pilots now land near Crocus Bluff in Dawson, and we would go up and clean that.

Later, as a teenager, we were active in high school. There were about 40 of us in the whole school from grade 9 to 12 and we would plan our own events. That taught me how to plan for dances, bonspiels and sledding parties. We, as a group, would organize, even down to getting our own chaperones.

Then, as life happens and you have children, then you're volunteering for fundraisers and everything that they're involved with, as well as being coach, driver and all sorts of other things. There are swimming clubs, bands and Girl Guide cookies to sell and more volunteer time.

For several years, I was very involved with the Canadian Cancer Society, raising funds, knocking on doors — similar to campaigning and a lot of times with the same reaction. I was quite surprised that raising money was so very difficult.

I was also on the original team that hosted the Relay for Life cancer event in Yukon, and for several years that was a huge success. We raised hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Later, after the Canadian Cancer Society decided to close its doors here in Yukon, we gathered, after a few community meetings, and a small group of volunteers stuck together and we started the Yukoners cancer care fund. It's a fund now that I speak passionately about and, with the support of the Yukon Hospital Foundation, we too have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars and all of the money stays here in Yukon. It's to help support families who have cancer in their homes, to cover expenses and to alleviate financial stress because, no matter what the disease, the bills keep coming in. We did mention that in the tribute earlier this week.

Supporting other organizations throughout the years, I firmly believe it is the responsibility of all community members and each citizen to give back because, if you don't have money or goods, you always have time.

Volunteering can give you experience to add to your resumé. It gives you an opportunity to meet some wonderful people and it gives you a sense of joy and peace. Today with the mental health walk and this being Mental Health Week, it has been proven that volunteering aids mental health — just knowing that you're contributing to the overall sense of your community and place. If only an hour a week or as much as you can — because we know we're all busy — just reach out and see what you can do. There's an enormous need for volunteers, and I don't even know if we can put a value on the number of hours given by volunteers.

I would like to send a shout-out to all the volunteers, no matter what their passions — they give so much of their time and energy. I would again like to commend Ryan Wood Exploration and their wonderful contribution to the territory, especially their area in Dawson.

The not-for-profit organizations that we all are a part of or all contribute to — just a heads-up to continue to support them.

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

Mr. Gallina: I would like to thank members for their contributions to this motion today. We've taken this time to highlight and thank champions in the community, from businesses to volunteers to families and to athletes themselves who saw the opportunity to advance sport and healthy living in our northern communities.

Mr. Brekke, in my opening remarks in putting this motion forward, I did my best to highlight your contributions and the contributions of Irene to the sport of cross-country skiing, both in the territory, in Old Crow and here in Whitehorse, through the creation of trails, the development of athletes, the TEST program and helping Yukoners appreciate this wonderful sport.

From the discussions today, we've heard many valuable contributions. It sounds like many members in this House are supportive of this motion, and I thank everyone for their contributions.

Motion No. 20 agreed to

Motion No. 23

Clerk: Motion No. 23, standing in the name of Mr. Adel.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Copperbelt North:

THAT this House supports the efforts of the Government of Canada to restore confidence in Yukon's environmental and socio-economic assessment process through amendments contained in Bill C-17, *An Act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act*, now under consideration by the Parliament of Canada.

Mr. Adel: I am honoured today to begin debate on this motion. As a government, we believe it is important to let Yukoners know where we stand on Bill C-17, which is now making its way through the House of Commons. It will have a major impact on our relationships with First Nation governments and on the future of Yukon's mining industry — fitting that this is Mining Week. I know many Yukoners are interested to see where all parties in this Legislature stand on this issue as well.

We were clear during the election campaign last fall that we supported Bill C-17 — and the Third Party, the NDP, as well. The Yukon Party was silent. Today we will see what side they come down on. Bill C-17 went to second reading in the House of Commons on April 10, 2017, sponsored by Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. Its purpose is to repeal the amendments to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* set out in Bill S-6, which was passed by the previous federal Conservative government.

A five-year review of YESAA was launched by the previous federal government as required under the *Umbrella*

Final Agreement. The review resulted in 76 recommendations, 72 of which were agreed to by all parties. But, when Bill S-6 was introduced, there were four additional amendments thrown in without any meaningful consultation with First Nations. These four additional amendments, to be repealed by Bill C-17, are as follows: this enactment amends the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, YESAA, in particular by repealing the provisions: (a) that authorize the federal minister to delegate any of his or her powers, duties and functions under the act to the territorial minister; (b) that exempt projects and existing projects from the requirement of a new assessment when an authorization is renewed or amended and there are no significant changes to the original project as previously assessed; (c) that establish time limits for assessments; and (d) that authorize the federal minister to issue binding policy directions to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board, YESAB.

From the time Bill S-6 was first introduced, the relationship between the now former federal Conservative government and the Yukon First Nations has been very contentious. A lawsuit from three different First Nations, with the support of the Council of Yukon First Nations, was filed against Mr. Harper's government over these very amendments. Bill S-6 created a power shift and significantly reduced the autonomy of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board, handing the federal minister the opportunity to make unilateral decisions or delegate to the territorial minister if they chose to do so.

Consultation is key. The intent to work together as different orders of government is what our territory is built on, and we need to respect that. Bill S-6 did not respect our final agreements, nor did it represent the territory as a whole.

The last-minute amendments were severely criticized in this Chamber by the Yukon Party and the New Democrats. They were criticized outside of this Chamber by Yukon First Nations and the mining industry. At Roundup in Vancouver in 2015, the mining industry said — among other things about Bill S-6 and the amendments — that they would like to see a government and First Nations avoid litigation if at all possible. The process has to be done right. We should see the parties work together to avoid court.

Eira Thomas, CEO of Kaminak Gold, said that resolving disputes between government and First Nations needed to be a top priority. Kaminak continues to encourage dialogue to achieve a resolution on those outstanding issues, she said.

Rick Rule with Sprout Asset Management, which funds mining projects, was more direct. "If you want my money, don't ask me to fund a dispute," he said. In December 2014, the president of a company planning a mine in Yukon went public with his concerns about Bill S-6. He asked the federal and Yukon governments to find a solution to address the outstanding issues within Bill S-6. It went on to ask the federal Conservatives to recognize the company's concerns about the fragility of the intergovernmental relations in the Yukon surrounding Bill S-6 and the negative impact this is having on the territory's mineral industry. He said it was imperative that YESAA has the broad support of all

governments to ensure the confidence of projects, proponents and Yukon residents in the YESAA process and to facilitate investment in the territory. In the face of this criticism, the former federal Conservatives and the Yukon Party had a choice to make: try to avoid another lawsuit with First Nations or barge ahead unilaterally. They could have reduced the regulatory uncertainty and addressed the concerns of the mining industry. We know what they chose. The results are here for all to see. The "my way or the highway" approach of the former government failed.

Mr. Speaker, the unilateral approach on the four amendments that originated within the Yukon Party government demonstrated a complete lack of respect for First Nations and their integral role in the involvement in sustainable resource development. They were just a slap in the face. A complete lack of meaningful consultation with all orders of government and stakeholders, especially First Nations, was evident in the former government's approach. It disrespected and disregarded the final agreements, which were developed and implemented over the years of consultation, multiple drafts and efforts from all Yukoners. In that sense, it disrespects Yukon and how we have chosen to govern and work alongside one another. There was a clear undertone of the federal government's approach of wanting to exert more power over the assessment process outlined by the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*. It also undermined the First Nations' authority. Two of the four amendments to be repealed apply directly to the federal minister's authorization to act and/or intervene on the assessment process.

The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board operates at arm's length to the government. They are the policy-making body. They are the professionals from industry, environmental stewards, Yukoners and much more. We have nominated them to this role under good faith that they will guide the assessment process for the Yukon with sound policy directives.

By assigning the federal minister additional overarching authority over the board, you completely undermine their ability to operate as an autonomous body. How can they fully impart their knowledge and experience on to the assessment process if it can be amended or even revoked, without question, by the minister? Mr. Speaker, they can't.

When projects are subjected to YESAB's assessment process, they are placed on an equal playing field. They are subject to the same policies and baseline data requirements. This brings balance and integrity to the process. The policy directives and guidance of the board to the district offices are given under the same format.

All being said, the assessment process has its challenges, and we have committed to working in collaboration with Canada and the First Nations to amend them. The previous Yukon Party government stood by Bill S-6 to the end, to the point where it ended up in court. They condemned themselves to the labours of Sisyphus when dealing with the First Nations. Their support included four additional last-minute amendments, of which two were said to have been requested

by the Yukon Party Premier himself. This approach showed a complete lack of respect for First Nation governments which, unfortunately, the previous government was well-known for. The blatant disregard of the First Nation final agreements has led to many lawsuits filed against the Yukon Party government, including the Peel lawsuit.

In October 2016, three Yukon First Nations filed a lawsuit in regard to the four additional provisions set out in Bill S-6. Chief Smith of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Chief Fairclough of the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation and Chief Sidney of the Teslin Tlingit Council, as a united front, launched a petition filed in the Yukon Supreme Court. They received unanimous support from all self-governing First Nations through the Council of Yukon First Nations.

At this point, I would like to quote Chief Sidney on the lawsuit. He said: “The amendments through Bill S-6 undermine or weaken Yukon’s development assessment process and our role as First Nation governments. They are a clear breach of our final agreements.”

The filing of this petition was a very clear statement made by Yukon First Nations. It is not okay to dilute their role in responsible resource development, especially without meaningful consultation. The final agreements are protected under the Constitution — as they should be. They were signed in good faith.

Bill C-17 is the first step to repair the Yukon environmental and socio-economic assessment process. As a society, we need to work together to repair our relationships with First Nations. Reconciliation is our only way forward, and the Yukon Liberal government has made it a priority. Through collaboration, meaningful consultation and government-to-government work, not only can we mend the assessment process, but also our relationships.

We come to the table ready to listen, learn and contribute. We will work hard for Yukoners to make this right. Bill S-6 should never have been pushed through. It is an infringement on First Nation rights and the federal government has been working hard to repeal provisions and move forward from there. Bill C-17 is intended to reverse the controversial amendments contained in Bill S-6, something our Yukon Liberal government fully supports. It is something we support.

Repealing these amendments will provide certainty to the industry and assurances to the First Nations. The bill is an example of governments moving forward together, working in partnership to better approach our life in the north.

On April 8, 2016 the Yukon government, Canada, Council of Yukon First Nations, and Yukon First Nations with final agreements signed a memorandum of understanding to repeal these four contentious clauses in Bill S-6. On June 8, 2016, Bill C-17 to amend YESAA was introduced in the House of Commons on behalf of the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs. The motion we are discussing, if it receives unanimous support, will address a broken relationship, lack of trust and lack of certainty that has resulted from the previous government’s actions and thereby set us on a course toward reconciliation.

The Government of Yukon, First Nations and Yukon Chamber of Mines issued a joint letter on March 16, 2017 confirming their united support to have Bill C-17 passed by Parliament without change and to address the industry’s concerns through a collaborative framework. Our government will do what it can to support Bill C-17, as Yukoners have asked.

The federal Conservatives do not support Bill C-17. Here’s what David Yurdiga, the Conservative MP for Fort McMurray-Cold Lake had to say in the House of Commons: “Bill C-17 is just another example of the difference between the previous Conservative government, which empowered northerners, and the current Liberal government, which is obsessed with taking power away from the territories and bringing in countless regulations to stifle economic... growth.

“Bill C-17 is a step back in the progress that has been made for resource development in Yukon. It seeks to expand governmental regulations and stifle growth. These unnecessary regulations would impede private sector investment and pose further threats to jobs and economic development in the region.

“... Bill C-17 puts the people of Yukon at a competitive disadvantage with the rest of Canada for private investment, as industry is dissuaded from resource exploration in the region by an uncertain review process and a seemingly endless amount of bureaucratic reassessment.”

Mr. Speaker, I am curious to hear, and I’m sure many other Yukoners as well, what side the Yukon Party is going to take on Bill C-17 and the motion we are debating today. Do they stand with the federal Conservatives? We know several members opposite were just recently quite eager to show off their membership to the Conservative Party of Canada.

So the motion is clear and I hope we get a clear answer, particularly from the Official Opposition.

Mr. Hassard: Of course it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to Motion No. 23 with regard to the amendments contained in Bill C-17, which of course, as we all know, is currently under consideration by the Canadian Parliament.

As we were able to highlight yesterday in a number of tributes, mining and mineral exploration is an extremely important aspect to all levels of our territory’s economy and well-being of our communities here in the Yukon. Many of our friends and neighbours remain employed and provide for their families, thanks to the resource industry, including through placer and quartz mining, exploration, geological services, engineering and environmental monitoring. The money that flows from mining investment benefits many aspects of the private sector, whether that be through partnerships with development corporations; supporting the hospitality and airline industries; and contracting local companies for supplies, construction, equipment and transportation or generous donations to our non-profit fundraising organizations, such as we have heard a lot of today in this House.

We have said before that it requires hard work and determination to get a project to successfully take off, but

that's not all it takes, Mr. Speaker. A significant amount of time and investment goes into the process of establishing an operating mine. It already takes years for a mining project to get off the ground, even if the regulatory, permitting and assessment pieces go through expeditiously. Companies and investors require clarity and certainty in these processes to ensure that the money and time they dedicate to projects is not wasted.

In developing our platform, the Yukon Party spoke with a number of members from the mining industry and the industries that rely on it. We spoke with mining executives, investors, engineers, regulators and geologists. We spoke with placer miners, hard rock miners, mining associations, chambers of mines and our chambers of commerce, and we spoke with the families. Even in discussion with communities, business owners and contractors, we heard the same thing. They want government to increase certainty for the industry, stand up for resource jobs and support current and future mineral exploration in the territory.

Here are just a few things that we arrived at in our platform. We committed to create a mineral exploration tax credit to jump-start exploration and create new jobs for Yukoners. We committed to invest more money — \$7 million to be exact — in the Yukon mineral exploration program and to find ways to make it more accessible to exploration and grassroots miners. We committed to continue our support to the Chamber of Mines and their successful campaigns to promote mining in the territory, as well as organizations such as the Klondike Placer Miners' Association, Yukon Minerals Advisory Board and the Yukon Mining Alliance. Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, we made a number of commitments to ensure that unnecessary or duplicated regulatory processes did not stand as a barrier for companies to explore, invest and mine here in the territory. That included working with the industry, the federal government and First Nation governments to establish greater certainty around access to resources, water licences and permits — continuing efforts to ensure a clear permitting regime with established timelines, comparable to that of other Canadian jurisdictions. We committed to work with First Nations and industry, and streamline the permitting process to ensure that it would not hinder investment and further development. That brings us to the content of the motion.

The intent of the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* is to establish a single development assessment process for projects on all federal, territorial and First Nation land here in the Yukon. When the five-year legislated review occurred, changes were made by the federal government with the desire to make Yukon more competitive for investment in the resource sector. I believe that the federal government's rationale for these amendments was to allow Yukon to remain competitive with other jurisdictions.

Regardless of where Bill C-17 goes in the House of Commons, having our territory remain competitive in this industry is what we, as a party, want to see for Yukon. I think we can agree with members on the government side of the

House that a competitive mining industry is a good thing for Yukon, and that projects and project proposals do not get tied up or slowed down in the regulatory process, which could have an effect on the current and future investment in this industry.

We would like to see the territorial government work to mitigate any measures that could potentially send private companies and their investments elsewhere. We want to ensure that Yukoners are still able to experience the benefit of these investments. Working to get projects off the ground already has a significant cost associated with it.

I would like to start by reading an excerpt from a meeting on the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, which occurred on September 25, 2014, in its examination of the previous amendments to YESAA. This was provided by Dave Morrison, the current government's chief of staff, in his role as the president and CEO of the Yukon Energy Corporation, with regard to the nature of investment in our territory. For the record, Mr. Speaker, this testimony was in favour of those amendments: "One of the things about Yukon is that much as you have all seen how beautiful it is — and how much those of us who live there like being there — it does have a high cost of business. If you add to that cost by regulatory or assessment processes that are lengthy, cumbersome and not easy to understand or navigate, you add another chink in the armour."

This is particularly in reference to the significant costs associated with the process and potential delays in that process, especially where there is a lack of clarity as to what is expected to occur in that process. A significant portion of this lack of clarity is with regard to timelines. The amendment provided by the Senate bill was to set clear timelines for assessments. With respect to that, we recognize that timelines do exist in the environmental assessment process, but they are set by the board on a case-by-case basis.

Industry requires certainty to help them make their investment decisions. Any number of circumstances can influence the length of time it will take for assessment. Allowing them to be set arbitrarily would not offer any relief for companies wanting to move forward on their projects. People rely on these projects to move forward expeditiously or else they may consider taking their investments elsewhere. Securing investment is highly competitive, and dollars move quickly.

I want to reiterate a couple of other points made by the former president and CEO of the Yukon Energy Corporation. I quote: "Timelines are imperative... Projects work within a fairly logical set of processes when you go forward and try to build things. First you do some planning; then... you do some preliminary engineering and you start moving projects forward. Projects move forward not when every 'I' is dotted and 'T' is crossed and they're ready to go. They move forward about halfway through their life, and they move into these screening processes. Having screening processes that don't have defined timelines, and strictly defined timelines, makes it

very difficult for people who are investing millions and hundreds of millions of dollars.”

I would have to agree, Mr. Speaker. Clear timelines are very important.

I would like to read another excerpt, this time from the executive director of the Yukon Chamber of Mines in the Senate committee meeting on October 10, 2014. I quote: “There are three aspects that have been a part of our submissions and our activities as part of the consultation that AANDC has undertaken with respect to the bill.

“First and foremost are the definitive beginning-to-end timelines. That was probably the most important aspect of this bill to our membership. The definitive beginning-to-end timelines create certainty and allow for consistency from coast to coast for proponents, regardless of where they are doing business... It is so important for proponents to have consistency and regularity when dealing with and preparing for their project activities.”

This was followed up with comments from the president of the Klondike Placer Miners’ Association offering a perspective from their part of the industry on how established timelines will alleviate some of the issues that have arisen in the past for placer miners. I quote again: “Placer projects generally have a designated office evaluation, so that’s an area in which we are concerned with timelines. In recent years, there has been a further increase in timelines, with some licence renewals expiring as they wait to go through the YESAB office. This means that some mines are left in a state of limbo. They can’t operate. They have to go through care and maintenance, and for a small, family-based operation, this is a considerable burden to go through a mining season without actually being able to mine.”

This goes to show that the importance of having established timelines does not just affect investment in big, open-pit, hardrock mines. This has an effect on small, family-based placer operations as well. This affects a miner’s ability to provide for their family and to put food on the table.

The second aspect that received support in the previous amendments was with regard to certainty around reassessment. This was offering the ability to exempt a project from reassessment when an authorization has been renewed or amended, unless there has been significant change to the project. If a project has not made any significant changes to its project and it is up for renewal or the amendment of an authorization, it seems logical not to burden these projects with another long assessment without clearly defined timelines to keep operating.

I would like to read another note made by the executive director of the Chamber of Mines on the nature of reassessments before the amendments. This one is particularly in reference to the proposed section 49, were it passed. I quote: “... project proponents are being assessed to death. We believe this is where section 49 will help alleviate some of that and assist in not needing a review for non-significant modifications to a particular project.”

The president of the Klondike Placer Miners’ Association stated — and I quote: “As for proposed subsection 49.1(1) on

reassessments, our industry is heavily burdened with repeated YESAB reassessments for minor amendments and renewals of ongoing projects that we believe have no significant changes. This adds costs and time for the proponents — us — for the First Nation governments and for Yukon territorial government, where they should be devoting their resources to projects that are new and/or of more impact.”

In summary, there is a lot of support across the territory with regard to clarity and certainty around timelines and requirements for reassessments. I think we can all agree that providing certainty to industry is a good thing. I would like to follow up by reading some of the statements made by Clynton Nauman, president and CEO of Alexco Resource Corp., whose primary assets lie in the Keno Hill silver district — and I quote: “Alexco has been a recent producer of silver, lead and zinc from the Keno Hill district and plans to go back into production pending a successful outcome of a current environmental assessment under YESAA and other authorizations that key off YESAA.

“We realize that we are delivering this testimony today when we are at a time when we currently undergoing another of many environmental assessments. In fact, our current environmental assessment is the tenth YESAA assessment of our various projects at Keno Hill since 2006; five assessments on the exploration, development and mining side of our business; and an additional five assessments on the environmental cleanup side of our business.

“I believe our relationship with Canada, our contribution to the environmental cleanup of legacy liabilities and our experience in the resource extraction industry in Yukon make us exceptionally qualified to provide you with some real-world realities and business impacts for this policy decision.”

With regard to reassessments, Mr. Nauman stated — and I quote: “The nature of many ore deposits is that during the mining process, new or extended ore bodies will be identified that require slight modifications to the operating approach. The current act requires us to undergo a complete reassessment of our production process, including previously assessed aspects each time this happens, even though there are generally no or few changes in the production stream.”

He stated further — and I quote: “... support the need for an environmental assessment process for new resource development projects and where fundamental changes are being made. However, small changes to a mine plan or time extensions for water treatment plants should not require a ‘back to ground zero’ assessment, especially when the environmental record of these facilities has been excellent.”

On the topic of timelines, Mr. Nauman mentioned that Alexco supported timelines for the reassessment process. He specifically referenced the fact that, over the past five years, up to 2014 when the committee proceedings were held, Alexco had undergone the environmental assessment process four times specifically for mine development and mine operation purposes. He noted — and I quote again: “Clearly, the issue of timelines and both adequacy and assessment periods needs to be addressed to restore certainty to the assessment process.

“The current uncertainty has had a negative impact on our ability to efficiently plan and operate our business, and by extension, it impairs the competitiveness of Yukon as a jurisdiction to assert certainty in the mine development and production process.”

In closing, Mr. Nauman explained that, “Simply stated, in Alexco's experience, it was much easier to assess and permit the initial development of mine operations at Keno Hill than it has been to sustain our operations. This has been due in part to the continual reassessing and re-permitting of routine changes to mine plans that do not alter the effects on the environment.”

Mr. Speaker, one concern we had going forward is that projects that were determined not needing reassessment previously will not be grandfathered into the changes when these amendments are repealed. Essentially you're going to see projects that were submitted through the YESAA process under one designated timeline coming out of this under the rules of a different timeline.

As the members opposite can appreciate, it isn't fair to change the rules mid-game for industry. This again raises the issue about certainty to promote investment. That said, I do note that, recently, the Government of Yukon, the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Chamber of Mines sent a joint letter to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, which issued a subsequent joint news release in support of the bill and the amendments of the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*. In their joint news release from March 16, 2017, the representative for the Chamber of Mines stated that, “The mining industry is on the front lines of reconciliation, as exploration and development activities occur in the traditional territory of all Yukon First Nations. It is with this in mind that the resetting of the relationship between all orders of government brings the opportunity to address challenging issues around timelines & re-assessments through a collaborative framework moving forward.”

It is with that, that I would like to propose a friendly amendment to this motion, Mr. Speaker.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Hassard: I move:

THAT Motion No. 23 be amended by:

(1) adding, after the words “Parliament of Canada”, the following: “; and

“THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to address industry concerns around timelines and reassessments through a collaborative framework with the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Chamber of Mines.”

Speaker: I find that the amendment is in order.

It has been moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition:

THAT Motion No. 23 be amended by:

(1) adding, after the words “Parliament of Canada”, the following: “; and

“THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to address industry concerns around timelines and reassessments

through a collaborative framework with the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Chamber of Mines.”

The Leader of the Official Opposition, on the amendment, has 20 minutes.

Mr. Hassard: I certainly will not take 20 minutes. I would just like to begin by reading the motion as amended. It would now read: “THAT this House supports the efforts of the Government of Canada to restore confidence in Yukon's environmental and socio-economic assessment process through amendments contained in Bill C-17, *An Act to Amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, to make a consequential amendment to another act now under the consideration of the Parliament of Canada; and

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to address industry concerns around timelines and reassessment through a collaborative framework with the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Chamber of Mines.”

I do believe that this is truly a friendly amendment — apparently someone disagrees with me over here on the left. I believe that the current government — I would like to hope anyway — understands the intent of the amendment to this motion, as the wording to the amendment came directly from a government news release. I hope that we can all have some more good discussion around this motion as amended, and I look forward to hearing what other members in the Legislature have to say.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, I find this really disappointing. What we're seeing by a back door is a reiteration of the Yukon Party's position with respect to Bill S-6. Yes, of course we would urge the Yukon government — not limited to working with Council of Yukon First Nations. Of course we urge the Yukon government to work with First Nations and industry to develop collaborative frameworks. We've heard the Yukon government tell us repeatedly, since this session began, that they have a number of protocols and other tables going on to deal with mining and mining-related issues.

YESAA, I would remind the interim Leader of the Official Opposition, is not restricted to mining. It applies to all development in this territory. It was originally the development assessment process in the *Umbrella Final Agreement* — if the member will recall that.

The intent of the motion as I understood it coming forward today was to actually demonstrate that this House could show some unanimity — could show some maturity with respect to actually acknowledging that we have come through some pretty dark times over the last couple years where we saw a government that attempted to undermine and unravel the key provisions of the relationship between the Government of Yukon and First Nation governments and, through that process of trying to unravel both the land use planning process and the Yukon environmental and socio-economic assessment process, what they did is they made it very clear that these Yukoners understand that these are not First Nation agreements — they're our agreements —

and so to the extent that the Official Opposition still doesn't get this is very, very disappointing.

What we saw in the motion originally — and I'll say it right now because I probably won't get another chance to speak, given where these folks are going. We were, optimistically — perhaps naively — assuming there would be unanimous consent to the intent of the motion that the Member for Copperbelt North had proposed. With that optimistic mind, we were going to be proposing that we would ask the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly to convey the motion to the Prime Minister to signify that the Yukon Legislative Assembly had overcome the last couple of years of dysfunction where we had a Premier going to the federal government and saying, "We want you to undermine the environmental assessment process, and we want you to change a piece of legislation that we all worked on for years, and we want you to undermine that so that now a territorial minister could give binding policy direction to YESAA." One wonders, when one reads the statement of claim from Northern Cross, whether that was part of that intent. One wonders what was intended when they undermined the Peel land use planning process — if that's what they intended when they went to the federal government and said we want these abilities for a federal minister to delegate to a territorial minister the ability to give binding policy direction.

I find this is not a friendly amendment. There is no way that it's consistent with the intent of what the original motion was, at least from our perception. For that reason, we would not support it.

Mr. Kent: I'm going to speak to what we believe — unlike the Third Party — is a friendly amendment. As my colleague, the interim leader of our party, has said, this wording comes directly from a Yukon government press release with respect to the collaborative framework that they talked about.

Perhaps it would be useful, as I sat in the chair of the EMR minister at the time that this was initially discussed, to provide a little bit of background on the reassessments piece and the timelines piece. I'm not sure if the current minister has experienced this as well, but one of the things I certainly experienced early on, and as this went through discussions, is that industry did not have a unified approach.

I believe, to this day — just even recently when this joint letter was sent and the press release put out by the Government of Yukon, Council of Yukon First Nations and the Chamber of Mines — there were a number of calls into my office from different proponents — I'm certainly not going to name who they are here on the floor here today — expressing some frustration with this approach.

That said, I think the Chamber of Mines was pleased with the commitment the Government of Yukon had made to the collaborative framework around timelines and reassessments. I think hopefully if the minister has a chance to respond today, or perhaps later on in this Sitting, he can give us a little bit more detail on what that collaborative framework would look like with respect to timelines and reassessments.

Just for a reference point, I did sit on the YESA Board from 2004 to 2007 as a member of the executive committee. It was the initial YESA Board; it was when it started, and they started to conduct assessments in 2005 or 2006, after all the rules and procedures were put in place.

The YESA Board right now has the ability to set timelines and they do have timelines in place and for the industry — as we take a look back to when this bill initially came forward and the amendments that were proposed — it was to enshrine those timelines in the legislation. It's up to the board right now. The Member for Copperbelt North, during his opening remarks, did state that the board is arm's length, so they do set the timelines. In fairness to them, there's a consultation process that takes place with respect to those timelines. I know they've changed the designated office evaluation timelines once since the original rules were put in place. I stand to be corrected on this, but I don't believe there have been any changes to the executive committee timelines, and of course we are awaiting our initial panel review, which is being contemplated for the Casino mine project.

There are still some industry concerns about the timelines and how long it takes. The big piece on this is the reassessment piece. For those who don't know, we were provided with a document that was released through access to information. It was a third party that requested it and provided it to us. The number in there, Mr. Speaker, is 87 projects so far — and they're not all mining projects. There are some municipal projects that have gone through the reassessment piece. There are 87 projects that have been deemed not to require reassessment so far.

I don't have the specific section in front of me, but it is that section 49 piece of Bill S-6 where those are applied. It's my understanding — and perhaps if the minister speaks he can provide some further details — that when a project applies for reassessment, there is consultation or notification with the affected First Nation, or whoever's traditional territory the project is in.

There are 87 projects — some municipal, some mining, to my understanding — that have not required reassessment. I think that's where this collaborative framework will be positive for all proponents, because not only does it free up time for projects or allow projects that don't have significant environmental impact to not require a reassessment, but it also frees up the time of the assessors. They can spend time focusing on all the projects that they need to focus on. I think whereas there have been some obvious challenges around that piece since Bill S-6 has been the law, there have been a number of companies apply and be successful through that section 49.

I think we're supportive of this collaborative framework announcement that First Nations and the government and the Yukon Chamber of Mines had made. My colleague mentioned — and it was brought to our attention by a couple of proponents — a concern in Bill C-17 around grandfathering. My understanding is, and I don't have the specific section with me again, but one of the sections in the bill suggests that no matter where you are in the process, once the bill is

assented to or once the bill becomes law then you are subject to the previous piece. That has obvious repercussions for individuals who have applied under section 49 on the reassessment piece, where they will be no longer able to follow through with that.

For anyone new, we believe that should be the case that once the reassessment provision is repealed then they shouldn't be eligible, but there will potentially be a number of projects that are halfway across the stream, so to speak, when it comes to this.

The other piece is on timelines. I think members opposite know that there are a number of projects that will be going through the process right now with the timelines that have been set in place under Bill S-6. Many of the designated office ones it may not make a big difference for. I don't want to speak for all of those proponents, but the designated office evaluations are relatively simple, but there are two projects that are currently, as all members know, going through the executive committee screening level currently at the timelines set out in Bill S-6. That's Goldcorp's Coffee project and BMC Minerals' Kudz Ze Kayah project, but once this bill becomes law, once it goes through the federal government, they will be subject to a different set of timelines halfway through an assessment — not halfway, but after their assessment has started. We have some concerns about procedural fairness when it comes to that. That would require some interventions by the Yukon government and the Council of Yukon First Nations with federal counterparts if this bill — I think it could be potentially changed when it's in Committee. So again, we would just flag that as a procedural issue and hope that members and ministers opposite would contact some of the individuals in the Government of Canada with respect to that.

Unlike the Leader of the Third Party, we believe that this amendment is friendly. It only restates in the motion put forward by the Member for Copperbelt North of the government's commitment to a collaborative framework — which I think was extremely important to the Yukon Chamber of Mines when it came forward. Should they choose to expand that to those discussions, to municipalities and others that are involved with the YESAA process on a regular basis, of which there are many, perhaps they can choose to do that. Again, the news release and the letter that we saw suggested that those discussions happened between the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Chamber of Mines. We would, of course, as I mentioned, be supportive of any expanded dialogue between other groups as well.

I will wrap up my comments there, Mr. Speaker, and if the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources is to speak on this, I would be interested in his experience. As I mentioned off the top, there has never been in my time a common position by industry with respect to these amendments. I guess a lot of it depends on where you are in the process and what size project you have. We have seen today the Leader of the Official Opposition talk about some of the comments that were made to the Senate committee at the time, and I think we should take those into account when having these

deliberations here today. I'm anxious to hear from other members.

I know the Premier was going to stand up when I stood up, so please go ahead.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In consideration of time, I'll be very brief here.

I appreciate the intent of what the Yukon Party is doing here and some of the comments from the Leader of the Official Opposition talking about regulatory certainty and streamlining. We're so close here, but we're putting the accents on the wrong syllable right now when it comes to the intent of this amendment.

We're seeing the Yukon Party hopefully turning a page here and actually supporting Bill C-17 moving forward. That's the intent and that's really what we should be debating here today. We need to have a united voice here to go to Ottawa to say, "We need to move forward." We need to move forward on a lot of things, not just necessarily for the regulatory certainty piece for mining but, to the Leader of the Third Party's words, a wide breadth of things we need to speak of. These things should have been talked about in Bill S-6. We need to get back on the table and I don't know of a First Nation chief or economic development branch that doesn't want to talk about this.

You're very correct as far as the chamber's intent and CYFN, but we don't want to be making decisions on behalf of the First Nations of the Yukon here in the Legislative Assembly about the process. That is not what we're supposed to be doing here. What we're supposed to be doing is seeing that we have a united voice in us saying that we need to see Bill C-17 go forward.

As I made a commitment to the Leader of the Third Party, I said with the amendment that she was going to put forward, we will do that.

We will work with the Speaker — if we all approve this motion, we will make sure that this goes into Ottawa and that they know the actions here today. We will make a commitment to the Yukon Party that the concerns of the Chamber of Commerce, when it comes to the concerns around timelines and reassessments, we'll absolutely pursue that.

This amendment, in my opinion — and this is just me being frank — takes away from the original intent. It's important, and we do want to get to it, but we don't want to focus all the attention just on one area. We commit to you, as well, to making sure that we move forward on that process and work with CYFN, but we can't support the amendment at this time.

We really would like to get to a vote on the main motion. I do commit to a new process, moving forward. I do commit to turning the page and not talking about who did what, as far as the amendments go or who did what as far as Bill S-6. Let's move forward. I make that commitment to the Yukon Party right now, but we can't support this amendment because it puts the accent in the wrong place.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: This is a vote on the proposed amendment put forward by the Leader of the Official Opposition for Motion No. 23.

Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Disagree.

Mr. Gallina: Disagree.

Mr. Adel: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Disagree.

Mr. Hutton: Disagree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are six yea, 12 nay.

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

Amendment to Motion No. 23 negatived

Speaker: We'll return to the debate on the main motion.

Mr. Cathers: We are disappointed by this outcome. I think in crafting this amendment, it would have strengthened the motion, as I know was the intention of the Leader of the Official Opposition. What should be noted is that the commitment, as my colleague noted, did come from a press release that was sent out by the current government.

What is disturbing to me here is that I think the government may have lost sight of the fact that, just as this issue is very important to First Nations — and we certainly accept and acknowledge First Nations' concerns with how the amendments were developed and the way consultation done by the Government of Canada was conducted on amendments that were made — it is important to remember that, for people whose livelihoods were affected by the regulatory process, the problems and the flaws within the YESAA process are of very great concern to them. In some cases, as members may often think of it applying to mining companies and to larger companies and, of course, an impact on a large project — a delay on a large project — can delay economic benefits for Yukon contractors and employees of the mine, the impact on

major mines are certainly important. The impact on amendments to licences, for example — as one of my colleagues mentioned, the challenges that Alexco has faced and the fact that delays around permitting have been part of what led to them going into a temporary shutdown — it is important to note that, for the Minto mine, permitting risk and timelines around that have been something that has affected their decisions of when to hire or when to reduce their workforce.

I want to also put the focus of this on small businesses and on placer miners who are affected and on the fact that it is not just the mining sector that is affected by some of the problems within the YESAA process that have not worked so well in the past.

We have heard consistently from Yukoners who have to deal with the YESAA process that certain parts were overly onerous. For example, when the legislation and regulations were originally put in, the triggers for certain activities required someone — literally for a single power pole — to go through the YESAA process. That type of activity — while an application for putting a power pole would probably not be overly difficult, at least in everything but exceptional cases, to get through the YESAA process at a designated office level, it is a cost to that applicant — and in my opinion it's really a waste of the system's resources in looking at fairly simple applications that have fairly similar impacts and themselves still do require a permit from Yukon regulatory authorities in most cases.

It's a matter of recognizing that it doesn't make sense for relatively simple, relatively low-impact applications to have the triggers that require someone to go into the YESAA process to be set too low. That was one of the concerns that we have heard from the mining sector.

My colleagues and I do recognize and support the first part of the motion, recognizing that, at this point in time, probably the best way to proceed forward and attempt to get a common, shared approach between the Yukon government, the Government of Canada and Yukon First Nation governments would be to take a step back from the amendments that were put in by approving Bill C-17.

What does need to be recognized is one issue that my colleague, the Member for Copperbelt South, raised — about the fact that, if the legislation is approved without further amendment, there are applications currently in the process that will have the rules changing after the point of application.

The point we were attempting — in suggesting what we believed was a friendly amendment, pulled right from a government press release — is urging the government to recognize the real importance of sending a message to not just Yukon First Nations, but also Yukoners who are genuinely worried about their livelihoods and whether the YESAA process causes them a potential problem, delay, the loss of a season or significant cost that they may not be able to afford. These people have also very genuine and sincere concerns and, just like every Yukon First Nation person, everyone who is a placer miner who lives in the territory, and every one of these Yukon small business owners is part of our Yukon

society, part of our Yukon community, and we believe a message should have been sent that acknowledged the concerns of everyone.

While supporting the Parliament of Canada repealing the amendments through the bill that they're contained in, Bill C-17 — also making the strong commitment, through what we hoped would be a unanimous vote in the Assembly, to Yukoners who were concerned about the YESAA process — that, in fact, government hears their concerns, is committed to acting on their concerns and believes their concerns are important and worthy of the acknowledgement of this Legislative Assembly.

While we are disappointed by that, I acknowledge the Premier's comments. I do have to express a degree of scepticism when someone makes a strong commitment but votes otherwise, but I will hope that he indeed will follow through on the commitment he made. I would sincerely urge the Premier and everyone on the government side to recognize that the YESAA process has problems with it — recognize that some of the inconsistency that has occurred in the past between the way designated offices assess projects in different districts does pose a concern for Yukon families, Yukon small businesses, and for Yukoners who depend on getting through the process to make a living. I would encourage government to not let this go dormant but very sincerely work with all involved to recognize there are still problems with the process and they need to be fixed.

Speaker: Order, please.

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

Debate on Motion No. 23 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled May 3, 2017:

34-2-13

Yukon Law Foundation Annual Report — November 1, 2015 to October 31, 2016 (McPhee)

34-2-14

Yukon Judicial Council Annual Report — 2016 (McPhee)