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HANSARD

Wednesday, November 20, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2019 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

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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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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, November 20, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

Speaker's Statement in recognition of National Child Day

Speaker: The Speaker will now provide some brief remarks about National Child Day, but first I would like to take the opportunity to introduce the Child and Youth Advocate and the staff from the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate office. We have Annette King, Lynda Silverfox, and Taylor Greenland-Paauwe. As well, we have an inspirational young Yukon adult who I will be referencing, Ira Mamis, and her mother, Maribel Mamis. Welcome to the Assembly.

Today is National Child Day. On this day in 1989, the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* — UNCRC — was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. Canada ratified the UNCRC two years later, in 1991.

National Child Day reminds all Canadians that governments carry the responsibility and are obligated to uphold children's rights. There are 42 rights outlined in the convention that focus on non-discrimination, survival and development, consideration of the best interests of children, and participation of children in the decisions that affect them. Every child has the right to be protected from harm, be provided with the provisions to develop to their full potential, and to be given the opportunity to be active participants in their own lives.

Today, we recognize the actions of those who work to promote the realization of children's rights.

In 2009, the Yukon government passed the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*. Since that time, the advocate has addressed over 750 advocacy issues for over 500 children and youth to ensure that their rights under the UNCRC are fully upheld. The advocate has recently observed an increasing number of situations where service providers are including children and youth in the decisions they make about them, sometimes for the first time. The youth are encouraged to have a say and show empowerment and engagement in the process.

Over the last year, 53 Yukon youth participated with the Child and Youth Advocate in focus groups as part of the GlobalChild project, an international research project led by the University of Victoria. Students from the following schools provided feedback about how they believe rights in Canada for children are being upheld: Elijah Smith Elementary School, the Individual Learning Centre, the Youth Achievement Centre, Vanier Catholic Secondary School, Porter Creek Secondary School, and F.H. Collins Secondary School. The information they provided is helping to create a global monitoring tool for countries to use as a form of reporting to the United Nations.

The Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office has brought to my attention one particular Yukoner who has exemplified

youth participation at a local and national level. Ira Mamis is a 21-year-old student from Yukon College and, in addition to being a full-time student in the bachelor of social work program over the last year, Ira has taken action by participating in the following — and I can say in advance it's impressive: She represented the Yukon at the United Nations assembly of youth in New York. She was a Yukon youth representative at the Prime Minister's Office and attended the Canada Youth Summit with another Yukon youth, Cassis Lindsay, who was one of the recipients of the Outstanding Youth Achievement Award in 2018.

Ira also held a summer internship position in Ottawa at Parliament Hill as part of the Canadian Filipino interparliamentary internship program. Also, she holds the following ongoing roles: regional ambassador for Pinoys on Parliament, encouraging the engagement of youth in government; the youth representative on the board of directors for the Yukon Filipino association; future student ambassador for Yukon College, promoting post-secondary education in the Yukon; and finally, the Yukon youth representative on a national steering committee for U-Report Canada, a project run by UNICEF that surveys Canadian youth about current issues.

Last month, Ira represented Yukon as a newcomer Canadian at the Youth Action Gathering, hosted by the Canadian Council of Refugees in Moncton, New Brunswick, along with another Yukoner, Sebastian Cuenza, who was also recognized with an outstanding youth achievement award in 2018. Sebastian has produced a video showcasing the voices of newcomer youth.

This week, as part of National Child Day, Ira and Sebastian are launching the video and sharing their experiences with other Yukon youth, letting them know about opportunities to get involved. This is proof of what can happen when youth realize that they have a voice.

Today, we urge all Yukoners to look at how to enhance the implementation of children's rights, policies, and practices and to create space for children and youth to share their views as part of decision-making processes. When children and youth are heard, they feel empowered, and that will have positive, lasting impact for generations to come.

Applause

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House that Motion No. 115, notice of which was given by the Member for Porter Creek Centre, was not placed on today's Notice Paper, as the action requested in the motion has been taken in whole or in part.

The Chair also wishes to inform the House that Motion No. 1, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek Centre, has been withdrawn from the Order Paper at the request of the member.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

We have some visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Please help me in welcoming Mayor Dan Curtis, councillor Steve Roddick, past-councillor Rosyln Woodcock, and director Mike Gau. The City of Whitehorse is co-hosting the Arctic Winter Games and we are very happy to have them here today.

We also have Mr. Philippe LeBlond with us, who is a wonderful local artist and a cycling advocate/guru who is probably here for tomorrow's tribute.

We also have with us today, from the Sport and Recreation branch in Community Services, Jared Slipp, Megan Cromarty, Trevor Twardochleb, Sue Meikle, and the deputy minister, Matt King.

From the Arctic Winter Games: Moira Lassen, Carolyn Moore, Courtney Nichol, Desiree Cook, Echo Ross, Jeffrey Woodhouse, Laura Williamson, Lindsay Smith, Lucy Coulthard, Danny Macdonald, Meaghan Kimmitt, Mia Val, Michelle Parsons, Sandy Legge — sorry, Sandy, if I pronounced your surname wrong — Shelley Williamson, Kathy Zrum, Geneviève Doyon, Adam Purdy, Ken Howard, Sophie Tremblay-Morissette, Ryan Romero, and I would also, Mr. Speaker, really like to welcome the Arctic Winter Games mascot, Däch'aw, who goes by the pronouns "they" and "them".

Applause

Ms. White: I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming the Porter Creek GSA. We have Jason, Sam, Hannah, Taiga, Alia, Rylee, Annabelle, Shane, Jackson, Molly, Grey, Brenden, Adrian, Xander, Shania, Bella, and Fynn.

Thank you for coming.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I would like to ask my colleagues to help me welcome a few guests here today. Paul Johnston, Dylan Smoke, Chris Boodram, and Valerie Royle, our deputy minister of the Women's Directorate.

Thank you so much for coming today.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I would like to have members welcome Murray Martin, a local columnist and political commentator, I would say, to the House.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors? Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Yukon amateur sports

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I rise today on behalf of all members of the Legislature to pay tribute to the many accomplishments of Yukon's amateur sports community — athletes, coaches, mentors, supporters, organizers, volunteers, and mascots.

Our territory's young athletes continue to amaze my colleagues and me in their achievements. This past summer,

Team Yukon travelled to Swift Current, Saskatchewan for the Western Canada Summer Games. Yukon sent 134 athletes, 38 coaches and managers, and 10 mission staff to the games, and they came back with an amazing nine medals. Congratulations to Mia Barrault, who won silver and bronze in swimming; Julianne Girouard, who won two bronze medals in solo kayaking; Mara Roldan, who took home a bronze in cross-country mountain biking; Jack Amos, who won bronze in the men's 5,000 metre distance; and wrestlers Judy Russell and Jaymi Hinchey, who took home silver in their divisions; and flag-bearer Cassi Jensen, who took home a bronze, which means, Mr. Speaker, that all of our wrestlers medalled.

This was the highest ever medal count for Yukon at the Western Canada Summer Games, and there were also many top-10 finishes and personal bests set. Well done, Team Yukon. Bravo à l'équipe Yukon.

Now our athletes are gearing up for the Arctic Winter Games. Everyone is gearing up: coaches, mentors, supporters, sponsors, mission staff, event organizers, mascot, and volunteers. We are now up to 1,100 volunteers, and I am counting on all MLAs to be part of the volunteer crew. Everyone is prepping for what is sure to be another amazing accomplishment — the 2020 Arctic Winter Games in Whitehorse. We will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Arctic Winter Games — well, not 50 games, but the 50th anniversary since the Arctic Winter Games started. The 2020 games will happen in our capital city from March 15 to 21, 2020.

His Worship Mayor Dan Curtis and I are counting the sleeps — 116 — and we are proud to co-host this event with the City of Whitehorse. This event is being led by the 2020 Arctic Winter Games Host Society, a dedicated team of staff and volunteers who are bringing a full-court press with their talents, skills, and energy together to make this major event happen. Over five days, we expect 2,000 athletes and cultural performers from Alaska to Greenland, from Yamal jusqu'à Nunavik, to compete in 21 sports. This is no easy feat. It's not backyard badminton or the bunny slope; it's not pickup hockey or knuckle-hop scotch. The host society has great bench strength and has been doing a fantastic job of bringing these games together. In just the past few months, the team has built beds, marshalled the mission staff, vetted venues, signed sponsors, orchestrated the theme song, recognized sports in regard to reconciliation, set up sustainability, and organized Games Day Friday — whew. By the way, Mr. Speaker, games mascot Däch'aw — they have conducted community visits across the Yukon, so great to see them in the Legislature today.

So, today, Mr. Speaker, on National and International Children's Day, we tribute our aspiring athletes, performers, organizers, and volunteers. There are 116 sleeps, Mr. Speaker — 116 sleeps.

Applause

In recognition of Transgender Awareness Week and Transgender Day of Remembrance

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of our Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to Transgender

Awareness Week. Today, November 20, is a day of remembrance for trans folks. This is an opportunity to recognize and remember the trans people who have lost their lives due to transphobic violence. According to an annual report by Trans Murder Monitoring, 339 trans folks were killed in 2018 and 331 to date in 2019 — a total of 3,314 since the monitoring started 11 years ago.

Specifically, we honour the memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman whose murder in 1998 inspired the first International Transgender Day of Remembrance. Trans folks are still living in a world where they experience violence and microaggressions in their day-to-day lives just for being who they are, from the moment they wake up to when they go to sleep. Imagine going to get a coffee at a local coffee shop — something each and every one of us does probably every day — and someone uses the wrong pronoun to describe you. Then imagine going to school or work and living in constant fear of bullying, discrimination, and violence. Imagine trying just to book a holiday but being unable to travel without facing questions about the gender listed on your passport. Imagine going home to read the news and seeing an article online about trans rights followed by a comment section filled with transphobia, ignorance, and violence.

These are just a small number of situations that trans folks experience each and every day. As a society, we can do better and we must. I am optimistic that things are changing quickly because we have a generation following us who are leading this charge. Organizations such as Queer Yukon, All Genders Yukon, Northern Gender Alliance, and Yukon Queer Film Alliance are doing amazing work to break down stereotypes, take a stand, and reject transphobia.

Gender and sexuality alliances are taking action each day to make their schools safer for their peers who identify as trans and gender-diverse. In fact, these decisions to move away from being called gay-straight alliance is a perfect example of the proactive recognition of inclusivity. The Government of Yukon is developing an LGBTQ2S+ inclusion action plan in order to make sure that, in our role both as a service provider and employer, we are more inclusive. That action plan will be based on what we heard directly from Yukoners, specifically those who identify as LGBTQ2S+, and it will be developed with the oversight of LGBTQ2S+ organizations in Yukon.

While we are making great strides toward inclusion, there is still much work to be done in modernizing attitudes regarding trans and gender-diverse folks in our community. Gwendolyn Ann Smith, the founder of the Transgender Day of Remembrance, talked about the always present need for trans people to fight for their rights, including the right to simply exist. “Fighting for our right to exist” resonated with me very deeply. We’re not talking about a wish list of luxuries. Trans people are still fighting for the right to be who they are and to live safely in our community — in their community. I urge every Yukoner to take the time today and every day to educate yourself on gender identity, gender expression, transphobia, and the many barriers that trans people are still faced with. Use this knowledge to support your friends and family to be an ally

in our community. Be the spark for systemic change. It starts with each and every one of us.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that the tribute that we just heard to Arctic Winter Games was so uplifting, and I cannot wait for the day that we can do a tribute to LGBTQ2S+ and trans people and have that same feeling and that same spirit.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize today, November 20, as the Transgender Day of Remembrance in memory of those lives lost to transphobic violence.

Founder Gwendolyn Ann Smith said, “With so many people seeking to erase transgender people — sometimes in the most brutal ways possible — it is vitally important that those we lose are remembered, and that we continue to fight for justice.”

Over the last week, in honour of Transgender Awareness Week, organizations across the country celebrated the lives of transgender individuals and raise awareness around the issues that they face on a daily basis. It is widely recognized that the most powerful tool to quell ignorance is education. Transgender Awareness Week is an important time to use that tool to spread awareness and information to the general public about these issues that they may not fully understand — and many don’t.

It is hard to place yourself in the shoes of someone facing the issues of discrimination. It’s hard to empathize with a situation that you know nothing personally about, but educating yourself is a first great step. Once you have an understanding, educating others is a logical next step. Hopefully, education will continue to spread in this way and there will eventually be an end to the discrimination, to the harassment and bullying, and to the violence.

I want to note that we do have policies in place to ensure that bullying, not only against the LGBTQ2S+ community, but against any person, is not tolerated in our schools. The government needs to ensure that these policies are upheld and are not just in place as a formality. They are in place for a reason and there is no excuse for bullying, harassment, or violence in this day and age in our school system. Our kids deserve to go to school in a safe, secure, and respectful environment.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to mark today as the Transgender Day of Remembrance. Stigma and discrimination against trans and gender-diverse people is real and profound around the world.

Today, we honour, remember, and mourn the loss of the trans and gender-diverse folks who have fallen victim to violence — violence based on fear, hate, and ignorance. Today, we remember and honour the 331 trans and gender-diverse folks from around the world — those whose lives we know were stolen by hate. We remember all of those whose deaths went unreported or unknown, who lost their lives because of transphobia and discrimination, and we remember those who, when it was all too much, took their own lives.

Today, we don't only remember the loss of these lives with sadness but we celebrate the lives that were lived, the happiness and love that was shared, and the communities that were positively impacted by trans and gender-fluid folks. We all have a role to play in keeping our community safe for all people no matter their gender identity, and media has an especially large role to play, because, Mr. Speaker, words matter.

When we allow hate speech, speech that is intended to demean and brutalize another, or language that attacks a person or a group on the basis of protected attributes such as race, religion, ethnic origin, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity — when we allow that language to go unchallenged, then we become part of the problem. A person's freedom of speech isn't being restricted when hate speech is restricted and called out for what it is. One does not guarantee the other.

Media has a large role to play in this modern age of anonymous posts on public forums. Hate fuels hate. When media allows hate speech to go unchecked, they do a disservice to us all. There's a reason why media sources around the world are restricting anonymous comment sections on articles about marginalized groups, comments that are filled with hate and directed at marginalized groups who are unable to defend themselves in that forum. It is my hope that media closer to home will start standing up to hate and monitoring their anonymous comment sections. We encourage them to demonstrate their understanding of the important role that they play in respecting and protecting trans and gender-diverse folks right here in Yukon.

It is our job as allies to listen, to educate those around us, and to stand beside, behind, or in front of our transgender friends as they need us. Mr. Speaker, we celebrate trans men and trans women and those who are two-spirited. We celebrate those who are gender non-conforming, those who are bigender, and those who are agender. We celebrate the knowledge that you are of different ethnicities and racial backgrounds, that you exist in all shapes and sizes, that your gender presentations vary, that your identities are fluid and your expressions are unique, and that your stories and experiences are uniquely your own, but that you are all beautiful.

We celebrate your phenomenal strength and resiliency. We believe that your beauty and your truth deserve to be visible. Within our culture, our local communities, and across the globe, there continues to be an amazing surge in the visibility of our trans and gender non-conforming community members. This is overwhelmingly because of the courage of countless transgender men and women and their allies who have worked and continue to work tirelessly to raise awareness and speak out and live authentically as who they are. Whenever any trans or gender non-conforming community member claims visibility, our communities are stronger and better for it. Whenever any trans or non-conforming community member or their allies speak up in the face of prejudice, that act of courage helps change our world for the better.

So, we thank those in our very own community who continue to push and advocate for what is right and just because, Mr. Speaker, trans rights are human rights. We will

stand with you as allies, knowing that you matter and that the world is a better and richer place with you in it.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, I have for tabling, pursuant to section 23(2) of the *Housing Corporation Act*, the Yukon Housing Corporation's annual report for 2018-19.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I have for tabling a report entitled *Making it Work*, the 2019 report of Yukon Women in Trades and Technology.

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. Gallina: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House congratulates the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on its decision to maintain regional morning newscast services in the north.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to make stab-proof protective vests available to all Yukon correctional officers.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House supports recessing the Legislative Assembly from March 16 to March 23, 2020, during the Arctic Winter Games.

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: Beaver River watershed land use plan

Mr. Hassard: I have some questions for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources about the status of planning for the Beaver River watershed. In a letter from the minister dated September 12, 2019, the minister mentioned that the planning committee would be finalizing their work plan at a meeting on September 17 and then posting that to their website.

Looking at the website this morning, I can't find a copy of that work plan, so I'm wondering if the minister can confirm whether the work plan has been completed, and if so, where can Yukoners access a copy of it?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I'll give a little bit of background and then speak directly to the question. The Government of Yukon continues to work with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and ATAC Resources to develop a land use plan and road access management plan for the Beaver River area.

The land use plan and the road access management plan must be finalized before road construction is authorized. The Beaver River land use planning committee met in Mayo on October 24, 2019, to review the work plan following presentations for the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun citizens.

The Beaver River land use planning committee has held community meetings in Keno City, Mayo, and Whitehorse and has met with various interest groups. A "what we heard" document on the information received is available online.

We are aware, through our public meetings hosted by the planning committee, that increased access and harvest pressure on moose seem to be two of the key issues concerning the plan. I will endeavour to find out if everything has been finalized after that October 24 meeting that just occurred and make the members opposite aware of where the plan is available.

Mr. Hassard: We're certainly hoping that, since October 24 is almost a month ago, the minister would have been able to provide us with a little more information than that. We know the Liberals cut the Yukon mineral exploration program by \$200,000 this year so that money could be redirected to support work in the Beaver River watershed. Now, this geological work is important to the process and we're getting close to the March 2020 deadline that the minister set to complete this overall plan.

I can't find a copy of the work that resulted from the cut to YMEP on the planning website. Mr. Speaker, when will this work be made public and where will it be made available?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think it's important to set the record straight concerning the dollars from YMEP. First of all, if you look at the history of YMEP — which is the Yukon mineral fund that we used just for early grassroots exploration and where we take a portion of the cost and we offset the cost for the prospectors or even junior mining companies.

In the last number of years — previously, in the last mandate of government, it was as low as \$575,000. Upon taking on this role, we increased it to the highest it has ever been. It was undersubscribed for the last number of years, so internally, and also with support and endorsement from the Yukon Chamber of Mines, instead of having that money not being used, it made good sense to take it and allocate it to this baseline data work that's available.

I would think that, as this work is completed, which is still ongoing, we'll have a better opportunity to see where the parties want to provide this information and what platform that will be. As we have stated from the start and in our agreements, we are absolutely making best efforts to have this completed for March 2020. It is a tough piece of work, and we continue to strive to complete it in that period of time.

Mr. Hassard: If we look on the website, it says that further engagement will be coming in the coming months. The question I have for the minister is: How will this affect timelines? We know that December is not a good month to be engaging with people, so that would only leave January and February in order for this work to be completed by March. The question is quite simple: How is this further engagement going to work and not affect the timelines that the minister has put in place?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think that the next important step in this process is that there is a meeting in Na-Cho Nyäk Dun traditional territory, and I believe it's on November 23. It's between the community, as well as community citizens, and I believe the chief and council, and that will be very important to define when some of that collective and collaborative consultation should happen, especially in the communities that are most impacted.

I don't think it's appropriate to get into trying to come up with potential impacts of dates that may or may not happen. I agree that December is busy for everybody in the Yukon; it's busy for all people; it's close to the Christmas season. Our focus is to continue with endeavouring to complete it on the dates that we have identified, which was March of 2020. There's a tremendous amount of pressure. That's why this is a significant and important question for the opposition to ask me, and I'm sure that the Third Party will also ask me. It's a very tough file, and many Yukoners know that.

But we will continue to follow the agreement that we signed with the chief and council of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and continue to ensure that all of the technicians are doing the work as we move toward March 2020.

Question re: Government of Yukon website

Mr. Kent: I have some follow-up questions for the Premier on the website.

In February 2018, the Liberals launched their new website and logo rebranding project. They had originally stated that the new website would only cost \$250,000. But yesterday in Question Period, we confirmed that this cost has now skyrocketed to at least \$550,000 for the website alone, which is a massive 120-percent increase. However, as the Premier stated in Question Period yesterday, these costs do not include staff time. Well, associated staff time is still a cost that taxpayers have to pay, so it needs to be factored into the overall price so that Yukoners can know the true cost of this new website.

Can the Premier tell us, once you factor in staff time, how high the costs of this project have skyrocketed? Can he also please be open and accountable and provide Yukoners with a number?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I wonder if the member opposite calculated the staff time in the litigation for the Peel watershed case.

Mr. Speaker, as we did mention, this does not include Government of Yukon staff time. Our goal, though, with the overall process here is to complete the migration to yukon.ca and to decommission the old website by the end of March 2020.

We made these comments on the floor of the Legislative Assembly yesterday as well.

We already estimate that almost 85 percent of the most useful pages, first and foremost, for citizens of the old site have been already migrated over to yukon.ca. It's important to note also that not all content on the old site will be brought over to the new site, but on average, a department will transition about 50 to 60 percent of their web content from the old site to the new site.

Again, as we talk per department, this is a whole-of-government approach when we talk about content and the prioritization over to the new website, yukon.ca. The overall migration so far is approximately 70 percent complete.

I want to thank all of the department officials who work on this process. Again, yukon.ca improves access to government information, expands online services, and enhances our ability to receive and respond to feedback from Yukoners.

Mr. Kent: As we discussed yesterday, in 2018, the Liberals bragged that the new website would cost only \$75,000 a year for ongoing annual maintenance.

This, of course, was supposed to save Yukon taxpayers' money; however, that assumption is based on the old website shutting down. Yukoners need to understand the true cost of the Liberals' website. Remember, Mr. Speaker — no one was asking the Liberals for this new website and logo. Yukoners are asking for things like enhancements to medical travel, not wasted money on websites and new logos.

So, Mr. Speaker, how much has been spent on operation and maintenance of both websites since the Liberals decided to make this poorly thought-out decision?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I beg to differ with the member opposite. Again, we believe that providing the modern website is fundamental to citizens being the centre of an open and transparent government. It is disappointing to hear that the members opposite do not believe that this is money well-spent.

The new website has been designed to meet today's standards for privacy that weren't there in the past — for security, accessibility, and compatibility on mobile devices. It's too bad that the members opposite don't think that this is a good use of taxpayers' money — the increased ability for accessibility to Yukoners.

In 2018-19, as we said, we spent \$200,000 on the continuing development and improvement of yukon.ca, and this does build on the one-quarter million dollars that we spent in 2017-18 for that future-year planning. We also plan to spend an additional \$100,000 through the rest of this fiscal year to assist departments in updating and migrating their content to the new sites. We also anticipate spending another \$100,000 to maintain the old website this year.

The member asked the questions. I have provided the answers. We still, again, commit — and we know that this will happen — that, once we have completed the transition, the ongoing maintenance will cost \$75,000 a year, which is half of what the old website costs. The members opposite are saying that this is more expensive than it really is, and they really don't see the modernization as being a priority.

Mr. Kent: Here is what we know, Mr. Speaker. The Liberals said that they would spend \$250,000 on a new website. That has now increased to at least \$550,000, but we will go through the numbers that the Premier provided here today. However, the Liberals have conveniently forgotten to factor in staffing costs. The Liberals said that the new website would save us money because it is cheaper to run than the old website; however, we are now running two websites. It is now clear that the Liberals have completely bungled this project.

I am going to ask the Premier a couple of things. Will he provide us the business-case analysis that says that this new website will save us money, and what is the total cost of the website project once you factor in costs to all departments, including staff time and operation and maintenance for both websites?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We have been clear from the beginning and open and transparent on the process and on the cost to the departments. I went back and talked with the Executive Council Office to double-check just yesterday after questions in the Legislative Assembly. We're still very confident that, when we complete this transition, the ongoing maintenance will be \$75,000 a year, which is half of what the old website cost. Also, we're very confident that, by providing a modern website — this is fundamental to what a citizen-centred, open and transparent government should look like. Members opposite — there is a theme here that they want to go back to the ways of old, but I think that, when we look at a progressive, modern Yukon, Yukoners demand that our technologies are keeping up with the new options of mobility and also accessibility. Security and privacy are extremely important on this side of the Legislative Assembly.

Question re: Greenhouse gas emissions

Ms. White: At first glance, the government's recently announced draft strategy for tackling climate change appears to be an ambitious plan for reducing Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions, but upon closer inspection, one will notice that the targets do not take into account mining-related emissions. It fails to provide many specific statistics on the current trends in Yukon. The plan says — and I quote: "... Yukon's non-mining greenhouse gas emissions were 620 kilotonnes." It begs the question: What are the Yukon's mining-related greenhouse gas emissions?

The draft plan says — and I quote: "In the past, Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions have gone up and down, driven in large part by the level of mining activity in the territory." Given this statement, we would expect to have some numbers associated with Yukon's mining activities, especially concerning greenhouse gas emissions.

Can the minister provide the amount of greenhouse gas emissions currently produced by Yukon's mining sector?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: First, it's important to identify the fact that, when this work was being undertaken on our new plan — actually, data overall was difficult to gather. There were questions here in the House about — what the baseline was that we were looking at working from? Why did we look at 2010?

Really, one of the things that we found — it was identified in the work undertaken post-audit — was that it was difficult to find good data.

Also, there has been discussion publicly around the work in Faro and the remediation work and reclamation work being undertaken there. That information — I won't challenge the accuracy, but a lot of that has to do with the clearing of some of the areas. It is actually tree-clearing that has to be done in order to get to some of the ground movement. So, some of that upfront activity is what is really leading to some of the numbers.

I will go back to our departments and have a discussion about current — because, of course, we just had one mine reopen and another mine just open, and both of those, luckily, are on our grid, where about 93 percent of the energy is clean, but we would have to see what the numbers are based on what happened just over the last couple of weeks and months.

Ms. White: I look forward to receiving those numbers.

We are all happy to see an increase in economic activity due to mining in Yukon. However, this government's plan to set intensity-based targets for mining operations could create a situation where Yukon's overall emissions actually rise by 2030. There are several mines planned to open in the upcoming years. Among these are the Coffee, the Kudz Ze Kayah, and the Casino projects.

In its 2014 executive review submission, the Casino mining project anticipated that, during the mine's peak of operations, its CO₂ emissions would be 716 kilotonnes per year. Not only would this more than double Yukon's 2017 non-mining emissions, it would amount to 2.7 times the 264 kilotonnes that the government is trying to cut by 2030. The mining industry's greenhouse gas emissions are an important part of the calculations that need to be made in measuring Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions.

Does this government believe that its proposed intensity-based targets for mining will make a large enough impact on the mining industry emissions to ensure that Yukon's overall emissions do not increase by 2030?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There were a number of items there to address. In the first question today, the member opposite identified that we weren't taking into consideration the impact of mining. That question then, of course, was contrasted by saying that the plan does take into consideration the intensity of mining activity, and that is exactly what we're looking at doing.

The end of that second question was essentially a long-term projection for a project that has not entered an environmental assessment yet — although that project could be a major driver in the production of copper in a global state. When we look at places where there is a lot of geopolitical instability right now — like Chile or challenges that are happening in other places — what we believe is important is to work with industry and to consider, especially with commodities that are needed for a clean future, that we take a look at exactly what the emissions are associated with that extraction in our territory and benchmark that, as well, against other regions in the world, because what we hear when we talk about climate change is: "This is part of our contribution and

we have to be responsible with the planet." We think that we can do it cleaner than anywhere else can, and that is what we are taking into consideration.

Ms. White: The *Our Clean Future* draft is an important project. However, intensity-based targets for the mining sector could result in major shortcomings for Yukon's overall greenhouse gas emissions reduction. The NDP is supportive of inventive and environmentally forward mining projects, but we question how this focus on intensity-based targets fits within the strategy to lower Yukon's overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. I will quote once more from the draft: "... there is a risk that a decrease in mining activity could cause us to reach our target..." By this same logic, even if every single objective outlined in the draft is achieved, a boom in Yukon's mining sector could result in Yukon falling short of its 2030 goal.

Can the minister confirm that, even if all of the objectives set out in the draft climate action plan are achieved, Yukon's overall emissions could still rise should the planned mines go online in the next few years?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Well, first of all, thank you for the third question. There are a couple of things that I will leave on this last one. One is that it is a draft — the final draft. We believe that we are going in the right direction, so that gives a great opportunity for the Leader of the Third Party to respond to the strategy on behalf of the NDP.

On this side, I think that our prerogative has been that the mining sector is important, it has to be done in an environmental way, and we have to respect the community that we all live in. We also have to take into consideration that projects — Minto being a perfect example of where you are on grid, you are using clean energy, you are working in a respectful manner with the First Nation, you are using good practices, and you are pulling out a commodity that is absolutely in demand and needed if we globally are to shift to a clean economy. Those are all facts. I will say that this is how we are approaching it.

I am looking forward to seeing if the NDP thinks that we should stop building projects if it will adversely affect our emissions in the future, or do they think that, in the Yukon, we can do it in a cleaner way than letting someone else in another part of the world do it where there are lots of emissions. That is a very fair question.

Question re: Yukon parks strategy

Mr. Istchenko: From August 16 to September 29, the Liberals ran one of their so-called consultation surveys on the draft Yukon parks strategy. This consultation was advertised as a way for Yukoners to help chart the future of Yukon's territorial parks.

As part of this, the government spent taxpayers' money to run ads promoting the consultation on social media. One of the ads read: "We are looking for your thoughts on the draft Yukon parks strategy." It sounds good; however, the ads were targeted to southern Canadians and were being received in Toronto and Nova Scotia.

If you go back and look at the post that was being advertised, it appears that every single person who engaged with it is from outside of the territory.

Can the Minister of Environment tell us why her department was pushing this consultation to southerners?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would suggest that, when we do look at improvements in all of our parks in Yukon and we look at the significance of all of our parks and campgrounds, we consider all of the users, and that includes the visitors to Yukon. As we look at added value from improvements, we certainly want to ensure that we capture all of the various user groups using the various campgrounds so that improvement is significant, and it's essential that we look at ensuring that we get the necessary feedback from campers and look at improvements. But we also want to ensure that we look at not only improvements, but perhaps adding more resources if necessary. Those are some of the things that we consider when we look at data that we've collected from the 2019 season and look at future-year projections.

Question re: Mineral staking

Mr. Kent: My question today is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources regarding mining within municipal boundaries.

Yukon's demographics have evolved over the years as have Yukoners' land use requirements, which are impacting access to many long-standing mineral claims — claims that predate expansion of many municipal boundaries.

We've seen an increasing number of cases of municipalities denying development permits to operators. The minister committed to fixing this problem shortly after being sworn in, in December 2016, and for three years, we have seen little to no action from his government and no resolution to this problem.

When will the minister follow through on this commitment and provide certainty for municipalities and claim holders and address mining within municipal boundaries?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: First of all, as always, it seems that I have to start off after questions from the opposition with, "Let me set the record straight."

I said that we would take on this challenge. We would do our best to bring clarity to something that has been left in a very grey area. I think that our team and our department will probably get to a place to fix portions of this. I'm sure that there will also be people in the opposition who may disagree with some of the fixes, but that's some of the work that you have to do. It's better to take it on than to let it build up and fester like we've seen in the past.

The Government of Yukon is engaging with Yukoners to understand how we should manage mineral staking and development activities within community boundaries. As a first step, officials will meet with First Nation local governments and Yukon communities and municipalities, as well as industry stakeholders, to discuss issues and solutions. These meetings, which are currently taking place and will include several communities, will help us shape our second step — our public engagement.

Communities that we have representation going into at this time are Dawson City, Whitehorse, Carmacks, Faro, Haines Junction, Mayo, Teslin, Watson Lake, Keno, Hamlet of Ibex

Valley, Hamlet of Mount Lorne, Marsh Lake Local Advisory Council, Tagish Local Advisory Council, and South Klondike Local Advisory Council.

I will just carry on for question two and three.

Mr. Kent: While I'm pleased to hear that there's finally some movement on this file, we're curious why it took the government three years to start working on it. However, I'm also pleased to hear that limited discussions with select community groups have started, because the government's lack of action to date means uncertainty for our mining community and uncertainty for municipalities.

I have to ask why we haven't heard about these consultations in the media. Why have we not seen a government news release or a ministerial statement announcing this initiative? As I have mentioned, the government is fond of doing ministerial statements to re-announce things 10 times over, so why didn't they announce this through one of those? Why are we just hearing about this now?

My question for the minister is: Will he commit to immediately releasing all details surrounding this initiative and any discussion paper or other materials that are associated with it?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I will confer with the department. It seems that, from time to time, the opposition is missing some of the advertising on some of these items, so I'll make sure that we get a list of that information. I think that it is appropriate just to make sure that it's in place.

This is something that is really important, but it's also very sensitive. There is historical mining activity that has happened in many of these areas. It has taken a little bit of time to get this out the door — for probably the same reason that the members opposite had five years in which they could have done it, and they didn't do it — because it's a touchy file. We felt that it was time to take this on. We have heard from municipalities, and mostly from unincorporated areas, where they just felt that this was something that had to be dealt with.

It's difficult. I mean, we're dealing with lots of different policy pieces on it. I think that our Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has worked well — when you walk into a piece of work and you have to deal with an independent power production policy that was promised but didn't happen and you have to conclude the work on the Peel and then you have to start the Dawson City land use planning and then you have to make sure that the agriculture policy that's not done is there and then you have to make sure that all the policies that were never consulted on need to be worked on.

That's a lot of work for a lot of people at Energy, Mines and Resources. The good thing is that they are doing that, and we are doing this.

Mr. Kent: Being a minister is a lot of hard work, that's for sure.

As indicated, many of these mineral claims predate the subsequent expansion of municipal boundaries, and therefore, the claim holders' legal rights must be respected and upheld, especially considering the significant financial resources that are often invested in keeping the claims in good standing year after year. A claim to exclusive mineral rights is of little use

without the ability to access those minerals. While we are not in favour of expropriation, we recognize that, in some cases, a claim may ultimately have to be expropriated.

Will the minister commit to this House that the government will provide fair compensation value for claim holders if those claims have to be expropriated?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, again, just to clear the record, I didn't say that being a minister is hard work. I said that the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has been working extremely hard to deal with all of that work. The member opposite was a minister. If he felt that it was hard work, he is allowed to say that and say that, he did. I am just saying that the department has worked extremely hard to continue that work.

I appreciate the perspective on the respect toward the claim holders. I appreciate the advice and guidance about how we should handle these particular issues. Right now, of course, we are going through a process where people within these communities — Yukoners as well — are having an opportunity to give their response and to give their perspective on what is happening in their community, on the streets in their community, and maybe in their own backyards. We are going to listen to that, and then we are going to pull that together to see steps forward.

Thank you for the experienced voice. I will take that into consideration, but I will first listen to the Yukoners whom we are going to visit in their communities to understand what is the appropriate way to go forward.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed. We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 116

Clerk: Motion No. 116, standing in the name of Ms. Hanson.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Whitehorse Centre:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to restore funding to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in order to restore services in the north; and

THAT this House directs the Speaker of the Yukon Legislative Assembly to convey the decision of this House to Canada's Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, at the outset, it is really good to be able to speak to this motion in light of the decision, phrased in different ways by different people — but ultimately the decision by CBC North management to sort of walk back on the decision that they had made earlier in the week with

respect to the consolidation of service delivery in the north. I think that what we can do is recognize that, as we saw this week, there are indeed times when, through the concerted efforts of so many across our community, change happens and can happen.

Members of this Legislative Assembly — from the Premier to government backbenchers to both opposition parties — have been clear in expressing our support for the importance of CBC Yukon. This week, the news that the northern regional newscasts were to be consolidated and based in Yellowknife galvanized support in a way that should and does inspire.

Mr. Speaker, I think that, at its core, the news that the local morning newscast positions were effectively being cut in order to address CBC's budget constraints was, for many, the straw that broke the camel's back.

Today, we are debating a motion that speaks to how those straws got piled on over the past 25 years and a motion that urges the restoration of funding to the CBC so that we can address these types of actions that were announced this week — so that they can not only be prevented, but also allow CBC North Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut to re-base and become again the vibrant force that it has been and deserves to be.

There has been some discussion about why we would be structuring a motion that would suggest that we come together, all members of this Legislative Assembly, and endorse the restoration of funding for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and that we ask you, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of us to convey that message to our sister territories as well as to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism.

I chose to do that because I'm respectful of the fact that the Speaker is the spokesperson and representative of this Assembly in its relationships not only with the Commissioner, but also with other bodies outside of this House. We want to reflect that this is not simply the Government of Yukon — as much as we respect the Government of Yukon and the governing party — but it is all members of this Legislative Assembly whose wishes and whose will are being conveyed to those named in this motion.

As a self-declared CBC fan, the importance of Canada's national public broadcaster — to my understanding, of both the country that I live in as well as the region that I live in — has been reinforced many times over in my lifetime — whether it was in CBC regional offices in Calgary where I was growing up or regional CBC radio in PEI, Vancouver Island, or Ottawa — and for the past 30-plus years here in Yukon. The CBC has been an important aspect in terms of who we are and who I am. I think that, for many Canadians, it is the same.

As the oldest existing broadcast network in Canada, CBC is truly important as a unifying force from sea to sea to sea. There have been, over the years, a number of budget cuts to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. I'll come back to those in a moment, but I want to talk a little bit about the importance of the local CBC in terms of the development and celebration of local talent.

Over the years, we have said, and we know, that Yukoners have reacted in part to the cuts — and, as I said, these were the

last sort of straws that got piled onto that camel's back. That we reacted this week was, in part, a statement that, even though we are northerners and we may enjoy many pan-northern activities — and today, we talked about one of those pan-northern activities, the 50th anniversary of the Arctic Winter Games next spring which we will all be involved in — we also celebrate the fact that each territory is unique.

We are different. Our languages are different; our cultures are different. We want to hear from people who live and who work in our communities about what is going on in our communities. We have watched over the many years how this voice of the north, our regional CBC presence, our public broadcaster, has been whittled away piece by piece.

In some ways, it's sort of like the fable of the frog and the boiling water. You know the story — I'm sure everybody in this House does. If you put a frog in a pot of boiling water, it will jump out, but if you just slowly heat it up, eventually it will die, and that's the concern about allowing CBC to be whittled away. We're saying now that it's time to restore the funding for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to not let it die.

We have seen funding cuts that have resulted in the loss of local weekend programming and the loss of afternoon local news programming. We have seen the inability of staff to visit communities and report on community issues on a regular basis, the inability of staff to participate in events such as the Yukon Quest and the Canada Winter Games. Too often, Yukoners and northerners are having to rely on others to provide our information, including public radio from Alaska, to tell us what's going on in Yukon.

We have seen a decrease in the ability of news reporters to report or attend events on weekends. We have seen the loss of special events that CBC North Yukon used to host. I'm sure that there are many in this room who remember *A Christmas Carol* with guest readers from CBC and community members — a tradition long gone.

Mr. Speaker, I would also add — adding to the list of the loss of a Yukon-based regional CBC voice — that I don't believe that I'm alone in expressing frustration, to the point of turning the radio off on Saturday and Sunday mornings after hearing nothing emanating from the Yukon and being subjected to weather reports for unknown places like “Telsun” or “Klu-ane”.

We have to ask ourselves, How did we get here? How did we get to the point where our local radio station — radio CBC North — has become a diminished force, one that we love and we want to see reinvigorated?

Mr. Speaker, when you think about it, the mandate of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation goes back to 1991. It was set up as the national public broadcaster and it was to provide a wide range of programming that informs, enlightens, and entertains — all of which CBC Yukon has done over the years.

The programming under this mandate under the *Broadcasting Act* of 1991 said that the corporation should be predominantly and distinctively Canadian; reflect Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences while serving the special needs of those regions; actively contribute to the flow and exchange of cultural expression; be in English and in

French, reflecting the different needs and circumstances of each official language community, including the particular needs and circumstances of English and French linguistic minorities. The CBC is charged with contributing to a shared national consciousness and identity and with reflecting the multicultural and multiracial nature of Canada. It's a big charge.

Mr. Speaker, members may recall that the federal government in the mid-1990s made across-the-board cuts to all government departments and agencies, including the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. When I went back and looked at articles back then, I found one from *Maclean's* in September of 1996. At that time, the article said that “Phased in over the next 18 months, the cutbacks will bring to \$414 million the total CBC budget reductions, which were first imposed by the Liberal government in 1994. The cuts will affect every aspect of the national broadcaster, whose current budget...” — so this was in 1994 — “... including ad revenues and parliamentary disbursements, totals about \$1.4 billion and includes 9,000 employees.

“English-language CBC Radio will lose one in three staff positions...” as a result of the cuts made in 1994. The English-language CBC Radio would be losing “... about 500 jobs — and budget cuts will total \$34 million. Program budgets for CBC Radio will drop by 28 per cent.”

Funding for regional CBC stations would be decreased over time according to market size. Now, this is where it gets kind of strange. We are talking about a Canadian broadcaster — a publicly funded broadcaster — and they have this mandate. Then you say you are going to do a market-driven approach. How do you expect the same kind of services and the same quality when you're trying to do it across a diverse region like the north as opposed to the 905? It doesn't make sense.

Of course, as we recall, a number of programs would be cancelled — and they were. French language radio budgets were also reduced, with 238 jobs eliminated from the existing 900, and they downgraded their French language stations in Vancouver, Regina, and Edmonton. I say this, Mr. Speaker, to give a sense of the context. The cuts did not stop there. With it, the debate was often polarized along partisan lines about the role of the public broadcaster. Unlike Britain's BBC, which is fully publicly funded, CBC has faced increased requirements to generate revenue.

After the federal Liberal government made the cuts in the 1994 budget, the Conservative budget in 2008 led to more repeats of radio programming. When you think about it, how many times do we listen or get replayed *Ideas, As It Happens*, or any of the national programs because there is no regional programming and there have been so many programs cut? We have seen shorter seasons for popular radio programs. CBC has been forced to reduce its cultural programming because it is costly to produce, and most worrying in this age of suspect news driven by bots — most worrying to me as a citizen committed to open democracy fuelled by informed citizens is the dramatic decline in investigative journalism at both the regional and national levels. This is to say nothing about the axing of CBC's global presence. We are at risk of falling prey to the dumbing down of our own media and our news. To watch

the CBC, an institution with such a proud and deep history of journalistic integrity — Mr. Speaker, I find that sad.

There are network defenders — and I count myself as one of them — who note that CBC's mandate does differ from the private media, particularly with its focus on Canadian content, and much of the remaining budget should and does try to underpin the radio networking. CBC supporters — and, as I said, I count myself as one of these — point out that additional long-term funding is required to provide better Canadian programming, including radio drama and improving our local programming, to attract and sustain strong viewership. Because if we dilute the regional and local programming to the extent that it is just a repetition, then people get turned off and turn it off. Or if you can't find anything about your local region because the program is emanating out of Yellowknife and speaks nothing to what is going on in the Yukon, that eventually gets Yukon citizens to turn the radio off.

Mr. Speaker, according to the Canadian Media Guild, the \$115-million reduction in annual cuts — annual cuts started with the 2012 budget; there were previous cuts in 2008 after the ones in 1994 — but the ones that were scheduled in 2012, which were \$115 million a year "... amount to one of the biggest layoffs of content creators and journalists in Canadian history" according to the Canadian Media Guild.

In 2014, when they were fully realized, those, combined with the earlier ones, totalled 3,600 jobs lost at CBC since 2008. Between 2008 and 2014, it was 3,600 jobs.

You know, Mr. Speaker, as we saw this week, leadership makes a difference in an organization. Decisions or choices that make sense from a Toronto perspective sometimes simply don't work outside of that golden triangle of Toronto, Montréal, and Ottawa. And the choices by political leaders as to who leads the Canadian institutions such as the CBC also have lasting impacts. For example, in September of 2015, the then-president of CBC Radio-Canada spoke at an international public broadcasters' conference in Munich, Germany, and he claimed that, for the first time, public broadcasters were — quote: "... at risk of extinction."

The Canadian Media Guild responded that the same president of the CBC had made a career of shredding the CBC by cutting one quarter of its staff under his tenure. More than 600 jobs were cut in one year alone, in 2014, in order to plug a budget shortfall.

Over the last 25 years, CBC — and I applaud all the journalists and the technicians who work for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, those who have survived a roller coaster of cutbacks that have to be incredibly undermining in terms of confidence.

The good news was that, in 2015, the federal election saw the new Liberal government pledge to start to fill the funding gaps faced by the CBC after years of cuts. The fact is, however, that the cuts made to the CBC in the 1990s have played forward. Mr. Speaker, we have seen this replayed in departmental budgets as well. It's like reverse interest — and I have said this before — if you made these two-, five-, 10-percent cuts to budgets and then you just keep cutting and cutting and cutting

each year. When we have interest, we increase our funds each year, but this has been the opposite.

So, governments are now starting to realize, as they did, for example, on one that I was familiar with at the time in the 1990s — the indigenous file — when it was two-percent cuts and played forward significant deficits and a whole range of programs and services that should have been available. It's analogous to cuts made to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Media Guild says that, if the CBC was to be funded at a level comparable to 1990-91 in constant dollars — that's inflation-adjusted — its parliamentary appropriation in 2019 — this year — would have amounted to more than \$1.8 billion.

The amount that it received is closer to \$1.2 billion, a gap of approximately \$600 million. That's what we're talking about today, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about restoring the funding for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation so that it can properly and fully deliver on its mandate, which I outlined to you earlier.

So, terminating — which is really where this death by 1,000 cuts appears to be going — and/or reducing CBC's local presence to a mere shadow also entails the disappearance of vital local and regional voices and perspectives from the CBC's national network programs. If funding is not restored to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in effect, CBC would contract into a Toronto or Montréal broadcasting corporation, turning its back on the far-flung diverse reality of the other 75 percent of Canada.

We heard one of the motions this week talking about the fact that CBC North represents 40 percent of the land mass. But if there is this concentration of power and this concentration of where the resources go to the golden triangle, that will not serve the mandate of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. So, Mr. Speaker, we owe it to the citizens of Yukon and to Canada to not allow that to happen. We need to ensure that our public broadcaster is able to deliver fully on its mandate in the north and in the Yukon.

I look forward to hearing the views of members of this Assembly and, as a result of our debate this afternoon, reaching consensus on our request that the Speaker convey the support of Yukon's elected representatives for the restoration of stable and robust funding for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and that this message of support be conveyed by the Speaker to our sister territories and to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would like to begin by thanking the Member for Whitehorse Centre for bringing forward this motion. I would also like to thank all MLAs yesterday for agreeing to debate on this issue without our normal full day's notice on the motion. I think that speaks to how important we all believe, in this Legislature, this issue is. I also just would like to thank all of the parties and all of those involved who expressed concern right away.

I saw some differences in the approach to how we were trying to get there, but underneath it all, I saw that we were all

concerned and wanted to address the issue. We all wanted to work across all three of the territories to express our collective concern about the situation. I would also like to thank CBC for deciding to pull back their decision. I think that we are in a better place today than we were yesterday.

Just this past weekend, on November 17, we marked 50 years of CKRW. We stood in this Legislature to praise this radio station as the longest standing commercial radio station here in the Yukon. One of the things that was in the news was a quote from Mr. Rolf Hougen, who founded the station, and he was talking about radio stations across the country, especially smaller radio stations, and how they can sometimes be absorbed into the larger media conglomerates over the years and the importance of maintaining that local notion of radio. His quote through the media this weekend was: “Our belief is that radio stations should serve a community.” I am going to get to that notion of reflecting the regions, but I want to just talk a little bit about the north for a second.

For several years — nine years — I wrote for *Encyclopedia Britannica* on current affairs in the Arctic. I wrote about shipping and sea ice, diamond mines, offshore oil and gas, wildfires, salmon populations, and climate change. Some of these topics are shared across all of the territories, but some are not. Whenever I was asked to talk to southerners about the north, I would always try to explain that it is actually the “norths” and that it is not just one homogenous place. From Nunavut to the Northwest Territories to the Yukon, there are a lot of differences. As the Member for Whitehorse Centre noted, we have different geographies, going from the Arctic maritime to the massive Canadian Shield to the mountainous boreal forests here in the Yukon. We have different languages. Here in the Yukon, we range from Tagish to Gwich’in and English and French. In the Northwest Territories, it ranges from Chipewyan to Inuvialuktun to English and French. In Nunavut, it’s pretty much Inuktitut and English and a bit of French. We have different first peoples. Here we have 14 First Nations, 11 of which have land claims and self-government agreements. In the Northwest Territories, there are several regional land claims and self-government agreements. Nunavut has one agreement, which encompasses and, in fact, created the territory.

We have different histories, from whaling ships to barges to paddlewheelers. The Yukon is connected by a year-round highway while Nunavut has no roads and is dependent on air travel.

We all have climate change happening more rapidly in the three territories compared to the Outside, but it’s still experienced differently. Our big issue is wildfires. In Nunavut, they don’t have trees. It’s just different. For us, sweet clover is an invasive species. I remember in Nunavut when they saw their first wasp, and I remember them talking with elders about it. In Northwest Territories, their invasive species is salmon.

I understand that we’re all territories; I understand that we’re all north of 60, that we’re large places with relatively small communities and that we think of ourselves as different and distant from the south, but that doesn’t mean that we’re all the same. What’s news for Nunavut might not be meaningful or might not connect with the Yukon and vice versa.

It doesn’t make sense to think that local stories in the Yukon have the same immediate relevance for the Northwest Territories or Nunavut. I reflect on the comments on the weekend radio — when I listen at times to the CBC on those mornings when it’s a broadcaster from NWT — and I listen to them talk about the Yukon, and I think, “Ah, not really — kind of, but not really.” I too agree that we want to be very careful to protect that sense of regional relevancy, reflecting our regions.

Last night when I was thinking about debating this motion today, I was looking on Google Earth, and I looked at the distance from Whitehorse to Yellowknife. It’s about the same distance as Whitehorse to Grande Prairie or Edmonton. While I’m still a fan of Tara McCarthy, I don’t think her Edmonton news stories would be top of mind for us here in the Yukon.

The distance from Whitehorse to Iqaluit is farther than the distance from Whitehorse to Los Angeles. It would sort of be like sharing our news with the news out of Vancouver Island and Disneyland. It feels a bit like an apples-to-muktuk comparison.

I would be more than happy to hear a pan-northern newscast if it were in addition to local news. I’m very interested to hear what’s happening in the other territories and what’s important for them, but never as a replacement for the local news. I don’t think that it can actually be local in a pan-northern notion.

We currently span three time zones — three hours’ time difference, or maybe someday it will be four hours in the summer if we drop daylight savings and stick with Pacific Standard Time as Yukon time. I’m even trying to think of the coordination a bit from a time perspective.

Let me talk for a minute about local reporters. One of the great things that happens on the morning show on CBC is that they introduce local reporters from Old Crow to Ross River to Watson Lake and even to Skagway. By the way, I was very sad to learn of Buckwheat Donahue’s death — my condolences to his family and the community of Skagway.

I had an opportunity once to be the Marsh Lake community reporter for one day. I was the rec director and manager of our local community centre, and the CBC called me up and asked if I would, on the morning show, talk about events that are coming up. I said, “Absolutely I would.” It was a very fun day because, just earlier that day, public health had come around and dropped off a bunch of condoms, and we had our North of 60 café, which is for our seniors, and we decided to share the condoms with the seniors. We just had a great laugh over this thing. That became our story that we talked about with Sandi Coleman — before, of course, she had retired.

After that I had expressed my interest to run in politics, and as soon as that happened, I was no longer to be the local reporter — and terrific — but every time I listen to those local reporters, the relevance to each of their communities is so real and so significant. Of course, I’m not talking about the newscasts that would be there, but it just resonates on how important it is to us that the stories come from the communities themselves.

I will tell one small story about Sandi Coleman. I think that it was in May 2017 when there was an earthquake. That

morning, I felt the earthquake. It was pretty early in the morning — 5:00 or 6:00 in the morning, somewhere around there. I felt the earthquake and immediately I was on the phone with the Deputy Minister of Community Services because we deal with emergencies. We talked about gearing up to deal with the situation, and they already had things in hand. It was quite amazing to me that — a call in the wee hours of the morning — our public servants were already on top of it.

We discussed it, and I said, “I think this is going to end up being on the radio. Maybe I should come in.” I was on my way into town, and Sandi Coleman was on the radio at that moment. I think she was even talking to an expert seismologist about earthquakes, and suddenly there was an aftershock or another tremor or earthquake. She got scared, and you could hear it in her voice. She got under her desk while on air. I remember pulling over, picking up the phone, and calling in to CBC to talk to them, as well, in the next minutes or so, to talk about our public servants and how they were working to make sure everybody was safe — going to check bridges, buildings, schools, et cetera — and make sure that everything was going to be okay for the community. That is a purely local thing. That happens here; it happened in the immediate.

Last year, here in this Legislature, we tributed the CBC. The date was October 4, and it was in celebration of the 60th anniversary of CBC North, their proliferation across the north, and the importance. The Member for Porter Creek North, the Member for Whitehorse Centre, and I all stood to speak about the importance of CBC North. I will just now add one thing that I thought maybe would be too cheeky to say that day, but I was going to say, “Congratulations on turning 60 — now you’re half as old as the *Whitehorse Star*.”

When we talked about it, I think that all of us in this Legislature spoke about the importance of local radio, about the ability to connect with citizens here, and how important a service that is for all of us as citizens — of course, to represent the regionally different cultures and languages, but the stories and how they resonate with each of us.

I was looking through some of the comments last night on social media. I’m going to share one here for the record. It comes from Dave Bidini, who many of you may know is formerly of the Rheostatics.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Sorry — thanks. The Premier has just helped me out there, Mr. Speaker. They are back together, so great news — and my apologies to the Rheostatics.

I quote: “We ignore the north at our own spiritual and intellectual peril. This compromises the room and space for indigenous stories and beyond. If CBC won’t acknowledge the difference in regions and importance of serving them, who will?”

I am going to quote one more, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, my favourite political commentary on Yukon social media had this to say about the situation with CBC North — and I quote: “CBC All the north is the same. They all have igloos and outhouses right? Same news same difference.” And they go on to say — and by the way, this is me now saying that this is all with sarcasm. I hope that it is reads that way in Hansard. The quote

goes on: “Canada’s national broadcaster announces plan to turn northern news into one part homogenized mush and two parts yellow snow. Eat it up #Yukon #NWT #Nunavut it’s good for your national identity.”

I think there was a strong voice coming not only from all sides of this Legislature, but also from the community.

I would also like, just for a moment, to give a shout-out to Ms. Elyn Jones. I know that this “proposal” — let’s call it that — was not about individuals, but I have to say that she is an exceptional presenter of the news and a clear voice of and for the Yukon. If this had gone through, I am sure that a whole lot of Yukoners were going to really miss her in that role as a newscaster. This is not to take away from all the folks who fill in when she is not there or when she was filling in as a host. They did a fine job, but you have to say that she is pretty good at what she does. One of my first thoughts when we started to hear this news was: “Oh my gosh — I’m going to miss Elyn in that role.” Not to take away from the newscasters in the Northwest Territories or Nunavut — it is about a connection with the Yukon.

I know that our media has been changing, and I think that here in the Yukon we are blessed with quite a wide range of media. Well, depending on how you count it, we have three territorial papers — local papers as well — and we have three radio stations and one shared TV outlet. Again, it just tells me — I focus more on the radio because it’s more local. It just provides that additional sense.

Mr. Speaker, generally again, I wish to acknowledge all of the thoughts that came from all of the motions that were brought forward. I would also like to thank the Premier for writing his letter to the other premiers. I will say again that I was really happy that the CBC saw that it was important to keep local news here and make sure that we are reflecting the regions as per the mandate of CBC.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to propose what I think is a modest amendment to the motion that is before us. I will speak to it in a second.

Amendment proposed

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move:

THAT Motion No. 116 be amended by:

- (1) deleting the phrase “restore funding to” and inserting in its place the phrase “continue funding”; and
- (2) deleting the phrase “restore services” and inserting in its place the phrase “maintain regional services”.

Speaker: We have a proposed amendment on the floor of the Assembly. It appears that we have the copies that one of the pages will provide to all members for their review and then I will review the same with Mr. Clerk in order to determine whether the amendment is in order.

I’ve had an opportunity to review the proposed amendment with Mr. Clerk and I can advise that it’s procedurally in order.

It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services: THAT Motion No. 116 be amended by:

- (1) deleting the phrase “restore funding to” and inserting in its place the phrase “continue funding”; and

(2) deleting the phrase “restore services” and inserting in its place the phrase “maintain regional services”.

The rest of the body of Motion No. 116 remains the same.

The Minister of Community Services, on the proposed amendment — you have 20 minutes.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you. I am going to be brief. First of all, I want to try to explain how I landed here with this amendment. I want to say that, as I was speaking with the members opposite on the floor of the House, I got a new sense of the word “restore”. The interpretation that I heard from the Member for Whitehorse Centre was “restore”, not meaning the proposed change right now but back to an earlier time when there was more funding.

What I came here today — and in prepping for today, I was under the — I was focusing on the change that had been proposed just two days ago by CBC. I thought that’s what we were discussing, and I just had a different interpretation. That’s just how I landed at this place.

Because it was already given back, it was, I thought, already restored, so I thought this was just adding clarity to the motion. Also, Mr. Speaker, I will say that, as we work through this, as I said in my opening remarks, there was an interest on all sides of the House to address this issue. We had different approaches; okay. The principle at the high level, I believe we’re all trying to achieve something in common.

I did my best to try to work with the members opposite, but I just ran out of time. That’s all I want to say. It’s not to make an excuse, but when we put this on unanimously yesterday, I noted that the wording that I heard in the Legislature yesterday was not exactly the wording that I saw on the Order Paper today. All those subtle things make a little bit of a difference. I’m sure it’s all with the good intention of trying to get it appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, what I caught was the word “multiculturalism”, so I will go back and check that as well.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Sorry; it’s just a small change. As we were working through a discussion on this, those little things are important, if you’re looking at amendments.

My intent here and what I have proposed as an amendment, Mr. Speaker, was simply to acknowledge that CBC had already altered their position. When the motion came forward from the member opposite, that was not the case and I was merely trying to uphold what has just happened. That’s the point that I will make on the amendment.

I appreciate that the members opposite had a broader perspective about the word “restore” which I’m now understanding, and I’m happy to hear debate on the amendment as I’ve proposed it.

Ms. Hanson: Today, we sort of seized defeat from the jaws of victory. We had an opportunity, I thought, where everybody in this Legislative Assembly had indicated that they were happy that we had seen the regional management of CBC North backtrack on a decision made on how they were going to implement the latest in a series of cuts that have happened to

CBC. The three positions that were being consolidated for this newscasting position that the Minister of Community Services was lauding so greatly in terms of the work of Elyn Jones, our local newscaster — those are three of 35 positions that were being cut. The 35 positions are part of a series of cuts that have occurred. If you think for one moment that next year there won’t be more cuts and we’ll be debating the same damn thing in this Legislative Assembly because we — I mean, it’s naïve to think that our motion is going to change and see a restoration. What we are asking and what I thought could come out of this Legislative Assembly was an expression of the will of this Legislative Assembly — the members of this Legislative Assembly to say, “We would like to see the restoration of the CBC. We would like to see the CBC able to deliver the diverse range of programs and services that it did before a series of cumulative cuts” — as I said at the outset — over the last 25 years, and the net effect in real dollars — in 2019 dollars — is a difference of \$600 million.

I don’t anticipate that the federal government is going to turn around, but it was an indication of our will and our belief in the Canadian broadcasting system.

But if you want to go with the incremental little bits and pieces here, then you can continue to say in a motion next year, “Well, we’ll continue to support the CBC, and geez, wouldn’t it be nice if they didn’t cut that position or the next position they are going to cut?” — because there will be more cuts.

As I said, it’s unfortunate that this government’s members seem to think that every motion that comes from the opposition must be tweaked and must be amended to suit whatever — that doesn’t have anything to do in terms of respecting the fact that you could possibly come out of a motion that reflects the will of Members of the Legislative Assembly — that it would be the will of the Legislative Assembly. It’s an expression of will; it’s not a direction. We don’t direct the federal government on what to do, but we can say that, on behalf of Yukon citizens — and I am sure that every single one of them — I heard the minister opposite express some of the same sentiments. We know what CBC has been and what it has been able to deliver in the past. We know how hard it is for those professional broadcasters and journalists to be denied the opportunity to do the full scope of their work.

But if that’s not the will of the government members to express their belief in the integrity of the CBC and they’re quite prepared to see it continue to try to limp along and to continue to be cut little cuts at a time — as I said in my opening comments, the consolidation of those three positions into one was for many people the latest piling on of the last piece of straw on the camel’s back. The minister himself read a number of the online comments. I too read them. But they’re not going to stop there.

That’s unfortunate. We made an effort. I do — and I know my colleague, as a member of the New Democratic Party caucus, does firmly believe in the need to restore the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation before it’s gutted from its capacity to do the work from its mandate that was set out in 1991 on behalf of us all. So, we made it clear where we stand and I guess the

incrementalistic approach across the way will stand its majority and they can pass the motion as amended.

Mr. Cathers: This amendment, while there are parts of it that — the reference to “regional services” is perhaps a positive addition. It’s unfortunate the deletion of “restore funding” and replacement with “continue funding” does seem like the Liberals are more concerned about not offending the federal Liberal government than they are about simply standing up for the Yukon on this issue.

Something that I would note is that we had also proposed two motions yesterday on this same topic of CBC funding. The wording contained within this original motion brought forward by the member of the Third Party was not the same as the wording that we had in our motions. Personally, I like some of our wording better, but that being said, it was our plan to support the motion rather than arguing about semantics here in the House since the principle of what members were driving at yesterday seem to be the same.

The point made as well by the member of the Third Party in talking about the impact that the CBC has already seen, in her view, due to the reductions in funding is a valid point. We have seen some previous reductions. I have also noticed personally that there seems to be an increase in the amount of news from the NWT or even other parts of Canada in what used to be an entirely local newscast with very few exceptions. I would assume that this is due in part to the resources that CBC has. I am not intending to say that as a criticism to the local staff. It’s just a cause for concern for me if local news becomes less local and more about other parts of the country that, while valuable and unique in their own way, do not have the same interests and issues as the Yukon. The value of local reporting not just from Whitehorse but from rural communities is one that does matter here in the territory.

I will wrap up my comments on the amendment and save further comments for the main motion, but I would just note that this amendment does not seem to be a positive trend in terms of the impact on the motion. It is definitely watering down part of it. I would note as well for the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, who is usually the first to criticize members of this side for not sharing amendments to motions with them before making them and using that as a reason to vote against our amendments, I certainly never saw a copy of this wording before that member made the amendment. To my understanding from the comments of the Third Party, they didn’t see it either, so we have a government that applies one standard to itself and a different standard to everyone else.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I wasn’t going to stand on the amendment. I have some other comments I hope to get to later, but I think that I need to note that, with respect to the amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think you have heard my colleague indicate that this was done with the best of intentions, that work was done with the Third Party, which is completely contrary to what the Member for Lake Laberge has just said. I think it’s a valuable opportunity to correct that information.

It was done with the best of intentions. Clearly, the substance of this motion is supported by all members of this House — not to speak for them, but there were no less than four motions brought forward yesterday indicating various wording, which all substantively spoke to the concept that CBC should maintain, restore, continue — whatever words you want to use — the local broadcast and certainly the local news broadcast, and that those are very important to northerners, they’re very important to individuals here in the Yukon and presumably to individuals in Nunavut as well.

I will just take this opportunity to reiterate what has been said by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, which is that the intention was only to clarify wording with respect to funding, not to change the support, not to question what that might look like, and certainly not the intention that all motions need to be amended. There have been many, many motions that have come to this House and been passed unanimously without amendment by any party. Quite frankly, the opportunity for amendments on the floor of this House is what this is all about. It’s what this process is all about. The debate — the concept that ideas might need to be adjusted here is an opportunity, but it’s not done all the time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It’s not done in this case with anything but support, and it’s not done, as the Member for Lake Laberge has noted, by, I will say, using terms, and his characterization of this — that is simply not accurate.

The motion has been amended here for the purposes of us having the opportunity to debate the substance of this. Funding restored, I appreciate — funding continued, I appreciate that could have a different meaning, depending, but that doesn’t change the support for the substance of this, and that’s what we’re debating here. I suspect that many of the other members of this Legislative Assembly will have things to say about their support for CBC, and that’s what this is about.

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We talk often about different things in the House. I appreciate that the interpretation from the members from the government side were different from what was actually written down. When we talk about “restore” — the definition of “restore” is “bring back”, so reinstate; bring back; bring it back. The reason why we’re talking about that funding was because, if the funding was restored, then obviously we’d be able to have the regional broadcasting. We appreciate that CBC made the quick about-face.

As far as the work that had been done together between the Minister for Community Services and I, I have received two notes today about it. The first note said that the government was going to move an amendment — that it would be the Premier who would relay the motion and asked if we needed to chat about it. I said yes. I said that the Speaker is the non-partisan member of the Assembly and speaks for all members in the Assembly. The Speaker can speak on everyone’s behalf, so I said, “Yeah; I disagree with that.”

Then I received a second note that says, “Discussed quickly and drop our idea of Premier to support Speaker/all MLAs/House. Still bringing a small amendment to change ‘restore’ to ‘continue.’”

That was the indication that we were given then that there was going to be a change. I understand the frustration from my colleague for Whitehorse Centre because the wording is different — not only the wording, but the intention is different. I don't think that there's any challenge in this House that we all support the CBC and we all support regional broadcasting. We all support the work that is done, especially those of us who listen to CBC. But we can say that there have been changes recently. On Saturday morning, I listen to CBC out of Yellowknife when they're talking about the weather and that doesn't affect me at all. I haven't been to the places that are listed. I appreciate that, on Saturdays, we still get the Franco hour that's broadcast to Whitehorse. I think we still get the community reporter in Old Crow, but the weekend is predominantly read out of Yellowknife.

Maybe if we were looking at restoring the funding, maybe it could be focused on Yukon again but it's not. The wording is different — quite a bit different. Is it the intention that was there? I don't think it was. We know we highlighted the pre-1994 — the pre-2008 funding and the difference it is now. I appreciate that we're talking about CBC North and I guess I'm going to stay focused on that. But I just want to highlight that I did get two notes today. One was not moved forward with and the other one was. To be fair, the Yukon NDP didn't fully realize the changes that were going to happen, so I would prefer it if we weren't told that we were because that's not exactly true.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing from more members from the government side and to continuing the conversation.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the proposed amendment to Motion No. 116?

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. Hassard: Disagree.

Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yeas, seven nays.

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

Amendment to Motion No. 116 agreed to

Speaker: Is there further debate on the main motion as amended?

Mr. Cathers: I'm not going to be too long in speaking to this. I do just want to note and thank the Third Party for bringing this forward. As I mentioned briefly, we ourselves had brought forward motions yesterday on this same topic. On this issue, I just wanted to note that feedback from constituents and from Yukoners has been notable since the announcement was made by CBC to amalgamate all of the north together into one news desk for the morning show. It is something that has been widely criticized by Yukoners and by elected representatives, including me.

We were pleased that the CBC has announced this morning that they are cancelling that plan to centralize morning newscasts for the Yukon, NWT, and Nunavut out of Yellowknife. But another thing; regardless of the exact wording that passes in this motion, in my view and on behalf of our caucus, I would note that we think it is important to ensure that the CBC has adequate resources across the north to sufficiently cover locally relevant news in our territory and that it is also important to note that, together, the land area that the Yukon, NWT, and Nunavut comprise is about 39 percent of the country, and people making decisions in Ottawa or Toronto don't necessarily understand that.

It is a fact that many people in southern Ontario mix up Yellowknife and Whitehorse, don't know which is where and have misconceptions about the north. They apply generalities and stereotypes to their understanding of what northern life is like, and the reality is that, in 39 percent of the country — this vast area of the second largest country in the world — life in Nunavut, life in the NWT, and life in the Yukon are each unique in their own ways.

It is important, in my belief, that if there is a national broadcaster receiving public funding as part of their mandate to provide local and regional programming, that they do focus on that. I do believe personally that having the resources for them to do that and to focus on providing programming that would not be provided without that national broadcaster — to see that watered down is disappointing.

As I mentioned, the increase that we have seen already in NWT news being included in the local news on a regular basis does seem like a situation where we are not seeing as much Yukon content. The reality in each community of the Yukon is different from what it is in the Whitehorse area.

In terms of the value of CBC, I just want to speak briefly on the fact that we have seen the reduction in services, as the member from the Third Party noted. That includes when CBC's AM tower — that transmitter — was shut down, I tried at the time, as minister and on behalf of constituents, to see them

replace the AM tower, which is being moved from Whistle Bend. I was not successful in that, unfortunately. I was successful in getting the dismantling of that tower delayed by a couple of years and that provided some service for a longer period, but the decline of that service as well is having an impact for Yukoners who previously were able to receive CBC's AM service at cabins in the bush and use it as a source of news as well as information about the world Outside when they are out — whether on a trapline, hunting, or just in the bush. Losing that service did have an impact. Losing local reporting and losing the locally focused news would have a bigger impact.

I would just speak briefly about the fact that it can have benefits that are not always thought out in discussions of this type, including getting young children more interested in politics and the world around them. Speaking personally, when I was little, CBC was a big part of developing my early interest in politics and national and local affairs — that, coupled with discussions around the kitchen table. I know that the value I got as a young boy hearing *Morningside*, hearing *The House*, hearing *Double Exposure* and other programming on CBC as well as local newscasts was informative and educational. Losing that type of local news for others who might, like myself, grow up with their parents listening to CBC radio in the background or to another local radio station with local news, such as CKRW or CHON-FM, those newscasts from all three radio stations that we were fortunate to have locally do provide value to the community. They are informative to both adults and children, and they help keep each and every one of us more in touch with what is going on in the territory around us.

We will be supporting the motion as amended. As I noted, a part of the amendment appeared to actually weaken the motion. Fundamentally, what I wish to put on record on behalf of me as well as the Official Opposition is that, while the exact resourcing requirements of CBC are something that are left to federally elected representatives to debate and discuss, from our perspective, it is important that they receive the appropriate and adequate resources to ensure that they can provide regional programming across the north and reflect the perspective, the news, and the needs of communities across the Yukon, as well as in our two sister territories that, while we share many things in common, are each distinctly different and far away from life here in the Yukon. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my comments.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I want to thank everybody today for their comments on the floor of the Legislative Assembly — and if I will get a little bit of latitude from the members opposite about a little bit of a preamble here — if I can.

I do believe what I witnessed today and yesterday was a whole bunch of concerned MLAs wanting their best to, first and foremost, address the topical issue that we saw pretty quickly. I remember first hearing about the proposed changes to CBC just in the morning two days ago. I was kind of taken aback, and it was interesting listening to CBC interview CBC, and that was an interesting concept in general.

Then what I saw as well was three political parties on the fly, very quickly — I won't say scrambling, but really working in earnest to make this an issue. I applaud all parties in that pursuit.

What I also saw yesterday was our government and the Official Opposition working unanimously so that we could get this particular motion on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. Again, kudos to the Yukon Party for that — and also a good working relationship with the Third Party. Making that happen was something that was important to all of us.

What I'm noticing here now — where we did we get? Well, we saw some motions being taken off of the Order Paper because certain actions had been taken and some hadn't been. I saw — and I will just be very frank — our whole team really scrambling to understand the intricacies, I guess, of why certain ones were taken off and other ones weren't. Then I also saw House Leaders get together and have a great conversation again about this concept. Never at any time — and this is the quite honest truth — did we assume that the motion on the floor today is about historic funding. Again, that's on us as much as on anybody else.

But I think it does speak to how we prepare for private members' day as well. I would be totally amenable to having a conversation about notice for those motions. Currently, we give 48 hours' notice before we start debating. If the members of the opposition would want to have a conversation about maybe giving more notice, which would then allow more conversations at House Leaders' meetings — whatever. To me, when you take a look at the drafting of a motion, guidelines for — I'm really trying my best to work and lend an olive branch to the opposition.

If the Member for Whitehorse Centre has any reservations on me being somehow disingenuous here, I will have a conversation with her later. It's about being clear and concise. When we talk about being clear and concise, I honestly believe that we would alleviate a lot of issues if we were allowed together to have a little more notice. That's my only point, because what I did see today as well was the Minister of Community Services, who was attending events, trying to work with the opposition — but then again, when he's heading down to have those conversations, the members of the opposition are attending events as well, because it's important to other issues that we're dealing with. It's not a lot of time to really work together as much as we possibly can.

Best intentions — and thank you for not calling me out of order that I'm not speaking to the motion as amended as opposed to just the concept of motions. I really do appreciate the latitude from both opposition parties — to just state my point on that one small piece.

Mr. Speaker, with the motion as amended, I did want to start my contribution to today's conversation, which is about CBC and the importance of local representation of CBC, with a quick story of my first experience in the Yukon in Dawson City engaging on a community level with local CBC radio icons. It was one of my first years in Dawson, and it was my first year as a board member for the Dawson City Music Festival. We were hosting a winter concert series that was of

certain merit — of certain enough merit that we had the honour of hosting several CBC hosts in Dawson City for a whole week, pretty much, in March — one winter's occurrence too many years ago to count.

The board of the Dawson City Music Festival — we thought it was going to be really fun to host a friendly road-hockey tournament — Dawson City Music Festival versus CBC. I had already known some of the CBC cast and crew — Dave White, for example, no stranger to Dawson today and no stranger to Dawson certainly back in the day. I'm aging him as I'm aging myself. But there was also another friend of ours — a former DJ, Dave King. I'm sure people remember Dave King. I had met David King earlier on. He had come up a couple of times that summer, and we did some recording in my home studio with Dawson musician Fred Squire. We did a little piece for CBC for Dave's show that suggested that Dave King was a member of the underground pirate vampire club of Dawson City — younger days, Mr. Speaker. I'll just say that.

We had Sandi Coleman. She took the opening face-off against former producer Dominic Lloyd. I managed to intercept a pass and did a dump and chase of the puck behind the CBC net, and as I made my way to the rink end — and mind you, I wasn't necessarily at full-tilt — I was enjoying the day maybe a little bit too much — I was suddenly shuffled unceremoniously to the snowbank by a very tenacious force whose competitive chase to the puck got my attention and my respect. Mr. Speaker, that was my first time meeting Nancy Thomson. Not only did she kick my butt on that play, but she continued to out-hustle our whole team for three periods. I think that we won the game, and I also think that CBC let the home team win the game.

The whole weekend — and this is the point of the story — I witnessed and participated in — but mostly I witnessed — interviews with the whole community not just for the music festival, but we saw CBC take that opportunity to speak with elders, with artists, with leaders, with the Rangers, and with shy movers and shakers who might be more intimidated by someone they don't know. The point is that the snapshot in time that was recorded that day, because of the local know-how of CBC, was really important, and that story would not have been told if it weren't for the local content and the local connection to the communities that CBC brings to us on a regular basis.

The importance of local radio and local news cannot be overstated, and rural communities especially rely on radio to remain connected. Yukoners kept their radios always tuned to CBC as a means of connection across the territory. In my home of Dawson City, CBC is an absolute institution. Big changes, small changes, really affect everybody. When CBC in Dawson changed from the FM dial to the AM dial, that was a massive change for our community, because it affected a different range of people. Some people got a better signal and sound, but it wasn't as broad. That was a massive change, and the whole community voiced their opinion on that because broadcasting is such a critical part of our society, and CBC is certainly a significant part of our Canadian identity. That identity and that importance extends to the north, and our identity is threatened if local news is threatened.

Yesterday, I wrote my fellow northern premiers and I urged them to join me in condemning this decision, so I was happy to do so, but I do want Hansard to reflect that letter, so I will read that letter into the record.

“Dear Premier Cochrane and Premier Savikataaq,

“I am writing to ask you to join me in sending the attached letter to the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Catherine Tait, concerning the Corporation's recently announced decision to eliminate regional AM news broadcasts in our three territories in favour of a pan-northern news broadcast. As I am sure you will agree, this decision will negatively impact residents in all three territories.

“In addition to this proposed letter, each member of our Yukon Liberal Caucus will be sending a letter on behalf of our constituents and will urge our colleagues in the Yukon Legislative Assembly to do the same.”

Mr. Speaker, the letter that I proposed northern premiers send to the president and chief executive officer of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Catherine Tait, reads as follows:

“Dear Catherine Tait,

“We write as the Premiers of the three territories to express our concern regarding the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC) recently announced decision to eliminate regional AM news broadcasts in favour of a pan-northern news broadcast. We believe this decision will negatively impact residents in all three territories by reducing the availability of regionally specific news for residents of Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, respectively. We call on CBC to stand by its mandate, as stated in the 1991 Broadcasting Act, and ensure that programming reflects Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences, while servicing the special needs of those regions.

“We value the CBC and its contributions to telling the vital stories of Canadians across the North. CBC has consistently been a strong voice for northern culture and has gone to tremendous lengths to share northern stories with the entire country. To lose the regionally specific news coverage would greatly diminish the voices of northerners and decrease their access to important information that impacts their daily lives.

“We request that you reconsider this decision and ensure that consideration is given to the distinct cultural and regional differences that exist across the North between three separate and distinct territories that comprise 40 percent of Canada's land mass. Each territory is unique and each relies on CBC for thorough coverage of local news stories.”

Mr. Speaker, hundreds of Yukoners as well as residents of Northwest Territories and Nunavut expressed their disapproval in regard to this decision. I was pleased to hear this morning that CBC did reverse their decision.

Throughout the decade, CBC Yukon has a steady, strong voice through times of terror, times of tragedy, but also times of wonder. When a comet streaks across Yukon skies leaving a dazzling trail of light in its wake, we turn on the radio to find out what just happened. When an earthquake shook us all out of bed — or out of a shower, in my case — in the early

mornings, it was local reporter Sandi Coleman who advised us from beneath our desks about this news and also the risk of aftershocks and what to do. When Yukon First Nations settled their land claim agreements, when the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favour of Yukon First Nations in the fight to protect the Peel watershed — these are the stories that CBC Yukon stood beside us for, and we need to stand for them now.

I hope that today we can all rally — you know, there has been a lot of frantic movement from a lot of political parties and MLAs who have a huge concern — and not lose touch and sight of the general debate here, which is support for CBC. I hope that we can get unanimous consent on that. I honestly believe that, on this side of the House, the endeavours we had to reach across the way to have a progressive conversation and try to wrap our heads around how we can work together is something that we absolutely aspire to today. I want to thank members of my caucus, but also of the opposition, for their care and consideration for the mother corp.

Ms. White: I would just like to take the opportunity to thank the Premier for his comments. Yesterday, there was not just an effort in Yukon, but I would say a pan-northern effort by residents, citizens, government officials, and people who were elected and not elected to make sure CBC understood how important northern broadcasting is and how important the differences that we have are. Although we have the commonalities of living in northern climates, we all have different realities. I just want to focus on the positives. I want to thank him for his comments. I believe that if push comes to shove again, the Leader of the Official Opposition and I are happy to also send a letter. That was one of the things that had been proposed yesterday at the House Leaders' meeting.

We know that the amended motion is a bit different, but I don't think it changes how we feel about the CBC, which is that everyone has stories, just like the Premier shared — although I have not been chucked into a snowbank by Nancy Thomson, but she can run very fast so I'm not surprised that it happened. We all have stories about how the CBC has affected us.

We know it's important and we appreciate that there were motions from the Official Opposition, from the government, and from our side, and we do appreciate that there was the unanimous support yesterday to bring this motion forward because, to be perfectly honest, none of us knew that this morning there would be an announcement that things would have been different. The reality when we brought this forward yesterday is substantially different from the reality this morning. I appreciate what the Premier said and we also confirmed this morning that it would be in order just because of the language that we chose.

I hear all those things and I think that the most important thing is that, although there is frustration because the language has changed, it doesn't change the intent, which is — sorry, it changes the intent of the original motion, but it doesn't change the intent of how we feel about the CBC. That's what we're focusing on because yesterday we didn't know what January would look like and so today is a different reality, so I do

appreciate that we were all trying to come at it from that angle, although we came from different angles.

I just want to thank the Premier for the tone. Although it's not quite what we imagined the day to be like, it doesn't mean that anyone cares any less about the CBC and that's what today's focus is about, and there is a reason to celebrate. There is a reason to celebrate because in January we won't be having the news coming out of Yellowknife. I can't even imagine how they would report about the Legislative Assembly business come sitting time and I'm pretty sure Yellowknife wouldn't care to hear any of us on their radio station. We wouldn't be familiar voices in the grocery store and people couldn't stop us on the side. So, I think that there are a whole bunch of reasons — some that have been shared and some that people are just thinking about — and of course every single person who has ever listened to CBC in Yukon has a story.

I know that our intentions were all good and we come at them from different angles, but I just want to say that I believe that our intentions are ultimately good. So, Mr. Speaker, I thank everyone for their comments today.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the opportunity to be able to speak on this motion which I think is highly important and deserves the time we can give it this afternoon.

That is not only because it was so vitally important to listeners and to CBC listeners from across the north who responded yesterday to this poorly thought-out decision by the CBC to change the newscasting, but because we have by unanimous consent agreed that this motion should be brought forward. I think it is an important opportunity for us to speak about the importance of CBC.

I will come back around to this, but I don't disagree with the Member for Whitehorse Centre that this isn't about today; I think there's a bigger fight to be had and I think we're all in it together.

I moved here — which I think Mr. Speaker is aware — almost 30 years ago. That's longer than some Yukoners and much less than others. I was offered a job over the phone to come to the Yukon and I was faced with the prospect of moving to Whitehorse sight unseen. I thought about that decision very carefully. It really only came down to two questions for me. I asked my then-potential employer and the people I was speaking to about the move two things. One was: Is there a daily newspaper? The other one: Is there CBC Radio? I remember that distinctly because those were two things that I thought were very important to me. A new job, a new place to live, interesting adventures in the north — all of the things that have since come as a result of that. Those were the two things I was concerned about at the time. That is the only thing that I wanted before I made the decision to move to the top left-hand corner of Canada. I cared about the daily newspaper because I believe that they build and support community. They share news and stories. There's a local focus. They spread news of community events and these are all really important aspects of building community and becoming part of one.

I cared about the CBC because I believe that it is the fabric that binds this amazing country together — not only nationally

but on a local basis. I've lived in several places all across this great country and at each place relied upon the CBC to teach me about other great regions and the inspirational people and their stories across Canada.

At the time, I was a big fan of Peter Gzowski and *Morningside*, so that tells you how long ago that was. Like many other Canadians, I considered him to be a national treasure. He has maybe singlehandedly — although there have been many, many other brilliant CBC broadcasters — taught Canadians more about themselves and about each other and our diverse ways of life than anyone in Canada.

With respect to the local CBC, it serves to complete the tapestry with the national CBC that is this great country. It plays a vital role in our community at a local level. I know that we can all remember listening to CBC and the reports that they have done — clearly, on September 11, 2001, and the importance of the role they played not only with respect to the connections they had with the RCMP, but the connection that they had on that day of informing our community on what was happening because, whether we liked it or not, we were drawn into that international world-renowned story.

They talk to us about earthquakes and about local elections. They talk to us about forest fires and about highway conditions. They talk to us, just this morning, about highway conditions and gave information to travellers. They talk to us about local emergencies of all kinds. They talk to us about critical national and international issues that arise here and that arise in other places, but the voice of local CBC gives us the opportunity to tell the rest of the world about things like the Peel watershed and the changes that have been made there — the land use plan — and like modern treaties of our First Nation governments and the leadership that the Yukon shows in relation to them — by that, I mean the broadest of Yukon communities, the First Nation governments, the First Nations and their work as leaders in the world.

These stories cannot originate in places where they do not occur. Well, they can, but justice will not be done with respect to that approach.

To those stories, to the people who are at the heart of those stories, and to the listeners who rely on the local content, our local culture, and stories that are relevant to and reflect our community — they must be done at a local place. They must be done here.

It seems obvious to us — who have the benefit and pure joy on many days of living here in the north — how unique we are, but it's often referred to as a single region in Canada — “the north”. We all know that it simply is not.

As mentioned earlier by the Member for Whitehorse Centre, the distinct ways of life across the north are vast, unique, and real. One aspect alone — and we could spend all afternoon listing them — is the differentiation of First Nation communities or languages. It's vast. Yellowknife is over 1,100 kilometres from Whitehorse as the crow flies, and it's over 2,200 kilometres from Iqaluit. There are no roads between them. This is a fact that is known to us as obvious, but it is perhaps not so well known in the south.

The details of our region continue to be much of a mystery in other places of Canada. That often benefits us. For instance, in the world of tourism, the Yukon is larger than life, and we ask visitors to come and discover our year-round beauty. We ask them to discover what is unique about the Yukon and what makes it unlike any other place in the world. That uniqueness doesn't always serve us well when we are trying to explain the needs or the wishes on a national forum or, even closer to home than that, at a gathering of family or friends from Outside. I am sure that I'm not the only member of this House who has been asked some completely irrelevant questions by otherwise well-intentioned and well-meaning southerners — things like: “How is the diamond mining up there?” or “What do you do when you see a polar bear?” You get my point. We have all been there. We have all had those kinds of questions brought to us and had the great joy of explaining the situations that we may be in wherever we may be from — Yellowknife, Whitehorse, Iqaluit, or other parts of the great north.

This illustrates my point that we are not all the same, Mr. Speaker. Again, while that seems obvious to us, it is not the case. In debating this motion and the decision that was made yesterday — or made before yesterday but conveyed yesterday — by the national CBC, it is clearly the case that they needed to be reminded that we are not all the same, and therefore we cannot be served by a centralized service of any kind.

It is critical that we remind ourselves — and that we remind the rest of Canada on a daily basis, if necessary — that, as the Member for Whitehorse Centre said, this conversation isn't over. I think that we all agree on the importance of the CBC for various reasons, but I hope that we will agree, going forward, to support this notion.

I take the point and agree that it is important that we remember that reminding the CBC about this decision and them reversing it is just one piece of the puzzle. We have seen the CBC, over the years, restructured or reduced — and I'm not concerned about modernization. I'm not concerned about new technology. I'm not concerned about that, but I think it's important to make reference to the *Broadcasting Act*, which is the legal authority for the CBC to operate — both radio and television. I won't torture all the listeners with much of the details. It's not a very long act, but it is the legal authority for the CBC to operate.

It was noted by the Member for Whitehorse Centre earlier, and I think it's important — she made reference to several pieces, but this is the mandate of the CBC. I'm very pleased that we did not have to resort to reminding CBC of their mandate in this particular instance. We did not have to write the letters to remind them about these details, but I take the point, and I think we're not finished. I think this will proceed, and presumably, some day we will need to do this or we will need to make sure that they remember these very important concepts.

The CBC is owned and controlled by Canadians pursuant to this legislation. They are required to provide public, private, and community elements. They are required to provide programming that's a public service “... to the maintenance and enhancement of national identity and cultural sovereignty...” of this country. Those are pretty heady

concepts, and they play out every single day in a real way at the local CBC level for communities like ours and communities across the country.

The Canadian broadcasting system is required to "... serve to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada..."

I note that, as the Member for Takhini-Kopper King said with respect to the political, social, and economic fabric, cultural fabric — the idea that these could be done in some other place is really mind-boggling. I appreciate that it has to be done in a way that is properly responsible with Canadian taxpayers' money, but I assure you that this is an argument that — in my view and certainly in the view of the people I know who support the CBC — it is broadly supported across Canada — perhaps less so in some larger markets where they have a variety of opportunities, but we have great broadcasting here. We have other great local broadcasting here. We have just celebrated some in the last couple of days and those are also valuable, but the CBC is an important part of that process.

This act requires that the programming provided by the Canadian broadcasting system should be varied and comprehensive — I am paraphrasing and won't read it word for word — and it must provide a balance of information, enlightenment, and entertainment, which has been mentioned earlier. It is to draw from local, regional, national, and international sources. It's pretty clear.

It is to include educational and community programs. It is to provide a reasonable opportunity for the public to be exposed to the expression of differing views on matters of public concern. I have emphasized "differing views" because I think that, if we get news only — we've all mentioned Saturday morning, and the news and the programming that only comes from Yellowknife doesn't really seem like differing views. It doesn't really seem relevant to most of us who are used to having a local opportunity.

Programming provided by the corporation — the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation — should reflect Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences while serving the special needs of those regions, and it must actively contribute to the flow and exchange of cultural expression. As we've noted, the cultural expression of our communities, of our First Nation communities, and of our individual communities that might exist here in Whitehorse or in the Yukon certainly aren't the same as the ones in Iqaluit or in Yellowknife or in the Northwest Territories or in Nunavut.

It also has a mandate to have programming reflect the aboriginal cultures — again, to our point and to my point and to the points of other speakers here today that they're not the same. It's not appropriate to understand that they are the same.

Mr. Speaker, I will close by saying that I agree with the Leader of the Third Party and other speakers today that this is really about the CBC and that the wording going forward — the lesson learned today with respect to how motions are called, and we should take that into consideration in the near future — that the value here is in supporting the CBC. But I also take support from the ideas mentioned by the Member for Whitehorse Centre, because I have watched the CBC be —

maybe it is a bit like water torture in that there have been small decisions — maybe it's more like a melting ice sculpture. There are pieces that disappear, and so long as it is not too drastic, it can go relatively unnoticed. But 30 years ago when I was going to move here, I believed in the importance of CBC and the fabric of this country. I have not changed my mind. It has probably only become more important, especially for small, unique regions like ours, and we need to continue to voice that to the federal government, to the CBC specifically, and to join our partners from the other two territories across the north to maintain and to hopefully gain back some of the services that have been lost at the local level. I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak today.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to also take a bit of time to speak about this very important issue. It is important for all of us. It is important for those of us who live in remote parts of Canada. It is important when we speak about CBC and the connectivity across the north and, for that matter, our connection to the rest of the world. It connects our stories, it connects who we are, and it helps us to share our experiences.

So, I rise today to speak to Motion No. 116 as amended. I want to just take some time to speak as the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin and a few of the thoughts and experiences on one of the oldest radio stations in Canada — in fact, it is the oldest radio station in Canada. As Yukon's most northerly remote fly-in community, our links to broader Yukon — and the rest of the world, for that matter — are sometimes tenuous. Geography, climate, and infrastructure are factors that play into our ability as northerners to communicate within our territory and connect with both our identities as Yukoners and as Canadians.

For generations, radio has been one of the most reliable sources of news for all of us in the north. I recollect many stories from my grandparents speaking about war times, about going into the cabins, blinding the windows out, and just turning the radio on to hear about what's happening in the world — what's happening with the world war and the pending pressures and how that was detrimentally impacting and affecting their relatives and those who had gone to fight to protect the country. The only connection that they had in the far northern regions of our country was to listen to the radio. Those are some real-life stories, Mr. Speaker.

The geographical connection — and the generations that radio has been in our midst — so the most reliable source of news in the north. We often get, of course, some copies of newspapers, but often not until several days after they have gone to print. In my particular community, we didn't have that. We had a plane that maybe came in once a month — that was in the early 1960s — and at that time, we got some news, but other than that, it was relying on the radio.

In the fall when the fog hangs low over the Porcupine River or in the deep winter when it's simply too cold for the plane to land, what do we do then? We turn on the radio. Radio has always been the way in which we've been able to connect in real time with the rest of Yukon and Canada.

I have personal stories and memories of being out on the land with my family on our trapline, huddled around the

campfire in our wall tents, all crowded around our small transistor radio, turning that on and listening only at a specific time. Every Saturday morning, we would get caught up on where things were at in the world. At that time, if there were some significant happenings in our region or messages to be transferred or relayed, it would come through CBC in Inuvik. The messages would come to us through the small little transistor radio that we would huddle around at our campfire and listen to — knowing when the plane was going to come to pick us up or when there was going to be an airdrop coming over to drop us food. Mr. Speaker, those are my times — the times that I remember very well, relying on the radio. That is still the case today.

Mr. Speaker, we know that local news is of vital importance to those in the north, especially in our rural and remote communities. My community has a distinct relationship and perspective with the importance of local news shared by local people. We still get that today. We hear Glenda Bolt speak on the radio, giving local news in Dawson City. We hear Stephen Frost speaking about the local news from Old Crow. We hear others speaking about what's happening in their specific areas and in their specific communities. It is important that we stay connected that way.

Our past elder Miss Edith Josie put Old Crow on the international map with her local community-based coverage, *Here Are the News*. Miss Josie covered her own unique stories in her own unique way of sharing her stories, which were broadcast worldwide — stories about how well John Joe Kay or Dick Nukon did out on their muskrat trapline or how bad the mosquitoes were. Those are things that she spoke about that were relevant to her at that time and relevant to the community. She talked about who was going to go out on the land and who we should expect. An example would be, in my specific era, that my grandmother would get a message on the radio to tell her — on the CBC morning show on Saturday from Inuvik — that Donald is coming out today and that he would be there at such and such a time, and that would be how the news was transferred. We would sit and wait in anticipation of the arrival. That's really important. She also spoke about what it looked like in the summer when autumn was coming into the community — the changes before us. These stories endure through everlasting time. We are still hearing about them today, finding their way into our hearts, the hearts of the people of Old Crow, and those in the Yukon and around the world. We saw that recognition most recently with Mr. Hougén's acknowledgement of Miss Josie. Her column appeared for 40 years in the *Whitehorse Star* and in syndicate papers in Toronto, Edmonton, and elsewhere around the world.

I would like to mention another Gwich'in broadcaster who has found a way into our ears and into our hearts through CBC, through her time at CBC, both in Inuvik for many years and through the local Whitehorse station. Ruth Carroll helped to preserve the Gwich'in language through her daily, hour-long program *Nantaii* and the weekend call-in *Voice of the Gwich'in* program — the connection of the elders through the radio waves from one community to the next and the elders sending and relaying messages via CBC to share their condolences if

there was a passing or to share good news and also to just let others know how they were doing. The work Ms. Carroll did to preserve and revitalize the Gwich'in language would not have been possible without regional CBC programming.

I would like to take a moment to share two particular Old Crow news events that stand out in my memory — perhaps in the memory of other Yukoners as well. Many, many years ago when our winters were still the kind that went below minus 40 — periodically, we still see that in Old Crow — and stayed there sometimes for weeks — the Yukon, at this particular time, was in the thrall of a particularly long and brutal snap. The temperature remained below minus 40 for weeks. At that time, the temperature in my home community of Old Crow went below 50 and stayed there, which was common back then.

I spoke about Stephen Frost, and this kind of reflects on that. The plane couldn't land on this one particular occasion, and there were no groceries in the grocery store. It was very difficult for the community. So, groceries couldn't get into the community, and it was a local CBC radio reporter who called to check up on the community and to share our experience with the broader Yukon public. The reporter got hold of my uncle, Stephen Frost — and those of you who know Stephen know that he is quite the character — and asked him about the cold snap. My Uncle Stephen said, "Up here, we know that winter comes once a year, and that's how we started." The reporter recovered from this and tried again: "I heard the plane couldn't land. Are there food shortages at the co-op?"

And my Uncle Stephen replied, "You know, I did meet a man this morning who was pretty hungry, but I think he just didn't eat his breakfast yet." So, that was some of the humour that was shared, but it also reflected that there were challenging times and the connection to the rest of the world, and it is just an indication of the survival and the means by which the community banded together in circumstances like this and more or less telling the rest of the world and the Yukon that we are okay and all is well.

Another memorable story that I will share about the importance of local, regional news coverage — or in this case, lack thereof — happened — and some may recollect this Yukon territorial election — and I believe that it was in 1985. This was a very tight election, the results of which depended on the outcome in Old Crow. Well, at that time, communications went down and many Yukoners went to bed not knowing the results of the territorial election. In the end, the way Elections Yukon and CBC got the results was by flying a plane over the community and having the results relayed by ham radio to the pilot. Just a reflection of the extreme measures that CBC had gone to in the past to get results to Yukoners.

It is another indication of why it is so important to garner support from everyone and just show our collective support to CBC. Without local journalists, without local connections, telling stories, we are disconnected and practically speaking, I guess, sometimes we are fragmented, because we don't see what is happening in all of our communities or we don't get to share stories. That is why it is important and I want to be able to kind of reflect that by sharing some of the real-life stories in the north — 40,000 people sprawled over 500,000 square

kilometres of land is vast — and my colleague, the Justice minister, spoke about that earlier — about the vastness of our country and how it seemed possible to connect stories between Nunavut and my little community of Old Crow and to try to have some correlation between them.

Local news coverage delivered locally is where we focus our sense of connection, community, and trust. When we hear stories of Bob Sharp starting a seniors café in Mount Lorne, we remember our friends who built that community. We remember a beloved teacher — my teacher — and we reflect on what a good idea that is and how come we don't have that in Mayo, Dawson or Old Crow?

Local news coverage covered and delivered by local reporters during times of stress and times of tragedy is incredibly important. Many years ago, a small child went missing in a rural Yukon community. The search for the child garnered national media attention. Fortunately, the child was found. However, a national news broadcaster contacted the local reporter and demanded to know the name of the family. Knowing that, in a small community, naming a family would identify the child and have detrimental impacts on the family, the reporter refused. That's the connection CBC has to our communities — very much so for the reporters. This is the type of integrity and compassion Yukoners have come to know and depend on from their local reporters.

The voices of our local reporters are the ones that we trust and that we turn to in times of extreme crises. In 2001, I was here in Whitehorse from Dawson City. My sister happened to be away. Her daughter was at a high school in Porter Creek and I was at the Council of Yukon First Nations on Nisutlin Drive and I was trying to get to my niece who is in Porter Creek, and we were having some jets land in Whitehorse and there was pure chaos in the city. I was listening to CBC Radio about the quickest way I could get to Porter Creek high school to get my niece and take her back home. There are times when we have to turn the radio on and the connection is there in time.

On September 11, 2001, authorities reported that a hijacked Korean airline would be landing at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport. Yukoners will never forget that day or the important role CBC reporters played — staying on air throughout the day, updating all of us on what was happening. We knew through the CBC that Whitehorse schools were evacuated and, in the end, that the landing of the Korean airline resulted in a peaceful conclusion. I do not want to imagine having to face a local crisis like that broadcast from a news desk located 1,000 miles away in Yellowknife.

There is more I can say on this subject or on the vital pieces local, regional reporting plays on weaving the fabric of Yukon and the unique northern realities of our three distinct territories and the importance of upholding and honouring the mandate of the CBC as outlined in the CRTC *Broadcasting Act*. But for now, I will leave it at this. Any one of us can cast our minds back and remember major news stories over the decades that would not have been possible without local, regional newscasts.

The CBC stood beside us in those moments and we stand beside them now. I am happy to hear that the decision to amalgamate the morning newscasts have been reversed.

As the Member for Whitehorse Centre said, we should be celebrating this, but we really should be cautious as well. Why should we be cautious? We should be cautious because there's always a caveat or some connections to what is announced and decisions that are reversed. Why was the decision made in the first place? What was the objective?

When the decision was reversed, the director, Janice Stein, announced this very morning, on reversing the decision: "Overall the response we received from staff and the community was not supportive of the change..." She goes on to say that the original change was made with the "best of intentions..."

Now, the important piece to this is that communications from the most relied-upon radio station in the north did one thing and one thing that wasn't appropriate and that was — these are the words from the director, Janice Stein: "The communication of our plan was poorly executed... We need to start at the beginning, which is consulting with our staff", which is an indication perhaps that the decisions that were made now may come back at some time in the future that we should be obviously cautious of. Therefore, the amendments as outlined reflect on maintaining regional supports and maintaining long-term funding support so we don't ever have to end up in a situation of trying to defend a decision, as we did yesterday. I think we all reacted and were obviously with all good intentions wanting to support our colleagues.

I'm happy our Premier wrote a letter asking the premiers of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to write a letter to the president of CBC asking him to reverse the decision. I'm happy to have seen so many Yukoners stand up to express their views on CBC North. Finally, I am happy that the local morning newscast from Yukon will continue.

Mr. Gallina: I'm happy to rise today to speak to Motion No. 116 as amended. I'm also happy that the members of this House granted unanimous consent to bring this motion forward for debate, as the Minister of Community Services had mentioned. It's clear that this matter is important to many members of this House. Yesterday, several motions were tabled on this topic, including a motion that I tabled, that I think fairly represent our caucus and the views of the broader community.

We have heard from other members today, and as I began to prepare my notes, I found it fascinating to learn about the transformations and developments of broadcasting in Canada taking us to today and how Canadian and northern content is prioritized and how Canadians across the country consume this content.

I would also like to share some of my experiences in working with CBC and reflecting on northern content.

In a northern land with a fragmented population, the communication provided by Canadian radio and TV was, from the very beginning, crucial. Before Internet, broadcasting was not only a principal source of entertainment, it also linked citizens to the world outside of their homes and helped develop a sense of community. It was Canadians' public space.

Canada developed a more elaborate and advanced physical structure for delivering radio and television programs than

could be found in any comparable country in the world. In 1979, the US had 982 transmitters in operation, but Canada, with one-tenth of the population, had 1,045, including rebroadcasting transmitters — a number that grew steadily over the years. By 1981, there were 1,225 in operation in Canada. By early 2010, there were 4,918, including digital.

Canada was a pioneer in satellite communications and was the first to use geostationary satellites in domestic communications. The national broadcasting service, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, distributes most of its programs nationally by satellite, also using them in assembling programs.

Historically, the weak element in the broadcasting system was rooted not in physical facilities, but in the amount of original Canadian programming. Over the years, CBC produced an impressive number of radio and TV programs in English and French, many of high quality.

The private TV stations broadcasting in English depended mostly on imported foreign — principally US — programs for prime time. Many of the imported programs were popular, but such dependency led to a continuing struggle to devise public policies that would ensure more distinctively Canadian broadcasting content.

Throughout much of its history, Canada has employed a combination of public and private enterprises, falling somewhere between the strong state-owned element of the British system and the less regulated, private enterprise system of the US. The stages in this evolution can be related to successive acts of Parliament and to the regulating bodies set up to license stations and to establish and administer these rules. I feel that we can all appreciate the significant infrastructure and content challenges faced by Canadian broadcasters, especially those wanting to cover important northern happenings and events.

Mr. Speaker, in 2004, I was hired by the 2007 Canada Winter Games host committee as one of their marketing managers. It was an honour for me to work alongside some formidable Yukon pioneers: Paul Flaherty, chair of the sponsorship committee; former Whitehorse mayors Ernie Bourassa and Bev Buckway; former Premier Dennis Fentie; Peter Milner, chair of the sport committee; Judy Gingell, the Member for Whitehorse Centre; and many other Yukoners who all have had a strong influence on me. One person who stood out for me while I worked to plan this event was the chair of the 2007 Canada Winter Games host committee, Piers McDonald. As I quickly came to learn, Piers has vision and he inspires others.

These Canada Winter Games were the first games held north of the 60th parallel. Piers saw opportunity. The vision of Piers that was shared by his colleagues and ultimately Yukoners and northerners was to create a northern national marketing campaign that would allow each territory to capitalize on this event and leverage the significant promotion that an event of this nature could yield. Mr. Speaker, as many here today know, this national marketing campaign was very successful in raising awareness of our tourism capacity,

economic opportunities, and the pride that we take in our cultural and heritage roots here in the north.

This campaign came to fruition because of the significant support of CBC as a host broadcaster. Yukon and our territorial partners realized a significant amount of content being generated by CBC for these games with advertisements, athlete profiles, volunteer profiles, stunning cultural displays and events, plus the games themselves.

Mr. Speaker, when CBC typically partners with an amateur event such as the Canada Games, they agree to do their best efforts to cover the event. This is just to cover the event itself; this doesn't include the additional programming that I have just described, and it could be interrupted by a special news event or really anything that the CBC deems to be a priority to cover.

There was vision from Yukoners to leverage the Canada Games and to partner with the CBC to profile our unique northern region, and it is touching to think about the people involved to make this happen and the willingness of CBC to partner in these dreams to focus the attention of Canadians from across the country on our northern homes.

I have touched on broadcasting across Canada and the infrastructure and challenges that we face. I know that some of my colleagues want to touch on other aspects of this fascinating and complex industry and how it impacts CBC and the north.

I will begin to close my remarks and reference that CBC North had announced that it was going to centralize its morning radio newscast in Yellowknife. Since then, there had been a tremendous amount of support generated to not make any changes to its English morning newscasts in Yukon and across the north.

Yesterday, the Hon. Premier tabled a letter addressed to the premiers of Northwest Territories and of Nunavut, urging Catherine Tait, the president and CEO of CBC, to reconsider her recent decision. I, along with other MLAs, tabled motions yesterday urging the House to reconsider their decision, and support from the broad community was also consistent.

I was pleased to see in today's news that CBC North has reversed its decision to consolidate morning newscasts. In looking at a news article from the CBC, it states — and I quote: “The about-face comes after strong backlash from newsroom staff, listeners, and politicians, including the premier of Yukon...” It goes on to state: “On Tuesday...” — the Hon. Premier — “... asked fellow northern premiers... of the Northwest Territories and... of Nunavut to join him in writing a letter to Catherine Tait, the president of the CBC, asking her to reverse the decision.”

As I look at the comments on social media — as some others have pointed to — it is encouraging to see and to read that so many Yukoners are supportive of this decision to have CBC North include regional aspects throughout the north.

I quote from some of the posts on the article: “Yay!! Thank you for listening... and not destroying what is a treasure.”

“I told my husband yesterday that I don't think I'd enjoy listening to the morning newscast after the change. So glad CBC is not going through with it.”

“Great news! Thanks for listening, CBC North!”

“... thank you for listening to our response.”

Mr. Speaker, these people stand up for CBC, and so do we in so many ways. As we've heard from members throughout this House, CBC North has touched us in so many ways — personal experiences, experiences in our work, in our life, and with our families — memories that we will cherish forever. I'm encouraged to see that this decision has been reversed, and I look forward to further debate on this motion as amended.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I rise today to speak to Motion No. 116, brought forward by the Member for Whitehorse Centre and further amended by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes.

I'm happy to be speaking to this today. It's very important as a Yukoner to support our local broadcast station — CBC. It certainly has been a part of my life always. We just did a tribute to CKRW recently, and that was one of the statements that I made in that tribute — that CBC or CKRW were always on in the house. It certainly becomes part of us as Yukoners, and some of the background music and the dialogue that happens — it has this strange kind of ability to become part of your life and who you are. When you think back to all the memories, there are always those types of memories that are embedded in us, and so I'm really happy to be able to speak to this motion today.

I thank the members for all of the comments that have been made so far, and to hear that outpouring — I hope that all of the broadcasters who are there today and those who may look back at Hansard or may be listening know how appreciated they are, because they have done tremendous work.

Now, being in the positions that we're in now — it's interesting because it's kind of a love-hate relationship sometimes, but they are good relationships. Yukoners need to have that voice. They are part of our political system as journalists to ensure that they are telling the stories to our citizens, and so it is very important.

I want to reiterate the importance of our national broadcaster and its presence in our three northern territories, which are so unique to Canada and very diverse. In the north, many communities rely heavily on CBC to provide their news and have little or no alternative. Sometimes, I think, folks in the south forget that — that these are some of our main mechanisms to ensure that people are informed about what's happening, and when we do have emergencies or when we have different things happening in our community, our radio is our first go-to and something that, for me, is the very first thing that I do in the morning — I turn on CBC and I listen to the first news, and then I move to the next broadcaster and the next one so that we are getting that balance. I always try to get that balanced view of what's going on from all of our local broadcasters.

Here in Whitehorse, we have seen both the *Yukon News* and the *Whitehorse Star* shrink in size over the last several years. We are already losing that invaluable local coverage, and we do want to acknowledge and commend the excellent journalists who have served the territory in all of these forms of communication for our territory.

The story of the decline of media is being repeated across the south as well, most recently with the layoffs announced at the *StarMetro* papers this week, and our own Northern Native Broadcasting, Yukon is also struggling with reduced funding.

It's a constant battle to ensure that they have the resources that they need to continue the important work that was started years ago. It was really a part of the strategy with self-government. I remember those days when Northern Native Broadcasting was established to bring that other part of the voice and bring that perspective to our First Nation communities and it has grown as well. So, there are a lot of struggles going on with our northern broadcasting. I just wanted to acknowledge that as well today.

At this time when we are losing local news left and right, we need CBC more than ever. Changing the CBC to a pan-territorial broadcaster would have been another step down the slope to end local news. Really, I am thrilled that the decision was reversed and that we're having somewhat of a different conversation today, but I certainly have listened to all of the comments that have been made today, and the concern that we are maybe facing those types of decisions again down the road may be very real.

Of course, with all due respect, what happens in Yellowknife and Iqaluit has very little bearing sometimes on Whitehorse, Beaver Creek, Carmacks, Watson Lake, or other communities in the Yukon. Listeners want local news, not news from thousands of kilometres away; in fact, Yukon and Nunavut are literally at opposite ends of the country. Yukoners have their own unique voice and their own issues that need to be addressed in local media.

On December 9, 2016, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages. Yukon is known to be home to eight different First Nation languages: Tlingit, Gwich'in, Hän, Upper Tanana, Northern Tutchone, Southern Tutchone, Tagish, and Kaska. When you think about that fact, you can see how indeed Yukon literally has its own voice and is so unique.

CBC plays an active role to advance the goals identified within the International Year of Indigenous Languages. One of these goals is — and I quote: “Mainstreaming the knowledge areas and values of indigenous peoples and cultures within broader sociocultural... domains...” For instance, Paul Kennedy recently spent some time in Whitehorse co-hosting a series of radio plays with people from the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in Old Crow and with the Gwaandak Theatre company in partnership with the Vuntut Gwitchin Government. Together, they attempted to preserve the language through a series of bilingual radio plays. I had the opportunity to go and see that live performance and to watch the community members interact and tell stories in their language, in that bilingual format, and it was beautiful. Those are some of the values that CBC also brings. I just wanted to highlight that piece.

Christine Genier, a citizen of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, is now the host for *Yukon Morning*. Christine Genier is part of the ancient people of this land, of this Yukon. The traditional territory that they share with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation is the land that we stand on today. Having her voice as a local

broadcaster and storyteller in her own right has added so much value to CBC. We miss Sandi Coleman, but I'm happy to see a Yukon First Nation woman from this land take on that role, and I'm very proud that step has been taken. She comes from a long line of storytellers and so she comes by it rightfully for sure.

CBC is not only a provider of local news but a cultural institution, especially here in Yukon. I grew up listening to CBC, and it does become part of a lot of the memories. I remember there was one show — and I can't remember; I've been trying to remember all day what it was called; somebody will probably tell me after maybe hearing me speak about it — but there used to be a political show that you could call into every morning. My grandfather, George Edzerza, used to call into it all the time. You could always tell. They would say — you know, it was almost a morning, everyday thing. My grandfather would call in and they would have a political discussion about the issues of the day. That formed such a huge part of one of my most precious memories of my grandfather who was a very strong Liberal supporter. This debate would happen live every day. When I was thinking back about CBC, I was thinking about that and just how again CBC coverage is such a deep part of Yukon's social fabric and culture. It's more than just a radio station; it's part of our Yukon lives. CBC is so rooted in the lives of all Yukoners.

One memory I have as an adult and in my career — I remember clearly the one interview that stands out the most for me was when I was Director of Justice for Kwanlin Dün. Chief Doris Bill and I did a live interview with Sandi Coleman just after a murder of a young person in the Kwanlin Dün community. The whole territory was reeling over this. It was just one of the most devastating situations. We were working to communicate with the local community; we were working to communicate with the broader community and really just trying to have this — to communicate with the entire Yukon about what was happening in real time. That interview helped a lot of people because everyone was struggling with what to do, how they could help. When we ended up speaking — Sandi Coleman talked about being a mother of a young woman as well, and so did Chief Doris Bill. We're all mothers having this conversation about the loss of this beautiful innocent young person. That interview stood out probably the most to me because I still have people today — and this was years ago already — talk about how that was an important interview and message that they heard and realized that what was happening in the community was not a First Nation issue; it was a Yukon issue and it really resonated with the entire Yukon. It brought us together in a way that was very special and unique, and it was part of the catalyst for change in our community. Not having that opportunity to be a direct voice and to not have that opportunity to speak to a local reporter would have been an opportunity lost and potentially may have had a different outcome for Yukon in that respect. I just really admire the work that CBC does and the compassion that they have.

CBC has always been there as an institute that we can rely on for stories that relate to our lives. Whether they are tragic or positive or somewhere in the middle, it is something that we have come to rely on.

So, we need those voices to be heard. Our communities are unique. The stories are part of the canvas of our identity. As the Minister of Tourism and Culture, I know very well how media are part of the heritage and it enables us to collect those memories. I can't emphasize enough how important media outlets are to us.

Again, I was happy that the decision was reversed — I heard it just as I was leaving my house this morning — after the public outcry. I think that it is great that Yukoners have stepped up and have voiced their concern and have protected this important institution that we have. I respect the need to find efficiencies, but depriving Yukoners of local news is not the way to go. Yukoners want CBC local coverage and they deserve it.

I fully support the Premier to convey in writing the importance of regional programming in the north to the federal Minister of Canadian Heritage and I fully support the House to urge the Government of Canada to continue funding CBC in order to maintain regional services in the north.

I want to congratulate the Premier for working in a timely manner with his northern counterparts on this issue. When I attend the federal-provincial-territorial ministers meetings on heritage, I always take the opportunity, absolutely, to advocate for our Yukon and for our service providers.

My most recent meeting with the heritage ministers across the country and the federal minister happened last June in Halifax. We talked about a number of matters, and the focus of the most recent meeting was strengthening the creative economy, strengthening culture and heritage infrastructure and resources, and strengthening culture and heritage promotion in Canada. There were some good outcomes of this meeting, and I am absolutely looking forward to bringing Yukon's voice back to the FPT meeting that will happen sometime in the new year. I am looking forward to bringing our Yukon concerns and northern concerns and potentially working collaboratively with the other ministers from the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to bring that collective voice forward to ensure that our new minister is well aware of our support of CBC and of all of our broadcasters in the Yukon and how vital they are to us.

Today, we stand with CBC Yukon, and I again thank the members for all of the comments that were brought forward. I thank the Member for Whitehorse Centre for bringing this motion forward, I thank our member for the amendment, and I look forward to further discussion today.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I want to thank the House for the opportunity to address this issue today. As a former journalist, there is so much to talk about when it comes to the CBC and media and the importance of these avenues for public discourse. They are vital to our society.

Today, as a society, we're in a very strange place. As a Legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're in a strange place this afternoon — weird, even. Communication is difficult. It is tricky, and we have all learned a lesson about that today — a tough lesson.

I'll attempt to cut through the chaff to find the threads of commonality that bind us — that bind us as communities and

that bind us here in this House — because that's really what is at the heart of this debate. This afternoon, at its heart, we're debating and expressing support for that which unites us.

We all support the CBC. Every one of us here this afternoon supports the CBC. That's clear. It's clear from the heartfelt words that we've had from many members in the House this afternoon. We want it to be well-funded, supported, and enhanced if possible. This is good, and it's important.

So, this afternoon, I stand with you all. I support the various motions that we have brought before this House in the past 48 hours. I personally support the CBC. I support CBC North, I support funding the CBC, I support funding CBC North, I support a stronger CBC, and I support a stronger CBC North. I support this myriad of approaches, because I believe in news and features on sports and weather and profiles and advocacy. I believe in shining light into the shadows. I cherish accurate information. I believe in the transmission of accurate information to society. I believe in an informed society, and I believe that it is very important if we're going to have a strong democracy. I've heard that from the Leader of the Third Party, the Member for Whitehorse Centre, and the Member for Lake Laberge this afternoon. I will note that, like my colleague the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, I have a lot of respect for broadcaster Elyn Jones' even-keel approach to relaying the news in the morning and also for the once ink-stained Chris Windeyer — who shepherded my former shop and is now a broadcaster at CBC — for Nancy Thomson and for my old colleagues, Dave Croft and Dave White, and for Leonard Linklater.

I could go on and sing the praises of many — there are so many talented individuals in this community who gather and disseminate information to Yukon citizens. Producers, writers, technicians, editors, photographers, videographers, filmmakers — the gathering, vetting, and transmitting of accurate, interesting information is a complicated and intense business. And, of course, these individuals — both in front of the mics, cameras, and notebooks and those behind them — deserve recognition as well. So, hats off to them — they do incredibly important work.

This afternoon, we were to debate the continuance of the CBC broadcast of local news in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and Yukon. That is because it is invaluable to each individual in the unique region here on the enormous frontier of this great nation. These are our stories; they are our issues.

The issues here in the Yukon are different from those in the NWT and Nunavut. They are not better or more important, but they are different, and they are more relevant to us. The news we share locally is vital to making decisions. The local news is vital to celebrating our successes. It is vital if we are to learn from our mistakes, and today that local knowledge — that local sharing of information — has never been more important because, as a society — as I noted at the outset of my remarks — we are in a very strange place — a weird place. Why is that? It is because we are awash in information. We are, in fact, drowning in it. We are gorging on it, and yet we remain hungry for it.

We are continually searching for it, and the market is fractured. News media is transitory and ever-changing. It is rarely curated, and so, as we devour it, we must question it. We don't trust it. We shouldn't trust it, in many cases, because that supply of information from a myriad of sources, each with its own perspective or agenda — unedited or often not verified — is tainted. The flow of information isn't clean and tidy like it was. It is sometimes twisted, warped, distorted, misleading, wrong — and that dims the light and encourages shadows. It weakens us and it divides us.

Even though we have more channels, avenues, portals, vehicles, apps, websites, blogs, and blog websites available to us, there are gaps. One of the biggest gaps is curated general local news. The CBC fills that gap with professional, edited, verified, solid information, and that makes it important — crucial. Up here in the Yukon, it's one part of the mix, because here we have five or more newspapers and magazines and four or more broadcasters and bloggers, columnists, and filmmakers — we're fortunate to have such a richness.

Today, we acted together in support, and we were successful in making our concern known. We imposed a decision that did not recognize our regional differences. As communities, as one, we opposed a decision that would have seriously impeded public discourse in our regions, and that collective voice was heard. This is a good decision for the territories, because the CBC unites our nation and unites our communities, and in this case, it unites us.

Even if that message has been unfortunately garbled, we have been united in our support for this national, regional, and local treasure. Long may it continue telling our stories. Long may our local media, in all their mediums, continue telling our stories. Long may it continue to shine, Mr. Speaker, because their stories unite us sea to sea to sea and, in this case, bench to bench.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on Motion No. 116 as amended?

If the member now speaks, she will close debate.

Does any other member wish to speak on this motion?

Ms. Hanson: It has been interesting and fascinating listening to the comments and to the stories that people have told this afternoon. What we have heard this afternoon reinforces the message that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation — CBC, CBC North, CBC Yukon — is incredibly important to us all.

As I was sitting here, I was putting words down as they came to me. One of the things I wanted to say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, is that the motion that was put forward by the New Democratic Party in response to what we had heard on the weekend with respect to the announced cuts was precisely worded the way it was in the context. As I tried to outline in my speech, this is a story that has repeated itself and will repeat itself. When we heard that there were 35 jobs being cut and the impact locally was the consolidation of the morning newscast — it's that kind of information that makes you say, "We've been here before; we'll be here again. The story didn't start on

the weekend.” The 35 cuts may have been held off, as the Minister of Health and Social Services pointed out, but it hasn’t stopped. It has simply been delayed — so it may not be the front line.

When we put forward the motion to restore funding, it was deliberate, Mr. Speaker. There’s a difference between “continue” and “restore”. I was touched by some of the stories that we heard this afternoon. The Premier talked about having the benefit and the opportunity to meet and kibitz and play over the years with CBC employees and staff as they’ve been in the communities, and we all can recall — those of us who have attended back in the day — the Dawson City Music Festival — and attended and listened either at home or in the mad drive on the Friday afternoon to get to the concert at the gazebo on the river. That doesn’t happen anymore, Mr. Speaker. Why? Because there have been cuts.

CBC did a whole series of compilations, for example, of Dawson City Music Festivals — of the best of the best of the festivals and the best of the best of Canadian talent. That doesn’t happen anymore.

We talked about community interviews and the importance of having those skilled professionals out in the community in Dawson City and meeting with the broad spectrum — the horizontal and vertical sort of slice of the community. That’s not happening. Yes, we have wonderful community reporters, but they’re not the CBC. We have the community volunteers like Glenda Bolt, like the folks in Old Crow and from Watson Lake.

Hearing the experiences of the Member for Lake Laberge, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin growing up in different parts of this territory or the Minister of Justice in Nova Scotia — CBC means something to us all. That has never been a question. I never assumed or never doubted, when I put my motion forward, Mr. Speaker, that anybody in this room undervalued the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. But what we had, we no longer have.

Yes, we’ve won a Pyrrhic victory — and it was Pyrrhic because the consolidation of those three newscasts isn’t going to happen right now. The 35 cuts will still happen. Who knows what the next fiscal year will bring? As Joni Mitchell said, you know, “You don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone.” As I said earlier when I used the analogy of the frog in the boiling water, I guess we’re at that stage where we just don’t know what we’ve got. Maybe it will be until it’s gone because, if we’re quite satisfied and quite content to simply say, “Okay government, okay CBC, just continue; continue” — well, what evolves over the next year, five years, or 15 years for CBC will be very different. Some of those changes you can expect as a result of natural progression, but the ability to reflect that local knowledge, as the Minister of Highways and Public Works said, has never been more important.

We acknowledge the efforts of all members and the fact that the Premier wrote to the other premiers. That’s excellent. It’s what we would expect the Premier to do. I hope that this motion, which the members opposite chose to amend to simply reflect their desire to continue with the funding — continue support, continue whatever — they feel that’s satisfactory; I

personally don’t think so. It’s unfortunate too that people just assume that, when there is a motion put forward, that one party is thinking the same as the other. Perhaps it’s because I’ve been around a long time. As I said at the very beginning, I lived through being a public servant during those cuts in the mid-1990s. I saw the systemic impact of those and it wasn’t just the CBC. I saw in the mid-2000s and then in the teens and I saw the beginning of a reversal, and so I was hopeful that I would hear from all members of this House that we want to see that continuation. I don’t believe in the status quo, Mr. Speaker. When there’s a change required, I think we have the right and the ability as members of this Legislative Assembly to urge others to make change — to not be satisfied with the status quo.

I guess that’s all I have to say. It was good to hear people’s appreciation of the CBC — to know that we share that at least. I will let it rest at that.

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

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: 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. White: Agree.

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

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

Motion No. 116, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 113

Clerk: Motion No. 113, standing in the name of Mr. Istchenko.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Kluane:

THAT it is the opinion of this House that licensed firearms owners should not be subjected to forced confiscation of their lawfully acquired personal private property without just cause.

Mr. Istchenko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today to speak to this motion and to give a voice

to the many Yukoners who own, enjoy, and rely on the responsible, safe, and lawful use of firearms. Hopefully, we can get through this without the power going out.

I was encouraged to listen to many of the members of the House speak to the support for CBC in the previous motion and how important it is to stand up for rural and northern people because it is a different way of life. I am hoping that members in the House here today will be supporting this motion. I sure hope they would.

Firearm ownership has been a part of the Yukon life and culture since the founding of our territory. When trappers and prospectors first made their way into the wild and beautiful part of the country, having a trusted firearm at one's side is what allowed many to eat and protect themselves and therefore survive.

Firearms and hunting rights are also given recognition in the legislation and treaty aboriginal rights. These uses and benefits are still experienced today by indigenous and non-indigenous Yukoners alike. In a land where many of its citizens choose to live a lifestyle that includes the humane and ethical harvest of healthy organic game to feed their families, firearms are an essential tool. Along with the Yukon's vast, beautiful wilderness, the abundance of wildlife comes with an equal abundance of predatory species. As such, firearms also play a role in allowing Yukoners to protect their families and livelihood from bears and other dangerous animals. Most often, their role is to protect property or livestock. But in the rare but horrible event of a predator attack, they are a means of personal protection. In that terrible moment when the threat to your life is very real, a firearm being present is often the only element that could prevent a tragedy. I've lived through that on more than one occasion.

Responsible, safe, and lawful use of firearms goes beyond these life-sustaining applications that are essential for northern and rural life. Many Yukoners also enjoy safe and responsible sport and target shooting. I know the Member for Copperbelt North enjoys sport shooting as a hobby and shares this enjoyment with his family. I think that's great. I know he has been a contributing member to the firearm community, so I thank him for those contributions.

Many Yukoners are also law-abiding collectors of firearms. Maybe someone has an interest in the tools of the Klondike Gold Rush or the Great War where so many Canadians and Yukoners demonstrated their resolve to the world in need and who deserve our eternal gratitude for their service and sacrifice. Or perhaps one may not be a firearms user technically but have inherited possessions from their since-departed and dearly loved relatives which are treated as family heirlooms. There are many very valid reasons for owning a variety of firearms. I know I have had a number of family and friends go through this type of real situation. We even have a staff member who, although not technically a firearms user, inherited his grandfather's rifle from his service in World War II. I don't think it would be fair or reasonable for the government to confiscate precious family heirlooms such as this.

Yet, in last month's federal election, we saw the Liberal Party campaign on forcibly confiscating Canadian's private and lawfully acquired property. We all know that elections have a lot of exaggeration and polarizing rhetoric that can be dismissive of the facts or purposely only tell half-stories, and this election was no exception.

I don't really want today to become a rehash of those debates. I think Yukoners and Canadians are tired of the political rhetoric and partisan attacks on this topic. Really, the purpose of this motion today is because a lot of Yukoners are concerned about a particular political promise from the governing party. I think it would be a good thing for us MLAs to say that, on this particular issue, we all disagree. This particular promise is very concerning to licensed firearms owners. The Liberals promised to ban assault and military-grade weapons. I think it's important to address some of that. I see those as purposely political words meant to stir up emotions and fear.

These terms are neither factual in the context of Canadian civilian firearm ownership nor a hallmark of a respectful government, as they are designed to frighten the uninformed. First of all, assault weapons are already prohibited for civilians to own in Canada, and they have been for many years. Just because a civilian's sporting rifle may look like something similar on the outside to a soldier's firearm doesn't mean they function the same way. In fact, they don't at all.

A true assault weapon is a fully automatic machine gun — again, something that has been prohibited in Canada for decades, as I said earlier. I think that is good, and the prohibition should stay in place, but the language used by the federal government is meant to mislead people into thinking that these prohibitions are not currently in place. Further, the term "military grade" is misleading. It is true that many varieties of firearms and their components may share common features with their counterparts employed by the world's armed forces, but to suggest that these modern civilian firearms are military grade is deceiving.

Take, for example, the .30-06 rifle cartridge. I think everyone in here would probably know what that is. This calibre of ammunition is one of the most common and widely used variety over the last century, partially because of its versatility. It has been commonly used here in the Yukon for decades as many hunters' preferred choice. It's effective for a variety of game from caribou to moose. It is legal to use for game as big as bison, although it may be a bit much for sheep. Yet this cartridge was first employed in the United States Army in 1906 and remained in use until the late 1970s. So, does the federal government consider a .30-06 cartridge military grade? Their language and rhetoric suggest so and it is concerning to lawful firearms owners, hunters and trappers in the territory.

So, what is it really about? It's about gang violence in southern Canada. It's about a very real epidemic. More needs to be done to address it. We support effective action to address gang violence and punishing to the full extent of the law any crime that's committed with a firearm, but we do not think that this current proposal by the federal government is the proper policy.

Just about every piece of restrictive gun control legislation introduced since Confederation has failed to stop gang violence or eliminate illegally owned weapons. This type of legislation often comes with the rhetoric I described above in order to distract public attention.

For example, Bill C-51 was passed not to control crime but to distract public attention from the pursuit and to persuade MPs to support the government's proposal to abolish capital punishment back in the day. Or the 1995 *Firearms Act* — Bill C-68 was passed by the Liberal government during a period of declining gun violence. Less than five percent of all violent crimes in Canada involve a firearm and despite decades of tough laws regulating civilian ownership of guns, the other three-quarters of gun-related violent crimes involved handguns and most of them are unregistered. As an aside, people who currently do not register the guns are not law-abiding and they are not going to have a sudden conversion to decide that they want to comply with the law because the government is bringing in a new act. The real motivation for Bill C-68 was a strategic political concern, not anxieties over crime or violence.

And now Bill C-71, *An Act to amend certain Acts and Regulations in relation to firearms*. It was put forward by the Liberal government in Ottawa. It doesn't actually address the issue of gang and gun violence in cities. Instead, it targets law-abiding firearms owners like those who live in the Yukon.

Canadians own guns for a variety of reasons, the most common being hunting or recreational shooting and, in the Yukon, with trapping. The newest legislation senselessly targets law-abiding gun owners. The new backdoor gun registry isn't going to keep Canadians safe, and as I've said, the legislation actually fails to address gang violence or to target gang criminals. The word "gang" doesn't even appear in the legislation.

Canadians believe that putting dangerous criminals behind bars is more important than making life more difficult for those who already follow the law and use firearms safely and responsibly. As I have said, there is no doubt that violence is plaguing the streets of our large cities — it is. These criminals and gang members are using smuggled, prohibited, and therefore illegal handguns in the commission of their crimes and must be dealt with swiftly and decisively. There is no room in a free and just society for disregard of not only the law, but human life, and we agree wholeheartedly — throw the book at the scum. Let's give the police the resources that they need to shut down these gangs and stop the flow of illegal guns. That is who we need to be targeting. We need to be targeting the actual criminals, not our hunters and our northern trappers. Law-abiding, trained, RCMP-vetted and licensed gun owners are not responsible for these atrocities.

When I was writing this, there were some interesting facts that I came up with, which I kind of figured, but this actually made them facts for me. The Yukon has the highest number of licensed firearm owners per capita in the country. We also have the highest number of restricted licence holders per capita, the licence required to own handguns. We also have the highest number of authorized-to-carry, or ATC, permits per capita. These permits are those civilians, meaning those who are not

serving in the military or law enforcement, can obtain to legally carry a handgun for wilderness protection — for prospectors, wilderness tourism operators, big game hunting guides, bush pilots, and the like. Having a rifle slung over one's shoulder is too difficult when suddenly confronted by an angry grizzly or a moose. A sidearm is designed for this very purpose, as opposed to the exaggerations and rhetoric that we sometimes hear.

That's why we are so concerned with the other decision happening federally about potentially bringing in an outright ban for handguns, because all firearms — regardless of function, capacity of ammunition, length, or rate of fire — are all designed for one purpose only: to accurately launch a projectile. What that projectile is aimed at is entirely up to the person who is operating it. Let me be clear — it is extremely important to make sure that those who are licensed are trained and of sound mental health so that they do not hurt themselves or others.

As someone who has spent most of his life around the responsible use of firearms — whether I was learning to hunt as a child or it was through my time with the Canadian Armed Forces or through my continued service with the Canadian Rangers — I disagree with the characterization that firearm owners are dangerous. I want to be clear that firearms are very powerful tools and, as such, should be respected and treated responsibly and safely.

Proper training, care, maintenance, storage, and licences are all essential components of responsible and respectful firearms ownership. I also want to be very clear that a weapon of any sort does not belong in the hands of somebody who is at risk of doing harm to themselves or to anyone.

It is incumbent upon a responsible government to ensure that we do everything that we can to keep weapons out of the wrong hands while providing the support that people with mental health challenges require. That is an important part of this discussion as well.

What are we doing to support those struggling with mental health? Is it enough? I don't think so. I think that everyone in this House agrees with me on that point, but that is a discussion that we have had many times in this House, and I am sure that we will have it many more times. It isn't the focus of today's motion.

I am not suggesting that I have all the answers to the problems that are affecting the country in our big cities, but I do not think that it is right for the federal government to suggest that it would forcibly confiscate Yukoners' lawfully acquired property. These firearm owners have followed the law. They continue to follow the law, and they are doing so safely and responsibly. The Liberal government in Ottawa has budgeted \$400 million to conduct this confiscation program.

Even if you aren't a gun owner, do you believe that it is a responsible use of our tax dollars to confiscate lawfully acquired property from law-abiding citizens? Wouldn't those hundred of millions of tax dollars be better used to stop actual criminals and provide mental health support? I think so. I don't know about everybody else, but I sure think so.

Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that legal firearm owners are among the safest people in society. When we have this discussion, I think that we need to understand this very real and very important distinction.

There are criminals with firearms, and then there are target shooters, hunters, competitive shooters, and legal citizens who are not causing any problems at all. That is what this motion is about — standing up for those in our community, those Yukoners who have followed the law, who are doing so safely, and who will continue to do so safely.

I know that every single person in this House wants to stop gun violence, but I think we need to focus on policies that actually do that.

I hope that my words today were able to convince some members in this House or all members of this House about the merits of this motion and its intentions. I urge all members to support licensed Yukon firearms owners and support this motion. I think it's important that we stand up for Yukoners. I have said it in this House before, and I have said it many times: I don't think that we are always represented quite correctly at the federal level, and I don't think it's fair to Yukoners. Quite often, Yukoners show their voice. I'm in the Legislative Assembly today showing my voice in support of all of the licensed Yukon firearms owners, and I sure hope everyone supports this motion.

Mr. Cathers: I'm pleased to rise today, and I would like to thank my colleague, the Member for Kluane, for bringing this motion forward and for the excellent job that he did in introducing it.

This is an issue where we recognize that there were commitments made at a federal election in a very heated election campaign that — I think it's fair to say that many Canadians and Yukoners were disappointed by the tone of the rhetoric that occurred. One thing that is important to keep in mind is that we need to remember, in society, that, if democracy and society are to function and if this country is to remain a united federation where people feel that, while they may not agree with the government of the day, generally speaking, the government is trying to protect their rights — it's important for everyone to remember that we need to respect what our fellow Canadians value, even if it is not important to us. In this particular area, the right to own firearms for purposes including hunting is very important to a great many Canadians, including Yukoners. As my colleague, the Member for Kluane, noted, the Yukon has the highest number of registered firearm owners in the country and the highest rate of licensed firearm ownership in the country.

It is important to people across this territory who use firearms for hunting, including subsistence hunting, pursuant to the UFA and First Nation final agreements, as well as for self defence and defence of animals and livestock.

For an urban voter in downtown Toronto, the possibility that you might have to defend your animals from a carnivore if you live in rural Yukon is something that is not well understood, but I know that many people in this territory have had to do that.

In fact, as another small example, for people who live in rural Yukon, such as many of my constituents — not everyone even has indoor plumbing and facilities — if you have a bear on the prowl in the area, having a firearm is one way of keeping yourself safe and your family safe.

I want to go to a few specific examples here and talk about the fact that, in terms of what was promised by the federal government — as noted by my colleague, the Member for Kluane — the cost estimates that they gave at the low end were \$400 million. At the higher end, even federal Minister Blair admitted that it could cost up to \$600 million to confiscate one-quarter million guns from Canadians. It's important for people who are not aware of it to keep in mind that the past practice in Canada has been that, if firearms laws were changed, previously legal firearms that were no longer legal to sell — the owners of those firearms were able to keep those firearms but not able to resell them. The change on the step across the line into what has been called a “buyback” — but is in fact “confiscation” — is a major change that is deeply disturbing to many Canadians. It's a gentle-sounding word for what it really is — forced confiscation of private property. With the cost estimates of over a half-billion dollars, it's a significant expenditure that could better be spent in other areas.

Now, the federal government — or the federal Liberal party — in making that announcement also talked about increasing resources for police, but it should be noted that a challenge that is being faced across the country by the RCMP is in recruiting a sufficient number of people to fulfill their current duties. So, if they're already short of RCMP members across the country, adding more duties does not mean they will be able to actually fulfill those duties. Those resources, as noted by my colleague, the Member for Kluane, would be better directed to going after organized crime and drug trafficking. It's important to recognize that much of the violence that has upset urban voters is in direct connection to organized crime and illegal drug trafficking. The gun violence, while serious — and, of course, every single death from gun violence or from a drug overdose is a tragedy — the violence itself is mostly a symptom of organized crime and illegal drug trafficking.

So, returning to the principle of the matter: In terms of the buy-back program, government is telling people how much they will pay, but your legal rights are overturned and you are made a criminal if you refuse to surrender property that you legally acquired. For many Canadians and many Yukoners, the principle of this is unacceptable. For people who believe that private property should be protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, they believe this is fundamentally wrong. For people who believe that every person has a god-given right to self-defence and to defend their families, they believe that confiscation is fundamentally wrong. For hunters who are worried about whether their guns will be confiscated — as my colleague noted, in fact, if the term “military assault rifles” that has been used by the federal Liberals is an ambiguous term, and in terms of rifles that were developed for military purposes and used for military purposes, including assaulting enemy positions — the Lee-Enfield .303 that is widely used by many Yukoners, including the Canadian

Rangers and many people as their hunting rifle, is itself a military weapon. The question of whether the government is going to consider confiscating those is an issue that is not only greatly concerning to Yukoners but also a potential violation of the rights of First Nation citizens whose subsistence hunting rights are protected in the final agreements.

For people who live in urban areas or even in the Yukon who have not grown up with firearms, hunting, or target shooting, they may not understand why other Canadians value firearms in their lives, but as I noted, it is important, if our society is to function, to respect what our fellow Canadians value and the things that are important to them.

In terms of comparison, in terms of the opioid deaths to which I referred which violence in urban areas is largely a symptom of — according to Statistics Canada, the opioid-related fatalities in Canada in the past two and a half years were 12,800 opioid-related deaths between January 2016 and March 2019. If you look at the increase between 2016 and 2018, there is a growth from 3,023 deaths in 2016 to 4,588 deaths in 2018.

In comparison, Mr. Speaker, the types of guns that are being talked about, according to Statistics Canada data, would fall under the rifle or shotgun category, and the number of homicides in 2018 committed with a rifle or shotgun was only 56, which, in comparison to that number of 4,588 due to opioid overdose, is but a fraction of that problem, and of course, though, every one of them is a tragedy itself.

Speaker: Order.

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

Debate on Motion No. 113 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled November 20, 2019:

34-3-24

Yukon Housing Corporation Annual Report — For the year ended March 31, 2019 (Frost)