



Yukon Legislative Assembly

1st Session

33rd Legislature

Index to **HANSARD**

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NOTE

The 2014 Fall Sitting of the First Session of the Thirty-Third Legislature occupies two volumes

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Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 160

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, October 23, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME CONSTITUENCY PORTFOLIO

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Vuntut Gwitchin
Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
Patti McLeod	Watson Lake

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

New Democratic Party

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

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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Deputy Clerk	Linda Kolody
Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Rudy Couture
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Doris McLean
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, October 23, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Speaker: Please remain standing for a moment of silence in memory of and respect for Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo who were pointlessly murdered in two separate acts of cowardice this week.

Moment of silence observed

INTRODUCTION OF PAGES

Speaker: Please be seated. Welcome back, everyone.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the following students will be serving the House as legislative pages for the 2014 Fall Sitting. I will apologize now if I mispronounce any of their names. They are Vaskor Chowdhury, Eric Muir-Cressman, Arman Sharma, Ashley Harris and Koda Eckert-Maret from F.H. Collins Secondary School, and Toshibaa Govindaraj, Courtney Brown and Alison Travill from Vanier Catholic Secondary School. Today we have with us Koda and Alison. I would like to ask all members to make them feel welcome today.

Applause

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes that have been made to the Order Paper, and bear with me, there are quite a few.

The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as they are outdated: Motions No. 245, 354 and 512, standing in the name of the Leader of the Official Opposition; Motions No. 517, 521, 622 and 651, standing in the name of the Leader of the Third Party; Motion No. 589 standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt South, and Motion No. 701, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as the action requested in the motion has been fulfilled in whole or in part: Motions No. 35, 92, 151, 302, 489, 592, 599 and 666, standing in the name of the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin; Motions No. 41, 181, 491 and 674, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King; Motion No. 43, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun; Motions No. 47, 193, 221, 290, 308, 416, 577, 578, 609 and 664, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake; Motion No. 61, standing in the name of the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes; Motion No. 119, standing in the name of the Minister of Environment; Motion No. 440, standing in the name of the Leader of the Official Opposition; Motions No. 595 and 678, standing in the name of the Leader of the Third Party; Motion No. 614, standing in the

name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin; and Motion No. 621, standing in the name of the Member for Riverdale South.

Motion No. 137, standing in the name of the Leader of the Official Opposition and Motion No. 292, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King have been removed from the Order Paper at the request of those members.

Motion No. 375, standing in the name of the Leader of the Official Opposition has been removed from the Order Paper as it refers to a bill that is no longer before the Parliament of Canada.

Motion No. 501, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake has been removed from the Order Paper as it is the same as Motion No. 216 standing in the name of the Premier.

Finally, Written Question No. 6, standing in the name of the Member for Riverdale South has been removed from the Order Paper as it is now outdated.

Speaker's statement re: Refurbishment of the Mace

Speaker: Prior to proceeding to Daily Routine, I would like to draw everyone's attention to our Mace. Yukon's Mace, which was acquired in 1972, was a gift from the Parliament of Canada. The Mace is made of sterling silver and is gold-plated. However, in recent years the Mace has been showing its age and this past summer we had it re-plated. Murdoch's Gem Shop provides ongoing maintenance of the Mace; however, re-plating the Mace was a much bigger job.

The Ontario Legislative Assembly assisted us in finding a jeweller who could do this work. Corona Jewellery Company in Toronto, under the direction of Michael Minister, refurbished the Mace. Corona has experience with this specialized kind of work, having refurbished the Ontario Legislature's Mace in 2009.

In re-plating and cleaning the Mace, Mr. Minister and his crew approached the task as one would approach an article of great historical significance. They started with almost forensic-like detailing. The Mace was photographed from multiple angles to ensure that, when reassembled, everything would fit properly together. Each piece was recorded and mapped and a guide of reassembly was produced.

Ultimately, there were over 50 pieces, each unique and crucial to the Mace. Special jigs were made to handle some of the larger pieces, one of which was over 12 inches long. When the Mace was made, many of the pieces were assembled using bolts that have been, over the years, frozen in place by heavy oxidation. To solve this problem, Corona manufactured a custom-made wrench that fit perfectly and allowed for the careful and proper torque to remove the bolts.

Because of the unique nature and the size of the pieces for the Mace and the fact that some areas were suffering from oxidation, it was decided that each piece would have to be hand-polished prior to reassembly to remove any tarnish. This would allow for a uniform and perfect finish.

Polishing took over 24 hours of work by hand. Prior to assembly, each piece was plated with nickel to slow the

natural oxidation process that occurred on the original silver Mace. Each piece was then plated again, this time with yellow gold. The coats of arms of Canada and Yukon were plated in white gold to better show off the beautiful hand engravings that were done previously on the original Mace.

The Mace was ultimately reassembled into its former style and grace, and Mr. Minister assures me that no pieces were left over.

On behalf of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, I would like to thank the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for finding a jeweller to do the work, for safeguarding the Mace while it was in Ontario and for having Inspector Rick Boon, their operations manager, escort the Mace back to Whitehorse.

I'd also like to thank Corona Jewellery for the exemplary work they did. Thanks to them, the symbol of our democratic process has been restored to its original beauty.

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will now proceed with the Order Paper.

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As Canadians, we have seen in this past week an unprecedented attack on our democracy.

On Monday, a cowardly and senseless attack took the life of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. Warrant Officer Vincent was a 28-year veteran of our Armed Forces.

Yesterday, the entire country was shaken as violence struck at the heart of our nation. Corporal Nathan Cirillo, a young reservist with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, was deliberately targeted and taken from us as he stood guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the War Memorial in Ottawa.

The Parliament of Canada itself then came under attack.

Let us not harbour any illusions about the nature of these despicable events. Canada is a free and democratic country that cherishes human rights and the rule of law. Canada is a free and democratic country where we agree to disagree civilly. I want us all to remember that the women and the men of our Armed Forces volunteer to serve this country. They need no coercion or arm-twisting to serve. Such is their devotion and sense of duty to our democracy.

Sometimes people are tempted to speak in abstract terms about the military, but we all need to remember that the military is Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent. The military is Corporal Nathan Cirillo. The military is the Unknown Soldier, guarded honourably by Corporal Cirillo until the last moments of his life. The military is our most elderly veteran and our newest volunteer.

Likewise, democracy is not an abstract concept. Democracy is what allows each of us to stand here before you today as elected representatives of our communities. Democracy is what allows us to express our differences peacefully without threats of violence or intimidation. What

we cherish, we must protect. We have a duty to protect our democracy.

As we have seen, there are those whose hatred and fear of freedom and democracy compels them to seek to destroy us. This is not an abstraction either. The threats are real and we must be vigilant. We will not be intimidated or silenced. We will not flinch in the face of evil.

As many of us have watched, read or listened to the coverage of yesterday's events in Ottawa, we saw Canadians coming to the aid of other Canadians. We saw citizens, first responders — our security, our police forces and others — put their lives at risk. Each of us has a role in showing our resolve and our gratitude to our Armed Forces for protecting our democracy.

In this House, we can do this by diligently carrying on with the daily work of democracy. In our communities, we can do this by feeling a sense of pride in our schools and our workplaces in this free, open, democratic society. As Yukoners go about their work today, they do so knowing that they live in a country where the rule of law is paramount, where their rights and freedoms are protected, where they are free to contribute to building this great country of ours.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let this day and the days ahead be about protecting Canada and building Canada together. While there are those determined to destroy our democracy, we are even more determined to strengthen and grow it. We will move forward with the work of this House and with the many tasks that we carry out in the interest of Yukoners and other Canadians. We will carry in our hearts and minds the knowledge of the sacrifices made and the lives put at risk over this past week and through the decades. We will be thankful for what our fellow Canadians have given, and we will endeavour to live our lives with the same commitment and dedication. Our love of Canada and all it represents and our determination and vigilance in protecting our home will sustain us.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, yesterday Canadians witnessed a second unspeakable act of cruelty in less than a week. A Canadian soldier guarding the tomb of one of his comrades from a war that began a century ago was murdered in cold blood by an assailant about whom we know still little. We cannot give enough thanks to the first responders from the police services, the military and the parliamentary security that bravely rose to the occasion and put their lives at risk to secure Parliament and downtown Ottawa.

We share in the grief that comes with the violation of the sacred spaces of our democracy. We know that Canadians will stand together and, once the dust has settled on this terrible incident, rise to the occasion and reclaim them. We pay tribute to Corporal Nathan Cirillo, a Hamilton-based reservist from the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Corporal Cirillo, like many Canadians, gave his time above and beyond a regular career to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces on evenings and some weekends.

This is time that Corporal Cirillo chose to spend training and drilling with the Highlanders instead of with his family.

As Canadians, we hold this kind of dedication to public service and to protecting our country in the highest regard. My hope is that Yukoners and Canadians will not only remember Corporal Cirillo as a victim of this heinous crime, but as a role model who believed in a greater good and who gave his time and his life on behalf of those beliefs. Our democracy, and the values that underpin it, are paramount. It's thanks to those like Corporal Cirillo who answer the call to public service that we continue to enjoy the collective benefits of our society.

This type of tragedy affects so many, from the courageous passerby who selflessly tried to save Corporal Cirillo's life, to the millions of us in Canada and abroad who watched and worried in this age of instant media, but not instant resolution. We should all take a moment to reflect on the values and the foundation of our identity and our democracy as Canadians: compassion, community, solidarity.

May Nathan Cirillo rest in peace. May we as Canadians stand together and reaffirm our resolve to build a better world where love, hope and optimism prevail over hate, fear and despair.

Mr. Silver: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Liberal Party to pay tribute to democracy and to those who defend it. We may be far geographically from the events of last week, but that doesn't diminish their impact here. These events are a shared and a national tragedy.

We have been very fortunate as a country that so few men and women have had to sacrifice their lives on Canadian soil to defend our democracy. The targets of yesterday's attack were symbols of our nationalism and they were meant to rock us to the core. What we must not forget is that at that core, we are a very proud democracy, a welcoming and peaceful nation, a country that has open arms, open minds and open hearts. We cannot allow that to change, as these are the values and the ideals upon which we must rely in those days ahead.

When looking at the pictures of the reservist killed in Ottawa, I can't help but think about our lifestyles and how we are the exception to the rule, Mr. Speaker. We are so privileged as Canadians. We are privileged to be able to work and to play. Sometimes we forget that most people on this planet don't have the same rights and freedoms that we enjoy. We have earned these freedoms, absolutely, but we should never forget the men and women who have given us these privileges.

As we prepare for another military action, I wonder and I hope: Are we prepared to support our veterans as they return from active duty? Our thoughts and our prayers are with the families and the friends of the victims of yesterday's tragic events, including those of Corporal Nathan Cirillo and as well, those of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent who died on Monday. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude on behalf of my constituents, on behalf of the Yukon Liberal Party and all Yukoners to the brave men and women who selflessly and courageously serve and protect our great nation. Thank you.

In remembrance of Dr. Anne Williams

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take advantage of the opening day of this session to pay formal tribute to a woman who left us much too soon. Dr. Anne Williams passed away suddenly on May 20, 2014.

Dr. Williams was originally from the Yukon, but she didn't return home until after her medical training was completed in about 1986 when she re-established her roots here in the territory.

She spent the first five years of her medical career here in the territory doing locums in many communities throughout the Yukon. Her Whitehorse-based practice, which she managed from 1992 to 2007, involved what is commonly known as a cradle-to-grave care. She provided emergency room coverage, inpatient care, operating room assists, maternity care and she served on numerous committees over the years. Starting in 2008, Anne began providing regular clinical coverage in numerous communities such as Old Crow, Destruction Bay, Beaver Creek and Haines Junction.

In fact, I'm sure that Anne and her husband Bruce spent many of the best times of their lives on the North Alaska Highway at a cabin they had there. In the last few years though, Dr. Williams stepped away from clinical practice into administrative roles that challenged her in different ways. In fact, I remember when I was appointed the Minister Health and Social Services for the Government of Yukon, the very first member of the medical community in the territory who I consulted was Anne Williams. After Anne expressed deep sympathy for my appointment, she then continued over the next two and half years to provide invaluable advice to me and to the medical community.

In April 2013, she became medical advisor to the Yukon. She worked closely with staff at the Insured Health Services branch in Whitehorse. It is wonderful to see how easily she transitioned to her new position, which included an active role at the medical director's table and at the annual national workshop on medical audit.

It is wonderful to see how easily she transitioned to her new position, which included an active role at the medical director's table and at the Annual National Workshop on Medical Audit.

Additionally, Dr. Williams was an active participant on the collaborative care initiative working group and the family physician working group. Dr. Williams also provided forensic examinations to victims of sexual assault. She worked at improving supports for child victims and witnesses of crime, among the other work that she did.

We don't have time — or I don't have time here — to really detail everything that she did and meant to all of our communities. She was truly a pillar in the medical community and was fully committed to Yukon and its people.

Besides being a good physician and an able advisor, Anne Williams was a warm and caring woman who gave generously of herself. She will be missed.

I would like to take the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to recognize Bruce Williams and Jessica — Bruce, her husband, and Jessica, her wonderful daughter — who came here to

share in this tribute today. I hope all members will welcome them to the House.

Applause

In recognition of Poverty and Homelessness Action Week

Hon. Mr. Graham: I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Poverty and Homelessness Action Week.

This year the theme for this past week was food security. Food security is defined by the World Health Organization as “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.”

The Department of Health and Social Services is keenly aware of the link between food security and health and a person’s well-being.

Having access to nutritious food is a cornerstone of a healthy, productive life. To help raise awareness of this issue, we have partnered with the Anti-Poverty Coalition to bring up Jonathan Bird, food security advocate, who gave a brief public presentation this week on how to cultivate a resilient community through better options to end hunger.

I also had the opportunity to meet with members of the Anti-Poverty Coalition and Jonathan yesterday, and we had an interesting and productive meeting. I wish to commend the Anti-Poverty Coalition for heightening Yukoners’ awareness of this important topic.

This year the Department of Health and Social Services is contributing \$95,000 to the Yukon Food for Learning Association to help support school-based nutrition programs. As well, From the Ground Up Yukon Healthy Choice Fundraiser is supported by our health promotion unit. This fall, almost 3,500 boxes of fresh vegetables were sold, totalling almost 50,000 pounds. Of these, 437 boxes were donated to various organizations to help feed those who have difficulty accessing nutritious food.

Local organizations, such as the Salvation Army and the Whitehorse Food Bank, provide an invaluable service to help feed and support Yukoners who cannot access enough healthy food to feed themselves or their family. This year, our department is providing \$569,000 to the Salvation Army to help support them in their program in the territory. Just this spring, you will remember that the Premier and I were fortunate enough to be able to provide the Food Bank with a \$750,000 grant to assist with the purchase of its property on Alexander Street, here in Whitehorse.

In closing, I want to give thanks and extend my appreciation to the many non-profit organizations and the individuals behind these organizations who work tirelessly to address issues of poverty and homelessness. While government most definitely has a role in supporting Yukoners in need, poverty and homelessness is a matter that can only be addressed by all of us working collaboratively. Too often, governments provide a great deal of assistance and there are still cracks that many individuals fall through. We want to thank the NGOs for, in many cases, filling those cracks.

I think that by involving the broader community, we will eventually defeat homelessness and poverty. Thank you very much.

Ms. Stick: I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to also pay tribute to Poverty and Homelessness Action Week, which just ended yesterday.

The theme this year had to do with food security, an issue that affects every Yukoner. We know this is true when we witness what happens in our grocery stores when a highway is closed or a truck overturns — bare shelves, no fresh fruit or vegetables. We are all impacted. But, more importantly, food security affects individuals and families living in poverty or those on the edge of poverty. The statistics and information gathered point to continuing food insecurity faced by many in the Yukon. These include: the continuing rise of numbers at the food bank — a 9.5-percent increase over the last year — and the increasing numbers at the Salvation Army — in one week alone in September 1,248 plates of food were served. Yukon Food for Learning — 16,385 meals served in one week in 27 schools across the Yukon.

These are but a few of the food programs that are offered throughout the Yukon to provide food or nutritious meals to Yukoners. Behind these numbers are individuals, families and children who are paying more and more of their income toward rent, individuals struggling to make ends meet on EI or social assistance, the homeless and the working poor.

Lack of nutritious food impacts the long-term health outcomes for infants and children and can lead to lifelong learning and health problems. Upstream strategies impact our costs for health care and education downstream.

We are fortunate to see the numbers growing for local food producers and we are fortunate to see initiatives such as the Potluck Food Co-Op, and we have many thanks to give to the Whitehorse Food Bank, the Salvation Army, weekend soup kitchens, Food for Learning — the list goes on.

The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition is calling for a food security strategy for Yukon, which could use the 2010 Yukon Nutrition Framework as a starting point. As well, they are calling on the federal government for a federal anti-poverty plan to address these concerns. Food security impacts us all and it should be of concern to us.

Thank you.

Mr. Silver: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Liberal Party to pay tribute to Poverty and Homelessness Action Week, which ran from October 16 to 22. Since 2005, this week has raised awareness for the plight of hunger and homelessness throughout community engagement activities.

As mentioned, this year’s theme was food security as a pertinent issue for us in the north. We all know our lifeline to the south may be very fragile. Food insecurity in the Yukon is a concern that affects us all. The need for programs to help fight food insecurity has steadily been rising in Whitehorse. According to the Whitehorse Food Bank’s monthly statistics, 585 households in our communities needed to use the food bank in September, and this is an increase of 11 percent from

September of last year. Much of this need is attributed to the rising cost of living here in the Yukon.

The Anti-Poverty Coalition has spent the last week hosting a number of events to help raise awareness of hunger issues here in the community, including a food bank receipt challenge and a bring-a-blanket, leave-a-blanket movie night. This year's campaign was also used to call upon the federal government to create a national strategy to address poverty across Canada.

I had an opportunity to speak with the keynote speaker Jonathan Bird this week and to discuss his ongoing efforts to build sustainable food networking in Vancouver and his experiences managing affordable housing projects — a fascinating conversation. His approach to creating a food network where everyone is engaged in all of the steps of the process and creating a hands-up approach is something that we can absolutely support. This is taking the concept beyond just a soup kitchen and into a community working together for food security for us all.

I would like to thank many of the organizations for their hard work in helping our community and the needs of our community. The Whitehorse Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity Yukon, Salvation Army, the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, Maryhouse, Blood Ties Four Directions, the Boys and Girls Club, the Watson Lake Soup Kitchen and the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition for their ongoing efforts.

In recognition of Waste Reduction Week

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I stand before you today in this Assembly to recognize this week, October 20 to 26, 2014, as Waste Reduction Week in Canada. During this week, Canadians are challenged with the important task of being aware of and trying to take steps to reduce their ecological footprint through actions and activities.

The Yukon government is committed to responsible waste management across the territory. This includes recycling and other waste diversion initiatives. We are currently working with partners, including and especially the City of Whitehorse, considering options for taking the next steps to modernize our recycling and waste diversion systems and our solid-waste management.

The Yukon government's focus is on working with partners, including Whitehorse and other municipalities, to identify sustainable, long-term and cost-effective solutions for processing recyclables in the Yukon and for handling other portions of our waste diversion system and ultimately waste management.

Proposed steps that we are also currently consulting on include the beverage container regulation and designated materials regulation, led by the Department of Environment, which will further increase diversion of recyclable materials from our landfills and better handle the costs of handling, processing and transporting these materials.

In support of a sustainable recycling system in the Yukon, one that is comparable to those found in other jurisdictions in Canada, government proposes to: expand the types and sizes of materials to be collected and processed for recycling;

simplify the beverage container deposit refund system and establish and revise surcharges and fees to cover actual costs of processing and recycling materials; as well as expanding categories to include all tires and many electrical and electronic products not currently covered.

I also encourage Yukoners to take advantage of the remaining two weeks and a bit in the public consultation on these proposed changes on the government website.

Along with the other 12 jurisdictions in Canada, Yukon formally participates in this national week that promotes and advocates for responsible waste management and environmental stewardship. Yukon residents in Whitehorse and rural communities are becoming more aware of the waste they create and, together, we are taking huge steps toward more responsible solid waste management and environmental stewardship.

Over the past five years, the Yukon government's solid waste operation and maintenance budget has doubled because we have stopped and ended the open burning of garbage in favour of environmental stewardship and waste diversion initiatives, and we are also continuing to work with our municipal partners, the First Nations, unincorporated communities and local organizations to take additional steps toward more regional models of solid-waste management.

A number of the landfills operated by the Yukon government have been transformed into solid-waste transfer stations, where residents are encouraged to divert as much as possible and where waste is transported to regional landfills. In the past five years, we have also introduced groundwater monitoring at Yukon solid-waste facilities to ensure that local watersheds and groundwater are not being negatively impacted by solid waste.

Responsible waste management and environmental stewardship carry cost challenges in the north, but we remain committed to finding effective solutions and continuing to take additional steps with all our partners to find cost-effective solutions and improve our handling of waste materials.

As I mentioned, we have already made significant progress and we are confident that, together with these partners and with all Yukoners, we will find solutions that are best for Yukon.

So, Mr. Speaker, during this Waste Reduction Week in Canada, I encourage all Yukoners to continue to do their part: be conscientious consumers; be aware of what you buy and the power your purchases have to effect change; continue to divert waste in your home and community; and utilize options available to recycle and keep our landfills empty of waste that can be composted, recycled or processed in other ways.

In closing, the Yukon government will continue to do our part, working with all Yukoners and our partners to find more sustainable solutions for the Yukon.

Mr. Barr: I rise on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party, the Official Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, Waste Reduction Week is a Canada-wide, awareness-raising celebration of reducing our waste. It's a week where we can take a look at our actions and

relationships around waste and recycling. Governments of all levels across the country are in a unique position to lead their communities by example. First Nation, municipal, provincial and territorial governments dedicated to waste reduction and environmental sustainability through their own operations are in a much better position to educate and encourage their residents and businesses to practise the three Rs everyday: reduce your consumption; reuse products for a longer period of time; and once an object has reached the end of its useful life, recycle it so it can be made into something else.

We are lucky to have Zero Waste Yukon, an organization with 23 partners and stakeholders. They focus on education and action campaigns. There is no better time than the present to get serious about the ultimate goal of zero waste. Zero waste means working together to dramatically reduce the amount of material that goes into the landfill.

As consumers, we have a responsibility to choose our products wisely. Are they biodegradable? Are they long-lasting? If we all looked at packaging with a critical eye, we would be better able to decide if the product with minimal packaging or the product with more packaging is best for us.

Waste reduction is more than just recycling. It is a combination of composting and actively managing our waste management facilities with integrated systems. The economic and environmental benefits of achieving zero waste are huge, including more local jobs, more resources conserved, better air and water quality, and lower energy and waste management costs.

We in the Yukon have been leaders in the north, with our forward-thinking approach to climate change and the part we play in the bigger picture. Organizations like Raven Recycling and Zero Waste and passionate individuals help show us the way.

Mr. Speaker, a shining example of intergovernmental cooperation is the work being done by the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and the Village of Haines Junction. If we followed their example, we would be much closer to our goal of 50-percent diversion by 2015. Nurturing these partnerships between different levels of government, NGOs and businesses will lead us toward a cleaner, greener future.

Mr. Silver: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Liberal Party to pay tribute to Waste Reduction Week. Nationally, Waste Reduction Week is held in the third week of October each year. On Monday night, City Council declared that October 20 to 26 would be observed as Waste Reduction Week in Whitehorse.

Waste Reduction Week calls for all citizens, all Canadians, to adapt more environmentally conscientious choices in our everyday lives. The national Waste Reduction Week website provides resources to give people ideas to reduce waste in all facets of daily life. Reducing waste is one small solution every citizen can do to help with the many environmental challenges we face.

Recycling and waste reduction weeks date back to the mid-1980s when several recycling councils and environmental organizations began holding provincial events. Since 2001, a

national effort was enacted under the banner of Waste Reduction Week in Canada, organized by a coalition of governments and NGOs, recycling and environmental groups from all 13 provinces' and territories' jurisdictions across Canada.

The Yukon Liberal Party supports the City of Whitehorse's efforts in reducing waste in the city through the solid waste action plan, which has a strong goal of reducing waste by 50 percent by 2015. The solid waste action plan focuses in on getting the big stuff out of the landfill first — particularly organics through its expanded composting program, wood waste, cardboard and all recyclables. It also focuses on developing new partnerships to grow services that will reduce waste, showing that governments can show leadership in environmental change.

It is unfortunate that this week comes on the heel of the closure of Raven Recycling and we encourage Yukoners to use Whitehorse's other recycling options — the bins at the Whitehorse management facility, P&M Recycling depot or the Blue Bin Recycling Society collection.

I want to thank all businesses, governments and individuals who have taken the time to recycle and to work to support landfill diversion goals.

Thank you.

Speaker: Are there any visitors to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It's my pleasure to recognize a couple of people. First, I'd like to recognize a constituent. Murray Martin is with us today. He also has his pen in his hand as a journalist.

I'd also like to recognize Peter Johnston, former Chief of the Teslin Tlingit Council and not a bad hockey player. I get to share the ice with him once in awhile.

I'd also like to recognize a couple members of our staff: Ric Stryde, who is chief of staff, and also joining our staff is Debby Simms.

I invite all members of the House to join me in welcoming them today.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I'd also like to enjoin the House to welcome today Vikki Quocksister, president of the Yukon Federation of Labour; Bud McCue, who is the business manager for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 574, I think; and Earl Graham, who is the service representative for the United Steelworkers. There are other people too — Jeff Sloychuk from the carpenters union. I'd like to introduce as well Mike Fancie, who has joined the NDP Official Opposition caucus as a member of our team. He was director of communications at the Broadbent Institute, so we're very pleased to have him. It's a good example of what happens when somebody comes to the Yukon, visits the Yukon and falls in love with the place. The Yukon is an attractant.

Applause

Mr. Silver: I have no staff here in the audience tonight, otherwise the doors would have to be closed. I would like to welcome Matthew Magoffin, the business manager for the United Association of Plumbers, Pipefitters, Sheet Metal Workers and Hospitality Workers Local 310. I understand that Matthew has also become a recent father, so I'd like to congratulate him on that as well.

I would also like to welcome to the gallery a man who did an excellent campaign running for the nomination for our federal Liberal candidacy, and that is Mr. Gurdeep Pandher — I think he has left but he was here earlier — and also a long-time friend and the son of one of my mentors, Rosemary, Mr. Damien Burns.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would also like to ask all members to extend a warm welcome to one of my constituents from Whitehorse West, Mr. Wilf Carter. Welcome.

Applause

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: The Chair has for tabling the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's annual report for the period ending March 31, 2014. This report was distributed to members and made public in June 2014.

The Chair also has for tabling the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office 2013-14 annual report.

The Chair also has for tabling a report from the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly on the absence of members from the sittings of the Legislative Assembly and its committees, dated October 23, 2014.

Are there any other returns or documents for tabling?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I'd like to table today the Yukon Public Accounts for the fiscal year 2013-14, the unqualified opinion of Canada's Auditor General.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Mr. Hassard: I have for a presentation the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees.

Speaker: Are there any further reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 15: *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, be now introduced and read a first time. Are you agreed?

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 15 agreed to

Bill No. 78: *Act to Amend the Marriage Act* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Graham: I move that Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Health and Social Services that Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, be now introduced and read a first time. Are you agreed?

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 78 agreed to

Bill No. 79: *Pioneer Utility Grant Act* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Graham: I move that Bill No. 79, entitled *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Health and Social Services that Bill No. 79, entitled *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*, be now introduced and read a first time. Are you agreed?

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 79 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced? Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House:

(1) urges the Government of Yukon to show national unity and Yukon's support for the Government of Canada's decision to participate in the broad international coalition of nations working together to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and to provide humanitarian aid to innocent people suffering from ISIL's atrocities;

(2) recognizes the personal contribution of Canadians serving in the Armed Forces and that the experience of war has profound and ongoing consequences for veterans by supporting our troops during combat missions and after they return home; and

THAT the Speaker of the Yukon Legislative Assembly transmit the decision of this House to the Parliament of

Canada and to the provincial and territorial assemblies of Canada.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to contribute \$25,000 to the Canadian Red Cross in support of its efforts to address the Ebola epidemic in Africa.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that changes to recycling surcharges on beverage containers provide additional support to recycling processors and community depots.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that recycling fees better cover the costs of diverting and processing recyclable materials by:

- (1) making all beverage containers subject to a recycling surcharge;
- (2) requiring a recycling fee for all sizes of tires sold in the Yukon; and
- (3) requiring a recycling fee for many electronic and electrical products sold in the Yukon.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to ensure that there is no undue impact on resident, non-resident or First Nation hunters as a result of the filing of claim by the Ross River Dena Council seeking a declaration that Yukon government has a duty to consult, and where indicated, accommodate Ross River Dena Council prior to issuing hunting licences and seals under the *Wildlife Act* for big game animals.

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

THAT this House opposes Bill S-6, which amends the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* (YESAA) by providing authority to a federal minister to issue binding policy direction to the independent Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board with respect to any of the board's powers, duties and functions; and

THAT this House further opposes unilateral changes to YESAA that have not been agreed upon by all parties to the *Umbrella Final Agreement*.

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

THAT it is the opinion of this House that:

- (1) our veterans deserve our utmost respect and support owing to their service to Canada during both war and peacetime; and

(2) the Yukon government should call on the federal government to:

- (a) address the mental health crisis facing veterans through the hiring of properly trained mental health professionals;
- (b) re-open recently closed veterans' offices; and
- (c) review its New Veterans Charter to address the concerns of Canadian veterans thereof, notably the issue of lump sum payments.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to acknowledge the affordable housing motion unanimously approved by the Association of Yukon Communities on September 21, 2014 and recognize that:

- (a) a stable and secure housing system that creates and maintains jobs and allows for a range of living options is essential to attracting and retaining new workers, meeting the needs of young families, supporting seniors and our most vulnerable citizens, and growing a vibrant Yukon;
- (b) cost and availability of affordable housing are threatening the Yukon's long-term viability, putting our economy at risk;
- (c) while each community's affordable housing problem looks different, every community must be treated fairly and equitably in addressing their housing needs;
- (d) solutions to our housing needs can only be realized with the long-term planning and investment by the territorial government that includes measures to ensure a healthy stock of rental housing for Yukoners; and
- (e) the lack of housing is a critical issue affecting all our communities and urges the federal governments to commit the necessary resources for addressing the territory's housing issues as a matter of urgent priority and work with Yukon communities to develop solutions.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to implement a federal anti-poverty plan to eradicate poverty and hunger for the 833,000 people in Canada who use food banks each month and for the millions of others struggling to get by.

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

THAT this House urges the government to reaffirm its pledge to diverting 50 percent of solid waste by 2015 by increasing solid waste diversion credits to ensure a sustainable level of funding for organizations handling the Yukon's non-refundable recyclables.

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

THAT this House congratulates the City of Whitehorse for showing leadership in addressing the issue of affordable housing.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to call a meeting of the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges to review the power of the Speaker of the Legislature, in particular the Speaker's ability to police non-responsive answer in Question Period.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support Canadian military personnel by petitioning the Government of Canada to reverse its cuts to Veterans Affairs offices.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?
At long last, this brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: YESAA process

Ms. Hanson: In June, the federal government used the unelected Senate to introduce Bill S-6, legislation that was supposed to reflect the five-year review of the *Yukon Environment and Socio-economic Assessment Act*. First Nation governments and Yukon citizens were shocked to learn that the controversial amendments were added unilaterally by the federal government with the Yukon Party's support. This was done after the collaborative consultation with First Nations had ended. One of the amendments would give the federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development the power to give binding policy direction to the independent Yukon Environment and Socio-economic Assessment Board.

My question is, under what circumstances does the Premier think that Ottawa should be giving binding policy direction to an independent Yukon board — a board created under Yukon land claim agreements?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As members opposite are fully aware, there has been an ongoing consultation process for YESAA amendments for almost seven years. There was a mandatory five-year review that began in 2008 that produced 76 recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, 73 of the 76 recommendations were agreed upon by everybody, which certainly is a very outstanding achievement. There has since been an additional almost two more years of consultation to ensure that Yukon's environmental assessment legislation is consistent with legislation in other parts of this country, to ensure that this territory can remain competitive with other jurisdictions across this country.

Ms. Hanson: Eleven years ago, devolution gave the Yukon government province-like powers for land and resource management. This was an important step in Yukon's history and crucial in Yukon's ability to determine our own future, a future grounded in respectful relationships among Yukon First Nation governments and the Yukon government.

With these proposed amendments to what is a made-in-Yukon environmental assessment process, YESAA, it's no longer ours. The Yukon Party has said it is satisfied to go

backward, back to a time before the new relationship between First Nations and the Yukon government was forged in land claim agreements.

Can the Premier explain why 21 years after the *Umbrella Final Agreement* was signed, he now thinks we should return to the past and why he supports legislation that would again allow a federal minister in Ottawa to dictate how environmental assessments will or will not be carried out in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: To be clear, the policy direction ensures that there is a common understanding that occurs between the government and the board, and the intent of that is to ensure that we help to reduce the uncertainty and the delays.

Mr. Speaker, policy direction provided has to be consistent with YESAA. It has to be consistent with the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and, in fact, all of the individual land claims and other pieces of Yukon legislation. Policy direction is very common and occurs in other jurisdictions as well. In fact, the ability for the government to provide policy direction occurs right here in Yukon as the Yukon government has the ability to provide policy direction to the Water Board.

Ms. Hanson: You know, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. Not once in the actual five-year review of the YESAA review did anyone suggest giving the federal minister the power to give binding policy direction to YESAB. So, who asked for this? Why are the voices of those who lobby behind closed doors heard more clearly than those who, in good faith, negotiated the terms of land claim agreements that set out the principles for an independent, arm's-length, made-in-the-Yukon environmental assessment process? Unfortunately for Yukon citizens, this Yukon Premier has once again followed the federal Conservatives' marching orders. He has deliberately eroded the relationship of trust with Yukon First Nation governments, a trust relationship that underpins the economic well-being of Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, my question is clear. Yukoners deserve a straight answer. Under what circumstances does the Premier think that —

Speaker: Order please. The member's time has elapsed.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Under the *Yukon Environmental Socio-economic Assessment Act*, Yukon First Nations are guaranteed participation. There are seven board members. Three of them are executive committee members. Each of the three — Yukon government, Yukon First Nations and Canada — has representation on the executive committee. There are four additional board members, two of which are representatives of the Yukon First Nations.

That means that, out of the seven board members, three of the seven are representatives of Yukon First Nations, two are representatives of Yukon government and two are representatives of Canada. That ensures that Yukon First Nations have guaranteed participation in the assessment processes. If there is ever a concern where there is a conflict between YESAA and the final agreements, it's very clearly

marked in the act that the final agreements will always prevail, which is very important.

This legislation is good for Yukon. These amendments are good for Yukon. This creates certainty for industry. It creates opportunities for jobs and that's good for Yukon families.

Question re: Affordable housing

Ms. White: After years of inaction on affordable rental housing, Yukoners thought the Yukon Party's mishandling of the housing file couldn't get any worse. Sadly, they were proven wrong this summer when the minister announced the cancellation of 75 affordable rental units in Whitehorse. For months the minister had bragged about this project as proof of his commitment, just like he had done in previous years about Lot 262. Yet again, all Yukoners are left with more broken promises.

How can the minister justify sitting on millions of dollars of federal housing money while Yukoners are struggling to make ends meet because of his continued inaction?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It's really disturbing to see that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King again continues to fail to recognize the significant investments made by government in social housing including over \$100 million in investments since 2008. That includes \$53 million directly from Canada's economic action plan.

The remaining amount in the northern housing trust account of \$11.5 million, which has not been announced for allocation, will include a contribution to the Salvation Army project. The remaining amount we will look to target those areas most in need and continue to address the needs of Yukon families.

Again, I would draw the member's attention to the facts and to the statistics.

Ms. White: I think our interpretation of the facts will always be different. The minister's continued lack of understanding of the housing file is shameful. He doesn't understand that social housing is not the same as affordable rental housing. We're talking about rental housing for Yukoners who make \$15 an hour and have to spend 50 or 60 percent of their paycheques on rent.

This Yukon Party government has been sitting on the northern housing trust money since 2006. That's eight long years. Does the minister understand the difference between affordable rental housing and social housing?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Does the Member for Takhini-Kopper King — I know she's genuinely passionate about it, but does the member understand that, in fact, the majority of Whitehorse area landlords are little landlords who own one or two rental units? These are people who, in many cases, depend upon the income from a rental unit to help pay the mortgage on their home.

The RFQ/RFP process developed by Yukon Housing Corporation was in response to a prolonged period of low-vacancy rates in rental accommodation. When the process began in early 2013, the latest statistics report showed a rental vacancy rate of 1.5 percent. Through investments by the

private sector and government, we have seen that rental vacancy rate rise to 7.1 percent, as of the April statistics report released in July. The vacancy rate for duplexes contained in that report is almost twice as high as the overall vacancy rate — 13.9 percent.

Mr. Speaker, these are people who depend on that income from their rental unit to pay their mortgage. The Member for Takhini-Kopper King would have government undercut these people and put their largest investment at risk and put their families and their well-being at risk through the NDP's approach.

Ms. White: I'm fairly confident that it was at that minister's direction that brought us to those 75 rental units.

Mr. Speaker, the minister's lack of action speaks much louder than his words and the minister's inaction leaves him no credibility whatsoever when it comes to housing. The minister did, however, accomplish something extraordinary this summer. He was able to rally the Chamber of Commerce, the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, private sector contractors and the City of Whitehorse to unanimously denounce his action. That is quite a feat, Mr. Speaker.

Yukoners first saw the Lot 262 project cancelled, and this summer the 75 units promised for Whitehorse were cancelled at the very last minute. That money has been sitting there since 2006.

Why would anyone believe that this government cares about those who struggle to make ends meet and pay their rent?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I know the member is passionate about this, but there has to be reason underneath this passion. I would remind the member that the process developed by the Yukon Housing Corporation was in response to a prolonged period of low vacancy rates. When that process went out the door, the vacancy rate was 1.5 percent, well below the three-percent rate that had been identified as a healthy market rental level.

Again, what we heard from stakeholders this spring was that statistics had not caught up with the change in the market, that the market had shifted significantly.

The statistics report that came out this summer proved they were in fact right. That rental vacancy rate has risen to 7.1 percent, which is above the rate in a balanced rental market. We have already seen a reduction in home prices from their peak in 2011, and we will continue to see a reduction and adjustment in the rental rate because of that high vacancy rate. Again, I remind the member the majority of Whitehorse landlords are in fact little landlords. They depend upon the income from rental units to pay the mortgages on their homes, and this government listened to the facts, recognized the change in the market, and we stood to protect those families and their investment.

Question re: Housing programs

Mr. Silver: I have a question for the Premier. It has now been three years since this government has taken office. The entire time, the government has been sitting on these millions of dollars in affordable housing from Ottawa. Plenty

of time has passed for the minister responsible to find a way to spend this money and to address the obvious need in our territory and he has failed to do so. This summer a plan the government has been touting for some time was scrapped at the last minute.

My question is to the Premier: How long does he intend to allow the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation to fumble around on this file before replacing him?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I want to reiterate the comments that the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation has just made. Certainly there have been a number of changes in that market. We can talk all day long of the accomplishments that we have achieved through housing, through investment in social housing, through the availability of lots, through the support of down payment assistance programs, through the creation of seniors housing — the list goes on and on and on.

We are focused on ensuring that we get great value for every dollar that we do invest, not only in housing, but throughout whatever we do. The reality is, with the member opposite, is that he will find any excuse to essentially vote against all these projects. Certainly some of the projects that he has opposed are in fact in his own community that we've had great support, such as the new hospital and new nursing home that we are currently building in the community of Dawson City.

Mr. Silver: The Premier might think that they're doing a good job, but many Yukoners do not on this file. One of the central questions involved in this failed process was: Who decided when and where the money was spent? The minister assured Yukoners that it would be the board of the Housing Corporation, free from political interference, making the call. Unfortunately that is not what happened. In the end, a political decision was made by the government and the input of the arm's-length board was overruled.

In one media interview, the minister said that it was a Management Board decision. However, he told a different story in *Faro* at the AGM of the Federation of Yukon Municipalities when he told the audience that it was a caucus decision. As noted by many of the attendees, if the government was to blame, the minister sure was interested in spreading that blame around to his colleagues, instead of taking the responsibility for himself.

For the record, can the Premier tell us whose decision was it to cancel this RFP? Was it the Cabinet? Was it the Management Board? Or caucus? Or the minister himself?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In fact it was a Management Board decision that included, of course, as we do in all major decisions, caucus input prior to Management Board or Cabinet making those decisions. I know the member wasn't there in *Faro*, but I think he would find, if he went back to people who were, that most would recognize that what I said at that time is decisions of that magnitude are Cabinet or caucus decisions and never made unilaterally by a minister. Again, it was a Management Board decision, as has been noted and explained by an official from Finance earlier this summer.

Earlier in the spring, at one point, we were of the understanding that it would not require Management Board approval at that final stage. That was based on an incorrect briefing note that was corrected and fully explained by both that official and myself earlier this summer. We appreciate the work done by the Yukon Housing Corporation board. Government reacted and responded to the information we received from stakeholders. We recognized that the housing market was shifting and we acted appropriately.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, a briefing note? Seriously?

The last question that I asked in the House last spring was on this affordable housing file. I predicted at that time that the government wasn't satisfied with the results of this RFP and a political decision would be made to pull the plug and to overrule the housing board. The minister vehemently denied it but, at the end, that's exactly what happened.

Since that time, the minister has come out with a number of different versions of what happened and, in *Faro*, he threw his colleagues under the bus while trying to duck the responsibility for his decision. Affordable housing remains a problem in this territory and the minister has demonstrated that he cannot get the job done.

When is the Premier going to ask for the resignation of this minister?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, \$100 million in investments since 2008. We have looked across the full spectrum of housing, from emergency shelters right through to home ownership. We continue to work with stakeholders to meet those needs of Yukoners. We have worked with Kaushee's Place to create Betty's Haven for women and children fleeing violence — second-stage housing for them. We worked with OFI to create a nation-leading program on support for adults living with FASD.

As I said earlier, our focus is on Yukon families. Yukon is really the best place to live, to work, to play — the best place to raise a family. We are committed to ensuring that we are working for all Yukoners and will continue to do so.

Question re: Coroner's report re death at Watson Lake hospital

Ms. Stick: On June 21, 2012, Teresa Scheunert died of mixed drug toxicity at Watson Lake hospital. In the judgment of inquiry, the coroner says the system let her down. Mary Johnny, a 60-year old aboriginal woman, died on August 9, 2012 after being medevaced from Watson Lake hospital to Whitehorse General Hospital. The judgment of inquiry reports Ms. Johnny received an incorrect diagnosis. Last Friday, October 17, the coroner's inquest ruled Ms. Johnny's death a homicide.

What specific actions will this minister take to ensure the Yukon Hospital Corporation is accountable to the Yukon public and makes the changes necessary to increase patient safety?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The Yukon Hospital Corporation immediately begins an inquiry any time an adverse medical reaction occurs in any of Yukon's medical facilities. In doing so, they involve all members of the medical staff at the

hospital to determine what occurred, what could have been done better and what should be done in the future.

The Hospital Corporation attempts to learn from every adverse reaction in the Hospital Corporation. With respect to a couple of the issues mentioned by the member opposite, the Hospital Corporation did hire an external resource to conduct an independent patient safety review, focusing on health care.

This, along with the recommendations from the coroner's inquest in June of this year, has guided actions for future system improvement in the Hospital Corporation itself.

Ms. Stick: Ensuring public patient safety is one of the most essential responsibilities of the Yukon Hospital Corporation, yet public trust has been shaken. If it weren't for the tireless advocacy of the Scheunert family and the work done by this coroner's office, we would still not know the gaps in patient safety and oversight identified throughout the coroner's inquests — yet questions remain and Yukoners deserve answers.

Will this minister commit to having the Hospital Corporation report to the Yukon public about how each recommendation is being followed and acted upon?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I have already committed to having the Hospital Corporation appear in the Legislature. I realize that the member opposite perhaps didn't remember when I mentioned it to her. I agree that, because of my very gentle, sweet nature, sometimes I don't get to put across my points as well as I should. Perhaps I can apologize for not making sure that she understood when I talked with her recently.

However, I don't see how anybody can misunderstand the fact that on April 16, 2014, in response to a question from the member from Dawson City, I made a commitment. The Yukon Hospital Corporation will come forward to the Legislature as a witness. I've made a commitment that we will do it again in the fall session. The Hospital Corporation will be attending. I don't understand how I can be any more clear than that — April 16, 2014, page 4262 in Hansard.

The Yukon Hospital Corporation will attend during this session and they will be able to answer some of the questions proposed by members opposite, and I know they will be able to answer those questions well because I have seen some of the actions they have taken and the importance with which medical staff treat these issues.

Ms. Stick: Having the corporation come before the Assembly is an important step to answer outstanding questions on the system failures that surrounded these two deaths, and we thank the minister that the Hospital Corporation will be here and we look forward to that, but it is just a first step and it does not commit the corporation to publicly reporting — an actual report — on how the recommendations are being followed.

There are many, many recommendations coming out of those two inquests. For us to ask a question on each one, I'm not sure we're going to have time. I believe the number is 24, possibly 28 recommendations.

Two people from Watson Lake have died. The public has a right to know what action is being taken to prevent similar

deaths. Will the minister commit to a public report on the implementation of the coroner's recommendations?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I can't commit to that because I don't know which parts of the assessment that will be conducted by the Yukon Hospital Corporation will be confidential to the Hospital Corporation itself. I will commit to saying that any parts of the recommendations that are not confidential — I would be only too happy to request that they be made available to me for tabling in the Legislature, and I will do that.

But once again, they will be attending this House. They will be here. I've made the commitment. I think it's up to members opposite to ask intelligent, reasonable questions at that time and I'm sure the Hospital Corporation will be able to answer them.

Question re: Human rights investigations at Whitehorse Correctional Centre

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, this summer the Department of Justice tried to prevent the Yukon Human Rights Commission from investigating allegations of human rights abuses at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre.

The minister has argued that the commission does not have jurisdiction to investigate at the jail because WCC has an internal investigative body that can deal with human rights complaints. The commission argues that the minister has no grounds to prevent human rights investigations from taking place, raising the question: Why is the minister trying to prevent the Yukon Human Rights Commission from conducting investigations at Whitehorse Correctional Centre?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: In addressing the member opposite, the commission's authority to investigate human rights complaints is governed by the *Human Rights Act*, and the member opposite should know that.

The *Human Rights Act* requires that all complaints first exhaust all other review procedures available to them under other acts. The member opposite should be well aware of that.

This government believes in holding offenders accountable. This government also believes in providing services to victims of crime. We have worked very hard on that and we'll continue to move forward in that direction.

Ms. Moorcroft: The Minister of Justice has not provided any reasonable justification for his decision to block the Yukon Human Rights Commission from doing its work. We've seen Yukon Party Justice ministers handle issues poorly before, but this minister is actively opposing adequate human rights investigations from taking place.

He doesn't seem to understand the basic democratic principle that every citizen should have the same access to human rights.

We heard the Premier speak this morning about the duty to protect our democracy, but Yukoners deserve better than what we're hearing from this Minister of Justice. He has been making inconsistent statements, so I'll ask him to go on the record and provide some clarity in this House.

Will the minister publicly commit to respecting the law and providing the Yukon Human Rights Commission with full

cooperation and access to conduct investigations at Whitehorse Correctional Centre?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The member opposite clearly has not understood and read the *Human Rights Act*. That *Human Rights Act* requires that all complaints first exhaust other review procedures available to them under other acts.

The member opposite — I hear them heckling already — clearly needs to go back and read the act and understand the procedures at the correctional facility. This government believes in holding offenders accountable; there's no question about that. As I mentioned in my first response, the government also believes in providing services to victims of the offenders who are in the correctional facility.

Over the 2013-14 year, Victim Services provided service to over 1,000 clients in our territory, and I commend them for their important work in this community.

Question re: Raven Recycling Centre funding

Mr. Barr: Just last week, Raven Recycling shut down its collection service of non-refundables, leaving thousands of Yukoners without the accessible recycling that we relied upon for decades. With Raven Recycling handling around 85 percent of all Yukon recyclables, the government's plan to divert 50 percent of waste by next year is in jeopardy.

This non-profit institution has been calling on the government for years to step up and develop an adequate funding model to support the recycling of materials like paper products, plastics and Styrofoam.

Today, less waste is diverted from the landfill and we can all hopefully agree that this is bad news. Why is the government dragging its feet to the point where many recyclables are now heading straight to the landfill?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In fact, I think the member does not understand some of the context of what has gone on here recently. Not only has government provided support in the past to Raven Recycling directly for a number of capital upgrades — last year, the Yukon government, for the very first time, began providing diversion credits to pay for waste diverted to the landfill. That was in response to a request that we received jointly from Raven Recycling and the other recycling processor. At that time, they asked us to implement a diversion credit matching the \$75 per tonne that the city pays for a combined diversion credit of \$150 per tonne for waste diverted from landfills. We did what they asked for last summer.

Last month, Raven Recycling requested that the combined diversion credit be more than doubled to \$330 per tonne. We are concerned about the significant growth of the amount requested and I have personally asked Raven Recycling to provide us with more information to clarify what makes up their cost for this material and why the cost has increased so much beyond what they asked for last year. They have committed to providing that and I'm looking forward to receiving it.

We are currently focused on working with partners, especially the City of Whitehorse, to identify sustainable, long-term, cost-effective solutions in this area.

Mr. Barr: Short-term, top-up diversion credits aren't enough. Diversion credits offered to Yukon recyclers cover less than 50 percent of the cost of recycling. The equation is simple: without a more stable funding source, Yukoners have lost access to our primary recycling drop-off point. It has been 22 years since beverage container regulation rates were set, and it has been 22 years without adjustment. The coming changes are a good thing, but they only affect 10 percent of our recyclables. That leaves 90 percent of recyclables that need a closer look by government as part of a wider waste-diversion system.

What is the government's plan to address the 90 percent of recyclables that are not covered under the beverage container regulation consultation?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, I should bring the member's attention to the fact that in addition to the beverage container regulations, the designated material regulation is the most significant change proposed in the two regulations out of the consultation. That proposes expanding what is currently an upfront fee that applies to small passenger tires only — first of all to all tires and, secondly, to a range of electrical products and electronics. This will add upfront costs, but will result in the end in Yukoners not having to pay a tipping fee for delivering that material to the proper location at solid-waste facilities. This is in fact the next significant step in evolving our waste system.

As I noted earlier, the step that was taken in 2011 or 2012 of ending open burning at our solid-waste facilities was a very significant change in Yukon's management — and municipalities' management — of our waste system. The investments that we have made jointly with the City of Whitehorse in the composting facilities at the Whitehorse solid-waste facility, the investments that have been made through CDF this year in 80 bins to handle cardboard, which are being used jointly by Raven Recycling and three companies — all of these are part of the steps that we are taking to modernize our waste system. Our focus is working with partners, especially the City of Whitehorse —

Speaker: The member's time has elapsed.

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, what about paper, plastic and other similar products? Recycling isn't free. For years, this government has benefited from the hard work of Yukon's many non-profit organizations, while only providing the barest of funding. Raven's current situation is no different. For decades, Raven Recycling has helped build Yukon's recycling infrastructure. They have also been in our schools and workplaces, providing Yukoners with the know-how they need to have sustainable workplaces.

It's only thanks to groups like Raven Recycling and Yukon municipalities that the Yukon government's goal of 50-percent waste diversion by 2015 is even possible. The government can't keep downloading its responsibilities to NGOs and the City of Whitehorse.

Will the minister commit to increasing Yukon's waste-diversion credits in the short term to a sustainable level or will he throw his 2015 waste-diversion goals to the curb?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, I would remind the member that the diversion credit was implemented last year for the first time in response to a joint request that we received from Raven Recycling and the other processor. They asked us to implement a combined diversion credit of \$150 per tonne. That is what we did. A year later, Raven Recycling has asked for more than double that amount. They have committed to providing a breakdown of why there has been such a significant increase in cost. We have yet to receive that information.

Our focus is in working with the City of Whitehorse in considering options, as most of the volume of recycling and other waste in the territory falls under the jurisdiction of the City of Whitehorse. They are, in fact, a bigger player in this than the Yukon government, but we are committed to working jointly with them. Officials have been in regular contact and we will also, at the elected level, be engaging in further discussions in this area.

Again, our focus is working with the City of Whitehorse in particular to identify sustainable, long-term, cost-effective solutions for processing recyclables in the Yukon. I would encourage the member to actually look to the fact and recognize that the Yukon government has contributed significantly to Raven Recycling and other recycling agencies, including the recycling depots in communities, in promotion of recycling throughout the years and we will continue to do so.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 2:31 p.m.

The following Sessional Papers were tabled October 23, 2014:

33-1-124

Yukon Conflict of Interest Commission Annual Report to the Legislative Assembly for the Period from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 (June 27, 2014) (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-125

Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office 2014 Annual Report (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-126

Report from the Clerk of the Yukon Legislative Assembly on the Absence of Members from Sittings of the Legislative Assembly and its Committees (October 23, 2014) (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-127

Public Accounts 2013-2014 of the Government of Yukon for the year ended March 31, 2014 (Pasloski)

33-1-128

Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees Twelfth Report (August 19, 2014) (Hassard)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 161

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Monday, October 27, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME CONSTITUENCY PORTFOLIO

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Vuntut Gwitchin
Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
Patti McLeod	Watson Lake

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

New Democratic Party

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

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Doris McLean
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, October 27, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Speaker: Before we begin, I would like to express appreciation for the Commissioner being able to accept our invitation to join us today for the tributes in light of the presentation of the first poppy and the raising of the poppy flag to signal the week of remembrance.

Mr. Commissioner, it is our honour to have you here today.

Applause

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Royal Canadian Legion poppy campaign

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I rise today on behalf on behalf of the Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to the members of the Royal Canadian Legion as they launch their annual poppy campaign.

I've just returned from a ceremony at City Hall, which was particularly well-attended this year. Over the weekend, as you know, Corporal Chris Cassia stood guard at the cenotaph here in in downtown Whitehorse. In Haines Junction the Ranger Patrol and the Junior Ranger Patrol laid two wreaths at the memorial that is located there. The scene was repeated at cenotaphs across this country as veterans, cadets and members of the forces stood guard.

Canadian citizens by the thousands also brought flowers and wreaths to memorials and cenotaphs from coast to coast to coast in a heartfelt show of Canadian resolve. The guards have also returned to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the war memorial in Ottawa. Of particular significance, Mr. Speaker, is that it was Master Corporal Bianca Toledo and Corporal Gabrielle Porter who stood at the first post.

Given the ruthless, freedom-hating misogynist ideology exhibited by ISIL, all Canadians are especially proud of these dedicated, brave Canadian women soldiers. Master Corporal Toledo and Corporal Porter are only two of the more than 10,000 Canadian women who proudly and nobly serve in the regular and reserve forces. In every corner of our country, Canadians are united in their respect and gratitude for those who defend our precious rights and freedoms and keep us safe.

The poppy is the official symbol of remembrance and each year, for two weeks before November 11, Canadians

wear poppies as a pledge to never forget fellow Canadians who have fallen in war and military operations.

Worn as close to the heart as possible, the poppy is a powerful and instantly recognizable tribute to those who have served. This year, Canadians have been asking for their poppies early, and with good reason. Our friends in the United Kingdom have been asking for Canadian poppies as well.

It was just a short time ago, Mr. Speaker, that Canadians were devastated by the senseless, unprovoked murders of two members of our Armed Forces. Taken from us in an act of cowardice on Monday, October 20 as he walked in a St-Jean-sur-Richelieu parking lot was warrant officer Patrice Vincent. Warrant Officer Vincent had served this country loyally and honourably for 28 years. He was a dedicated firefighter who always sought to improve his knowledge and skill, an avid cyclist and a quiet man known for his good-humoured nature.

When Canadians don their poppies this year, many will do so appreciating the service, loyalty and dedication of Warrant Officer Vincent.

Taken from us in another act of cowardice on Wednesday, October 22 as he stood guard over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the War Memorial of our nation's capital was Corporal Nathan Cirillo. Corporal Cirillo was just 24 years old. Along with Corporal Branden Stevenson, he stood guard that Wednesday morning over an unidentified Canadian soldier who fell 97 years ago in the battlefields of France. As a reservist with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders out of Hamilton, Corporal Cirillo was the second in command of his regiment's weapons detachment.

When Canadians don their poppies this year, many will be doing so appreciating the service, loyalty and dedication of Corporal Cirillo. The intention of the poppy campaign is to remind us of the sacrifice of Canadians who gave their lives in global peacekeeping missions as well as the 111,000 Canadians who died in the two world wars.

The poppy campaign serves another important purpose. It is the primary annual fundraiser for the Royal Canadian Legion. The Legion is one of this country's largest service organizations with programs that contribute to the lives of hundreds of thousands of citizens every year. The Legion assists and provides services to veterans, ex-service members and to their families.

Mr. Speaker, you and I are both active members of the Legion and personally know the value of this organization in our community. Yukon Legion's Branch 2 and Branch 254 support Yukon communities through donations to the Hospital Foundation and sponsorship of youth organizations.

Yukon's legions also work closely with all Yukon veterans to ensure that they are aware of the services available to them through Veterans Affairs.

Together in this Legislature, it is important to acknowledge and support the Royal Canadian Legion's poppy campaign to show our respect for the hard work of our Legion members and of our veterans. Let's proudly display our own poppies on our left lapels and donate generously to the poppy campaign.

Mr. Speaker, while I stand here, I would also like to recognize in the gallery today that we have four veterans and members of the Legion, Mr. Wayne Wannamaker, Mr. Lorne Woodier, Mr. Red Grossinger and Joe Hewitt. I would invite all members of the Assembly today to join me in welcoming them here today.

Applause

In recognition of Patient Safety Week

Hon. Mr. Graham: I rise in the House today in honour of Patient Safety Week, which runs from October 27 to 31 each year. This annual campaign was started by the Canadian Patient Safety Institute in an effort to focus attention on improving patient safety and quality of care. The theme this year is “Ask. Listen. Talk.” We are all being encouraged to ask questions, listen carefully to the answers, and talk about our concerns as a way of improving safety.

As patients, we must ensure that we understand what our health care providers are doing for us. We must ask questions until we understand and, when we have concerns, we need to share them with our health care providers. When we are not in a position to ask, we must rely on advocates, whether in the form of friends, family or in the form of institutions that are tasked with our physical well-being.

It’s clear to anybody who has read or listened to the news lately that Yukon takes patient safety very seriously. The coroner’s inquests that have taken place into some recent deaths point out the importance of identifying what, if anything, has gone wrong in patient treatment and what health care providers can do to improve patient safety and care. While most of the recommendations issued from these inquests are not directed at my department, nevertheless we reviewed them very carefully to see if we can use them to help improve our own services.

Yukon Hospital Corporation, our community health centres, continuing care facilities and home care workers follow best practices to ensure the best possible health care outcomes for patients and clients. When adverse incidents do occur, all members of our extended medical community take them very seriously and make every effort to improve the systems to ensure better patient care in the future. As an example, continuing care undergoes regular accreditation reviews by Accreditation Canada. Most recently, our continuing care achieved exemplary status, which is a notable achievement much envied by the health care community and something of which we are very proud.

If you have ever had a flu vaccination, Mr. Speaker, you will have been asked to stay in the waiting room for about 15 minutes after your shot. This is so the health care nurses can assess whether or not you’re having an adverse reaction, however unlikely that may seem. It’s a small step, but it’s a very important one and it’s an example of how we all need to work together to ensure patient safety.

Ms. Stick: I too rise on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to Canadian Patient Safety Week. I thank the minister for his remarks on

the goals of the Canadian Patient Safety Week. Of particular interest this year — and the focus that the Canadian Patient Safety Institute is bringing forward — is hand hygiene, which might seem a very simple and straightforward precaution but it is one that needs to be reinforced and remembered at all times. Washing our hands — simple, but we can reduce health care, associated infections in our homes, our schools, our workplaces and, most importantly, in our health care facilities. An estimated 220,000 Canadians are affected each year with health-care-associated infections — things they pick up in hospitals, seniors homes and continuing care facilities.

Having personally spent many months and a lot of time on a particular ward where infection control was critical, I have become a real advocate of handwashing. It was so important on this particular ward that they had video surveillance to ensure that every single person coming and every single person leaving that particular ward washed their hands. It didn’t matter who you were.

We hear more and more these days about, and are aware of, superbugs and antibiotic-resistant bacteria. At one time we only associated these with hospitals. We didn’t believe they existed outside of them, but we know better now that these are all in our communities. It’s reinforcing — reminds us to wash our hands. As the minister mentioned, with the flu season coming, it’s even more important.

A simple reminder: if we are going to or are visiting anyone in any health care facility, including hospitals, seniors residences, continuing care, please wash your hands before and after you visit. Remember, 15 seconds or as long as it takes you to sing, *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*. Wash your hands.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

Order please. Please stand for the departure of the Commissioner.

Commissioner Phillips leaves the Chamber

Speaker: Please be seated.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 80: Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that Bill No. 80, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 80, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 80 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support recycling and waste diversion by:

(1) making all beverage containers subject to a recycling surcharge and sharing the increased revenue with recycling processors and community depots;

(2) requiring a recycling fee for all sizes of tires sold in the territory;

(3) expanding the designated material regulation to implement a recycling fee at the time of purchase for electronic and electrical products; and

(4) working with the City of Whitehorse and rural municipalities to identify and implement sustainable, long-term and cost-effective solutions for processing recyclables in the Yukon.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round destination by:

(1) promoting local tourism and increased economic opportunities for northerners;

(2) increasing Yukon's funding for overseas marketing initiatives by \$590,000;

(3) developing new tourism products such as the Millhaven Bay project;

(4) enhancing Yukon's cultural products;

(5) supporting Yukon museums and cultural organizations;

(6) promoting events; and

(7) fostering new and emerging events.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to continue to support the Canadian Rangers and their Yukon Patrols in local exercises that provide skills and abilities so they can help support local functions such as the Yukon Quest, among many others.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide its full cooperation to the Yukon Human Rights Commission to investigate human rights complaints at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and to ensure that the Correctional Centre's practices and operations are consistent with the Yukon *Human Rights Act*.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to review the overuse of solitary confinement at the Whitehorse

Correctional Centre and assess the impact of its use on the physical and mental health of inmates detained in Yukon's jail.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to protect whistle-blowers by implementing the suggestions made by the Yukon Ombudsman regarding the anticipated public interest disclosure of wrongdoing legislation and by giving the proposed position of the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner the authority to order, rather than recommend, a remedy rather than a reprisal against a whistle-blower.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to make the temporary two-year tourism marketing funds announced this summer a permanent part of the Department of Tourism and Culture's marketing budget.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to invite officials from the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation to appear as witnesses in this Legislature this fall.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to delay passage of Bill S-6 *Yukon and Nunavut Regulatory Improvement Act* to allow for genuine consultation with Yukon First Nations.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: YESAA process

Ms. Hanson: Last week, the Premier was unable or unwilling to tell Yukoners under what circumstances he thinks the federal minister should give binding directions to the independent, arm's-length Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board. The ability for a federal minister to give binding directions to YESAB is one of the most controversial changes in federal Bill S-6. This element of Bill S-6 was added after the consultation with First Nations had already occurred. Yet the Premier continues to give his blessing to the federal Conservatives' bill even though First Nations have indicated they would resort to legal action if these controversial provisions are maintained.

Can the Premier explain how more lawsuits will encourage economic certainty in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I have explained in the House already, policy direction will ensure a common understanding between the government and the board to help reduce uncertainty and delays. Any policy direction that would occur would have to be consistent with the *Yukon Environmental*

Socio-economic Assessment Act, needs to be consistent with the UFA, consistent with individual land claims and also consistent with other Yukon legislation. Policy direction is in fact common in other jurisdictions as well, and, as I also explained, Yukon government has the ability now to provide policy direction to the Water Board. Any direction in policy must pertain to the exercise or performance of board powers, duties and/or functions.

Ms. Hanson: He says it has to be consistent with YESAA. We're talking about a fundamental change to YESAA through this bill.

Mr. Speaker, it seems the Premier does not understand what the word certainty means when it comes to investment in our territory. Before Bill S-6, YESAA provided certainty. Investors knew that when they completed the YESAA process, they would have the support of First Nations and the public. That is certainty. By changing YESAA without the support of First Nation governments, investors will no longer have a clear path to social licence for their projects.

Does the Premier understand that the changes to YESAA contained in Bill S-6 will create less certainty for investors by harming their ability to get social licence for their projects?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The amendments to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* through Bill S-6 will, in fact, provide consistency and certainty with our legislation — to be consistent with other similar legislation across the country, including the other two territories. This allows us to be competitive and that is a priority for this government — to ensure that we are consistent, to ensure that we do create opportunities for Yukoners and Yukoners to be able to have more jobs. That is a priority for this government.

There have been almost seven years of consultation through this process. We support the amendments that the federal government is moving forward. As I said, they are consistent with similar pieces of legislation across this country — the ability for the federal government to provide direction to ensure that common understanding occurs between the government and the board.

Ms. Hanson: The Premier is incorrect when he says that this was a subject of consultation over seven years. Yes, the five-year review did occur.

These amendments were never part of it. The secret, unilateral and underhanded approach to governing that the Harper government and the Yukon Party government have adopted is only creating more conflict around development projects in this territory.

Mr. Speaker, the signing of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* 21 years ago signified a new direction in Yukon when it came to our relationships with Yukon First Nation governments. This agreement — the UFA — was negotiated in good faith. The five-year review was in good faith; S-6 was not. The Yukon Party government's absolute disregard for the final agreements and the institutions they create have taken their toll on a once-strong government-to-government relationship.

Does the Premier realize that economic certainty requires strong partnerships with First Nations, and how does he plan to rebuild its broken relationship with First Nation governments?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I said, the amendments were the result of almost seven years of consultation. Certainly they are consistent with Canada's action plan to improve the northern regulatory regimes and the northern strategy, and, in fact, it also conforms with the northern premiers' northern vision document as well.

These amendments will enhance environmental protection by allowing potential effects of likely future projects to also be considered when doing an assessment.

YESAA is not just about resource projects. YESAA is a process that assesses all development in this territory. Whether it's a recreational facility, whether it's a road, or whether it's a new bridge or water treatment plant, it affects all of us. Of course, we know that Bill S-6 passed through the Senate with unanimous support of all members, including the Senate Liberals, with no amendments.

Question re: Affordable housing

Ms. White: At last count, there is still more than \$11 million of northern housing trust funding that the Yukon Party government has been sitting on since 2006. In a letter addressed to some housing stakeholders last week, the minister indicated that Cabinet has approved using some of this money toward expanding the Salvation Army shelter.

Can the minister tell Yukoners how much money will be allocated to the Salvation Army, what project it will support and how many people he expects will benefit from the services provided?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As I noted earlier, the details of that will be announced very shortly. The funding has been committed to support the Salvation Army. I can tell the member that it supports their project that is a shelter replacement and transitional housing, but the specific details will be announced very shortly.

Ms. White: Word in the community is it is \$3 million toward the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army expansion project will help address some social housing issues but that's not a solution to the pressing need for affordable rental housing for many families in the Yukon.

Last week, organizations were invited to a meeting held this morning to get input on how to use the rest of the northern housing trust money. Of the four options presented by the minister for discussion, only one mentions affordable rental housing.

Does the minister understand that social housing is only part of the equation and his continued inaction on affordable rental housing is affecting families, employers and the Yukon economy?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member, as should come as no surprise to anyone, is not accurately describing the discussion this morning or the range of potential options that were discussed.

I wrote in an invitation to the groups, as well as to the members of the community advisory committee who were invited to this morning's meeting with an indication of some of the potential areas that Cabinet was thinking of for, not just the northern housing trust remaining money, but also the new investment in affordable housing agreement that is a federal funding agreement I signed with Minister Bergen this summer.

We provided them with a range of the potential areas that government was considering, sought their input and had a very thorough and robust discussion that went about half an hour over the time that we allocated for it. Although there was a diversity of opinion, there were also many areas of commonality. I look forward to sharing that feedback with my Cabinet colleagues and to making decisions informed by what we heard this morning.

Ms. White: The need for affordable rental housing affects a broad spectrum of people from seniors to families. We're talking about friends and neighbours who have to spend more than 50 percent of their income to meet their housing needs. When the minister cancelled the 75 rental units planned for Whitehorse this summer, he sent the message to our friends and neighbours that they are not a priority of the Yukon government. With three of the four new options put forward by the minister not even mentioning affordable rental housing, is the minister telling Yukoners that the remainder of the northern housing trust money could be spent without creating a single affordable rental unit in the City of Whitehorse?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: We hear again the NDP standing in favor of multi-million-dollar grants to developers and touting that as the solution to the problem.

As I reminded the member before, the majority of Whitehorse area landlords are little landlords who own one or two rental units. We've seen a significant shift in the housing market. We've seen the rental market starting to shift. Compared to early last year when the vacancy rate was a mere 1.5 percent, the vacancy rate as of early this year is 7.1 percent on the rental market and it goes as high as 13.9 percent, according to stats branch, in the duplex market.

As I should again emphasize to the member, those people are the people who depend on that rental income to continue to be able to afford the mortgage on their home. Government is very concerned about protecting those citizens and not undermining their largest investment and their families' future.

Question re: Affordable housing

Mr. Silver: I have a question for the Premier. Many Yukoners have lost confidence in the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation. Here is what the Yukon Chamber of Commerce had to say about the dealings with the minister: The decision to scrap the plans for 75 affordable housing units in Whitehorse could — and I quote: “erode the trust” in the request for proposals process. Here is a quote from the chair of the Chamber of Commerce — and I quote: “You really run the risk of having businesses ask the question

of whether these government RFPs are worth bidding. What does it mean if they can simply overturn them? That's not dealing in good faith.”

Does the Premier agree with the criticism from the chamber, or with his minister who says everything is fine on the affordable housing issue?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It should come as no surprise to this House again that the Liberal Leader chooses to spin the facts in a manner that do not reflect reality. I would remind the member that we do appreciate that the chair of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce did express concern both on behalf of his organization and the company that he is president of and who did bid in that process. We have continued through the housing action plan and through discussions as recently as this morning involving stakeholders, including both chambers of commerce, to talk about the future needs within the housing spectrum. As I emphasized to all who participated this morning, the remaining amount of money is relatively small. We are committed to making investments.

We also recognize that there are areas that require further, ongoing dialogue and are committed to working with all the stakeholders to hear their input and to discuss future actions.

Mr. Silver: The point is the business community has lost faith in the minister. Here's more from the business community: “Why would I waste my time and my money knowing that somebody is going to change their mind after all this process is completed?” “We entered into these things with the understanding and the assumption that this is going to happen. If someone had said, ‘Well, we're not quite sure this is going to go ahead’ ... I would have never submitted in the first place.”

This is from another one of the developers who did respond to the RFP.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, why does the Premier continue to back this minister, instead of the territory's business community?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What the member is failing to reflect in his comments is, of course, a developer who went through the process and thought they were going to get a multi-million-dollar grant would be disappointed that Management Board made the decision not to approve any projects in Whitehorse. But again, as I've stated on a number of occasions, the decision made by this government is based primarily on the fact that the rental market had shifted significantly from a vacancy rate of 1.5 percent in March of 2013 to a vacancy rate in April of this year — as per the release in the summer of that data — of 7.1-percent vacancy rate in the rental market, and the vacancy rate in the duplex rental market — 13.9 percent.

Those people who own duplexes are Yukoners who depend on that income to continue to be able to pay their mortgages in many cases. This government will stand on the side of those Yukon homeowners and we will continue to recognize the importance of not undermining their investment and putting them and their families in financial peril.

Mr. Silver: The minister's stats are disturbing. He is comparing oranges to apples and he knows that.

Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the business community has no confidence in this minister and it is clear that the Premier intends to ignore the business community and defend the indefensible. It is also clear that housing advocates have no confidence in this minister either. The cancellation of the latest housing initiative resulted in quite a storm of criticism in many NGOs in this field.

In late June, the minister stepped in and cancelled the affordable housing project after saying for months that it wasn't going to be a political decision. Just days later, in early June, the Premier made the following statement — and I quote: “Western premiers recognize that access to stable and affordable housing is fundamental to a strong economy and to the health and well-being of western Canadians.”

Mr. Speaker, why is the Premier letting the minister do anything but use this money for affordable housing?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: What the member of the Liberal Party is really upset about is the \$100 million that this government has spent since 2008 on housing in this territory. That is really what this minister is upset about. Of course, we can talk about things such as Whistle Bend and the expansion of lots you are able to buy at the counter — as we have done in many of the other communities, Mr. Speaker.

But we know what the member opposite's record is on each one of those investments. The Liberal Leader voted against them — as he did on the hospital in Dawson City, as he did on McDonald Lodge that we are building right now. The Liberal Leader voted against them.

Of course, we have done things, such as the down payment assistance program as well, that have moved a lot of people out of rental housing and allowed them to be able to invest in their own equity and their own home. We continue to invest in home owners' repairs — the investments that we have made in Kaushee's Place, with Options for Independence to house adults who are living with FASD, the many senior housing projects that we've done throughout this territory, and youth shelters as well.

I am very proud of the record of this government in what we have done in terms of land and housing availability. We have more work to do and we will continue to do it.

Question re: Teacher staffing

Mr. Tredger: In last year's Spring Sitting, I asked the Minister of Education several times about how she planned to manage the overuse of temporary teachers' positions within the Department of Education.

Temporary teachers are employed by the department on a year-to-year basis. They have no certainty that they will be employed the following year. This makes it very difficult for them to settle down in the Yukon and become an important part of our communities. In an arbitration settlement, the arbitrator made it clear that temporary teachers could not be employed beyond two consecutive years unless there were exceptional circumstances.

Has the minister rectified this long-standing problem within the Department of Education and moved all temporary

teachers who have been employed for more than two years into permanent staffing positions?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, as I articulated, or at least I attempted to last sitting for the member opposite, temporary teachers are hired for a variety of various reasons. They're hired for specific periods of time, of course, to replace permanent teachers who are on long-term leave. They could also cover off individuals who are on sick leave, personal leave without pay, salary leave, deferred salary leave, parenthood leave and educational leave. There are a variety of reasons why temporary teachers are utilized.

We continue to review our hiring protocol. As I mentioned last year, in fact the last change to the hiring protocol was made earlier this year, which elevated the status of a temporary teacher to second in place.

Mr. Tredger: There remain many teachers in this position. Teachers are a central part of our communities. We trust them to care for and educate our children. They go above and beyond their profession to give back to the community. They are an integral part of our communities. When they are employed temporarily it makes it hard for them to settle down and invest where they are teaching. Many cannot qualify for a mortgage.

The act states that temporary teachers cannot be employed as temporary teachers beyond two years. Why does the minister use exceptional circumstances to justify continually employing people as temporary teachers? At what point will the minister admit that there is nothing exceptional about these temporary teachers' employment situations other than this government's exceptional overuse of what should be a rarely used section of the *Education Labour Relations Act*?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I'm not entirely sure what the member opposite is referring to or if he is perhaps saying that the Government of Yukon is not following the letter of the law. In fact, the member opposite refers to the *Education Labour Relations Act*. We continue to follow that act. We continue to follow all of our hiring protocols and continue to work with all of our respective stakeholders to ensure that fairness is instilled and continues to be implemented within the system.

As I mentioned before on a number of occasions, and I will continue to reiterate: temporary teachers continue to be used for a variety of reasons, for very important reasons.

We will continue to work with our stakeholders to ensure that all teachers — are very much followed according to the letter of the collective agreement, according to the *Education Labour Relations Act* and according to each and every one of our protocol hiring staffing changes — and continue to tweak accordingly.

Mr. Tredger: I would remind the minister that there remain many outstanding grievances on this very issue. The government's attempts at muzzling teachers over the years, and their treatment of temporary teachers, show a pattern of lack of respect for our teachers. The way they are treating temporary teachers has a significant impact on their livelihoods and the communities where they work.

Temporary teachers provide us with a vital service and it is our duty to them to ensure that if they put in the work, they will get the certainty they deserve. This government talks about certainty for investors. What about certainty for our educators? This government needs to stop taking advantage of the good faith of Yukon's temporary teachers and implement a solution to this problem.

Will the minister commit to working with the Yukon Teachers Association toward a permanent solution that would create certainty for all our teachers, enabling them to, in turn, commit to in turn commit to our community —

Speaker: Order please.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Again, temporary teachers are members of the Yukon Teachers Association and they are covered by all of the benefits of our collective agreement with the Yukon Teachers Association.

As I mentioned, temporary teachers are hired to meet temporary programming needs in all of our schools. They're very important members of our community and we will continue to utilize them in times of replacing permanent teachers who are on long-term leave and a litany of other leaves provided under the collective agreement.

Under the Yukon Party government, over the last 12 years, the Yukon government has continued to increase the number of full-time equivalent teachers and of course, the paraprofessional members, as well, of our teaching community. Again, we take this matter very seriously. We'll continue to implement and execute resources in each and every one of our classrooms in support of our student population.

Question re: Whistle-blower legislation

Ms. Hanson: When the Yukon Party was re-elected in 2006, they pledged to create whistle-blower legislation to ensure that public servants who observed wrongdoing in the workplace could come forward without fear of reprisal.

Since then, there have been two legislative select committee reports that set out what would be in the whistle-blower protection legislation. Last spring, the government released an information package highlighting how they planned on crafting this legislation.

Protection for whistle-blowers in Yukon is long overdue. Being able to speak about wrongdoing is vital to our democracy. As legislators, we have a duty to provide protection to public servants who, in good faith, reveal practices of wrongdoing.

Can the minister confirm that whistle-blower legislation will be tabled this sitting, as he committed to last spring?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is correct that this issue has been one that has been on the mind of the Legislature for some time now. Of course, a number of select committees over the years have looked at this issue and we take the recommendations made those select committees very seriously.

The most recent report of this Legislature is the one that has guided us to date, and we have full intentions of bringing

forward legislation at some point in our mandate with regard to this issue.

Ms. Hanson: Well, goodness, you would assume, judging from the level of rhetoric this government produces about their support for public servants, that this legislation would be a priority for them. You know, the information package that was released by government was not consistent with the recommendations of the select committees. The government information package did not include authority for the Ombudsman to order remedies for reprisals against whistle-blowers. The Yukon government is only prepared to allow the Ombudsman to recommend, not enforce, remedies when reprisals occur. The Ombudsman has been clear that any legislative approach that does not guarantee protection from reprisals for whistle-blowers will not work. Worse, it places public servants in jeopardy.

Will the minister commit to providing the Ombudsman with the authority to make sure whistle-blowers in the Yukon are protected from reprisal?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: There is a reason why we do these consultations, and that is to get feedback on potential legislation and to hear from Yukoners, whether they be in the unions or whether it is the Ombudsman herself, on these important issues and this specific issue as well. So of course, when we take something out for consultation, it doesn't mean necessarily that that's our end outcome. It means that this is our intention and this is what we want to hear from Yukoners about. So we take the input we receive from the Ombudsman very seriously and, of course, have incorporated all of her comments into our work.

We look forward to bringing forward legislation in due course, and I'm sure, at the time we bring forward that legislation, the Ombudsman will be satisfied with the fact that her comments have been incorporated into that work.

Question re: Ambulance volunteers

Mr. Barr: Last week, we heard more disturbing news from the volunteer ambulance service in Haines Junction. During the month of July, only two shifts had full coverage, and two-thirds of the time the ambulance wasn't staffed at all. Now, it is important to note that Haines Junction is the third most called-upon volunteer ambulance in the territory. As a result of this understaffing, there were 12 medevacs to Whitehorse. Only two of those were medically necessary. This could have been avoided had the Haines Junction volunteer ambulance been properly staffed but, until now, the government's response has been that the volunteers are responsible for finding more volunteers.

Why does the government refuse to take action to support the Haines Junction ambulance?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I need to begin by correcting the member and by noting he indicated that the response had been that volunteers are responsible for finding more volunteers. I have never said that and do not agree with that statement. It's a partnership between government and the community members to work and find and recruit people, where there is a need for additional volunteers. Of course, for those volunteers

we do have in Haines Junction and throughout the territory, we work with them in understanding their needs, their priorities and their challenges.

As I pointed out to members — I believe recently — one of the things that I did last year, shortly after taking over responsibility as Minister of Community Services, was sit down last fall with all of the rural volunteer ambulance supervisors. I did that again earlier this year and again on Friday. We will continue to work with them in addressing their needs and their priorities.

We've already acknowledged that the additional steps that were taken this year in Haines Junction did not work as well as were hoped and have offered and committed to sending out senior staff of Protective Services branch to sit down with the EMS crew in Haines Junction to talk about what next steps should be taken to further support them.

Mr. Barr: Speaking specifically of Haines Junction here, and also what Haines Junction feels they need, the ambulance volunteers themselves contend that a lack of volunteers isn't the problem. The ambulance volunteers have ideas for how to solve this problem, but there are many stakeholders involved in this work. The Haines Junction ambulance volunteers have asked for a meeting based on the community development team model to find solutions to this problem. That's all the Haines Junction volunteers want: a discussion on how to ensure that Haines Junction has the ambulance coverage that it needs.

Will the minister commit to adopt the community development team model to find a solution to these gaps?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member is completely out of the loop on what is going on in this situation. I appreciate him bringing this issue forward.

As I noted, this is an area where additional steps were taken by EMS to support Haines Junction this year. Those steps did not work as well as had been hoped. We have already engaged, both at a senior departmental level and me directly, with the supervisor and others to offer and commit to sending out senior staff to talk to them about next steps and discuss a range of options. I spent time during this last week — on Friday I met with the supervisors of rural EMS units, including Haines Junction. On Saturday I spent a good part of the afternoon attending and talking to volunteers at the skills competition, and Saturday night I spent the evening at the EMS volunteer skills banquet until after 10:00 p.m. talking directly with supervisors and other volunteers from our community.

Again, I very much appreciate the valuable work that is provided by supervisors and all of our rural EMS volunteers. We have taken additional steps to support them, and this government recognizes and will continue to take further steps to support all of them, as well as Haines Junction directly.

Mr. Barr: Only now the minister is starting to hear what has been sounded in Haines Junction for some time now. The minister himself admitted to the press this week that the Haines Junction ambulance won't be offered any support beyond what is available to other volunteer ambulances in the communities.

The minister doesn't seem to understand that Haines Junction — the largest community without a hospital — has the highest level of ambulance calls in the territory. We are talking about public access to adequate levels of medical treatment, Mr. Speaker. An expensive medevac to Whitehorse, in lieu of a well-staffed volunteer ambulance, is neither sustainable nor cost-effective.

The sirens have been wailing since early this summer. When will the minister heed the warning, and can we have a timeline on this meeting he speaks of?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, the member really does not do a service to anyone by framing this in the manner that he has. In fact, the member's statement is absolutely wrong in his interpretation of what I said during interviews this week. We have in fact said very clearly that we are committed to considering the possibility of unique solutions to address Haines Junction's needs.

However, I will again reiterate that, as we consider Haines Junction's needs, we also have to be mindful of how it compares to what is done in other Yukon communities and we want to ensure that our support is consistent with and comparable with what we provide to volunteers in other Yukon communities while considering whether there are specific additional steps that are necessary to address the Haines Junction situation and further improve the coverage there.

Again, this summer, we did implement additional supports to Haines Junction. Those supports were not as effective as we had hoped, and we have already recognized — and both senior officials and I have committed directly to the supervisor and to other volunteers that we will follow up on those areas and that senior staff will travel to the community and will engage directly with the volunteers to talk about what steps should be taken next.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 15: *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 15, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Before I begin, I would like to first acknowledge the constituents of the riding of Mountainview who I have the honour and privilege to serve. I thank them for their ongoing support.

Two important financial documents were presented on October 23: the 2013-14 Public Accounts and the first supplementary estimates for 2014-15.

With the tabling of these documents, Mr. Speaker, allow me to take the opportunity to speak about our government's financial record.

Over the past three years, I have observed on a number of occasions here in the Legislature that the Yukon government's budget has reached the \$1-billion threshold. I can imagine how this might be downplayed, even criticized, by some with comments such as: \$1 billion is just a number. Why all the fanfare? Isn't \$1 billion simply an arbitrary threshold? Yukon's budget has exceeded \$1 billion now for six consecutive years. What's the big deal?

I completely understand these observations, and perhaps a billion-dollar budget is not specifically worthy of fanfare, and perhaps a billion-dollar budget can be considered just an arbitrary threshold. However, it is a big deal. It is significant. It is significant because this billion-dollar spending threshold speaks volumes to the services, to the programs and the infrastructure that's delivered by our government on behalf of Yukoners.

Having managed the government's finances over a multi-year horizon since 2003-04, a period of 12 years, our government has delivered effective, responsible and disciplined spending initiatives and investments on behalf of Yukoners. Allow me to provide some context of where we were, where we are, and where we are headed.

Let's consider Premier Fentie's first budget, tabled 2003-04, with total expenditures of \$550 million, of which approximately \$98 million was allocated to capital investments. I recognize that our operational expenditures represent significant spending on programs and services for Yukoners, and I certainly do not wish to diminish their importance here. However, I also recognize that one measure of government budgets is the amount allocated to capital or infrastructure investments.

In 2003, approximately 18 percent of the budget was allocated to capital spending initiatives. Back in 2003, Yukon's population was just under 30,000. In fact, in June 2003, it was 29,976. Basic arithmetic tells us that Yukon government budgeted expenditures totalled approximately \$18,350 per Yukoner for the 2003-04 fiscal year.

Moving to the present, members will note the summary financials provided in the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* document identified total budgeted expenditures for the 2014-15 fiscal year to be just under \$1.34 billion, of which \$287 million — or approximately 21.5 percent — is allocated to capital. In absolute terms, current capital spending is \$189 million greater than it was a decade ago.

Yukon's current population — and that's in March of 2014 — is at 36,623. Again, basic arithmetic tells us that the Yukon government's budgeted expenditures totalled approximately \$36,590 per Yukoner for the 2014-15 fiscal year. These basic metrics are telling. Over the past decade, our government's program, service and infrastructure investments have increased significantly. Total budgetary investment has

increased from \$550 million to \$1.34 billion, an increase of 144 percent. Total investment in capital has increased from \$98 million to \$287 million, an increase of 192 percent — almost three times greater. Expenditure per Yukoner has increased from \$18,350 to \$36,590, an increase of just under double.

Think about it, Mr. Speaker — Yukon's annual budget is now greater than \$1 billion. It has been greater than \$1 billion for six successive years now. This represents significant annual investment in Yukon on behalf of Yukoners. It highlights, with emphasis, the financial demands facing our government on an ongoing basis.

I have spoken in this Legislature previously about our government's rigor and discipline with respect to financial management. At the three-year mark of our current five-year mandate, we remain committed to pursuing planned, disciplined and affordable expenditure initiatives on behalf of Yukoners. Our past and continued efforts have put us in good stead as we move forward. In an environment where many other Canadian jurisdictions are working toward achieving balanced budgets and reducing their net debt, Yukon is there.

Our successive budgets have built financial capacity and we continue to build on that capacity with our forward-looking financial plan. Our fiscal position provides us with the capacity to be responsive to Yukoners' needs, to be responsive to emerging pressures without breaking the bank, as we continue through our mandate.

Fiscal discipline and sustainability has been a virtual principle of our mandate. Our 2014-15 budget contained a number of capital initiatives, particularly in the areas of education and health, that are of significant importance to Yukoners, including the F.H. Collins replacement, Macdonald Lodge replacement, Sarah Steele replacement, Whitehorse hospital expansion, Salvation Army redevelopment and long-term continuing care facility.

Investing in infrastructure developments and initiatives is not a one-off exercise. Once built and commissioned, facilities such as these I've just highlighted require ongoing funding support. Whether it is funding for general operational expenses, such as utilities and maintenance, or funding for programs and services, there are ongoing budgetary requirements that must be considered for every infrastructure development.

This bears repeating: our past and continuing financial discipline has afforded us the opportunity to make significant infrastructure investments on behalf of Yukoners.

In addition, our commitment to prudent fiscal management has ensured that our government is well-positioned to manage the ongoing operational, program and service requirements associated with these facilities.

Our prudent and disciplined approach ensures the sustainability of the programs and services provided on behalf of Yukoners. Yukon is in an enviable fiscal position, a position for which my colleagues and I are extremely proud. I have spoken previously at some length on our government's approach to planning, budgeting and decision-making, about how our government proactively manages to ensure and to

allow for appropriate legislative consideration of our proposed expenditure initiatives.

Indulge me once again, Mr. Speaker, as I cannot emphasize enough the importance of strong planning, strong budgeting and decision-making processes. In its basic form, planning and budgeting is about decision-making. It is all about identifying priorities, then considering, developing, resourcing and implementing appropriate actions to provide the best services possible to Yukoners.

At its core, planning and budgeting requires decision-makers to make choices. The budget process supports us as decision-makers to consider all issues and identify appropriate solutions. In this regard, the development of a budget serves us both as a planning tool and as a control tool. Decision-making is an ongoing, frequently evolving process. Decision-making is not an isolated event. It remains the prerogative — more so the obligation — of our government to consider emerging issues and priorities and to recommend effective and appropriately resourced solutions and actions to the Legislative Assembly.

This has resulted in the adopted practice of the Yukon government to in-year adjustments tabled as supplementary estimates for the Assembly's consideration to the original budget plan. This approach has served Yukon well, offering significant opportunity within the context of the multi-year fiscal framework to consider resource requirements for competing priorities and make sound recommendations for scrutiny, debate and approval by the Legislative Assembly.

I apologize for taking us on a tangent. My colleagues and I take very seriously and respect the importance of a strong and effective basis in process and procedure in support of our decision-making responsibilities.

I believe it is important for me to once again confirm with all members of the Legislative Assembly our commitment to prudent, responsible and ultimately accountable decision-making.

Thank you for your indulgence.

Mr. Speaker, I started out today noting that I had presented two important documents for consideration by this Legislature. First, we have the 2013-14 Public Accounts, representing the final accounting for the 2013-14 fiscal year. I will take this opportunity to briefly identify a number of highlights from the 2013-14 fiscal year-end report.

The 2013-14 Public Accounts are presented with a clean opinion from the Office of the Auditor General of Canada. Members of the Assembly will note that we are not tabling a final appropriation bill and final supplementary estimates for 2013-14. For the third consecutive fiscal year, all departments managed within their approved appropriations, and I would like to recognize and thank the ministers and their departments for their due diligence.

The summary financials on an unconsolidated basis for the year ended March 31, 2014, are an annual surplus of \$57.873 million, net financial assets of \$194.654 million and accumulated surplus of \$1.284 billion.

The Yukon government's financial position remains very strong. We are truly in an enviable position, where we can

make significant infrastructure investments — such as those I previously noted — and continue to provide financially sustainable, ongoing programs and services on behalf of all Yukoners.

The second document tabled today is the 2014-15 *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* and the accompanying appropriation bill, which is Bill No. 50.

The first supplementary estimates of a fiscal year provide us with two opportunities: first, incorporating the results from the 2013-14 fiscal year, as reported in Public Accounts. It provides us the opportunity to present to the Legislature, and to the general public, an update on the financial position of the government. It is important for us as legislators to understand the issue of timing. I'm confident that members can appreciate that at the time the 2014-15 budget was prepared and tabled, the audited results for the 2013-14 fiscal year were not finalized. Therefore, the summary projects for 2013-14 may have been subject to change. This is the case every fiscal year.

Now that the results for 2013-14 have been finalized, *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* represents the first opportunity to provide the Assembly a financial update for 2014-15, inclusive of the 2013-14 final results.

Second, and more to the point of seeking required spending authorities, this first supplementary estimate details the proposed expenditure changes that require legislative appropriation authority, in addition to the spending authorities previously granted by the Legislature when the main estimates were approved.

Individual ministers will be pleased to provide members of the Legislature with complete details of their respective portfolios in general debate.

Although I defer to the individual ministers on details, I would like to take a moment to comment on our summary financials reported here today.

After incorporating the 2013-14 final audited results, as well as the expenditure and revenue changes identified through the first supplementary estimates for 2014-15, our government continues to be in a very healthy fiscal position. *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* presents a forecast annual surplus of \$45.689 million, resulting in an estimated accumulated surplus for March 31, 2015 of just under \$1.33 billion. Continuing to avoid net debt, our year-end net financial asset position is projected at \$176.819 million.

I wish to emphasize to all members the significance of having net financial assets as opposed to net debt. This is a very significant indicator of our financial health, as it means that the government is not relying on future revenues to provide current services. This is an enviable position for Yukon, as only Alberta is in the same position. My colleagues and I are very, very proud of this accomplishment.

The 2014-15 mains were tabled back on March 25 with a budgeted gross expenditure of \$1.318 billion, of which just under \$1.025 billion was allocated to O&M and \$293 million was allocated to capital. Building on our 2014-15 main estimates, the *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* and accompanying first supplementary estimates for 2014-15 provides for increased spending totalling \$21.44 million. Of

this total, \$27.56 million represents an increase in gross O&M expenditures and \$6.118 million represents a decrease in gross capital expenditures.

I did acknowledge I would defer to the individual ministers regarding the details of their respective portfolios. However, I do wish to comment on the net reduction to capital identified. It does occur where project implementation is delayed and funding previously allocated is not required in the current fiscal year.

We see that here in these supplementary estimates, where projects have been delayed and lapsing funds deferred to be included in our 2015-16 budget. While there are a number of smaller projects, deferral is identified under the Building Canada and the gas tax programs, as well as under the land development portfolio. Significant specific examples include McDonald Lodge and Atlin Lake campground.

I take this opportunity to confirm to the Legislative Assembly and to the Yukon public that these projects have not been cancelled. Project delays necessitate a review of required cash flows, and appropriate adjustments have been recommended to the Legislature through the supplementary estimates.

As I just noted, this supplementary budget provides for an increased O&M and capital expenditure of just over \$21 million. This increase results in total government expenditures of almost \$1.34 billion. Of this, just over \$287 million is allocated to capital for infrastructure improvements throughout Yukon and \$1.052 billion is allocated to O&M support of the many ongoing programs and services provided to Yukoners. As always, individual ministers will be pleased to provide members of the Legislature with the complete details of their respective portfolios when we reconvene to discuss the *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* in general debate.

As I have stated in previous comments before the Legislature and as I have repeated here again today, my colleagues and I take very seriously and respect the importance of effective processes and procedures in support of our decision-making responsibilities.

We prepare and table budgets based on the best and most current information at the time. Notwithstanding, the best-laid plans are subject to change. Changes to the budget plan through supplementary estimates allow us to be responsive to emerging pressures and priorities of importance to Yukoners. Changes to the budget plan through supplementary estimates maintain accountability to the Legislative Assembly and to all Yukoners.

As I wrap up, Mr. Speaker, I advise the Legislature that individual members would be pleased to provide members of this Legislature with the complete details of their respective portfolios when we reconvene to discuss *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* in general debate.

Members will have observed that my focus here has been on the commitment to solid planning, decision-making and budgeting and the strength of our fiscal framework. Our government is in a very strong financial position. We continue to target balanced budgets, with 2014-15 projecting an annual

surplus, and we continue to maintain a very healthy net financial asset position and avoid net debt.

The strength of our fiscal position and our government's ongoing commitment to fiscal discipline allows us to continue to make resource-allocation decisions such as those identified in *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* on behalf of all Yukoners. These are significant expenditures made for the benefit of all Yukoners. We continue to provide significant investments and expenditure initiatives on behalf of Yukoners while maintaining our commitment to fiscal discipline. We do this through a prudent and practical approach to planning, decision-making and budgeting.

We have a solid fiscal plan, and it continues to serve Yukoners very well. I am proud of the programs, the services and the infrastructure investments we provide for the benefit of all Yukoners. I'm doubly proud that we are maintaining a strong fiscal position, allowing for a government to be responsive to emerging issues and priorities on behalf of all of us.

I look forward to discussing the supplementary budget in further detail when we reconvene to discuss it in general debate.

Before I sit down, I would also like to acknowledge and thank all the department staff in their preparation of putting together this bill. In particular, I would like to acknowledge and thank the hard-working people in the Department of Finance.

At this time, I would like to acknowledge the work that has been accomplished in the past by the former Deputy Minister of Finance, David Hrycan, who, as we speak, is now enjoying the fruits of his retirement in the Okanagan of British Columbia. I would also like to acknowledge and welcome the new Deputy Minister of Finance, Stephen LeClair, and his leadership of that department.

Ms. Hanson: It is my honour to stand here as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Whitehorse Centre, a riding that, in its diversity — as it stretches from Marwell in the industrial area to the south access — really represents the full range of Yukon interests of Yukon's citizenry in terms of the very, very advantaged economically and socially, and the very disadvantaged economically and socially.

As I stand here as the member representing this diverse riding, it is with that mind that I listen to the Premier as well as bring forward comments I make as a Member of the Legislative Assembly because it's my job to represent, not just the members of Whitehorse Centre but, as the Leader of the Official Opposition, it is in our parliamentary democracy, the role and responsibility of the Official Opposition, to hold the government to account with respect to the decisions that it takes and with respect to the manner with which it stewards the financial resources that are placed at its disposal on behalf of all citizens of the Yukon. It's a role that I take — and that we take — very seriously.

It is my intention to keep my comments relatively brief with respect to the supplementary budget. I believe that once we've had an opportunity to be briefed by representatives of

the various departments, we'll be able to then to move into a more focused discussion on each of the areas where there have been both increases and decreases from what was approved in the budget process last spring.

There are a few comments that the Premier made in his opening remarks that I just wanted to reflect upon. I think it's important — and the Finance minister has made it clear, and I agree — that budgets are about priorities. I think it has become increasingly clear that the Yukon Party priorities are not in line with what Yukoners expect from our government.

There are a number of examples that come to mind. We've seen an agenda, for example, without the endorsement of citizens, without the expressed acceptance by citizens — an aggressive agenda with respect to oil and gas extraction, which is in stark contrast from the repeated calls from Yukoners who are focused on renewable energy. That's an agenda that's visible in both trade and popular magazines and other advertising venues.

We've heard the Minister of Finance say that the fiscal position of this government allows the government to be responsive to demands as they arise in the territory, which begs the question: Why? Why has there been such inaction on affordable rental housing? We heard again this afternoon — it's the echo this afternoon of the comments and the statements made over the last number of months and, in fact, the last number of years, if you think about it. It's the government that created a housing crisis by not making land available for housing — watched as prices escalated and then uses the rationalization that those highly escalated prices are now the reason why this government will not take action to support those working Yukoners who are looking for affordable rental housing, who can never, ever afford to get into the housing market.

We've seen where these choices — the chamber of commerce, Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, the City of Whitehorse and employers of all backgrounds have indicated that the shortage of affordable rental housing has serious consequences for our economy. Our economy — that's what will be driving Yukon in the future — a good solid economy, a stable economy.

We've just gone through a boom, and I know the Minister of Economic Development attended a recent speaking engagement from an investment advisor brought in by the Chamber of Commerce, and he brought forward some really important messages for us as legislators with respect to the need to be looking out a few years as the boom has now slid — and the commodity prices do have an impact on this economy. They do have an impact on the fiscal position of this territorial government.

It's one thing to say that we have a variable surplus. It's another thing to say that we respond, that we have the ability to be responsive. The proof is in being responsive. We will continue to hold this government accountable for their inaction on affordable housing. There are many other needs in our communities that a responsive government would be listening to and doing something about. The fact that there is a systemic issue of inequality and poverty, evidenced by empty

food shelves at the food bank and the increased use of the food bank by people who are forced to pay between 50 and 60 percent of their income on accommodation.

That's a serious situation, and this government refuses to act — or when we see a choice made not to provide support for ongoing funding for a safe place for women that is threatened because of lack of funding; or when we see NGOs like the Boys & Girls Club having to crowd-source to offer their after-school programming; or mothers and newborns programs cancelled because there is no public funding, despite the evidence that has been documented for many, many years — evidence that the Yukon has led — evidence with respect to the implications of support for mothers and newborns with respect to early childhood development. The EDI index is in this with respect to child development in this territory — serious, serious issues. The benefits — the long-term benefits to society by those investments — they speak to opportunities for government to be responsive.

The fact that a government that talks about having a long-term view and talks about having the ability to plan and project has neglected and/or refused — because I'm not sure which it is — to take seriously or go beyond the words and the rhetoric that it uses when it talks about climate change and when it talks about the notion of recycling; when it was forced — dragged kicking and screaming — to diversion programs and has not renewed the approach to how we deal with recycling and diversion in 22 years — the fact that Raven Recycling, which handles 85 percent of the territory's recycling, in terms of diversion, has been forced to close their drop-off for non-refundables because of the lack of sustainable funding for recycling in this territory.

If we're responsive to emerging needs in this territory, there's a gap here. There's a gap between what is said and what is going on. These are clear needs in our community and it's clear that the government is not stepping up and taking responsibility to address them.

The Minister of Finance is correct that a good government does demand — with respect to how we manage our resources — the expectation that we do it with prudence, probity and effectiveness, and that when we make decisions, I would like to suggest — as the minister speaks about decision-making processes and the control mechanisms, it was interesting — public admin 101 — which I think we heard last year. When you add to the decision-making process, I think the key part that's really imperative is that we talk about making decisions based on evidence — evidence-based decision-making — as opposed to the approach where decisions are taken and then there's an attempt to find — a desperate search, oftentimes — to find evidence to back up the decisions that have been already taken by government.

We have seen this demonstrated time and time again by the government to justify flip-flops on various capital projects, for example, from schools to housing. The Finance minister spoke to the fact that there are about \$12 million, I think, in lapsed — or more than that — \$15 million in lapsed capital expenditures. We will be interested to hear more of the details about that.

There are serious issues that have been identified — not just by the Official Opposition or the Third Party — with respect to how this government manages capital budgets — we hear it throughout the business community.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate the importance of our highly skilled professional public service. And I say this as a past public servant, because I do recognize the challenges that there are for public servants to try to anticipate — to deal with a government that changes direction and changes its mind as often as this one does with respect to direction, priorities and the basis for ever-changing decisions, to say nothing about what decisions that were made and to whom this government is listening, as it twirls the roulette wheel to pinpoint whatever the latest announcement is going to be.

I think we know that public servants who serve all Yukoners across the broad spectrum of services do so with dedication, with diligence. They deserve our respect and they deserve a government that is willing to demonstrate that genuine respect by ensuring that public servants who witness, or are subject to, wrongdoing in the carrying out of government activities can safely — and without reprisal — take the cover of secrecy off.

We know that abuse thrives where there is secrecy, where there are overt or veiled threats. We cannot afford to have an atmosphere of secrecy when we are dealing with the public trust, and the largest public trust that we have is the stewardship of the resources of this territory.

As legislators, we are charged with the public stewardship, as the Minister of Finance said, of an excess of \$1.34 billion. Once the political affirmation of the amounts are voted for in each area, our public service is charged with delivering the identified programs and services in the most efficient, economical and effective manner possible. They should be able to do this without fear of reprisal, without fear of interference. They should also be able to present policy options based on evidence, based on best practice, and not to have their views and expertise overridden by the behind-closed-doors lobbying of special interests.

The irony is that, in a parliamentary democracy, the notion is that legislators, like each of the MLAs in this Chamber, are charged with the overall management of fiscal renewable and non-renewable resources of Yukon. Decisions in a democracy are supposed to be made by those elected to represent the citizenry. Decisions made based on an open, transparent and vigorous debate are the hallmark of democracy. Increasingly, we have seen that tradition eroded to the point where this Chamber is presented with a fait accompli, maybe a little discussion — that, for the most part, the real discussion has already taken place elsewhere with select unelected stakeholders.

As the Official Opposition, it is our responsibility to hold the government to account for the decisions that it says it has made and to how it accounts for the decisions made with respect to the overall financial management of Yukon's fiscal resources. This supplementary budget has identified a need for a net of about \$21.4 million of new money. As we move forward into the debate, we will have questions, both about

what the new requirements are that have necessitated new expenditures and, at the same time, we will have many questions about the approximately \$15 million or \$16 million of planned expenditures almost exclusively in the capital area that were not or will not be delivered this fiscal year.

As I mentioned, once the departmental briefings have been scheduled, we as the Official Opposition look forward to debate on supplemental estimates and the opportunity to scrutinize both the government's choices and their capacity — or, in certain clear cases, the demonstrated lack of capacity — to carry out planned and approved expenditures.

I remind the ministers opposite that the Legislative Assembly gives approval for the expenditure of public funds, the administration of Yukon citizens' money and the expectation that the monies so voted will be spent in the best interests of all citizens of Yukon.

We will want to focus on those departments where there have been changes and we will be scrutinizing the performance of ministers' records over the past three fiscal years with respect to their ability to deliver on the programs, initiatives and the resources approved by this Assembly.

We look forward to getting on with the business of discussing the supplementary budget and to discuss the key issues and the differences presented in this first supplementary estimate from the mains from last spring.

Mr. Elias: It always an honour and a privilege to address this Assembly as the Vuntut Gwitchin MLA and respond to another supplementary budget estimate and Bill No. 15 and the corresponding speeches as it outlines additional direction and an agenda for Yukoners to consider.

I would like to begin with a heartfelt mahsi' cho to the people of Old Crow for their incredible and unwavering support and faith in me over the years that I've been your MLA. I do care about each and every one of my constituents, and words cannot express how I feel sometimes when I speak on their behalf. I am honoured to be their representative in the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

I did have the opportunity to travel to almost every community over the summer, and it was wonderful to engage with my fellow Yukoners and speak of so many issues and topics, and witness so many good works going on and listen to the innovative ideas Yukoners think would be wonderful to implement. I thank each and every one of you.

So many wonderful things are happening in my riding, and that's what I am going to focus my comments on today. I would like to share some of those with my fellow members of the Assembly.

It is with great pride that I mention to the Assembly that there was a vision by our elders that one day all of our students would graduate from grade 12 in our community of Old Crow. That dream for our people was realized and began on June 18, 2014.

History was made that day, and congratulations go out to Miss Sheila Kyikavichik. Sheila is Old Crow's first-ever Grade 12 graduate from the Old Crow alternate high school. Through our elders' vision, commitments from Sheila's

family, our minister of Education, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation education department and chief and council leadership and, of course, Sheila's teacher, Ms. Frances Ross, you have made our community so proud.

It was an emotional moment for me to watch Sheila walk across the stage at the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School and accept her diploma. Congratulations again, Sheila. All your hard work has paid off and your community is so proud of you.

Mr. Speaker, the 2014 Biennial Gwich'in Gathering was hosted by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation on July 21 to 26 this past summer, and it was a resounding success. I would like to offer my thanks to all the organizers and participants in the 2014 Biennial Gwich'in Gathering. Everyone I spoke with said they really enjoyed themselves. The organizers did a great job. It was inspirational to see all of our people and visitors come together and celebrate our culture, our history and to open our homes.

The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation was successful in their application to the community development fund to help ensure that the 2014 gathering was a success. The Yukon government provided \$20,000 to build needed infrastructure, including bleachers, benches, floor sections and a stage to enable Old Crow to host this great event. The project created 100 hours of employment for three people, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Economic Development for that support.

July 29 was an excellent day at the 2014 Biennial Gwich'in Gathering. It was a special moment for me to witness the signing of the contribution agreement and partnership between the Government of Yukon and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation government to support the construction of a community multi-use complex in Old Crow.

This initiative will support sport, recreation, healthy living and capacity building in our community. The Government of Yukon is contributing \$2.7 million toward the \$7.2-million complex. The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation is contributing approximately \$2.1 million and is hoping to access federal funding for the remaining funds. The complex will include a space for elder and youth activities, community gatherings, child care, which will include a language nest, and will include an industrial kitchen, communication centre, multi-purpose room, and weight training and fitness studios. I can't thank the Premier and my caucus enough. It was a pleasure to sign as a witness to this \$2.7-million contribution from the Yukon government to this long-standing, demonstrated community need. I want to take this opportunity to thank our community of Old Crow for their steadfast direction and patience as well — great job to everyone.

I also want to take a moment to mention a nice and thoughtful gesture that occurred on July 23 this past summer, when Premier Pasloski and our Member of Parliament Leef gave out some fresh Arctic char to the elders in Old Crow, Mayo and Alaska at the Biennial Gwich'in Gathering. Believe me when I say that the Premier and our MP made our elders so happy that day because the Gwich'in gathering assembly was speaking about the state of the salmon stocks across the Gwich'in nation when the Premier and our Member of

Parliament showed up from Herschel Island with the Arctic char treats. Thank you again.

I would also like to share with the Assembly that, on that salmon note, it was a general consensus of the Biennial Gwich'in Gathering that our countries cannot allow the salmon to ever be removed from the ecological tapestry or else the entire health of the watershed could unravel. The North Yukon water monitoring program is alive and well. This summer, at the request of Old Crow residents, the Yukon government Water Resources branch began monitoring water quality in the river surrounding our community.

In June, the branch trained a local water sampler and reactivated sampling stations that are now tested monthly. Branch technicians have revisited the upper Eagle basin in late July and the results will be forthcoming. There will also be three year-round hydrometric stations monitoring baseline stream flow on the Eagle River, McParlon Creek and DalGLISH Creek, which will better help understand the relationship between baseline water quality data and natural fluctuations in seasonal flow.

A fourth station monitoring Glacier Creek to measure the impacts of drinking water demands in the Eagle Plains area is also being monitored. The water quality is sampled at 16 sites across the Eagle Plains Basin several times per year to determine baseline water quality in the primary oil and gas basin.

On a related note, the Northern Cross (Yukon) Limited application is presently before the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board. Northern Cross has submitted a YESAB application for exploration drilling of 20 new wells in the Eagle Plains Basin. The work is planned to take place over the next eight-year period in the area where Northern Cross recently completed their 3D seismic program. The Water Resources branch has been working with the Yukon Water Board secretariat and the Oil and Gas branch to identify water licence requirements, and the Fish and Wildlife branch will be reviewing the application to assess the application's impacts on wildlife and traditional harvesting access.

There has been and still will be an opportunity for the public to comment throughout this YESAB Dawson designated office assessment.

Page 4-2 of the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan* speaks to the proposed new Summit Lake-Bell River territorial park. The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Yukon government approved the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan* in 2009. The approved plan recommended the creation of the Summit Lake/Bell River territorial park with a specified area of approximately 1,525 square kilometres, but with no defined boundary. Environment Yukon has worked with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to develop a proposed boundary. The Parks branch is currently beginning a process with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to discuss the park boundary, the park designation and a park management planning process. The process will also include consultation with the Tetlit Gwich'in and the Gwich'in Tribal Council, as the park falls within the Tetlit Gwich'in secondary use area.

I'm going to move on to speak about the Vuntut Gwitchin heritage and oral history project. Fifteen years ago, the community of Old Crow partnered with Parks Canada, the Yukon government and several universities in Canada and the United States to embark on the Vuntut Gwitchin Oral History Project. It is now coming to a conclusion. This project focused on the oral history research of our Vuntut Gwitchin elders, past and present, for four years. They then focused on cultural technology for three years, cultural geography for three years and finally navigation systems for four years. Over a decade and a half, the leaders of this important initiative successfully recruited and retained Vuntut Gwitchin youth to participate in the project from start to finish, which was so important, because I have seen those youth who have participated grow in a deep appreciation for our Gwitchin history, language and traditions.

In this final year, the planning will begin on how we as a community and partners will share, develop and teach the knowledge that has been learned and collected during this exemplary project.

Sharing with the world our Vuntut Gwitchin living culture, language and traditions is but one of thousands of reasons as to why we, as an isolated community, felt it necessary to present our aboriginal ancestry to the diversity of our country's fellow citizens of Canada, and to show some of what we as Vuntut Gwitchin have to offer the history and strength of our nation, as our community wants to be prudent partners in business and governance and the general social fabric with the rest of our country.

I want to speak about the Old Crow *Helicobacter pylori* project — *H. pylori* for short. I have offered to assist the Member for Klondike and the Member for Mayo-Tatchun with this project because some of their citizens have approached me over the years to begin a discussion about how this type of project can be initiated in their various communities.

The *H. pylori* is a bacterium that affects the human stomach lining. This issue became a community health concern due to the awareness of the bacteria's link to stomach cancer. In 2008, I contacted the Canadian North *Helicobacter Pylori* — or CANHelp — Working Group from the University of Alberta to inquire about developing a local *H. pylori* research program in Old Crow. Later that year, a resolution was passed by the Vuntut Gwitchin General Assembly that a project be carried out in the community of Old Crow.

In late 2009, the Old Crow *H. Pylori* Project Planning Committee was formed and planning meetings took place throughout 2010. The Old Crow *H. pylori* project was launched in December of 2010. In January of 2012, a University of Alberta gastroenterologist travelled to Old Crow to offer project participants upper gastrointestinal endoscopy at the Old Crow Health Centre. To date, 200 residents of Old Crow have consented to participate in one or more components of the Old Crow *H. pylori* project.

Some of the community's results so far are that, of the 186 breath test participants, 68 percent tested positive for *H. pylori*. Three percent were mild cases, 32 percent were

moderate cases, and 65 percent were severe cases. The treatment's success rate was 65 percent for sequential therapy and 95 percent through quadruple therapy.

I want to talk for a moment about the muskrats' environmental change and traditional use of the Old Crow Flats study that has been ongoing since 2007. Because of the importance of muskrat to the Vuntut Gwitchin people and to the Old Crow Flats ecosystem, our community of Old Crow developed a partnership with McGill University and the Department of Environment to study them and to better understand and predict changes that may occur in their abundance, diet, body condition and gene flow. The goals are to figure out where muskrats are, what they are eating, what condition they are in, and how they are related to each other across the Old Crow Flats. We gather this information by doing aerial surveys of muskrat push-ups in spring, which provide estimates of muskrat numbers, and collecting muskrat carcasses from community trappers to examine their body condition, health and DNA.

To gain better insight into factors responsible for lake-to-lake variation and muskrat abundance and condition across the Old Crow Flats, muskrats were studied on the same lake studied by other International Polar Year research teams. Some of the things being studied include: the plants' isotopic signature on the Old Crow Flats; the isotopic signature and protein content of submerged aquatic vegetation and the mercury in muskrat meat. Three hundred ninety-seven liver samples were also collected from across the Old Crow Flats and were examined for signs of bacterial diseases and parasites. Six hundred and sixty-nine muskrat carcass samples have been collected from 72 different lakes to examine muskrat nutritional condition and genetic diversity.

The annual population estimates of muskrat numbers in the Old Crow Flats from 2008 to 2013 were collected and the most recent muskrat population estimate is approximately 230,000 animals.

Environmental change in the Old Crow Flats was also studied and researched. One piece of that study found that, on average for the past 25 years, the spring temperature in the Old Crow Flats has been warming by one degree Celsius per decade, which is of grave concern to our community.

Very briefly, I would like to touch on some other works in Old Crow that are well on their way as we speak. Completion of the Old Crow community plan — this is essential for new housing applications. Galvanized aluminum foundations for the triodetic frame, or space frame, that move and adjust as one unit in responding to shifting permafrost were used on Freddy's and Lawrence's new homes. I know they are excited to move in soon. That is the first time we have actually used that type of space frame in Old Crow for residential homes.

Our community church foundation pad is complete and ready to build upon. We have six new houses and one duplex that are also scheduled to be completed early in the new year. Our new arctic co-op store is well on its way; the foundation is complete, the shell and the roof are up and the doors are scheduled to open in early January, 2015. Our community

member team that worked on this project are Winnie, Donovan, Rick and Marvin Junior, Vernon and Harlan. I thank them very much for their work.

We have hauled in a new high-tech distribution tank farm that will be in operation a year from now. Calculations suggest that it will save the Vuntut Gwitchin government \$300,000 a year when it is on-line. This great work was done by Jim, Dylan and Norman. Thank you very much.

Yukon Electrical has completed building its new gen-set and operations compound in Old Crow, providing safe and reliable power to our citizens. The Chief Zzeh Gittlit School has a new principal and three new teachers for the start of the new year. A welcome goes out to Eleanor, our principal and teachers, Adam, Andrew and Monica. The chinook and chum salmon sonar and radio tagging project is almost complete. The new RCMP member has settled in so welcome to Old Crow, Chris. Our Gwich'in language verbs dictionary is now complete and being used at the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School.

The Rampart House restoration project has completed another successful season, so congratulations to the workers, George, Joseph, Donovan, Tammy and Winnie. Your work is very much appreciated.

The government also trained two community members for the new water treatment facility.

It's so important to recognize the partnership between the Vuntut Gwitchin government and the Yukon territorial government that agreed to build a 2014 winter road from the Dempster Highway to Old Crow last January, February and March. Fifty-four semi-truckloads were hauled in and 34 were hauled out. This partnership between the Vuntut Gwitchin government and the Yukon territorial government precipitated many of the projects in Old Crow and resulted in so many Yukoners and businesses going to work.

In closing — I say this with a sense of responsibility. I'm running out of time here. Every generation has a legend and every journey has a first step and every saga has a beginning. On behalf of my constituents, I want to thank all of my colleagues on this side of the Legislature for recognizing the importance of the priorities, capital works and partnerships I have just spoken about today and for many years in this Assembly. We rarely do work in isolation to get the job done in Old Crow; it's almost always a team effort.

As the Member for the Vuntut Gwitchin and a member of the government caucus, I believe strong leadership is always necessary when one must make decisions inclusive of everyone. Our goal is to act in the interests of all Yukoners and the interest of the Yukon as a whole and, most importantly, we do not rest on our success. We must keep moving forward for a prosperous, healthy and strong territory, and we will never shirk or shy away from criticisms — empty or otherwise. We will simply find a way to succeed in our territory — a territory that is the best in the country in which to live, work and play.

Mr. Silver: I would like to start as well by thanking my constituents for the privilege of being their representative in this chamber. To my friends in Dawson, I want to thank them

for their continuing understanding. I hear all the time that I need to spend more time being just a community member — more time going to Thanksgiving dinners, birthday parties, playing music at the pit or at Gerties. Last week, for example, I missed participating with the Old Crow-Dawson City basketball team — the OCDC, great name — that came down to Whitehorse and was undefeated and won the basketball tournament last week. If it wasn't for volunteering for events like the Dawson City Music Festival or the Dawson highland games or Canada Day parades or economic development forums, I don't think I would have much opportunity to catch up with the lives of my friends. I'm very, very thankful because my constituents understand the importance of holding this government accountable. I am thankful for their encouragement and for their trust.

I would also like to publicly congratulate Roberta Joseph on her recent election as the new Chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. I would like to also send my thank you to outgoing Chief Eddie Taylor, and also outgoing Deputy Chief, Jay Farr, for their years of service in the community.

I have been working very hard to prepare for the Legislative Fall Sitting. As part of this process I have been talking to Yukoners about their hopes and concerns. Part of my job is to ensure the government is held accountable and I have outlined several areas where the government can do better and I will highlight some of them now.

In the spring I warned the Yukon government's unilateral approach to amending YESAB legislation would further strain the relationships between the territory's public and the First Nation governments. Now the government faces the prospect of yet another lawsuit stemming from its failure to cooperate with others. The Government of Yukon should be wielding its influence that it claims to have in Ottawa to see that these legislative changes withdrawn until they have had more discussions with the Yukon public and with the First Nation governments. Unfortunately, instead the government seems to be content to take direction from Ottawa for their support on this bill and it is despite the fact that there has been inadequate consultation with the Yukon First Nations and no consultation with the general public.

Affordable housing — this summer we saw several Whitehorse projects get kiboshed by the Community Services minister. The northern housing trust money has sat for eight years — that's a full housing cycle. We need to plan, not wait until the next crisis before we start building affordable housing. People involved with this entire housing process have lost confidence in our government due to last-minute political interference.

Let's move on to intergovernmental relations. The government's three years in office have eroded relationships with other levels of government. We have seen this repeatedly with Yukon's First Nation governments and, more recently, with the City of Whitehorse.

Another priority is the Yukon's energy future. After another summer of feasibility studies, is the government any closer to deciding how it will meet the rising demands for power, or have they made any progress on securing a

renewable energy future? That valuable time planning for our energy future was lost in an attempt to privatize our energy future. Is the plan now to simply stall until the next election?

Finally, to our economy — a stable, diverse economy is my number-one priority and I have a number of questions about our economic future and where this government is heading. We know in the last fiscal year, the government relied on Ottawa for 81 percent of its revenues. Despite talk of the government increasing the role of the private sector, we remain as dependant on Ottawa as we ever have.

On the legislative front, I will look forward to debating whistle-blower legislation, if the government decides to bring it forward this fall. After three years of delays, I hope the government is ready to proceed. If there is money in this budget before us to implement this new legislation, it is very well-hidden.

There seem to be specific items in the budget that have been left out of the budget, and I will flag those now for the ministers, as I will be asking questions on these as we get into departmental debate. There is very little information on funding for the hospital expansion, for example — \$72 million was announced earlier this summer. Since that time, there has been very little information about timelines or when this money will flow. Is it coming directly from the government surplus or additional borrowing?

It will be great to get some answers from the Hospital Corporation when they appear this fall. It would be helpful if the government could provide the date of that appearance now, instead of waiting until the last minute.

Type II mining sites — there is a \$10-million increase in funding from Ottawa. I am very pleased to see this funding continue. There is a reduction in funding to the Dawson recreational centre — over a half-million-dollar reduction. I will have questions on this as we get into departmental debate, absolutely.

Similarly, there is a huge reduction in the Shakwak funding — over \$7.3 million. There has been no real update on the Premier and his lobbying attempts to Washington to try to get the U.S. to honour their obligations to Shakwak. From the budget before us, it appears that the trip was not much of a success.

The cancellation of the Nisutlin Bay bridge project is recorded in the budget documents before us as well. Yukoners will remember that this project was cancelled this spring because of the government's inability to work in cooperation with the Teslin Tlingit Council. If I recall correctly, it was cancelled before we even had time to debate it in the spring budget. That is probably a record, Mr. Speaker.

There is a reduction in the McDonald Lodge replacement project of \$5 million. I will have questions on this and the foundation work that was done this summer.

Unfortunately the northern housing trust remains unallocated and continues to sit as part of the surplus.

Congratulations have to go out to the Tourism Industry Association for their lobbying on new tourism marketing funds that appear in this budget. It is unfortunate that the

government had to be dragged kicking and screaming into this funding program. Now they are happily taking credit for it.

We would like to see a commitment from this government to make this a permanent part of the department's core budget and not just a one-off to see a run-up to the next election.

It is too important to be handled as an application-to-application basis with Ottawa, and it should absolutely become a permanent fund.

Unfortunately, there is no funding to begin paving the runway at the Dawson City Airport or funds to support work being done to achieve a World Heritage designation for Dawson City in the supplementary. These are just a few examples of what we are looking forward to as we get on to the debate in the departments, and I look forward to that opportunity.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: It's a pleasure to speak to Bill No. 15. Our government campaigned on a platform of "Moving Forward Together". We committed to Yukoners to build a better quality of life, to protect and manage our environment, to continue to develop our economy, and to provide good governance. Our budgets reflect our commitments to Yukoners and we are using our budgets to deliver on the vision we shared with Yukoners.

The budget before us today is one piece of how we are accomplishing our vision. We are addressing the needs of students across the territory with programming support for individuals and communities. We have invested in the F.H. Collins replacement project. We contribute to Yukon College's operations so that students may access the Yukon grant and other opportunities through training, employment, apprenticeship and skills development programs.

I'm so very pleased that the work toward increasing educational options available at Yukon College continues to evolve.

We have improved housing options by modernizing the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, by helping first-time buyers and by increasing the supply of developed lots. We are addressing Yukoners' medical needs by recruiting physicians and other medical professionals and by financially assisting Yukoners' training in those fields.

Our government has invested in building a better quality of life for Yukoners. We are providing education and medical services, protecting and supporting our families, promoting the arts and sharing our culture, and supporting sports and recreation. We are investing in infrastructure like schools, hospitals, seniors facilities, arenas, treatment centres and housing for those most in need. We are indeed moving Yukon forward together.

I would like to take a moment to thank my constituents in Porter Creek South for continuing to have the confidence in me to represent them in this Legislative Assembly. I speak to my constituents in many different places — in fact, many of us do. I see constituents on their doorstep, at the grocery store,

retail stores; I see them at the gym and so on. I've been fortunate to become good friends with many of my constituents over the past few years. Friends often ask me if it's inconvenient to go shopping or go to the gym or just out in the general public because people always want to stop and talk. Indeed it is the very opposite. I thoroughly enjoy when constituents — when friends — take their time to stop and talk to me. It is through those conversations that I'm able to get a sense of what's important to Yukoners. I'm able to get a sense of what steps we need to be taking as a government to ensure that we represent Yukoners in this Legislative Assembly.

Many of my constituents are business-minded, are hard-working professionals within our community. Many of my constituents appreciate that this Yukon Party government continues to provide them with a healthy, stable economy, whether it be through mining, oil and gas, tourism or other opportunities.

People often commend the Yukon Party government on the work that has been achieved on the social side of the ledger as well.

It is no secret that the level of support for families and individuals affected by autism increase substantially through the support of this government. It certainly gained my attention as a parent of a child with autism and led me to become more involved with the Yukon Party executive followed by my involvement as a candidate.

As a result of this government's positive actions for people with disabilities, my son can now read and use an iPad to communicate his wants and needs. I'm sure he can now type about 40 words a minute using one finger. His frustration level, because of his lack of ability to communicate when he was younger, has decreased to almost nil. He can go shopping, swimming or to a restaurant with his family, all the while enjoying that experience. These are things that in 2002, when Jack was first diagnosed with autism, I never thought I would hear myself say.

Constituents in Porter Creek South who either have children with a disability or work with an individual with a disability take notice of the support that has been provided to them over the last 12 years. On behalf of my family, my friends and my constituents who are affected by disabilities in some fashion, I thank the Minister of Health and Social Services for this good work. I thank past ministers of Health and Social Services and the department staff who have been so incredibly helpful to ensure that proper and appropriate services are provided.

I would like to shift my focus to some of the areas of responsibility I have. I will just mention a couple items included in the fall supplementary budget. My intention is to discuss these in more detail when we get to Committee of the Whole for the departments.

When I think about the services that were available to victims of crime in 2002 and compare that with what we have now, I am so impressed with what we have achieved. In partnership with the Yukon Women's Transition Home Society, we funded the construction and ongoing operation of

Betty's Haven. We have partnered with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection to assist parents and children to stay safe in an increasingly on-line world.

I was just at the Justice FPT where I saw a very powerful on-line tool for parents and children called "WordsHurt", and you can see this at www.youtube.com/WordsHurt.

We have incorporated many of the *Substance Abuse Action Plan*, Yukon initiatives into the daily business of government. Yukon is leading the nation in responding to FASD. Recent initiatives include a supported housing facility and a prevalence study at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. A decade ago the government undertook a major correctional redevelopment program that resulted in corrections consultations held over 160 meetings and received feedback from approximately 1,000 Yukoners.

Informed by that feedback, we developed a new philosophy of corrections that emphasized public safety, offender accountability and the importance of rehabilitation. That new philosophy led to a new act and the new facility to support those principles. Today we are further ahead than we were six months ago, and six months ago we were further ahead than we were a year ago. We continue to see correctional services evolve and develop.

We are also working with other departments in government and with First Nations to address how offenders transition from our secure facility to the community. Year after year I see continued improvement in this area.

On Friday, we were at the Correctional Centre for a badge presentation ceremony. I know how proud our correctional officers are of the often thankless work they do. They have one of the hardest jobs in all of Yukon and they do it with professionalism and with pride.

Our Justice appropriation reflects adjustments for expenses as a result of the Judicial Compensation Commission. We're also including here increases to the judges' pension plan. We're also investing in upgrades at the Law Centre to improve the safety and security of our clients and staff. I would like to thank the staff of the Department of Justice for their hard work and commitment to our community.

As Minister of Tourism and Culture, it is a privilege to be able to represent the best part of the best country in the world. On the tourism front, we are continuing to share with the world why Yukon is the best place to visit. It is the best place to work, live, play and raise a family.

We committed to enhanced marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets in the U.S., Canada and Europe. Along with officials and trade representatives, I was recently in Germany and Holland. German-speaking Europe is the largest overseas market for Yukon. In February, we were also in Australia, and we will carry out a tourism trade mission to Japan and China in early 2015.

We committed to work with industry, with communities and First Nations to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round travel destination. I

highlight the Tourism branch and its recent successes, particularly in the marketing of Yukon as a larger-than-life tourism destination.

In 2014, in recognition of the growth opportunities this industry provides, we are making the single-largest investment in marketing the government has ever made in the tourism sector. In September, the Yukon government and Government of Canada announced joint funding of \$3.6 million over two years to increase our marketing efforts and draw more visitors from Canada and around the world. This historic investment has already generated several very exciting and innovative marketing projects that are captured under the program named Yukon Now. We committed to enhance marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets. Mr. Speaker, we have delivered. We are grateful for Canada's participation and accomplishing this commitment.

In our platform, we committed to utilizing the tourism cooperative marketing fund to build partnerships with industry that improve marketing efforts for both industry and government, and we have delivered. The Industry Services unit has been allocated \$2.1 million for its work to support businesses in the development and enhancement of tourism experiences. The funding includes a revote of \$176,000 for tourism cooperative marketing fund agreements, which are in place but not claimed by the applicants before year-end. TCMF provides matching funds for businesses. In other words, we assist businesses as they market their products.

In response to industry concerns, we had a look at the length of our tourism season. The \$1.9 million allocated to Visitor Services includes the additional \$70,000 required to extend the visitor information centre season to September 30.

The Minister of Environment and I announced the visitor information centre extended season and Environment Yukon's extension of full services in 10 key campgrounds. As we know, Yukon government's visitor information centres play an important role in increasing tourism revenues for Yukon businesses through the provision of high quality travel counselling services to hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. Beginning in 2015, all visitor information centres will open their doors to the travelling public May 1 and stay open until September 30. The VIC in downtown Whitehorse will continue to stay open year-round.

Mr. Speaker, one of the exciting areas for me is the exceptional work that is being done by Cultural Services branch in its mission to preserve and interpret our heritage, and support and promote the arts. We are promoting Yukon's arts and culture by supporting both organizations and individual artists. Organizations may apply to the arts operating funds and the arts fund. Individuals may access the touring artist fund and the Advanced Artist Award. We committed to continue to support the arts fund and the arts operating funds and we delivered.

We committed to continue funding programs such as the touring artist program and the Advanced Artist Award to provide assistance to visual and performing artists to enable them to conduct tours and compete in the southern markets.

The Arts section budget of \$4.2 million enables continued support of Yukon's dynamic arts community.

In July, I was pleased to announce a \$70,000-increase in funding available to individual artists through the Advanced Artist Award. The annual budget for the Advanced Artist Award is increasing from \$80,000 to \$115,000 this fiscal year and then to \$150,000 in 2015-16 and beyond. Support for artists at this level ultimately contributes to a vast array of events, exhibitions, tours, literary works and concerts. Together, these concerts make up Yukon's vibrant art scene and benefit Yukoners and visitors alike.

The arts fund supports a variety of creative community projects throughout Yukon. A few recent projects supported through arts fund included the Yukon Film Society's media arts programming project for the Available Light Film Festival and the Yukon Educational Theatre Society's plans for events highlighting the arts as a vehicle for community building.

The \$50,000 New Canadians Event Fund, which was announced in March of this year, has been accessed by three organizations to date to host cultural events that help promote multiculturalism and diversity in our great territory. These events include "A Night of Africa" showcasing African traditions and cultures, a Chinese culture show and a Chinese New Year celebration planned for February 2015. This fund supports newcomers in sharing their unique culture, which in turn helps reduce the potential for isolation of new Canadians and strengthens the expanding cultural fabric of our territory.

Perhaps one of Yukon's best kept secrets is the fact that Yukon produces the most abundant and significant ice age mammal fossils in Canada. The paleontology program continues to provide enhanced presence in the Klondike goldfields, where seasonal staff from the paleontology field office work with placer miners to ensure the territory's incredible fossil heritage is managed for the benefit of all Yukoners.

In cooperation with placer miners, the paleontologists acquired over 3,000 new fossils during the summer of 2014 for the Yukon paleontology collection. Thanks to our miners for doing their part and bringing forward new fossils and the important work they continue to do with the department.

The field office is one way the department is fostering a positive working relationship with placer miners and the Klondike Placer Miners Association. At the annual general meeting of the KPMA last month, the association voted unanimously in favour of a resolution supporting the development of a paleontology facility in Dawson City. The resolution also supports the development of a program to voluntarily report fossil finds in the goldfields and to legitimize the ownership of woolly mammoth ivory. The government is presently considering these requests, which would support scientific research while celebrating and preserving Yukon's rich fossil heritage.

I would like to thank the staff of the Department of Tourism and Culture for their dedication and commitment to their clients and stakeholders. Initiatives such as Yukon Now, the Advanced Artist Award funding increase, the Yukon

paleontology field office and the extended visitor services season are just a few examples of the many activities the department undertakes to foster a prosperous tourism industry, rich heritage resources and vibrant cultural communities.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It is a pleasure to rise and speak to this budget bill, the *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, for this year. There are a lot of things I want to discuss with regard to this bill as it relates to my various departments.

I wanted to first start by saying a few words about the unexpected passing of a constituent — a dear friend and great Yukoner, Rick Cusick — earlier this summer. Rick was the father of my close friend Tyler, and his tragic passing was an incredible loss to Tyler and Rick's wife Carrie, as well as Rick's whole family. I committed to the family that I would say a few words about Rick in the Legislature and pass on those words to them afterward.

I was just going to read briefly, with members' indulgence, the brief obituary that appeared in the newspapers in August earlier this year: It is with great sorrow that we mourn the passing of Richard (Rick) Leslie Cusick. Rick was born in Dawson City, Yukon, on April 5, 1958. His road to retirement began shortly after he graduated high school in Dawson. He began working with Yukon government's Department of Highways in 1976 and, after years of hard work, he was promoted to road foreman. He later moved to Whitehorse and became the foreman of the Whitehorse grader station. His love for fishing and camping was only surpassed by his love for his wife Carrie Ann, who he married on January 30, 2011. Rick will be missed deeply by his wife Carrie Ann, his son Tyler, his sisters Sandra and Donna, his brother Bob, his many nieces and nephews, and many of Tyler's friends — myself included — who flocked to Rick's house to learn about life, women and hockey.

Upon the passing of Rick, one of his friends had an excellent quote that was included in the obituary as well. He said that heaven better get organized because there's going to be a lot of rip and reshape going on up there.

In concluding on speaking about Rick, I just wanted to say a big thank you on behalf of Rick's family to the officials of Highways and Public Works and the Whitehorse grader station, who flew the flags at half-mast the day after he passed. Thank you very much to those officials. We'll miss you, Rick.

With that, I would like to turn to some of the goings-on of the Department of Environment, the Department of Economic Development and the Public Service Commission. It has been a fairly busy summer season for the Department of Environment for a number of reasons.

A lot of very rewarding initiatives going on, but a lot of challenging files as well, and a few challenging cases and circumstances the department faced throughout the summer that I would like to mention.

First of all, on a very bright note, of course, we were very pleased — I know that many of the staff within the Department of Environment were very pleased — to see the launch of the new water strategy for Yukon. The water

strategy promotes water for nature and water for people. The strategy recognizes the work that is already underway and identifies more than 50 new or enhanced actions the Yukon government will undertake to: (1) better understand and manager Yukon's groundwater; (2) plan for water needs now and into the future; (3) improve water management programs; (4) maintain or improve access to safe drinking water; (5) promote the sustainable use of water; and finally (6) improve the sharing of information about Yukon's water.

So, Mr. Speaker, this strategy, in its implementation, will see the government invest an additional \$2.7 million over three years on projects, including enhancing and formalizing Yukon's groundwater program, installing 25 new hydrometric monitoring stations, and hiring a hydrogeologist.

This investment is designed to provide economic benefits to local communities in the private sector, as well as use training to increase the capacity of water managers.

Mr. Speaker, that's something that I wanted to note about the water strategy — that one of the directions that we had given to the department with regard to the implementation of this strategy was the importance that was going to be associated with the involvement of communities throughout the Yukon in developing the new stations and monitoring them. It's very important that we note that there are a number of other governments that have roles to do with water — the territory is large geographically and a small population as we have — and that we work together to ensure that we don't have an overlap of duties and that we work together in partnership to ensure that we are all moving in one direction.

One of the focuses that the department will have will be engaging with water managers in the communities to provide training and to look to them for partnerships in the implementation of the deployment of new water monitoring stations throughout the Yukon.

In addition to the new infrastructure that's going up throughout the territory, one of the important features of the water strategy and one of the important action items is the hiring of a hydrogeologist for the government. The government has never had the type of hydrogeologist that we would need to implement the kind of groundwater monitoring program that we'd like to see developed in the territory, so that required us to go out and begin the hiring process. My understanding as of last week was that we had a short list of prospective candidates and that a decision will be forthcoming as to who the new hire would be in the coming weeks.

That is something that is very positive and I look forward to discussing the water strategy and some of the work being done in that branch of Environment Yukon.

I got a little bit ahead of myself, Mr. Speaker. I forgot to mention that one of the first things I wanted to talk about was, among the changes that Environment Yukon has faced recently, the arrival of a new deputy minister. Earlier this year, the Premier announced that our former deputy minister, Kelvin Leary, would be moved over to the Department of Community Services and that Jim Connell, who was most recently with the Executive Council Office, would move into the deputy minister role in Environment.

I want to take the opportunity to thank Mr. Leary for his years of service as Deputy Minister of Environment, most particularly those years when I was minister. For the past two and a half years, I had the chance to work with Kelvin in that capacity and really appreciated his professionalism and expertise in helping me transition to a new role as minister.

I am really happy to have Jim Connell aboard, and I am really looking forward to working with Jim in the coming years to advance some of the priorities we have expressed on behalf of the government and to do some of this excellent work that I am going to discuss here today.

The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin mentioned the trip that the Premier and I had the chance to do this summer, to Old Crow. Beyond that, what he didn't mention was that we carried on — well, he made reference to it at least — to Herschel Island. This is the second time that I've been to Herschel Island now since becoming the Minister of Environment. It was an excellent opportunity for me to reconnect with our officials who do the work managing that park on Yukoners' behalf. I wanted to particularly note Richard Gordon, the senior park ranger for Herschel Island. He has an exceptional team there and he did a great job hosting us. It was the first time I had stayed overnight at Herschel Island and I had a really good introduction to what life is like on Herschel Island throughout the summer months when the park is open and when tourists, researchers and government officials visit throughout the summer months.

The Parks branch, aside from Herschel Island, was a busy one this summer as well. As the Minister of Tourism noted, we announced earlier this summer that we would be extending the days of operation for 10 campgrounds in the general Whitehorse area until the end of September. This is, I think, an excellent step forward for the Parks branch and for Yukoners who enjoy participating in the camping lifestyle that Yukon is so famous for. The usage of many of these campgrounds that have extended services has been robust to say the least.

The extension of the services at these campgrounds, I think, will be well-received by Yukoners, many of whom have indicated to me in the grocery store, on the street and in various fashions that they want to see increased opportunities for camping and extending the season to a later date is something that accommodates that. I for one don't like to do too much camping late in September. It's a little bit cold for me, but I know that many Yukoners do like to do that sort of fall camping, which sometimes sees some snow on the ground in some parts of the Yukon.

Along the same vein as that, I did want to speak a little bit more about the need for increased opportunities for camping in Yukon and to comment briefly on the development of the Conrad campground, which is being currently developed. The most recent information I have suggests that we're still in the YESAA process and that we've been working closely with our partners in the Carcross-Tagish First Nation to see that project be assessed and ultimately go forward.

I know that the Carcross-Tagish First Nation is eager to see that project advance, as their final agreement requires

them to receive the right of first refusal on any of the construction contracts that will be pursuant to the passage of that through YESAA. I know the CTFN is looking forward to seeing that project go forward, as am I.

There are a few Yukoners who have approached me and mentioned that there are some challenges with that site, given the fact that it is a heritage site and that there are some heritage resources in the area. I wanted to mention that, as a part of advancing this campground, we are obliged by the final agreement to concurrently develop a heritage resource management plan for the site. So that plan, which will be done in conjunction with the First Nation, will include the preservation and protection of many of the historic sites and historic resources, including cabins, artifacts and various other pieces of heritage that exist on those sites.

Moving on, I would like to say a few words about the conservation officers with the department. They've had both — I think two events highlight the spectrum of reward and challenge that these officials face in the course of their duties. On the very positive side, we had a very interesting case this summer that saw two orphaned bears come into the stewardship of Yukon government and then ultimately the Yukon Wildlife Preserve. This was a case where a bear in the Copper Ridge area unfortunately had to be dispatched and the orphaned cubs of the bear were left unattended. Government stepped in — the conservation officer stepped in and took care of the bears. We were able to secure a place for them at the Yukon Wildlife Preserve and ultimately, an agreement was reached with the Calgary Zoo to see those bear cubs shipped down to Calgary to their new home at Calgary Zoo.

While it's a fairly positive story at the end, it is a cautionary tale to Yukoners about the need to properly manage our garbage and our waste to ensure that we don't produce attractants to bears, especially in the more urban areas of the territory like Copper Ridge or other parts of Whitehorse. But in the end, it was a fairly happy ending to what could have been a very challenging situation.

At the other end of the spectrum, we had a very unfortunate incident not too long ago with regard to a bear near Johnson's Crossing — an attack that proved to be fatal for a Yukoner.

I won't say too much about the case itself, as it's still ongoing, but I did want to commend the conservation officers who responded to that. I know that's a phone call that no C.O. ever wants to receive — that there's been a fatal attack. I commend them for their competence and professionalism in dealing with those very, very challenging issues.

I also should note, before I move on from Conservation Officer Services, that the new district office in Watson Lake is approaching the completion of construction. I know that the site is looking pretty good and the building seems to be coming along quite well. So I look forward to getting down there and visiting the new district office there in Watson Lake as soon as I'm able and as soon as it's open for business.

In the Environmental Programs branch, there are a number of things that are keeping our officials very busy. Those all tend to relate to changes in our various regulatory

regimes. First of all, in the summer, we announced changes to the *Environment Act* permitting regime, which were aimed at doing three things. The first was eliminating the fee for *Environment Act* permits, as well as extending the maximum amount of time that permits could be issued.

I see you're indicating to me that my time is limited and I do want to cover a few other things, so I'll move on.

Included in that work are the reviews of the beverage container regulations and the designated materials regulations that are underway right now.

I think this is an excellent step forward for Yukon's recycling regime and an excellent step forward for the department in taking that next step as a regulator, with regard to the recycling regime. I look forward to getting input from Yukoners, stakeholder groups and other levels of government, including municipalities, about those changes, and ultimately look forward to seeing those changes come into force as soon as possible.

On the climate change front, there's a lot going on as well. The Climate Change Secretariat is busy these days implementing the *Climate Change Action Plan*, with a focus, of course, on a number of very exciting research projects that are going on. In June of this year, I had an opportunity to announce — sorry, not June; in September, I had the opportunity to announce that we would be sending yet again a youth ambassador with our climate change delegation to the COP conference in Lima, Peru. Last year's youth ambassador was Mr. Bradley, and he did an exceptional job, and both Yukon and Mr. Bradley, I think, benefitted from the experience, and I'm sure the youth ambassador this year, Ms. Aletta Leitch, will very much benefit from her trip to Peru later this year with the Yukon delegation, and I look forward to hearing how that experience goes for Ms. Leitch and for our delegation.

I should also note that, earlier this summer, we announced a number of new investments in climate change adaptation research that we're doing in partnership with the Government of Canada. That included a number of projects — six projects, in fact — the first of which is one that I'm particularly proud of the department for doing, which is the Arctic adaptation web portal, vis-à-vis the Arctic Council.

This project is a web-based information portal that will improve access to information about adaptation research and actions in the circumpolar north.

This is an instance of the Yukon government leading a project at an international scale on behalf of Canada and through the Arctic Council. It is a really exciting step forward for the Climate Change Secretariat and the staff and officials who are leading that work.

There is also a number of other projects going on under that general aegis that includes the compilation of energy sector case studies, the assessment of temperature, trends and impact on energy demand, permafrost and risk assessment in Ross River, the mine access roads in northern Canada project and public health as it relates to climate change initiatives that are all funded under that same pot through the Adaptation Platform of Natural Resources Canada and AANDC.

I see that I'm down to my last minute. I am unfortunately not going to be able to cover all the ground I had intended to, but there is a lot of exciting work going on in the Department of Economic Development as well as the Public Service Commission that I am happy to discuss later on when we get a chance to go into the individual departments.

With that, recognizing that my time has elapsed, I will conclude my remarks and commend the bill to the House.

Hon. Mr. Kent: It's my pleasure to rise today in response to the supplementary budget and provide some comments. Like other members, I too would like to thank my constituents, those in the riding of Riverdale North, for their support and the confidence that they have shown in me to represent them here in the Legislative Assembly.

Like all of us, it truly is an honour to be one of those fortunate few who are able to sit in this House and represent Yukoners on a day-in, day-out basis, whether we are in this Chamber or in the communities. I commend all members of the House for the representation that they provide to Yukoners and for the job they do on behalf of their constituents.

Mr. Speaker, on a personal note, there is a new constituent in Riverdale North that I would like to particularly welcome — a young boy that my wife Amanda and I were successful in adopting out of foster care here in Yukon. The young man has Inuvialuit heritage. We are so very pleased and proud to welcome him to our family. I expect some time — perhaps as early as this week — for Amanda and him to come to the gallery, where I will make a proper introduction. Just be forewarned that he may not pay attention to the rules and procedures of those attending the gallery, but I told Amanda that perhaps he'll have to sit in the back row in case they have to make a quick exit.

A big thanks to all my friends and family and especially a big thanks to my wife Amanda Leslie for all of her support as we journey through this adoption process together — a very long process that has led to a successful conclusion. As mentioned, we couldn't be prouder of our young son and everything that he is and everything we hope he becomes.

When it comes to the budget and the budgets we have presented as the governing party in this Legislative Assembly, I commend the Premier — the Minister of Finance — and my colleagues for their strong commitment to the sound fiscal management that we have been able to attain over the successive budgets that we have brought forward.

One of the things, of course, that I ran on was to ensure that we had a strong, diversified economy that would allow us to make those important investments to Yukoners in fields such as education and health care. Just looking at the 2014-15 budget highlights, I think many of those investments are reflected in that budget and, subsequently, in the supplementary budget that we're going to debate this fall.

Investments such as a new McDonald Lodge for residential and home care nursing, phase one funding for a new continuing care facility here in Whitehorse, design funding for a new Sarah Steele Building to house Alcohol and Drug Services, as well as multi-million dollar funding toward

the replacement of F.H. Collins Secondary School — something located not quite in my riding, but that very much services the people of Riverdale North when it comes to providing a long-term school that has been there in that area for an awfully long time. Those who live in Riverdale and are able to go over there can certainly see the progression toward the replacement facility.

We continue to make investments in sports and athletics, such as the building of a six-lane track and soccer field at that F.H. Collins site on the lower field, support programs at the Heart of Riverdale Community Centre in Riverdale — \$420,000 over three years invested in that — as well as \$250,000 in the current budget to create an outdoor sports complex in Whitehorse — something that I know all Yukoners will be excited to use. Once it's complete, it will include an artificial turf soccer field and a proper eight-lane rubberized running track, among other things.

I know that it's very much in the design process, but a big congratulations to those organizations that brought forward the concept and a thank you to our colleagues for supporting the funding to see that project carry on.

Mr. Speaker, we know here in Whitehorse that the Alexander Street seniors' facility is nearing completion. I would expect that the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation would provide more detail, but perhaps as early as next month, we will see that facility transferred over to the Housing Corporation from the contractor. As well, with that coming to completion, the work has started on the 48-unit seniors housing complex in downtown Whitehorse. It's located on the corner of Front Street and Ogilvie. The excavators, I believe, are on-site as we speak. That's another exciting development in providing housing for seniors in the Whitehorse area. Again, the six-unit seniors housing complex in Mayo — construction has started on that as well and we look forward to seeing that project completed.

We've seen some upgrades to social housing in the 2014-15 budget as well — \$1.6 million. I know that some of that, of course, went to upgrades in some of the existing stock that we have. As the previous minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, I visited many of those facilities as I'm sure the current minister has — very much needed expenditures to provide the upgrades to those units that we're able to invest.

Those are a few of the investments that the Yukon Party government is making that will make a difference in the lives of Yukon residents on a day-in and day-out basis. Of course there are significant investments in education and training as well as work to protect and preserve our environment and wildlife. Practising good governance is another key pillar of our government's work. We continue to make significant investments and see the significant surpluses that allow us to make expenditures where they will matter the most to Yukoners, particularly in education and health care.

There are two projects that are close to my riding, or in my riding, that I think reflect these values. One is the F.H. Collins Secondary School replacement. Construction is well underway, and many contractors and employees from the Yukon are working on that project as we speak. I know the

Minister of Highways and Public Works has details of the number of Yukoners who are employed there. Driving by, one only has to look at the construction fence to see names of local contracting companies that are involved in that project, from Castle Rock to Arcrite to Stantec to many others — a big congratulations to those subs, as well as Clark Builders, who are endeavouring to hire local people to provide the jobs and complete the work on such an important piece of infrastructure.

Something that I've heard from my constituents with respect to that particular piece of property which is bounded on the south side by Selkirk Elementary School and Gadzoosdaa residence and includes the Teen Parent Centre as well as the trades wing, and over to the skateboard park on the north side of things, is: How will that property be developed?

I'm very pleased, in conversation with the Minister of Education, that she has instilled confidence in me to chair a multi-stakeholder committee that will provide recommendations to the government on how that campus or education reserve should be planned going forward. I know a number of letters have gone out to stakeholders, and I'm looking forward to conducting that work as the MLA for Riverdale North and as former Minister of Education. I look forward to hearing from those stakeholders and providing that advice to government on how that education reserve should be developed in the future.

Another important project that is being undertaken is the work at the Whitehorse General Hospital, a facility that is located in my riding of Riverdale North. It has been mentioned that funding of \$72 million has been approved for the Yukon Hospital Corporation for this multi-year project, which includes the cost for a temporary location for the MRI that is going to be completed this fall and winter. I know we got into some debate in the Spring Sitting on what that means, but the building itself will be repurposed for something else after the MRI is potentially relocated into another part of the expanded hospital.

Of the funding required, \$2 million was raised by the community through the efforts of the Yukon Hospital Foundation and matched by the government for a total of \$4 million, which will be offset against the cost of this project. We're looking forward to the Emergency department expansion and the MRI construction project and their target completion date in 2017-18.

Of course, the MRI will be ready much sooner. Work is underway on that facility right now, and I know that officials at the Hospital Corporation are quite excited to see that work completed and for the first MRI north of the 60th parallel in Canada to be offered. Big congratulations to all of those involved in fundraising and seeing that project through.

Two very important projects — one education-related and one health-care-related — that are located in or close to Riverdale North and we look forward to delivering on in the very near future.

I am going to talk a little bit about some of the accomplishments in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources as well as some of the Yukon Development

Corporation initiatives that are underway that I know members of the Legislature will be very interested to hear about.

When it comes to EMR, I too would like to welcome the new deputy minister to the post in Energy, Mines and Resources. Mr. George Ross joined Energy, Mines and Resources on October 1. He has a very long and distinguished career as a public servant in Ontario — most recently the deputy minister of Northern Development and Mines for the Government of Ontario. We're very excited and fortunate to have a high calibre individual such as Mr. Ross join the team at Energy, Mines and Resources. He is certainly making an impact already, and I couldn't be more pleased with the leadership that he is showing for the officials at Energy, Mines and Resources.

I should also thank Shirley Abercrombie, who acted as the deputy minister for a number of months prior to the arrival of Mr. Ross. Shirley provided excellent leadership as well, and her work and commitment to EMR allowed us to continue to move forward in those months prior to Mr. Ross' arrival.

When it comes to the details that are in the supplementary estimates, I look forward to getting into the details of those once Energy, Mines and Resources is called. We'll speak about some of the Growing Forward 2 initiatives that are in this budget. Type 2 mine sites are referenced by the Member for Klondike — investments in the Energy Solutions Centre, as well as the study of an inter-tie between Yukon and southeast Alaska.

We've seen significant increase in the Yukon Geological Survey. Their budget has been increased by \$950,000 this year. Again, we'll get into these details when we discuss specifics related to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

This does give me an opportunity to highlight some of the accomplishments of Energy, Mines and Resources when it comes to delivering on our government's mandate and some of our key platform commitments, as well as the commitments highlighted in the mandate letter that I received from the Premier.

They've worked very hard in Energy, Mines and Resources to provide land for Yukoners. Urban land in Whitehorse has become available through phase 2 of the Whistle Bend project. As well, country residential and commercial lots have been made available in Carmacks, and country residential lots were developed and made available most recently in Teslin on Sawmill Road. Lots continue to be available in Dawson City, Haines Junction, Carmacks, Destruction Bay and Grizzly Valley. Approximately 83 rural residential lots have become available as a result of new subdivision policies for the Hot Springs Road, Ibex Valley, Golden Horn, Mayo Road and Mount Lorne.

In March 2014 we made amendments to the Mount Lorne zoning regulation, which has the potential to add an additional 93 rural residential lots over the next few years if all of those that are now eligible for subdivision of their privately owned rural residential and agricultural lots choose to seek that subdivision.

For the first time in a number of years, the government was able to put out waterfront land, titled land, available for Yukoners. Nineteen lots on Tagish and Bennett lakes were developed and approved as part of the joint MOU between the Yukon government and Carcross-Tagish First Nation. There was an incredible amount of interest in those lots. I believe over 60 applications were received and the lots were all spoken for at the lottery process. As we move through the agreement for sale, we'll be able to find out if all 19 recreational lots were taken, but I think it shows the interest that Yukoners have in owning waterfront land of their own here in the territory and how exciting that is.

I see that you have given me a four-minute warning and I know there are a number of things that I wanted to continue to talk about, such as the inter-tie and the study that is going on in partnership with the Alaska government to investigate the viability of a southeast Alaska and Yukon economic development corridor. If constructed, it could increase telecommunications and transmission capability to Yukon and Skagway, as well as make some of those renewable projects — smaller hydro projects — along the way much more feasible and accessible if the transmission line were located in proximity.

Of course, the West Creek project that the Government of Alaska and the community of Skagway are looking at, located close to Dyea — they are looking for additional power in the summer months but would have that excess capacity to sell back to us in the winter months when it is needed here. Of course, we would have excess in the summer to sell down there, particularly for the cruise ships that dock and currently run their diesel engines to provide power to the ships. They're looking forward to potentially taking them off diesel and ensuring that they can run off of electricity when dockside.

I want to touch briefly on Yukon Development Corporation. There's an awful lot of work underway, important work for Yukon's energy future. For the Next Generation Hydro work that is underway, we have two contractors — one looking at the technical aspects, and the other engaged in the public and First Nation engagement piece — so there will be much to talk about in the coming weeks with respect to this project here on the floor of the House.

The LNG facility is progressing, as we heard in local media here this morning from the new president of the Yukon Energy Corporation. I should have welcomed Andrew Hall to his position as the new president taking over from Mr. David Morrison.

I should also reiterate the commitment that I made in the spring sitting that officials from the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation will appear as witnesses before the House this fall. I have given the heads-up in recent meetings with the Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation chairs and officials to be prepared. We're still setting a time, but they will be appearing prior to the House rising for Christmas. I know the Member for Klondike brought forward a motion today, but I will reiterate that commitment that I made in the Spring Sitting.

All sorts of exciting things are happening in mining, oil and gas, forestry, agriculture, lands and energy, and with the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation. It's a very diverse department that I'm pleased and proud to be the minister responsible for, and I look forward to debating it during Question Period and at other opportunities throughout the current sitting of this Legislative Assembly.

Ms. McLeod: It gives me great pleasure to rise today in response to the 2014-15 *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* as presented by the Premier.

I would like to take just a minute to thank the great people of southeast Yukon, though, for their continued faith in me to represent them in this Legislature. It is such an honour.

Our community in Watson Lake is a busy one and I am proud of everyone who takes the time to embrace that great community spirit in all of the events that take place and in our daily lives.

We have had some great events take place this year in Watson Lake, and I would just like to share some of them with you today. On June 5, 2014, the Yukon government and the Watson Lake Historical Society held a dedication ceremony to designate the Watson Lake Sign Post Forest as a Yukon historic site. Thank you to the Minister of Tourism and Culture for taking the time to join us in recognition of this landmark. The Sign Post Forest is world famous and really puts Watson Lake on the map. It is wonderful that we got this type of recognition.

I would like to recognize Watson Laker Britanee Laverdure. Britanee was part of Team Canada at the Commonwealth Games this past summer, where she made us all very proud. This fall she also went to the World Wrestling Championships in Uzbekistan. Our other national athlete, Watson's Lake own Zach Bell, also had a great summer as part of Canada's Commonwealth Games team and countless other cycling events over the summer. They both continue to make Watson Lake proud and they are very well remembered.

I would like to just talk a bit about the volunteer groups in Watson Lake — and there are many of them — and most go about their business on a daily basis running their programs. A good deal of them are funded in whole or in part by the Yukon government. I would like to recognize a group that works very hard in Watson Lake and it is the riding association.

Its real name is the Watson Lake Riding Association, but I don't want it confused with any kind of a political party because it's all about horses actually. However, in addition to the horses, it's also a 4-H group, which does such amazing work with the youth and teaching them all about community spirit and responsibility. The Riding Association is a group of very hard-working volunteers. I would like to give them a special thanks for their work in helping to make my community barbeque a great success. I would like to thank everyone from Watson Lake who came out, as well as my colleagues from this side of the House who were in attendance — and a very, very special mention to the Member for Pelly-

Nisutlin, who is a very highly regarded chef. As I understand it, he is available for almost any barbeque.

No community is complete without its special events and Watson Lake is no different. Discovery Days is a big event for Watson Lake and, again, the Riding Association volunteers were crucial in making sure things ran smoothly. They are the primary movers and shakers for the ball tournament, and I was very happy to spend a couple of days flipping my own burgers. Part of what we do on Discovery Days is to produce a number of events. There is, of course, the ball tournament to which a lot of Yukoners and northern B.C. people are invited to attend, and they do.

There was a golf tournament that folks really enjoyed, and I had the opportunity to be a judge at the parade, with Jeanne Lassen. I'm sure we must be very famous for our parades. They're well-attended by the public, anyway.

It was a really great summer down in Watson Lake. For the most part, I thought it was quite warm. I'm happy I could share some of that with you.

In regard to the budget, I think this is another great budget and I continue to be very proud of this government's work to meet their commitments to Yukoners. The people of Southeast Yukon are very appreciative of their hospital. We've had a hospital for a very long time and we're happy to have a new, modern facility. I know we've had some challenges with doctors and other matters, and I would like to congratulate the Minister of Health and Social Services for his good works — he and his department and the Hospital Corporation — making sure we have doctor coverage.

The supplementary budget carries on the good work that this government did in the spring. I want to thank the ministers and all their respective departments for all their hard work. For most of us, I think we can't really imagine the work it takes to pull this kind of work together.

I was very pleased to see that the community development fund has done some great projects in my riding this year. I want to thank the Minister of Economic Development for supporting these important projects. The Liard Aboriginal Women's Society received \$16,648 to co-host a forum with the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues on the topic of community lateral violence based on aboriginal resistance to violence and racism. This annual forum happened in September and was themed, "Beyond violence: Responding to interpersonal violence at work and in the home and community". It was open to women from all Yukon communities and offered opportunities for developing shared understanding and collective action to address violence in all its forms: in the home, at work and in the community.

The Town of Watson Lake received \$6,570 to purchase an ice-edger for skating rink maintenance. The Watson Lake Daycare Centre Society received \$17,375 to upgrade playground equipment at the Watson Lake daycare.

The museums contribution program provided \$30,000 to the Northern Lights Centre in Watson Lake and the special projects capital assistance program provided \$8,566 for a new colour photocopier. I want to thank the Minister of Tourism

and Culture for his contributions to our wonderful Northern Lights Centre.

One of the things I have brought up on behalf of my constituents is extra street lighting along the Alaska Highway at Upper Liard and along the Robert Campbell Highway to the subdivision of Two Mile. I want to thank the Minister of Highways and Public Works for moving this project forward with the support of the Premier and caucus and an investment in this budget of \$200,000. This installation will be well-received and will bring added safety for the drivers and pedestrians who use these routes.

I am very pleased to know that Highways and Public Works is planning to tender projects in the fall to give contractors more time to submit their bids and have contracts awarded well in advance of the construction season. This is something that contractors have discussed with me and I'm sure the minister will have more to say on that, but I really am looking forward to seeing that move forward.

Over the coming year — or years — I'm really looking forward to working with the Town of Watson Lake and my colleagues to move forward on a number of initiatives. I'm very happy to say that we have had some dialogue and I do see some of these issues moving forward.

Of particular note — and something welcomed by small businesses that operate in Southeast Yukon — is the decrease in the corporate tax rate. I've said it before and I say it again, despite any ups and downs, when a Yukon Party government is managing the territory we see population growth, economic growth, new jobs and sound fiscal management. This is a good budget — good for rural Yukon and good for all of Yukon and I thank the Premier for bringing it forward.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I was just putting a few things together here, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to be here to speak to this in this session again. First of all and foremost, I would really like to thank my constituents of Kluane. We had a very interesting and pretty awesome tourism summit — economic summit — and my fellow colleagues helped me organize this. I worked hard to push this forward — because tourism is a big issue in our area — and to promote it. Out of that — first steps moving forward — is that Kluane is now extra larger than life. I'm pretty proud of that. You just have to look at our largest mountain in Canada being in the riding of Kluane.

I also really would like to thank my family. This morning, I had to leave early because, as Minister of Highways and Public Works, I did five radio ads, speaking to Yukoners about maybe leaving a little bit early if the weather's not so good and it's snowing — it could be slippery — so I did leave early. My young teenage boy was still sleeping, so I gave him a quick peck on the cheek and said bye to the wife. We're back in session and I do really want to thank my family for their patience, being that we have to be here in the capital city.

I also want to talk a little bit about this tourism summit and I want to thank Parks Canada and the local First Nations. You just have to look at our cultural centre out there, the Da Ku building. I would like to throw a big thank you or congratulations out to the new chief of Champagne and

Aishihik First Nations, Steve Smith, and their councillors, and especially their Elder Councillor, Mama Buzzell — I call her Mama, because she's like my second mama. I'm really proud of her. Her direction is really going to be great within Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. At the Da Ku building on November 1 is the chief and council potlatch, so I really do look forward to being there for that.

That hard work between Parks and the First Nations is really going to work toward a better product in Kluane — more product in Kluane getting out there so tourists spend more time in Kluane, which goes toward economic development.

Some of my fellow colleagues have spoken a little bit about CDF funding and the support that the local organizations get, and that is very important to our communities. I encourage and I support them all the way when they put in these applications.

I also want to put a little bit of a thank you out to our Community Services minister. Solid waste — back in 2011, we stopped burning so dumps had to change and things had to happen. I am really positive and thankful for the direction we are heading in solid waste and in recycling.

I also had some key meetings with the local municipality talking about some upgrades in some of our infrastructure. I would like to support some better economic development in Haines Junction, but also better active living. I've been hard on the file for the community clubs in the past three years, and it was just brought to my attention some of the things that we are going to be moving forward on and I look forward to making some announcements in the future here.

Going back to the actual department that I am responsible for, I want to speak just about some of the different branches. I'll talk a little bit about Corporate Services first. There are some interesting facts and statistics and it's kind of neat to put out that our coordinated planning and reporting of over 695 capital projects totalling \$344 million — that's in our department and that's in the 2014-15 kind of five-year capital plan. We advise and support the department in managing the department's budget. In 2013-14 — that fiscal year — our Central Stores sold 293 items valued at over \$166,000, but that's locally manufactured furniture to client departments. I think that is really important that we have some local product here. Central Stores stocks over 131 environmentally-preferred items.

In the 2013-14 fiscal year, the Procurement Support Centre handled 1,924 bids and proposals in response to 378 public tenders — so very busy in that department. The basic idea is to provide the government's departments support with contracting and tendering, acquisition assets management, stores, publishing, travel, vehicles, mail service, risk management and insurance services. That department keeps very busy.

In that department, the Procurement Support Centre — I have encouraged and I have worked as the minister to make sure that we increase our contact between the centre and the businesses who bid in the Yukon so we can better develop

procurement and also look at procurement documents so that they are more standardized.

In the Information and Communications Technology — the ICT — portion, we have about 230 buildings, and over 4,000 computers are connected to the government's computer network. Our ICT hosts over 200 servers, using 500 GBs of storage. Interesting fact — if the Yukon government were using technology from the 1990s to accommodate the storage needs today, the infrastructure would stretch from Whitehorse to Dawson City and back again. The Member for Klondike could follow his information there and back and it would consume 30 times the electricity that Yukon Energy produces.

Some of the stuff within that department is to keep the understanding of government departments' business needs and to develop solutions that make it easier for them to serve the public while doing so more efficiently. It is also to provide leadership and management, storage and protection of our government information assets and to facilitate public access to government records while protecting the privacy of our individuals and also to develop and manage essential information and communications technology infrastructure.

This includes our Yukon-wide mobile radio service that our government uses and our Highways employees use on a day-to-day basis. Another interesting fact is that we're working toward introducing support for iPhones, Androids and smartphones so we can enable bringing your own device with some of the new technology that we see out there. We have a virtual desktop to enhance access and productivity for employees including — which is a good thing — remote working, which will enable telecommuting and flexible work environments, which reduces space requirements resulting in lower property lease costs for the Yukon government.

One of the priorities is the creation of our e-services branch. This is a priority and a platform commitment that we had to increase the mobile access to Yukon government services. In the spring you will see that we're on track with some of the stuff and you will be able to get your angling and camping permits on-line, with more work to be done with more e-services.

We're also helping develop a new module within our Energy, Mines and Resources lands branch, which will accommodate class 1 notifications in our continuing work and collaboration with Yukon First Nations. I hear a lot in the House here that we don't work with Yukon First Nations. I think we're pretty busy working with Yukon First Nations on a regular basis.

Our property management division employs over 200 staff who are responsible for the operation and maintenance of more than 350 buildings across the Yukon. Capital maintenance is delivered by Property Management division across all the departments — it doesn't matter what department you're in. There are over 10,000 work orders processed each year. We provide the project management services for Yukon government capital building development, and I am proud to say that we ensure the provision of good facility space through acquisition, construction and recapitalization, or sometimes demolition. This will ensure

that government services are provided from facilities that meet the building code, health, safety, energy efficiency and sustainability standards. You just have to go across the bridge there and have a look at what is happening over at the new F.H. Collins.

Our Property Management division provided project management services for more than 270 projects, with a budget of over \$125 million, and successful project management of the new Canada Border Services Agency. The Canada Border Services Agency offices at the Dawson City Airport — I know the member from Klondike was probably very surprised. That airport, for those passengers flying directly from the United States, was completed by May 2014, in time to screen the 15,000 passengers who wanted to spend money in Dawson City. The success has four companies planning the repeat for the flights in 2015. The key thing with this is that we got this done in a hurry, and we got it done on time and on budget so that we could benefit the businesses and those folks in the riding of Klondike.

Some of the priorities are to develop and implement an updated and integrated government-wide portfolio management strategy. We ensure that Yukon government's buildings are sustainable over time and are designed to meet primary program needs and optimized for building operation and maintenance. This will reduce the energy consumption and environmental impacts of our Yukon government infrastructure, assets and operations, and this will reduce costs and support our climate change objectives.

The last big branch that we have is the Transportation division. Not a day goes by where someone isn't touched by this division. They have to drive or they have to fly. Across a bridge, there are over 132 of them and there are over 238 multi-plates. We do manage four airports and 25 aerodromes, and we have just about 5,000 kilometres of road — some paved, some BST and some gravel.

We're also the regulator when it comes to Transport Canada, their systems and infrastructure. That's a key point, because this is ongoing stuff that we get from the federal government. I work in close collaboration with our federal minister and the industry on this to try to mitigate concerns and issues as we try to move forward to maintain our transportation infrastructure and all our related equipment.

Continued major work and construction programs on the Atlin Road and the Campbell Highway, some major road rehabilitation program on the north Alaska Highway — I'm sure I'll be getting some questions about permafrost and the Shakwak. I'm happy to say I'm very busy on that file, as is the Premier.

We've done some continuing crushing and surfacing programs on the Silver Trail and the Dempster Highway. Of course, with the increase in traffic that headed up the Dempster to work on the road to Tuk, we saw a lot of increased traffic last winter. Anybody who went up to Dawson in the spring — our BST took a bit of a hit, but I was up there about a month ago and the crews sure did a fine job replacing that. That's just part of doing business when you become the warmest place in Canada in January.

Continued major bridge upgrade program, with the new bridge construction at Tatchun Creek — I had the opportunity to stop by there and look at the guys who are working there. Those guys are putting food on the plates of their families, spending their money in the Yukon — maybe at a local snowmobile dealer or down at a bike shop or at Canadian Tire, and there are people working there too.

Some of our upgrades to our gravel runways through the application of an environmentally friendly dust suppression and binder are key. I know the industry is very happy to see this.

Some of our priorities that I spoke to a little bit earlier are to continue to work with Alaska and Washington and Canada — all of those officials on Shakwak, the agreement between Canada and the United States. I want to see the continued reconstruction on the Campbell Highway, work closely with local First Nations to make sure that we can move this forward and see the completion of the Atlin Road, and also, the rehabilitation work associated with the degrading permafrost on the north Alaska Highway in some of the areas and other permafrost areas on our highways.

I'm looking forward to seeing some more resurfacing improvements on the Silver Trail and back up on the Dempster Highway. The other thing looking forward and looking into the future — being a little bit proactive — we talked about the Whitehorse corridor and the functional plan for that, but also the Klondike Highway, Freegold and Nahanni Range roads. Those are roads that need to be identified and we have to look into the future. As the territory grows, we have to be ready for them. I'm proud to say that the department is working on some functional planning for those so we can be ready.

One of the things, I guess, that was near and dear to my heart a little bit was the Ross River footbridge. I didn't know much about the Ross River footbridge before I got elected, Mr. Speaker — watching that file move forward, seeing the love of that bridge with the residents in the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin's region and the hard work that the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin did to work with myself and the Community Services minister.

We found a solution for that bridge. We met with the chief and council on many occasions and had many conversations. You need to just go to the Facebook page and look at the positive comments that are in there. That's this government, committed to working with communities and local First Nations.

I guess in closing I just do really want to say that working with industry to improve processes in government is something that is key and it's near and dear to my heart, and that falls within my department — such as multi-year capital planning and looking at getting some of these projects out in the fall — like the Member for Watson Lake spoke to earlier — so there's a little bit of stability within our industry, whether it's building or whether it's road construction, so these people can keep some people working in the wintertime because they realize they have some big jobs in the summertime. This is successful, multi-year capital planning

and some of this stuff is linked to a steadier, more robust local economy. Our government does continue to make Yukon — and you've heard this and you're going to hear it over and over because this is what I hear from the residents of my riding — the best place in Canada to live, work, play and to raise a family.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I was going to present some highlights of the supplementary budget for Health and Social Services, but prior to doing that, I listened very carefully to the Leader of the Official Opposition's response to our Premier's speech. I was struck by a couple of issues that the Leader of the Official Opposition brought forward. One was a shortage of affordable housing and how we should be doing more in that area.

Mr. Speaker, I know you and I probably represent two of the fastest-growing ridings here in the territory — Porter Creek North and Porter Creek Centre. I was struck, because I went and visited one of the developments in my riding. The development already had a number of condominiums built — a number of row houses. They also had some mobile home units put up there — all of which were sold, by the way — during the summer months when I was there. I saw about 20 of the condos that were built there at that time. They were being built in groups as triplexes. I toured them, actually. I took some time and spent some time with the builder there. Each of these triplexes had two of the units with a modest, we'll say, rental suite attached or directly part of the condominium. That meant, Mr. Speaker, when this whole project is built, they anticipated roughly 120 new homes. It means that, in that one development, there will be a total of 80 new rental units. These are modest rental units. I asked for some idea of where in the spectrum they fell in terms of rent, and I received some numbers that I won't repeat, because it was in the summer and things may have changed since then. I notice that in many areas in the city, rents are decreasing. It was interesting.

Each of the people occupying these homes, Mr. Speaker, is depending on that rental income. So those 80 rental units that will be constructed by the time the development is completed — these 80 people will be relying on that rental income to help them pay their mortgage. I guess that is what the Minister of Community Services was trying to articulate in many of the answers that he provided, both today and previously.

I was also struck by the Leader of the Official Opposition's evident passion about evidence-based decisions and how employees in the territory should be able to carry out their programs without fear of interference. I would assume that the member opposite meant without interference from political offices. I was struck by the apparent contradiction in terms, because just recently — last session — I fielded a huge number of questions with respect to the Coroner's Office about an inquiry and how we should be taking the initiative here and calling an inquiry and doing a number of different things to ensure patient safety in the Yukon Hospital Corporation. There is a very clear outline of how the coroner

operates and the fact that the coroner is independent — that position, even though a part of government, is independent, or should be independent of political interference. That is what we tried to do.

We tried to stay away from those decisions being made because the coroner's office is independent and we believe that we have a good coroner and that we have a coroner who is doing the right thing. Obviously members opposite didn't agree with our stance. I assume from what was said that members opposite would love to get up there and get their little fingers involved with the Coroner's Office and give specific direction. We don't believe that should be done and that's what we tried to do. As it turned out, it may have taken a little longer than people would like to see in some instances, but the system worked. We did the same thing with the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

Yukon Hospital Corporation immediately — when an adverse event occurs in any of their facilities — carries out a patient safety review. That patient safety review is, by legislation, private and cannot be used in future proceedings. The reason that is done is very simple: they want to ensure that the best possible information comes out in those patient safety reviews without fear of recrimination or without fear of any of the medical practitioners or hospital staff being implicated in any future actions. That is done primarily to ensure that if there are issues identified, they're identified honestly and quickly. The Hospital Corporation then has the ability to go out and correct those safety concerns.

Those were two of the things. The other was when the member opposite talked about programs being cancelled because no public funding was available. I'll assume that she probably meant the program that has been somewhat in the news lately. I know I received a number of petitions or a number of signatures on a petition for the mothers and babies program formerly run by Many Rivers. I thought it was interesting that the member opposite spoke about this program and how we should have jumped in to fund it. I thought that even though we did not receive a request to jump in and fund that program — even had we received that request, we would, as part of our due diligence, evaluate the programs, find out how that program would fit with current Health and Social Services programs that we already offer through Public Health or other facilities — Family and Children's Services. I thought it's interesting that we're being criticized because we don't jump in and fund these programs and yet, if we did, I would then be criticized for running off and spending money without paying due diligence.

I think of all of the times that I hear from members opposite that we're not doing it properly. Then we take the time to do our planning and to do our due diligence, and then we're criticized because it takes us too long. To me, it's much like funding of capital projects. We come up with what they call a "class D estimate" and that class D estimate could be plus or minus 40 percent.

That class D estimate is given as a result of a question or as a result of some publicity being taken. That then becomes the number that you're held to, even though it's a class D

estimate and it's plus or minus 40 percent, and it won't be able to be refined any further until there are a number of dollars spent.

I look at the F.H. Collins school. There was an estimate there — it wasn't refined until there were quite a few dollars spent, because you must get architectural drawings and you must get engineering reports, and all of those other things that have to be done in order to get a refined cost for a project we are criticized for, because we're spending money without the project being built. However, if we don't spend the money, we are then criticized because we can't follow a budget. So it's — I'm really — I find it difficult sometimes to answer questions and, at other times, I find it difficult not to criticize.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Dawson came up with an interesting motion the other day that you should be able to criticize us for not answering questions appropriately. I thought this would be a wonderful committee that would discuss that, and I want to be on that committee, because I want you to also be able to call members opposite to task when they ask stupid questions.

I guess, enough said on that one.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on a point of order.

Ms. White: We can either go with 19(g), which imputes false or unavowed motives to another member, or we can go 19(i), which uses abusive or insulting language.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Ms. White: We'll go 19(i) please, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I have to agree. The use of the word was unnecessary, and I would please ask you to apologize to the members at this time.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, of course I apologize. It was a purely hypothetical observation, but I apologize for inferring that any member opposite would ask a stupid question. Some other kinds of questions perhaps we can do as well.

Anyway, I'm also pleased to present some highlights in the supplementary budget for Health and Social Services. I would like to update the Legislature on many of the important priorities identified in the spring 2014-15 budget. A number of revotes are included in this budget so that we can proceed with some previously identified priority issues. One of the big ones was a revote of funds necessary to complete e-health projects within the department, within the hospital and in the medical community here in Whitehorse. One of the difficulties we've run into with this project is hiring people who are necessary to implement the e-health and records system. Consequently, it has been delayed for a while. We've now managed to work out some programs or some exchanges with some other jurisdictions. Consequently, we hope that we will have computer technicians and programmers in place here

in the very near future and that we will make significant progress on our e-health project in the very near future.

One of the other priorities for this government continues to be program supports and prevention for people with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. We are requesting a revote of \$105,000 for the fetal alcohol spectrum initiative that supports the development of a common case management approach and also the development of a local adult diagnostic team. The revote will be used to carry over funds needed to finalize training events and to complete the development of an evaluation framework. This funding is 100-percent recoverable from Canada and we should spend that total amount in the upcoming months.

Health and Social Services department requires the largest increase in Health and Social Services O&M supplementary budget. The main drivers for this increase are increased physician costs and coverage for some services following the termination of the territorial health system sustainability initiative, or THSSI, which ended on March 31, 2014. Over \$4 million — and I have to thank all members of my caucus for this support, because over \$4 million was required to enable a smooth transition from activities that were previously funded with THSSI to the new budget, which meant that we no longer had that \$4 million in THSSI money. The transition period, March 31, 2014 to March 31, 2015 required a one-time increase of \$1.6 million toward medical travel costs.

Services in communities have been strengthened, as we all know, with the addition of our facilities in Dawson and Watson Lake, but medical travel expenses remain a fact of life. We are also continuing to focus our efforts to recruit and retain qualified physicians and we are requesting an increase to fund these activities.

However, the good news was that there was also a decrease of over \$1 million under the Yukon Hospital Corporation to reflect the fact that the pension solvency requirement was nowhere near as bad as initially thought and an actuarial assessment lowered the requirement from \$5 million to — I believe it was — \$3.6 million, or very close to that. Consequently, \$1.4 million — or almost \$1.4 million — was returned to government coffers and we were extremely pleased to see that.

The major capital budget items are in Corporate Services, which involved the e-health system. So not only did we have revotes in operation and maintenance, but we have revotes also in the capital side of the budget.

We also have several increases that require increases in funding. Because one of our platform commitments was addressing the housing needs of Yukoners, one of our goals related to this is working with the Salvation Army to replace their existing homeless shelter in Whitehorse.

As one of our most valued community partners, the Salvation Army is well-known for providing the disadvantaged with excellent support and services. We are only too happy to see that continue and increase in the next years with the funding that we will be providing for them in the next little while.

Creating a better quality of life for Yukoners was also one of our commitments and it included addressing substance abuse. Part of this mandate means that our Alcohol and Drug Services must always respond adequately to the many needs of individuals with addictions. The Sarah Steele Building replacement project has now begun. The new building will be located on the existing site and will incorporate the three additional lots to the rear of the existing building. Construction is slated to begin this spring with completion slated for July 2016. The supplementary budget will be allocated to match the construction schedule.

Replacement of the McDonald Lodge in Dawson is also a very high priority for the department and we anticipate the completion of the project in late 2015 with occupancy in 2016. There are a number of other items that I'm very happy that the department is going ahead with and we'll look forward to discussing them further, but seeing my time is almost elapsed, I will end with that. Thank you very much.

Mr. Hassard: It's always a pleasure to stand before the Assembly to respond to Bill No. 15, *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, on behalf of the people of Pelly-Nisutlin. I would like to start by thanking all of my constituents for their continued support.

The riding of Pelly-Nisutlin has seen a very busy summer. Some of the highlights include seeing the repairs to the historic Ross River footbridge. These repairs were very important to the community and I was very pleased to have been able to help see these repairs proceed. I would like to thank the chief and council of the RRDC for their continued help and support on this file. I would also like to thank the many, very passionate members of the community who never gave up. They all know who they are, of course: Ivan, Clifford, Kitty and the rest.

We have two new water treatment plants in Faro — one is at the Faro mine site, as well as one for the municipality. I was fortunate enough in the last week or two to be able to travel with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and we were able to do another mine site tour at Faro and had the opportunity to see the new water treatment plant in operation.

If I could, I would just like to thank Cam Malloch, a young engineer for CH2M Hill. He took us through and explained the operations and the workings of the plant, and it was very interesting, so thanks to him.

The municipality had their own water treatment facility completed. This was a Building Canada fund project. I recently had a discussion with the public works foreman and he was very happy with the way it was working. He said the power consumption has fallen dramatically compared to the old system that they had, so that was good to hear.

As well, I was fortunate enough to be able to participate in the annual Faro golf tournament again this year. It was a huge success and, in case you're wondering, no, we did not cheat. It was an honest third-place finish, so thanks to my team of course — not so much to me.

Teslin had a very busy summer as well, with just over \$2 million in street upgrades through the Building Canada fund.

We saw many, many residents working seven days a week for about nine weeks. It was a great boost for the community. I would like to thank the CAO and the town council for all of their hard work on this project, as well as Teslin Tlingit Council for their tremendous support and input and working with the Deslin Development Corporation that oversees the project. It was really a great community project.

Unfortunately, the Minister of Environment wasn't very willing to work with the community, so a lot of work was done in the rain — that's federal, sorry.

As you know, I'm the chair of the community development fund, and I very much enjoy my role over there. The team at CDF is great to work with, as we continue to financially support many great projects throughout the Yukon. The tier 3 submissions that came due in January — we've seen over \$870,000 for six projects. It was almost \$300,000 for the church of St. Christopher in Haines Junction; \$90,000 for the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon; \$200,000 to the Hillcrest Community Association for their trails; approximately \$111,000 to the Lorne Mountain Community Association; \$100,000 to the Village of Mayo for their swimming pool upgrades; and \$73,500 to the Whitehorse Baptist Church.

For the May intake of the tier 1 applications, we saw 15 organizations receiving about \$206,000, with \$6,245 for the Alpine Ski and Snowboard Association of Yukon; \$9,116 to the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; \$19,500 to the Council of Northern Economic Developers; \$14,672 for the Council of Yukon First Nations; \$14,022 to the Freedom Trails Therapeutic Riding Association; \$13,320 for the Grey Mountain Housing Society; \$2,200 for the Humane Society Dawson; and \$20,000 to the Humane Society Yukon; \$16,648 for the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society; \$17,000 to the Sacred Heart Parish; \$12,731 to the Town of Faro; \$20,000 to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation; \$8,498 to the Yukon Association for Community Living; almost \$16,000 to Yukon College; and \$17,000 to the Yukon Comic Culture Society.

The May intake of tier 2 saw approximately \$972,000 spread throughout 21 community organizations for historical, cultural, recreational and other incentives throughout the Yukon. These tier 2 level projects will provide approximately 11,000 hours of employment to about 81 people throughout the Yukon. The Alaska Highway Heritage Society received \$51,461; Biathlon Yukon received \$70,000 for upgrades to the firing line and target line at Biathlon Yukon; the Dawson Childcare Association received \$30,000 to conduct a feasibility study to determine best how to address challenges surrounding inadequate facilities with the intent to ensure that they are able to meet community demand; \$32,625 for the Dawson Shelter Society; and \$25,803 to the Granger Community Association — that was to implement phase 1 of the Granger park plan and develop and design of phase 2.

The Klondike Snowmobile Association received \$44,048 to upgrade the network of multi-use trails in the City of Whitehorse, located between the areas near Fish Lake Road and the Klondike Highway. The Kwanlin Dun Cultural Society — \$35,455 to enable elders of the Kwanlin Dun First

Nation to record visual and biographical portraits and oral histories for future exhibits and programs at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre. Kwanlin Dun First Nation received \$68,202 to remove the old asphalt rink surface and replace it with a smooth level concrete pad.

The Marsh Lake Community Association received \$25,215 for improvements to walking trails. The Raven Recycling Society — \$41,500 to create a plan for a community gathering conference to develop a zero-waste event toolkit. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation — \$57,173 — this was to develop a network of single-track mountain bike trails on the Dome.

The Village of Teslin — \$29,480 to install new outhouses at Friendship Park and at the ball diamond; Volunteer Bénévoles Yukon — \$35,810 to review the organization's communications tools and processes and also to improve the offer of on-line resources and training. The Whitehorse Baptist Church received \$75,000 to do upgrades at the main building at the Marsh Lake Bible Camp, as well as to build an addition on the wash house. The Yukon Avalanche Society received \$28,732 to deliver youth-targeted avalanche awareness events and outreach programs throughout the winter.

The Yukon Church Heritage Society received \$45,240 to undertake conservation, restoration and repairs to the exterior of the old log rectory. The Yukon Council on DisABILITY received \$46,272 to develop a Yukon framework and implementation for the Canadian Convention to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Yukon Freestyle Ski Association received \$74,984 to build a summer ramp at Mount Sima. This was to allow freestyle athletes in Yukon and from across Canada to train during the summer months. I will not be participating. The Yukon Historical and Museums Association received \$27,869 for coordination and planning services that will support a major international conference on the role and contributions of women in the north and World War I.

The Yukon Transportation Museum Society, \$58,705 — this is to improve interpretive ability, revenue generation potential, security and curbside appeal for the Yukon Transportation Museum. YuKonstruct Makerspace Society received \$75,000 to empower Yukon innovators by assisting with funding to launch the PowerUp project.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, the community development fund is definitely a Yukon-wide fund. It touches many Yukoners in many ways. Once again, I would just like to commend the great crew over at Economic Development for their continued hard work on this CDF file.

As well, Tourism and Culture continues to support organizations such as the Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre and the George Johnston Museum, to the tune of about \$138,000 again this year. This government continues to deliver on our 2011 election platform promises. We have amended the *Landlord and Tenant Act*, developed land for residential lots in Whitehorse, as well as in many communities throughout the Yukon. That was very important for me. I think it was one of

the things that I had really hoped to do in our time here, so I'm happy to see that.

We've built Betty's Haven, expanded on the Options for Independence, the Alexander Street Residence is now nearing completion and we're working with the Salvation Army to expand their capacity. As well, this government continues to collaborate with other local organizations to enhance housing solutions across the territory.

We have committed to grow, support and diversify the economy. We are funding the largest tourism marketing investment in Yukon's history, upgrading Yukon's transportation infrastructure and improving cellphone coverage. As you can see, this government continues to work hard for the people of the Yukon. I would just like to thank the Premier for bringing forward this supplementary budget.

In closing, I would just like to once again thank my constituents for entrusting me with the privilege of being able to speak on their behalf here in the Assembly.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: It's my privilege to be standing before the Assembly and to speak to the supplementary estimates, second reading. I too would like to also join my colleagues in just thanking my respective constituents — the constituency of Whitehorse West — for their contributions over the previous years since I was first elected as the MLA for that particular riding.

It gets busy, and as the Minister of Education and a number of other portfolios, it can be difficult at times to find your way to the doorstep, but I did commit to do just that in the month of August.

I found myself on the doorsteps in my riding and, of course, it's a good reminder of just how important those door-to-door visits are — touching base with your constituents — to seek their input, their contributions as to what matters the most to them, and how I can lend my support and be of assistance in moving forth those issues of respective importance.

Indeed, the constituency of Whitehorse West has grown in leaps and bounds over the past number of years. In fact, there have been a couple of boundary adjustments since I was first elected back in 2002. There continues to be considerable growth in the riding as we speak, and it has contributed to a very diverse population of individuals within the riding. I am very honoured. That is my first and foremost job in this assembly — to represent my riding. I want to thank all of my constituents for taking the time at the doorstep when it was raining or when it was a beautiful evening — and, to be clear, those evenings were few and far between this past summer here in the Yukon. I also want to thank members of the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association for their ongoing work in support of our riding and in support of Copper Ridge and surrounding area.

In particular, I want to thank Damien Burns. Damien is not only one of my neighbours in the area, but has been a long-standing member of the association. I was very grateful to have his company in taking around a proposed plan on proposed improvements to the Lazulite Drive neighbourhood

park. That has been one example of an initiative that has come a long way. In fact, there wasn't a park in existence some 12 years ago, but slowly it evolved as a result of grassroots community individuals like Damien Burns, and many others along the way, to be sure.

Today you will see a great rink that is heavily utilized by the neighbours for skating, for hockey and for just a place to go. It has increasingly also evolved into a children's neighbourhood park, thanks to the goodwill of the City of Whitehorse, working in collaboration with the neighbourhood association. Now we are looking at enhancing those improvements to the park and working with our partners in the Yukon government and the City of Whitehorse to make it a more generational theme park for all to enjoy, particularly with residents of Copper Ridge Place situated right across the street. We want to make it an even more welcoming environment for those individuals, as well as the neighbouring residents, to come and enjoy and to sit and be able to play.

Again, I want to thank my colleagues in the neighbourhood association for their ongoing work on that particular initiative, which is important to our particular area in the neighbourhood, but also on all the other initiatives that they're heavily involved with.

I also just want to extend my thanks to my colleagues for their ongoing work in putting forth this supplementary budget and for their work throughout the summer. Indeed, I was able to travel to a number of communities over the course of the summer. In fact, I would also be remiss if I didn't mention that my colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, and I took up the challenge and we were able to actually complete with dignity the Klondike Road Relay. Mr. Speaker, that was a tremendous feat for me — I had not run since the day I literally ran for office some 12 years ago. For me, that was a tremendous feat as I said. Almost 20 kilometres later, I did finish it without tears and with dignity. So too did my colleague — he ran the first leg of the Klondike Road Relay and did it gracefully and actually did our team proud. Thanks to all of our team members for their efforts. Again, just another example of healthy active living here and how important it is for each and every one of us to partake in those activities.

I too would like to take a few moments and speak to a number of my different files. Of course, we'll get into further detail as we speak to the budget department by department.

I do want to first start by recognizing and acknowledging the national Aboriginal Women's Summit that took place in Membertou, Nova Scotia just recently — last week. I had the privilege of accompanying nine other women — First Nation women — from Yukon, representing a number of Yukon aboriginal women's organizations, representing youth from our territory and representing elders and various First Nation governments. It was a tremendous opportunity for us to be able to travel to Nova Scotia and to be able to join delegations from coast to coast to coast in this country and to be able to really reflect on those original recommendations that came out of the original national Aboriginal Women's Summit back in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, back in 2007.

I was very humbled to be part of that original delegation back in 2007 and, as members may recall, we had taken those recommendations from the national summit — the first ever — and we had taken them back to the Yukon and we had held our own two individual summits here in the territory — one in Watson Lake and one in Whitehorse. From there we were able to share the national recommendations and put the Yukon lens on it. From there came our own made-in-the-Yukon action plan and recommendations. Ever since 2007, we have been working to implement many of those recommendations. Just recently we had a subsequent round of Yukon aboriginal women's summits to be able to report progress and to be able to renew our priorities, renew the priorities of aboriginal women in the territory.

Again, our government has helped fund these organizations and their work in specifically implementing many of these recommendations to almost \$1 million by the end of these next three years, all inclusive of the last six years.

For me, it was a very rich experience to be able to hear some very empowering stories from women from all corners of the country and very inspiring to hear our own representatives from the Yukon speak to the significant work that they have been undertaking at the grassroots level and in working with their communities to come up with some culturally relevant community-based initiatives developed by and for aboriginal communities.

I just want to highlight some of the work. The Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, for example — the Together for Today project has been a tremendous success, and so too has their work, which has led to a renewed respect and understanding relationship between the RCMP and other agencies, in terms of the prevention of violence and also supporting victim-based programming within the community of Watson Lake.

The Sisters in Spirit initiative was another initiative that was spoken to. Of course, that originally started with the National Aboriginal Women's Association of Canada. It too was continued on by Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council and, in fact, it has been a tremendous initiative that has helped lead to the identification and working with respective families whose aboriginal women — sisters, mothers, aunts and daughters — have tragically been lost to violence in our communities.

Likewise, organizations like the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle have also been working on the aboriginal women and leadership project. There is more to come in the New Year — also, engaging men and boys through the Brothers in Spirit and the Sisters in Spirit project, which is another initiative that has been worked on by the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council.

All of these are but a few initiatives in which these organizations have really shown leadership. I was very honoured and I was very proud to be part of the delegation that was there. During the summit there was also a meeting of respective representatives of the national aboriginal organizations accompanied by ministers and also Premier Robert McLeod of the Northwest Territories, who also holds

the file of the status women and also aboriginal affairs in his territory.

It was a tremendous opportunity to really speak to the issue of murdered and missing women. In particular, the purpose of the meeting was really to talk about coming together, building on the commitment between the premiers and the national aboriginal leaders that was made in P.E.I. back in August earlier this year to support convening a national round-table discussion with the federal government on the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women. This is in the absence of a national inquiry. It is something that has taken shape. This particular meeting that was held in Membertou last week really helped set the actions leading up to the meeting of the national round table, looking to see that happen in the new year in Northwest Territories. The purpose is to really bring all of the respective parties together to build on those actions, to implement solutions addressing the root causes of why so many women remain vulnerable. This is absolutely essential as we move forward.

It continues to be treated as a very urgent matter that requires a collective and collaborative response by individuals and governments and organizations alike across this country. I did want to make mention of that. The Women's Directorate was very proud to be able to help sponsor our delegation — one of the largest in the country — that occurred last week. Again, I thank each and every member of our delegation for their leadership and for their strength in moving issues such as these forward on our behalf.

I also wanted to move on and say a few words about Education. In particular, when we look to the supplementary estimates, there are a number of expenditures that really reflect increased expenditures in support of the college's ongoing important work, including the Yukon Research Centre funding announcement and also in support of other initiatives, such as the ongoing funding announcement for the Northern Institute of Social Justice.

It was about a week and a half ago already that we were able to speak to these initiatives. We, as members of the Assembly, last year alone had celebrated some 50 years of Yukon College and how it has evolved as a post-secondary institution in the territory. We have really gone to work to be able to develop and expand a diverse range of programs offered at the college — with the college — designed for the academic and training needs of our students and the labour market in our territory. We are working to expand the trades training at the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, working to expand professional development at the Northern Institute of Social Justice, and to expand our cutting-edge cold climate technology studies at the Yukon Research Centre.

Yukon College continues to be a leader in education and it continues to be poised to continue to grow in a responsive manner.

An initiative I wanted to make reference to — and I see my time is running out slowly but quickly — is that, among just over \$26.5 million that we are providing in support of the college, we continue to support their ongoing evolution of the college into a university. As we've seen over the past number

of years, that evolution is a logical step along the path of natural growth. It's a commitment our government made during the last election.

So building on the college's strengths, we have and continue to work toward the creation of a university for Yukon, based on a model that is best suited for Yukoners. In addition to all those programs I've listed, we have also expanded the land reserve for the college in support of that long-range planning that will guide the growth and further development of the campus, as it transitions to university.

One important milestone along that very path, of course, is that of creating and delivering a degree program. We were really pleased to co-announce on October 14 at Yukon College that, for the first time ever, Yukon College will, by 2017, be offering a couple of different programs. One is the first-ever made-in-Yukon degree and post-degree certificate program — specifically a three-year bachelor of policy studies in indigenous governance and a one-year post-degree certificate in climate change and public policy. These are going to be the first-ever programs to be developed, delivered and issued by Yukon College as a stand-alone institution.

Both programs build on the excellent comprehensive work the college has been undertaking over the last number of years in support of research and indigenous governance. Again, we're very pleased to be able to again support the college as they move forward with these two new programs.

I know that my time is running short here, but I did want to make reference also — and just to mention, of course, some of the ongoing initiatives in support of bridging the gap between rural and urban education here in this territory. I make reference to, for example, the rural experiential model. I just want to thank and congratulate all the many partners involved in that particular session just held in Dawson City. It was a record high number of 105 grade 10 to 12 students who were registered from eight schools from across rural Yukon — tremendous success — and builds upon our Rural Equity Action Plan, which speaks to a number of programs, in terms of building capacity in our rural schools by being able to better support our teaching professionals in our schools in support of student learners being very successful.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know my time is due so I look forward to debating this budget as we move forward.

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

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, what we've heard today from the government side of the House is a little bit about the accomplishments that this government has achieved through this mandate and some great discussion about what we have yet to do in front of us.

The Yukon Party government has been working diligently to deliver what we promised to Yukoners in our 2011 election platform. Budget by budget, our Yukon Party government continues our work to make Yukon the best place in Canada. In 2011, we committed to addressing the housing needs of Yukoners. We established a youth shelter, amended the

Landlord and Tenant Act, developed land for residential lots in Whitehorse and Yukon communities so that Yukoners can now again buy a lot at the counter, built Betty's Haven for women in need of second-stage housing, expanded Options for Independence for adults with FASD and constructed seniors residences across this great territory.

We are currently completing the Alexander Street seniors residence, working with the Salvation Army to expand their capacity and collaborating with other local organizations to enhance housing solutions across the territory.

We committed to care for Yukoners and improve their access to our health care system. We have opened hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson City, increased bursaries for students in medical fields, developed physician recruitment and retention strategies that have resulted in more doctors practising in the territory than ever before, established funding for Jackson Lake Healing Camp run by the Kwanlin Dun First Nation, and established a caregiver tax credit for Yukoners caring for a family member with a disability.

We are constructing a space to house our new MRI, expanding the Whitehorse General Hospital to include a new emergency room and expanded medical imaging facility, replacing the Sarah Steele detox facility, replacing McDonald Lodge in Dawson City and are planning a continuing care facility for Whitehorse that will meet our current and our future needs.

We've committed to enhance education and support youth in Yukon.

We're taking steps toward establishing an Yukon university by building the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining at Yukon College, funding the mobile trades training trailer and working with the college to develop the first made-in-Yukon degree program that the Minister of Education just described.

We are building a replacement for F.H. Collins that will be a beautiful school for Whitehorse students, which is being built cost effectively.

To support our youth, we funded the Heart of Riverdale Community Centre, rebuilt the Ross River arena and provided a new school bus for Old Crow. We are funding the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation's new recreation centre, planning an impressive new soccer and sports complex in Whistle Bend and bringing forward tax incentives to improve Yukon families' access to sports and recreation.

We are committed to care for our environment. We have created the Yukon water strategy, implemented the Porcupine caribou management plan, ended open burning in Yukon landfills, enhanced funding for recycling processors in Yukon and modernized the *Environment Act*. We are implementing the Yukon climate change action plan and establishing a new campground at historic Conrad near Carcross. Since this government was elected, we have come to enjoy the largest percentage of protected land in any jurisdiction in Canada.

We committed to grow, support and diversify Yukon's economy. We are funding the largest tourism marketing investment in Yukon's history, upgrading Yukon's transportation infrastructure, improving cellphone coverage in

Yukon communities, developing municipal infrastructure across this territory, streamlining assessments in permitting and we've reduced the small business tax rate by 25 percent. We are developing a plan to build an alternate fibre optic cable to the south, continuing our work to reduce red tape and securing our energy future by investing in LNG backup generators and embarking on Yukon's next generation hydro project.

The Yukon Party government has been clear that we are committed to growing our private sector economy, creating employment opportunities for Yukoners, protecting our close connection to the land and providing the best quality of life for Yukon families. We will continue to do what we committed to do on behalf of all Yukoners. Our vision is a strong, vibrant private sector economy that allows Yukoners to move forward and prosper in the best place in Canada to live, to work, to play and to raise a family.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 15 agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:21 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 162

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, October 28, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME CONSTITUENCY PORTFOLIO

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Vuntut Gwitchin
Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
Patti McLeod	Watson Lake

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

New Democratic Party

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

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, October 28, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Mental Illness Awareness Week

Mr. Elias: Today I rise to pay tribute to Mental Illness Awareness Week in Yukon from October 27 to 31. Today I ask my colleagues to join me in helping to raise awareness about mental illness.

In the past year, a concerted effort has been made to de-stigmatize mental illness. Government agencies, non-governmental organizations and private citizens have taken on the task of talking about mental illness and how it affects each and every one of us. Almost one in five Canadians will suffer from mental illness at one point in their lives. For far too long society has treated mental illness as an invisible illness, forcing sufferers to avoid seeking help for fear of stigma. It is time to bring it all out in the open and help our friends, our family members and work colleagues to obtain the help they need.

In Canada, public personalities like Rick Mercer and Clara Hughes have lent their fame and public goodwill to the cause by publicly talking about mental illness and encouraging others to talk about it too. Yukon has set aside the week of October 27 to 31 this year to focus attention on mental illness and how it affects all of us. Health and Social Services is working with the Second Opinion Society, the Mental Health Association of Yukon and Yukon College to increase awareness about mental illness. Activities include opportunities for the public to get screened for mental wellness, depression, anxiety and risky drinking. In addition, a mental health professional will be on hand to discuss the screening results. There will also be a panel discussion and a showing of the movie *It's Kind of a Funny Story* — a lighthearted movie that focuses on depression.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Yukon's mental health professionals and advocates for their dedication, compassion and determination to help improve the mental health of all Yukoners. The Mental Health Association of Yukon is a voluntary association that exists to promote the mental health of all Yukoners. In order to carry out its vision — to be an effective contributor to a positive mental health environment throughout the Yukon — the Mental Health Association of Yukon works to empower people with mental health issues to make informed choices regarding the management of their lives; to focus on community education,

awareness, advocacy and support services to reduce the stigma toward people labelled mentally ill; to increase positive attitudes toward mental health; and, to engage in partnerships and collaborative activities with other agencies and organizations concerned with mental health.

The Mental Health Association of Yukon has assisted with the delivery of educational programs like Clara's Big Ride, Not Myself Today, *Yukon State of Mind*, and most recently, Mental Illness Awareness Week. The community TV show, *Yukon State of Mind*, debuted this week with an intimate look at stigma and how it affects all of those affected by mental illness.

This was another example of the collaboration of several community organizations and businesses coming together to build on each other's strengths to educate the Yukon about the facts around mental illness. The Canadian Mental Health Association of Yukon believes in supporting the individual, the family and the community. One way of doing this is the caregiver support group, which educates, advocates for and supports the family, who are most often the primary caregiver for someone experiencing mental health challenges.

In closing, I would like to give the last word to Zelda Williams, daughter of comedian Robin Williams who suffered from depression and committed suicide earlier this year. Zelda Williams' messages paint a clear picture of how mental illness affects not only an individual but also their family. To quote her, "Mental illness is often misunderstood and misrepresented, but that's starting to change." "Mental health is as important as physical health, and whether there are visible signs or not, the suffering is real." "It is not cowardly to suffer or seek help."

Ms. Stick: I too rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to Mental Illness Awareness Week. This week is being celebrated in the Yukon. It's an annual national public education campaign to remind Canadians of the reality of mental illness. It's an opportunity to recognize the efforts of many individuals and organizations in our communities and to express support for current mental health initiatives.

Again, we are reminded of the need to talk about and discuss openly mental illness and mental health in an open and respectful way. It's not just the individual with mental illness who is impacted by their mental health difficulties or crises but, as is true for so many health concerns, families, friends, coworkers, neighbours and even our communities are impacted.

By learning more, by talking openly and by listening and educating ourselves about mental illness and mental health, we can bring this out of the shadows and encourage and call for and support a national action plan and a territorial action plan to address mental illness and mental health.

A thank you needs to be sent out to all those who promote mental health and to the many individuals, both in government departments and non-government organizations, who support individuals with mental illness and those around them. I would be remiss if I did not thank the Yukon division of the

Canadian Mental Health Association, the Second Opinion Society, Many Rivers and many mental health professionals within government departments and within our communities. They are reaching out and trying to support individuals and their families.

There are too many to name, but a thanks should be offered to them all. Mental illness impacts us all. Let's keep talking.

Mr. Silver: Today I rise on behalf of the Liberal caucus to also pay tribute to Mental Illness Awareness Week, which is an annual national public education campaign designed to help open the eyes of Canadians to the realities of mental illness. The week was established in 1992 by the Canadian Psychiatric Association and is now coordinated by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health in cooperation with all of its members, organizations and other supporters across Canada.

One of MIAW's major initiatives is the Faces of Mental Illness campaign, a national outreach campaign featuring the stories of Canadians living in recovery from mental illness. Thousands of pieces of MIAW posters, brochures and bookmarks featuring the faces are disseminated to hundreds of organizations across Canada in an effort to raise awareness and to end the stigma that's attached to mental illness.

Locally, this week is being marked with events tonight at the Beringia Centre and later this week at the Yukon College. There is also a caregiver support group open house at 4 Hospital Road on October 30 at 7:00 p.m. to support families and friends of those who live with mental illness.

Speaker: Are there any visitors to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I would request all members of the Legislature to join me in welcoming two representatives of mental health organizations here in Whitehorse: Hailey Hechtman and Kim Solonick are both here. Hailey is from the Second Opinion Society and Kim is with the Mental Health Association of Yukon. Welcome.

Applause

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Dawson teaching and working farm

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Legislative Assembly to congratulate the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and the Yukon College on signing their memorandum of understanding for the teaching and working farm in Dawson.

This memorandum of understanding builds on already great partnerships that we have seen with the Yukon College and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, which is producing great results like the one that we saw this spring with the graduates of the first class of the mobile trades training trailer program.

I would also like to acknowledge outgoing Chief Eddie Taylor and his team for their work and also executive director Jackie Olson. Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in stands as a standard bearer

of what we can achieve in the Yukon when we let our educational institutions work with many partners toward those paths of traditional knowledge. This project will help preserve and maintain indigenous plants and shrubs important to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in healing traditions, as well as preserving a way of life that is based upon an economic and a spiritual relationship with the land, providing an on-the-land working environment for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens as well as developing a secure source of fresh produce for Dawson — things that we can all be proud of, Mr. Speaker.

Yukon College is leading the way in working with Yukon's First Nations to showcase what we can achieve in the Yukon when our education system is evolved to meet the needs of its students. Dr. Karen Barnes and her team at the college have worked very hard over the last number of years to build a unique and northern educational experience for northern residents. The new research opportunities at the teaching and working farm can only help further our understanding of our unique climate and landscape.

This is a great opportunity for all of Yukon, and I wish both partners the best of luck as they move the project into the next stages of development.

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 82: *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I move that Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Public Works that Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 82 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to collect data on every sheep harvested in the territory, continue to build its unique data set and provide that information to the public through publications such as *Yukon Thinhorn Sheep: Horn Growth, Genetics and Climate Change*.

Ms. Hanson: I rise to give notice of following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to review the use of auxiliary-on-call staffing positions to ensure that auxiliary-on-call employees who are working on a full-time, ongoing basis are hired as permanent employees and receive the benefit of a full-time, permanent Government of Yukon employee.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to adequately fund Raven Recycling.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House congratulates the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and Yukon College on their recent memorandum of understanding for the Teaching and Working Farm program in Dawson.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explore new options to replace early childhood development programs no longer supported by Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services to ensure that:

(a) mothers have a safe and supportive environment to help them through postpartum depression and stresses to being a new parent; and

(b) program capacity in the territory is sufficient to match the number of children born each year.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?
Seeing none, this then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Intergovernmental relations

Ms. Hanson: This government's "my way or the highway" approach to governing has gone on for far too long. Last night the City of Whitehorse passed a unanimous resolution calling on the Premier to reassign the Minister of Community Services because of his uncooperative and disrespectful approach to, for one instance, the affordable housing file.

The City of Whitehorse has broken the cone of silence and fear that has covered the divisive tactics of this government. The call by the city to reassign a senior minister speaks volumes to the serious erosion of trust and respect that underlies the Yukon Party approach to other levels of government. Unfortunately this is another chapter in a book of broken relationships that stretches back over a decade.

What immediate action is the Premier taking to mend the Yukon Party's broken relationships with the City of Whitehorse?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This government works hard on a daily basis with all governments on many fronts. In fact, this Friday, the Minister of Community Services and the Minister of Environment, along with their officials, are meeting with the City of Whitehorse to talk about many different topics on an agenda that was fully agreed upon by both parties. Some

things, such as the new sports complex that this government will build for the citizens of Yukon, and specifically for the citizens of Whitehorse — they're going to be talking about recycling; they're going to be talking about the *Municipal Act* review; they're going to be talking about the Arctic X Games and they're going to be talking about building consolidation, because we know that this is a priority for the city as well and of course we'll be talking about land devolution as well.

We continue to work on a daily basis with all levels of government.

Ms. Hanson: The track record of this government is clear. They have broken or undermined almost every important relationship with their partners. This government alienated its government partners and the Yukon public in the land use planning process to a point where it has ground to a halt. It has broken its relationship with teachers by muzzling them. It has broken the trust of the public service by delaying the passage of whistler-blower legislation and it continues to try to undercut land claims agreements at the expense of its relationship with First Nation governments.

The first step toward fixing relationships is admitting you have a problem. When will the Premier acknowledge that his divisive approach isn't working and what concrete steps will he take as leader of his caucus and as Premier to turn his sinking ship around?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It's disappointing to listen to the Leader of the Official Opposition — and in fact on a regular basis, the Leader of the Liberal Party as well — as they condemn and criticize the actions of the public servants. I started making a list a while ago, but essentially all departments have been impacted or criticized by opposition members from both parties criticizing the work they do. This government will continue to stand up for the professional work for our professional public service and will continue to work with governments — all levels of governments — throughout the territory. We don't live in a fairy tale world though. We will disagree on some issues sometimes, but that's how it is in the real world.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, the first step is acknowledging you have a problem. Clearly, the Premier cannot do that.

Nowhere is this government's inability to maintain a relationship with its Yukon partners more apparent than its treatment of First Nations. I don't need to remind Yukoners that this government is in court with several First Nation governments over its inability or unwillingness to adequately consult with them.

Now the Premier is in lockstep with the federal Conservatives on the proposed YESAA, which are fundamentally a back-door approach to undermine the final agreements that undermine the certainty necessary for a vibrant economy. I don't know if the Premier doesn't understand the importance of the final agreements and Yukon's relationship with First Nations or if he doesn't care. The result is the same: broken trust and broken relationships.

Why is the Premier taking a page out of the federal Conservative playbook by alienating its partners? Is he truly trying to run his sinking ship into the ground?

Speaker: Order. The member's time has elapsed.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I already articulated, both in this House and in fact, in the media, through a five-year review of YESAA, there were 76 recommendations that went forward. Seventy-three of 76 recommendations were agreed upon by everybody. That is outstanding.

Throughout those processes of almost seven years of consultation, Yukon government shared all of its comments with all of the parties that were involved in the consultation process. Bottom line for this government is that we are committed to ensuring that all assessment processes are consistent with other jurisdictions across this country. It allows us to remain competitive so that we can bid for and see that projects come to this jurisdiction, because that means good jobs for Yukoners and that means good jobs for Yukon families.

Question re: Affordable housing strategy

Ms. White: On the very first opposition day after the 2011 election, the NDP called on the government to develop an affordable housing strategy for Yukon. That call to action was rejected until two years later, when the government seemed to come to its senses.

The previous minister of housing, the Member for Riverdale North, promised to work with private developers to build affordable rental housing on Lot 262. The promise was broken and the project was cancelled. When the Member for Lake Laberge took over the housing file, he too promised to work with private developers to build affordable rental housing for Yukoners. That promise was again broken after the 75 units promised to Whitehorse were cancelled. Even before these two ministers dropped the affordable housing ball, the previous Yukon Party government couldn't even set aside lots for development in the midst of an affordable housing crisis.

This government's track record on affordable housing is nothing short of shameful. Mr. Speaker, when will this government recognize that history is repeating itself yet again and create the affordable rental housing that Yukoners desperately need?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I should note first of all to the members is that it is unfortunate the member chooses to frame things the way she does. The government has invested since 2007 well in excess of \$100 million — not even counting investments in this current fiscal year in 207 Alexander Street and in the 48-unit seniors complex that \$12 million was allocated for in this budget.

In fact, contrary to the member's assertions, the RFQ/RFP process developed by the Yukon Housing Corporation did not target any specific number of units in any municipality, including Whitehorse. Government, as I noted, because of a significant shift in the market, did recognize that the situation had changed and that, when the vacancy rate in rentals has jumped from 1.5 percent to 7.1 percent, and 13.9

percent in duplexes, we have to be very mindful that government action does not undermine people's investments in what is for most people their largest single investment — their home.

Ms. White: Again we hear the minister's lack of understanding between social housing and affordable rental housing. The minister likes to wax poetic about his accomplishments on housing, but what he isn't telling us is that he's actually comparing very different numbers on vacancy rates. The minister is on record, just right now, stating that vacancy rates in the territory have increased since 2013 from 1.5 percent to 7.1 percent. What he fails to tell us is that during that time, the kind of buildings included in the survey also increased astronomically. He continues to compare two very different sets of numbers. What the minister also fails to mention is that the cost of rent has increased significantly by 5.1 percent, which is much, much higher than the rate of inflation.

How can Yukoners trust a minister who takes such a selective view of government statistics?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In fact, the question the member should be asking is how can the public trust an opposition that takes such a selective and uninformed view of statistics? What the member is referring to — the vacancy rate — prior to this year when statistics captured all units, used to only count buildings with three or more units, missing over half of the rental market. We changed that through better data collection. On three units and above, the vacancy rate in those units has more than tripled to 4.7 percent when one considers the little landlords — the people with one and two rental units who make up most of the market and depend on the income from those rental units to pay their mortgage in many cases. The vacancy rate climbs to 7.1 percent and 13.9 percent for people who own duplexes.

This government will continue to invest in Housing and targeting those areas most in need, but we will also recognize the importance of not undermining people's largest investment — their home — through multi-million-dollar grants to large developers.

Ms. White: I believe that the numbers will stand on their own two feet.

The minister is speaking winners and losers when it comes to housing and he doesn't understand that affordable rental housing is a tenant's issue. This government's poor track record on affordable rental housing predates the minister. As we sit here and listen to his excuses again and again for his government's inactions past and present, Yukoners who are struggling to make ends meet are paying the price. Imagine having to set aside 50 percent or 60 percent of your paycheck for rent, Mr. Speaker. These are people who can't afford the \$1,500-a-month duplex that the minister suggests that they rent.

When will the government's minister of housing — whoever it may be tomorrow — commit to creating the affordable rental units that Yukoners need?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: This minister — tomorrow — will continue to do the same thing that I and my caucus colleagues

have done, which is to work with partners in these areas and to work with and invest in NGOs.

I would remind the member that our track record in investing and increasing support for NGOs that provide services to those most in need is a record second to none in which the NDP's record when in government is — well, frankly, they should be ashamed of their lack of support for NGOs. We have continued to work with NGOs.

We will continue to work with all levels of government and in fact, through the *Housing Action Plan*, we have involved multiple stakeholders and have had a series of meetings that has led to the draft *Housing Action Plan* which will identify next steps, not just for government, but identifying the needs and opportunities that everyone — from private sector businesses to individuals, First Nation governments, development corporations and municipalities — could all use to help guide our work together.

We again will continue to do what we have done, which is to take the next steps while working and engaging with partners at all levels of government.

Question re: Raven Recycling Centre funding

Mr. Silver: I would like to go back to this government's commitments on recycling that were clearly outlined in their election platform. The Premier told Yukoners before this session started that the government has fulfilled many of its commitments it has made to Yukoners. I would like to remind the Premier that there is still more work to be done.

Let's go to page 15 of his platform and see what was promised for recycling: "...develop a goal of zero waste with a target of 50% waste diversion by 2015." It has become clear that the minister responsible doesn't even support that goal. He told Yukoners on October 1 that recycling was a personal responsibility and really had nothing to do with his government.

Will the Premier admit that his government's commitment to 50-percent waste diversion by 2015 will not be met, especially now that our largest recycler has been seriously marginalized by a lack of funding?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Whether intentionally or unintentionally, the Member for Klondike, the Liberal leader, is not accurately representing my comments on October 1. In fact, what I was attempting to convey at that point in the interview was the fact that recycling requires not just government investment, which it does require, but it also requires people making a personal commitment to changing their own behaviours, to choose not to throw recyclables in the trash but, instead, to separate them out.

Again, we have continued to work in this area. When it comes to Raven Recycling, we are working with partners, including the City of Whitehorse, to identify sustainable, long-term and cost-effective solutions for processing recyclables.

With Raven, specifically — last month they requested that the diversion credit we implemented last year at their request be more than doubled to \$330 per tonne. We've asked them to give us a cost breakdown on that, and we're still

waiting for that. In fact, I asked my deputy minister this morning to send Raven a reminder that we are looking forward to receiving that information.

Mr. Silver: What he says and what he means — we've heard this before from the minister responsible. Given the minister's attitude, it's no wonder that Yukoners don't trust the government on when they are going to make good on this commitment or not. The minister believes that recycling is a personal responsibility, as cited from his words in the paper, and that's — I'll let those words speak for themselves.

Let's go to the actual issue. The government is sitting on the sidelines and is letting Raven Recycling stay closed to all but refundables, so it's clear that a cash injection is needed for this reopening immediately while some longer-term issues get resolved.

The question would be: How does the minister plan to meet his own target of 50-percent waste diversion by 2015 when Raven Recycling is all but closed?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, what I should point out to the member is that last year Raven Recycling and the other processor jointly approached government and asked us to implement a diversion credit matching the \$75 per tonne the city pays for a combined credit of \$150 per tonne, and we did exactly that.

Last month Raven requested the combined diversion credit be more than doubled to \$330 a tonne. We've asked them for more information and, as I noted in my previous response, I asked my deputy minister this morning to remind them that we are still waiting for that information. We are continuing to work with the city on identifying sustainable long-term and cost-effective solutions for processing recyclables in the Yukon. We have jointly funded a consultant's study that they have commissioned. Officials have been in discussion and the Minister of Environment and I are scheduled to meet with the mayor and city council on Friday of this week, along with our senior officials, to talk about issues including recycling, and to talk about next steps for both the City of Whitehorse and the Yukon government.

Mr. Silver: We're looking for a leadership role here from a senior level of government. It's very clear that this government is not going to meet its commitment of 50-percent waste diversion by 2015 without Raven being completely open. It seems there has been a complete 180-degree turn in policy here and it begs the question: Does the Yukon Party no longer support the previous environmental and social principles that led to the original investments into a public good? If the government no longer supports a 50-percent target, or Raven, then what is the new policy objective that is being sought here? You don't take away an integral service or public good without an alternative plan or objective. So, what are these? Or, are we witnessing here just a complete absence of forethought on this particular file?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, as I noted to the member, in fact we are continuing to work on this issue jointly with the City of Whitehorse. They are in fact a larger player in waste management than we are, because most of the Yukon population is within the City.

We made it clear that the Yukon government is committed to continuing to do more in this area. In fact, when it comes to Raven Recycling, it was just last month that they asked us to more than double the combined diversion credit to \$330 per tonne from the \$150 per tonne it was put at, at their request, last year. We've asked them for more information to clarify what those increased costs are made up of. We have yet to receive it. We are working jointly with the city in considering options and identifying long-term solutions to ensure that Yukoners continue to have access to the recycling processes and capacity that they need. That includes a meeting that the Minister of Environment and I have scheduled this Friday with the mayor and city council, as well as work that has been going on, on a weekly basis at the officials' level.

Again, we will work jointly with the city on this and identify what needs to be done to ensure that Yukoners have access to the recycling services they need.

Question re: Coroner's report re death at Watson Lake Hospital

Ms. Stick: The two recent coroner's inquests into deaths at the Watson Lake Hospital have shaken public confidence in the Hospital Corporation's ability to manage patient safety. Major gaps in patient safety and oversight were identified through the inquests and many recommendations were made.

Last week, I asked the minister if he would publicly report on the implementation of the coroner's recommendations and the minister said — and I quote: "I don't know which parts of the assessment that will be conducted by the Hospital Corporation will be confidential ..." But these recommendations, Mr. Speaker, are about policies and procedures of the Hospital Corporation — not about individuals. Can the minister commit to providing a public report on the implementation of the coroner's recommendations on behalf of the Yukon Hospital Corporation?

Hon. Mr. Graham: This morning the chair of the Yukon Hospital Corporation and I had a long discussion on this very subject. What we will be doing, once the hospital has completed their review, is providing to the Yukon public and to this Legislature a list of all of the recommendations — or a list of all of the actions — being taken by the Yukon Hospital Corporation in relation to improving their services at the various facilities in the territory. That I will commit to. We will be making those actions public once the Hospital Corporation's review has been completed.

Ms. Stick: I would thank the minister for that information. We are pleased to hear there's a commitment to a public report on the progress made on these coroner's recommendations that are so important to so many people. My only question left then would be: Can the minister indicate how soon that report might be made available, both to the public and to this Legislature?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Not at this time.

Question re: Alaska Highway corridor functional plan

Ms. Moorcroft: For years, I've been asking the Highways and Public Works minister about the Alaska Highway corridor functional plan. Each time, my questions have been deflected with assurances that the Yukon government intended to make the plan public. The months and years continue to pass and the accident rate along this corridor remains tragically high. The number of accidents and traffic fatalities in recent years demonstrate how critical this issue is.

My question today is simple: Will the minister tell the House when the draft Alaska Highway corridor report will be made available to the public?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I do thank the member opposite for the question. My ADM of Transportation spoke this morning on the radio and articulated quite clearly exactly what we are doing. By spending tax dollars on improving our roads, this government is making sure that Yukoners get to work each day. That's our school buses; that's our emergency personnel; and that's the food and fuel and everything else we require in the Yukon.

The Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway is one of the most important roads, of course — I've said this in this House over and over and over — and it's used by just about everyone who lives or visits Whitehorse and the Yukon. Up front, we've put a lot of time and effort into working with the City of Whitehorse, working with our local First Nations at the first level of consultation, because the City of Whitehorse is a key player in this, with accesses.

Right now, we're out looking at the high level and — you know what? We'll have the functional plan come forward and this government will look at what we're going to do for next steps, moving forward.

Ms. Moorcroft: I'm glad the minister thinks it's important. It's important enough that he should answer the question. In the Highways and Public Works debate last spring, the Minister of Highways and Public Works told this House — and I quote: "A public participation component will be used to refine the plan once we've decided which construction will be moving forward." It's hard to refine a document that the government refuses to let you see.

This continues to be a textbook example of the Yukon Party's approach to consultation. They do the planning, make the decisions, and then invite the public to participate in a so-called public consultation phase. Will the public input during the consultation phase be used to guide and prioritize the upgrades and construction along the Alaska Highway corridor? Or is it simply an exercise to make the public feel included?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Yes.

Ms. Moorcroft: Well, I'm not sure if it's yes, the public input will be used, or the public will just be made to feel included, Mr. Speaker.

The fact is — and the minister should be seriously concerned about this — that many of the intersections along the Alaska Highway corridor are not designed to modern-day standards that can safely accommodate the amount and type of

traffic now using this route. Most of the people living in the country residential subdivisions surrounding Whitehorse drive this road every day. They are reminded of the safety issues by the number of memorials and crosses visible along the route.

This morning, a Highways and Public Works official said that the corridor might be four lanes if not necessary but not necessarily four lanes, yet the minister has not provided the House or the public with any updates.

What is the minister waiting for before sharing the draft report with the public? Will he release the draft Alaska Highway report?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: When I answered my last question, it was, yes, we're going to take into consideration the consultation. I've actually been out there talking to local businesses myself, looking at this.

The long-term vision of this government — the reason that we're doing this is because this government does have a long-term vision. We have to address the fact that the Yukon is growing. Good economic development, sustainable economic development, diversified economic development still grows. We saw with the washouts how important the stretch of road is in getting goods and services to the community. We're doing our due diligence. We're out there at the high-range level of consultation and, again, when we identify each individual project, we will go and consult with those directly affected. Basically, we've already consulted with the First Nations and the City of Whitehorse. We're going to continue doing that. We're at a high-level consultation right now, looking at listening to some of the industry players and everybody else who uses the road — bus drivers and so on and so on — and then, when we identify a location where we will do work, we'll consult again with the immediate residents and those people around there. We're doing our due diligence. This stuff takes time, and I'm proud to say that we're working hard on this.

Question re: Family education programs

Ms. Stick: Yesterday the minister spoke to this Assembly about what he incorrectly characterized as the mother and babies program formally run by Many Rivers. These were part of a long-standing continuum of family education programs delivered by Many Rivers for the past 10 to 20 years.

He also stated that he did not receive a request to jump in and fund that program. I wonder when the minister stopped considering the call of Yukoners a request. As of this morning, 118 Yukoners have signed a petition calling on the minister to include family education as part of the core funding agreement and to reinstate the position of family educator and to continue to offer family education programs.

This is a clear request for funding from Yukoners. Will the minister commit to reopening its 2012 contribution agreement and offering core funding for family education programs and staff?

Hon. Mr. Graham: What the member opposite seems to not realize is that Many Rivers is a non-government organization with an independent board of governors who are

fully capable of approaching and requesting additional funding from this government, if they so desire. Many Rivers, to date, has not come forward and said, "We wish to continue running this program and we don't have enough funding, so we would appreciate some funding from the territorial government."

I haven't received that request, Mr. Speaker. Even if they did, there is a process that has to be followed and we would follow that process. We don't necessarily just hand out money because 108 people have requested it. We will consider it carefully and we will look at the pros and cons, but we don't jump into things without first of all considering the ramifications.

Ms. Stick: "Getting a good start" is one of three pathways set out in the Yukon government's 2014 *Wellness Plan for Yukon's Children and Family*. It states that: "All parents and caregivers benefit from information on healthy child development and good parenting practices."

In fact, research shows effective ways to improve child well-being include quality early learning and care programs in places where families can meet, socialize, swap ideas, support each other, play and have fun.

Sound familiar? It should. The *Wellness Plan* clearly states that Many Rivers offers services and programs to increase parents' knowledge, skill and confidence. It's in the *Wellness Plan*.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain to Yukoners why Many Rivers' long-standing commitment to family education doesn't merit this core funding when it's in the *Wellness Plan*?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I'm perhaps a little slow, but I don't understand what part of the first answer the member opposite didn't understand. Many Rivers is an independent organization. We negotiate a three-year agreement with them, which we did last year, and we will follow that three-year agreement. If they request a change to that agreement, we would follow the same process. We would sit down, consult with them, and determine if the programs and services that they wish to offer — first of all, whether or not they are offered by another organization or by the government itself — were cost-effective. We would look at a number of different areas. If we didn't do our due diligence in this area, the member opposite would be the first one who would stand up and yell at me and say — I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, that may be inappropriate language. The member opposite would be the first one to point out to me that we didn't do due diligence before we went ahead and spent a lot of money.

There's a process in place and we'll follow that process. If I receive a request for funding, that will be considered and shared with my Cabinet colleagues.

Ms. Stick: When this wellness plan was written and presented to this government, I assumed that those evaluations would have taken place. They just didn't pick this information out of the air. They just didn't talk about Many Rivers providing these programs. It's in the wellness report that this government, this department, has presented as a way of

improving wellness for all Yukoners in Whitehorse and communities. The government acknowledged that this was a good program being offered at Many Rivers, so I don't understand when the minister says that they had the negotiations and they didn't bring it up. They didn't bring it up and they said they didn't want to do it anymore. It's unclear.

Can the minister explain why he would not include core funding to a program that clearly meets objectives set out by his department, presumably with good information?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I wasn't there at the negotiations; however, what I will tell you is that obviously the funding of these programs did not come up during the signing of a new contribution agreement with Many Rivers. Had the subject come up, I'm sure my department would have brought that back to me and said that X number of dollars is being requested for core funding for a specific program. I would have asked the department to evaluate that request, give me an opinion about whether or not the request was legitimate and real, and I would have brought that information back to my Cabinet and said that I would like to add X number of dollars to my budget in order to continue running this program.

None of that occurred. So hopefully, at some point in the future, it will occur but, until it does, I'm afraid that what could have happened or what did happen is of no consequence, because it didn't happen.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. White: I ask the House to join me in welcoming a not-unfamiliar face to this House, a fellow bicycle enthusiast, Mr. Darren Parsons. We had a fantastic chat on the weekend about bicycles, so thank you for coming.

Applause

Notice of government private members' business

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the government private members to be called for debate on Wednesday, October 29, 2014. They are: Motion No. 724, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake and Motion No. 723, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 710

Clerk: Motion No. 710, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Speaker: It is moved by the Hon. Premier THAT this House:

(1) urges the Government of Yukon to show national unity and Yukon's support for the Government of Canada's decision to participate in the broad international coalition of nations working together to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and to provide humanitarian aid to innocent people suffering from ISIL's atrocities;

(2) recognizes the personal contribution of Canadians serving in the Armed Forces and that the experience of war has profound and ongoing consequences for veterans by supporting our troops during combat missions, and after they return home; and

THAT the Speaker of the Yukon Legislative Assembly transmit the decision of this House to the Parliament of Canada and to the provincial and territorial assemblies of Canada.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: My caucus colleagues and I have brought this motion forward because we believe that it is important that we show national unity and Yukon support for the Government of Canada's decision to participate in the broad international coalition of nations working together to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL. We also believe it is important to provide humanitarian aid to innocent people suffering from ISIL's atrocities.

In Canada we enjoy tremendous rights and freedoms. Canada has a long tradition of standing with our allies and of standing up to tyranny and violence. Our forces participated in the Afghanistan mission because we were asked to do so. Canada has alliances and with these come benefits and responsibilities.

I was impressed by a recent letter to the editor that makes an important point about honouring our commitments to our allies. The author stated the following: "Canada is not, and never has been, a neutral country. We have interests abroad, and alliances to maintain. We desire peace and stability in the world, but the world is a dangerous place. We must be prepared to defend our country and our way of life. These alliances, which have kept us safe for many years, come with obligations." The author of that is Darcy Grossinger, who is a veteran of our country and the current president of the Royal Canadian Legion No. 254 in the *Whitehorse Star* on October 20, 2014.

Over the course of the summer, each one of us was appalled by the media reports of barbarism that emerged from this conflict. It seemed as if each week contained a fresh report of a new level of savagery. We have seen the brutal murders of aid workers and journalists, professional women, doctors, lawyers and politicians singled out to be executed. There are well-documented reports of crucifying, beheading and the chopping off of arms and legs.

We know the names of James Foley, Steven Sotloff, Alan Henning and David Haines, two American journalists and two UK aid workers who were captured, imprisoned and murdered by ISIL. Although the names of slaughtered western hostages are well-known, at least 17 Iraqi journalists have been executed by ISIS. Many more have been abducted. On

October 10, an Iraqi cameraman — a 37-year old father of three — was publicly beheaded.

All minorities are targeted by ISIL. Yazidi men have been slaughtered and the women used as slaves by the thousands. They claim that their religion justifies this. The harrowing tales recounted to us by fortunate survivors demonstrate the evils being perpetrated by ISIL.

One of the UK aid workers is reported to have believed that he was going home because he had done nothing wrong. He was simply helping Syrian children and refugees. He cried for his fellow captives when ISIL took him away because he thought he was being freed. Instead, he was taken deeper into the ISIL prison network and beheaded. These and other atrocities, committed by ISIL, offend the whole world from north to south, from east to west. The UN Special Representative of the Secretary General in Iraq, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, is a Bulgarian and Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the High Commissioner for Human Rights is a Jordanian and a Muslim.

I mention their nationalities because this is not a West-against-Middle-East battle, nor is it a modern-day crusade against Muslims, as some have suggested. They jointly issued a report on protection of civilians in armed conflict in Iraq, July 6 to September 10, 2014. The report found corroborated evidence of rapes and sexual violence against women and children; forced conversions or death; the complete repudiation of basic human rights, and systematic genocide. We have seen their brutality and their violence overseas and we see it very close to home. Two main attacks — one on Monday in Quebec and the other on Tuesday in Ottawa — claimed the life of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo.

Canada has joined the international community in saying that this tyranny, this oppression, this bondage cannot be tolerated. Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has determined that the cause of freedom is once again in peril. Just as we stood with our allies in France a century ago, the Government of Canada has declared that we will stand with our allies. We will stand for our principles, and that means that we will stand up to this tyranny.

As our Prime Minister stated in his address to the nation on Wednesday evening following the attack on our nation, we are also reminded that attacks on our security personnel and our institutions of governance are, by their very nature, attacks on our country, on our values, on our society, and on us, Canadians, as a free and democratic people who embrace human dignity for all, just as it will lead us to strengthen our resolve and redouble our efforts to work with our allies around the world and fight against the terrorist organizations that brutalize those in other countries with the hope of bringing their savagery to our shores. This motion represents an opportunity for Yukon to express our support for the Government of Canada's decision to participate in the broad international coalition of nations working together to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIL, and to provide humanitarian aid to innocent people suffering from ISIL's atrocities.

Of course, as a compassionate and a democratic society, Canada sees suffering and wants to alleviate it. Our intent is to deliver humanitarian aid. As we have learned time and time again, there can be no delivery of humanitarian aid without security. We want to help heal the wounds, feed the hungry, and give shelter and sanctuary to those who are suffering. We cannot deliver this aid without safe passage, and the perpetrators here have shown no indication of providing safe passage. To the contrary, they have no regard for civilians. They make no such distinctions for ISIL — either to convert to their way or you are executed as a non-believer. We will deliver aid, but first we must take the knives from the throats of those who are currently being threatened.

Having been a long-time member of the Legion, I have spent many years listening to members of the armed services and their families relate their experiences of the reception they received when they returned from duty. In speaking with members of this Assembly, such as yourself, and with Yukoners who have served, I understand the importance of supporting our forces. We can recognize the personal contribution of Canadians by showing respect and recognizing that military service is a difficult and challenging job. Not everyone wants or is willing to perform the tasks and to undertake the missions that governments ask of their military. Indeed, some countries compel their citizens to participate in military service.

Canada's Armed Forces are entirely voluntary. These women and men have willingly agreed to serve their nation. If for no other reason, that alone is reason enough to deserve our respect. Many have shared with me the feeling that, having done what our nation asked of them, their contributions be recognized as valuable and important. This is something that we need to do, not just when they return or for a week or during November — we need to support them throughout the year and in the years following.

The experience of war has profound and ongoing consequences for veterans. Some veterans return with injuries — some visible, some invisible. Our society is developing a better understanding of responding to the invisible wounds. Decisions to deploy domestically or internationally are not taken lightly. We recognize the importance of understanding the dangers involved, not just to life and limb, but to each soldier's spirit and their moral compass. In his book, *What It Is Like to Go to War*, Karl Marlantes writes in his preface the following: "The violence of combat assaults psyches, confuses ethics and tests souls. This is not only a result of the violence suffered. It is also a result of the violence inflicted. Warriors suffer from wounds to their bodies, to be sure, but because they were involved in killing people, they also suffer from their compromises with, or outright violations of, the moral norms of society and religion."

We understand that injuries, seen and unseen, caused by conflicts can have long-lasting effects on members, their families and their friends. Some organizations provide a place for members to discuss their challenges with others having similar experiences. Through sharing experiences, they find healing. Each one of us can play a role in supporting our

troops. They deserve our respect and our honour. We believe that it is important that we recognize the personal contribution of Canadians serving in the Armed Forces and that the experience of war has profound and ongoing consequences to veterans by supporting our troops during combat missions and after they return home.

In his address to the nation, the Prime Minister reaffirmed that we will not be intimidated. Canada will never be intimidated.

The third point of this motion requests that the Speaker of the Yukon Legislative Assembly communicate to other assemblies in Canada the decision of this House. Canadians enjoy tremendous rights and freedoms, including the right to free speech. It is my hope that other assemblies across Canada will join us in expressing their solidarity with Canada.

Now that the decision to engage has been made, I believe we need to voice our support and encourage others to do the same. In response to the assault on our nation, the Prime Minister has stated that he has every confidence that Canadians will pull together with the kind of firm solidarity that we have seen our country through many challenges.

By endorsing this motion today, we can express Yukon's solidarity with Canada. As I stated in this Assembly on Thursday, Canada is a free and democratic country where we agree to disagree civilly. We can protect our democracy by diligently carrying on with the daily work of democracy.

Our democratically elected Assembly using the tools of democracy to pass a motion that affirms our support for the Government of Canada and affirms our support for our forces and their families and shares that support with other democratically elected assemblies across our nation is a great way to show that our democratic institutions continue to function.

Mr. Speaker, let us show the contrast between ISIL's wanton disregard for democratic rights by using the tools of democracy in our response.

In light of the tragic events that have unfolded in the Levant, in Canada and, indeed, in our nation's capital, let us be clear with the symbolism — that was an attack on our entire nation.

We face choices on how to respond. It can be said that we are being attacked because we choose to stand with our allies against oppression and against violence. As I contemplated the situation in the Middle East that precipitated our motion and the events that have unfolded on our soil since then, I am reminded that what matters is our values. We remain committed to our fundamental freedoms. We remain committed to our democratic rights and responsibilities. We remain committed to human rights. We remain committed to the rule of law. We have stood up for those values time and time again. We have a duty to defend what we cherish. I urge all members of this Assembly to support this motion.

Ms. Hanson: At the outset, I want to be clear that the Yukon New Democratic Party unequivocally condemns the murder of Canadian soldiers. I spoke at length on the first day

of this session with respect to the sadness that I and the rest of my caucus felt on hearing of their deaths.

I'm sorry Mr. Speaker. I have to leave for a second.

Speaker: We will take a five-minute recess while the member retires for a second.

Recess

Ms. Hanson: It's a good lesson on keeping your head up. I will endeavour to do that for the balance.

As I was saying, the Official Opposition, the NDP, has been clear in our unequivocal condemnation of the murder of Canadian soldiers. I spoke on the opening day of this Fall Session about the sadness that we felt, that Canadians felt, on hearing about the deaths of the soldiers in Quebec and in Ottawa.

In approaching and discussing the motion that is before us this afternoon, we gave careful thought to what is being proposed and what is being put before us. As it is with all matters that come before the Legislative Assembly, we feel it is important to ask: what is the outcome that we're seeking, and does the motion that is being put forward do anything? There have been and there will be many, many words spoken over the last number of days about issues associated with the notions of terrorism, the reality of terrorism, with the horrors of war, with the evil that comes from hate.

Mr. Speaker, the challenge that we face is being able to separate out the importance of the day-to-day reality of those people who are living and have been living with the horrors of either state terrorism or individually based terrorism for many, many years, in particular in the regions from Afghanistan across the Middle East. We need to ask ourselves what the government's motion will actually accomplish.

The federal government in Ottawa has already committed elements of the Canadian Armed Forces to the latest conflict in the Middle East. That is a done deal. Where Canada has fallen short is really on the humanitarian front. Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced by state terrorism, and our government watched thousands fleeing, watched thousands having their homes destroyed and children being murdered. We've watched and we've not responded with the openness and the compassion that we speak about as one of the underlying values of Canadian society. We have not opened our doors to allow refugees in here. We sit as observers on the sidelines as countries like Turkey, which can ill afford it, take in a million refugees.

There has been a lot of emphasis and heightened rhetoric, I would suggest, over the last week in particular about military action. We are about so much more.

I want to speak a little bit about what it means when you take on and engage, and we ask — and yet again invoke that sacred covenant that Canada speaks of when it speaks of its military, and we call upon them to act and to serve on our behalf in lands far away. I want to speak to that a bit. I want to speak to some of the issues that are associated with the fundamental values and principles that we talk about as we

ask these troops — when we talk about them defending and we ask them to go forward.

I want to spend a brief time on that, Mr. Speaker, because, at the core of this is our resolve and our belief that, as a Legislative Assembly, we have a very limited amount of time during each session to debate matters of great importance to Yukon. I, as Leader of the Official Opposition, question that this is the Premier's top priority, and we need to ask ourselves whether this is a government that has any vision left for the territory or if this is simply an attempt to run the clock.

At times when there are many issues — humanitarian issues in our own neighbourhood, issues that affect our relationships and really speak to how we treat each other with respect — it's one thing to talk about the horrors and the lack of respect elsewhere, but we have a lack of respect in this country, in this territory.

One of the things that strikes poorest in the reaction to the events and the issues that have gone on — not just last week, Mr. Speaker, but have been going on for years where we played small parts and larger parts — there is a very serious temptation at times to rise to a level of rhetoric as opposed to reflecting on what the core values and core issues are here.

As I was thinking about how we would address this issue, I was reminded that we were called upon in your opening prayer to conduct ourselves with dignity, temperance and honour and, in my view, that means that government needs to make sure that it takes the time to reflect and not react. There is an element of both the actions that have been taken at the federal level and that are being echoed here that are reacting and not reacting in terms of what will be a substantive effort — what will be the substantive effect of what we do on a lasting basis as a nation, as a territory.

It reaffirms the importance of reaffirming our belief in our common values and the foundations of our identity, our democracy and our compassion. In times of crisis, we are often tempted to sacrifice our civil liberties for the benefit of an abstract sense of security offered by higher security, more restrictions and greater access to our lives. I don't think it has to be that way.

You know, Mr. Speaker, there has been reference to the shootings in Ottawa last week. We know that that shooter was not on the RCMP's radar. We need to reflect and to remember the struggles that we as a country have fought to ensure — that our civil liberties are as strong as they are today — and we have to work to ensure that we do not sacrifice the now in panic.

We as a country, as part of our Constitution, have reaffirmed certain values, rights and freedoms in our *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Who among us would be the first to deny that everyone has the fundamental freedom of conscience and religion? Who among us would suggest that there are those in our society who don't have the freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression? Who among us would suggest that somebody else — not you — does not have the freedom of peaceful assembly or the freedom of association? Those are fundamental values that we as Canadians have affirmed and reaffirmed.

We also have affirmed that everyone as a Canadian has the right to life, liberty and security of person. Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search procedures. As we react and as we think about what we're going to do as a society in response to our natural reactions of horror to the immediate events — because they touched us personally, because it's on our soil — we can't distance that from the reality that that is the everyday existence of so many people in so many parts of this world.

We, as a Canadian society, have chosen to try to do things differently. We reaffirm it on a daily basis in our law.

The truth is that terror attacks cannot always be prevented, especially when individuals act alone. Sometimes there just aren't any clues that somebody's going to act. They call them a lone wolf. The path from joining, supporting and embracing radical ideas to actually committing terrorist violence is not a path that can be easily charted, which is why it's so important to remember to respect — that respect that we have for our *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

I, like the speaker before me, have also spent time reflecting and reading, because when we're in a perplexed state about what's going on, we try to look for ideas and understanding from those who have expertise in these areas. Wesley Wark, who's an expert and a visiting scholar in Toronto, said it quite clearly when he talked about terrorism. He said there is no standard profile for a terrorist. What we need to remember is that there's no such thing as perfect security and there is no such thing as easy prevention, at least in a democracy.

We have to avoid what has been called the fog of historical and cultural amnesia that prevents us from learning from the mistakes of the past. It's not me who is saying that. Yesterday, I tuned in and watched parts of the Senate hearing on security, chaired by our senator. At that Senate hearing, the RCMP Commissioner, Bob Paulson, was speaking. He told the assembled lawmakers that the best way to prevent terrorism is to prevent radicalization in the first place. That is a much more profound challenge than simply saying, oh yes, we'll wave the flag and we'll send troops over there. We don't know what we're dealing with. What he is suggesting to us is that we need to spend the time finding out, Mr. Speaker.

We can't afford another round of wars justifying — categorizing — simply by saying it's a war on terror. As I said, there is a tendency to forget history and there is cultural amnesia. We have been in a war on terror. There is something that needs to suggest to us we have failed. As we consider — and as we have already sent Canadian pilots and ground troops into yet another arena, an undefined arena with an undefined objective — we need to consider and we need to recognize that terrorism is not new. For many years, centuries even, terrorism was largely something that happened within a country. You know, we haven't been immune from these domestic crimes of terrorism. Most of us have been in Ottawa. We have seen the placard where D'Arcy McGee, a Member of Parliament, was assassinated on Sparks Street. Some of us are old enough to have been around during the Front de libération du Québec. Some of us — and it's recently, this is not going

back in history, but in recent times — the Ku Klux Klan re-emerged in the Prairies and domestic terrorism that included the bombing of abortion clinics and doctors in their homes by anti-choice activists.

These are sad examples of Canadians who resorted to violence when they could not persuade others to join their cause, and they couldn't overpower them, so they blew themselves up in washrooms in the Parliament buildings or killed unarmed hostages like Pierre Laporte and James Cross. The fact of the matter is that we know that while we have much conjecture, we have little to go on in terms of the assailants over the last week and a half. Regardless of how we feel about the terrorist regime and the terrorists within ISIL — and I expect that we all react with abhorrence to what they have done — the decision has already been made in Parliament. The mission will go ahead as planned whether or not we pass the motion in this place. We have many pressing issues in our democracy to discuss. A decision has been made.

We believe that Canada's contribution to this mission would be best served with a focus on a humanitarian crisis that is rapidly unfolding. The rise of ISIL, just like many conflicts in the Middle East, is an extremely complex geopolitical phenomenon, decades in the making. It is not going to be simply or quickly solved by boots and bombs.

We learned as much over the past decade-plus of war in that region. What we can do immediately is try to help the tens of thousands of displaced people who have the upcoming winter to worry about — a serious worry in an area where winter is brutal — and support the logistical machine that will be needed to transport goods and relief workers to the region. Our foreign policy has to be deeper and more thoughtful than reacting to the spectre, as awful as it is, of westerners being beheaded. In many ways, our refusal to acknowledge the history of the Middle East blinds us to the current troubles.

I will remind you — as I said earlier — we have a tendency for cultural and historical amnesia. In the late stages of the Cold War the west funded, armed and advised the Afghan mujahideen to drive the Russians from Afghanistan. In many ways, the history of Afghanistan over the past 25 years represents a political Frankenstein, one the west lost control over long ago and we've seen it spread and the residual impact. The hate of the outside, of us, is a result of those interventions.

The ISIL is, like al-Qaeda, an international collection of fighters on the fringe of right-wing Islam who have exploited the political instability in Iraq and Syria in order to advance their own agenda. The situation is so complex that we now see old enemies like Iraq and Iran banding together in common cause.

How can we begin to make sense of such a situation without a strong historical context? How can we begin to suggest that a knee-jerk reaction is going to do anything but exacerbate the situation? We need to learn from our history and intervene in the most appropriate way and in a way that will produce an effective result.

The other aspect of this motion is something that we spoke to many times in this Legislative Assembly. My

colleague for Takhini-Kopper King, will, in fact, speak to it more, I'm sure, because she has been such a passionate advocate for the issues of how we deal with veterans.

Just as an aside, Mr. Speaker, I spent the weekend with relatives. On many parts it was a very happy occasion, but part of it was reviewing with my 90-year-old aunt photos of my father, her husband and her brother-in-law during the Second World War before they went off to serve Canada. Before and after, the pride was there and the difficulties were there after as well.

Canada's veterans deserve our full support and we have tabled motions to that effect in this House.

We have tabled motions to that effect in this House. It will be interesting to see, in terms of the actions and the resolve of my colleagues across the way — the Yukon Party — and in terms of how they will actually give effect to the second part of this motion. As we've said before, we believe that this party, this government, should call upon the federal Conservatives to stand behind and with our veterans. That means that the federal government needs to reopen the Veterans Affairs offices it closed this summer, invest in mental health professionals who can help veterans through the traumatic experiences of armed conflict, and reopen discussion on the controversial *New Veterans Charter* to deal with a number of problems — the biggest one being the lump sum payments for injured veterans. We haven't seen from this government until today — and I'm pleased to see that part of the motion is at least there. But when we called upon this government to support the Public Service Alliance, the Legion and others — I guess actions speak better than words.

So where do we find ourselves? The federal government has committed the Canadian Armed Forces to an open-end combat mission against a non-state actor that is conducting operations in Iraq. The territorial government has tabled a motion in support of that mission, the motion that we are debating today, on the third day of the new Legislative Assembly, instead of issues that we can do something about.

We can deal with affordable housing. We can deal with repairing the relationships among and between governments in this territory. We can deal with the really serious issues of health care and climate change. Those are things that this government can do. The message is that the Premier doesn't agree that he can do anything about climate change but, in fact, his refusal to deal with the recycling issues and the diversion programs — that's a tangible effort that this government could do.

We cannot support a motion that is, in effect, structured as a cheerleading note, a commitment to combat. We cannot stand by while humanitarian support is critically needed to help displaced civilians in Iraq. We cannot allow this discussion to take place without calling for the federal government to change course — not just nice words about how we need to be good to veterans, but to change course from the cutbacks and the refusal to work with veterans, the shameful actions of a government that will dismiss somebody within months of their 10 years of service so that they don't have to pay their benefits, to change course in its treatment of

veterans at a time when a new generation have just come from a decade-long war, and we cannot allow ourselves to be goaded into surrendering hard-earned civil liberties due to an act of domestic terrorism, no matter how tragic or how awful the most recent act was.

We cannot support this motion.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I am pleased to rise in the House today to give a veteran's perspective — me being a veteran — to this motion. I don't have a whole bunch to say but I definitely do support this motion, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about the priorities that the member opposite talked about — I think about unity for our country — we need to look at the photo of Marcus, the son of Corporal Nathan Cirillo today and how the country came together.

This does hit close to home, and I do think and I wonder, if this had happened in Whitehorse or one of the communities that we represent, what our thoughts would be. The day that it happened in Ottawa — I do want to acknowledge our first responders, our security people in the building, all the staff who came together to make sure that we here, in the event of an issue, would be safe.

Unity for our country hits close to home and — in the motion, the Premier spoke to it but I'm hearing a lot about the humanitarian aid. At our Remembrance Day parade every year, we play a tribute video at the end of it and it is usually a soldier who has compiled a bunch of footage from World War I, World War II — not much from the Boer War — but also from Afghanistan and some of the other conflicts that Canada has been a part of. You need only to watch the videos, and in the videos it shows the Canadian soldiers rebuilding streets, helping with schools, a Canadian soldier with his hand out to a young Afghan boy, passing him a teddy bear — the humanitarian aid is there and it comes from this country.

As a service member, I appreciate how I am recognized as a veteran in the Yukon and in Canada. I have a veterans plate. I was very pleased when the first discussion with my fellow colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, brought forward — we had the opportunity to dedicate the Alaska Highway to our veterans.

As a Canadian Ranger, I'm pleased to see how the federal government, with the Canadian Rangers across the north — which are sovereignty and security. We wear our red sweatshirts so we can be seen, to show that the north is ours. The support from the federal government is great. Not only do we have to just look at how many times our Prime Minister has been here and how many times I've gotten to meet the Prime Minister and my fellow Rangers across the north — over 1,500 have had the chance to see the Prime Minister. Canadian soil, taking care of our Canadian soil — and supporting our troops and supporting our nation, moving forward with our allies in the combat mission is integral. I think it's very important, along with the humanitarian aid.

One of the things that I remember, as a soldier when I was released from the military, is the support I got. When I signed out of the base at Comox, they had fixed my teeth and made sure I had a heartbeat, and I was gone. Is there more to

be done? There's always more to be done. There's a lot that changes when you're released from the military now.

Do I believe that supporting our veterans is of the upmost importance? I think that's the primary importance. One thing that I thought about — and we've had this conversation in the House, and I'm pleased to be able to get up and speak in the House about this, because you know what? I think this is a priority for all Canadians.

I think other jurisdictions, other governments and other municipalities have had this conversation at a municipal level or at a federal or provincial level. I think it's important that we stick together as Canadians.

But, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to taking care of those veterans when they come home — you know, not only is it in Veterans Affairs. I have noticed something in my conversations with a lot of veterans, a lot of Afghan vets who have come back — that they also rely on our infrastructure, which is our nurses, our doctors and our mental health care workers, and that conversation comes up. A few weeks ago, when the Minister of Health and Social Services was in my riding talking to the nurses and some of the health care providers out there — mental health is a huge issue, and this government is committed and working to that.

In the big picture, we definitely need to support Canada, especially when it hits close to home and hits on our soil. I am just remembering a couple of things that happened on the weekend. Corporal Chris Cassia from the Carcross patrol decided he thought it would be good to go stand at the memorial, and there were a lot of people who stopped by and gave him words of encouragement. Mr. Speaker, some people brought him a coffee and showed support. Yesterday, I was there with you, Mr. Speaker, and others at the turnout for the first poppy. It was great to see those people there, but you know what? We need to be vigilant. That is the motto of the Canadian Rangers. We have to be vigilant. We have to be the watchers, but we also must remember them.

Mr. Silver: Nobody in this Legislature is opposed to supporting Canadian troops. ISIL is obviously a threat to global security — that is a known. They are responsible for countless murders and beheadings — also known.

Canada has never been a country that has ever sat on the sidelines. We are a great nation that has always risen to the challenge to protect the freedoms and the democracy that we cherish and we've earned and there is no doubt that this crisis will require our Canadian participation — absolutely.

However, I have spoken with several veterans who are confused by this motion. Furthermore, in a letter to the editor published on October 20, a local veteran who I will not name criticized all parties by trying to politicize debate and score easy points. We had an opportunity to avoid that here. Last week, it was requested to the Premier, given the circumstances in Ottawa the day prior, in an effort of good faith, to have the three different chiefs of staff of all parties to sit down and construct a motion that everybody would be able to comfortably agree upon. That request was ignored.

There are more vital issues that this level of government is tasked to deal with in this Legislative Assembly — mental health, education, infrastructure, resources. The budget that we are supposed to be debating has no line items for this debate. We don't have a Department of Defence nor of Foreign Affairs in the Yukon Legislative Assembly. The Yukon Legislative Assembly and the Yukon government do not decide whether Canada takes on missions overseas. There are, however, a large number of issues for which we have authority that are much more urgent to Yukoners' daily lives than focusing on a federal government foreign policy, which is currently being debated and which is currently moving forward.

I had some lists of local issues that we should be talking about, but if the Yukon government really feels the need to get involved with federal affairs, well there are a lot more pressing issues that we could be bringing forward right now. The federal government's cuts have hurt Yukoners, but the government does not want to get involved with these federal issues.

Many other topics could have been discussed here today that in my opinion are more valuable. Changes to YESAA are among issues that are very relevant to Yukoners, and the Premier has washed his hands of this, claiming it to be a federal issue. Tabling amendments here in the Legislature here for review would have been much more beneficial to Yukoners than blocking them out of the process before taking it to Ottawa. In the spring, I warned the Yukon government that its unilateral approach to amending this legislation would further strain the relationships between the territory's public and the First Nation governments. Now its failure to cooperate with others brings the potential threat of more legal action. I will be calling on the Yukon government to wield its influence in Ottawa to see that these legislative changes are withdrawn and have more discussion with both the Yukon public and the Yukon First Nations. We could be talking about that today, but we're not.

Yukon stands to lose \$4.2 million a year because of changes to the employment insurance program. Where is the Yukon government's position on these cuts? \$4.2 million is a large amount of personal income to be taken out of the territory. We could be talking about that here today, but we are not.

Up until September of 2012, Whitehorse had a Canada Revenue Agency office. When the federal government announced that it would close it, the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce spoke out about it. This cut was seen as a huge loss to the territory's small business community. We could be talking about the cuts to the CRA office today, but we are not.

There have been a number of opportunities to get involved in federal issues, ones where the Premier could have used his voice to directly benefit Yukoners. Now let's get to the motion on the floor today.

I as a Liberal, and as a Canadian, unequivocally support the Canadian troops, especially our veterans. I attended yesterday's presentation for the first poppy. On November 11, I will once again have the honour and the privilege to present

a wreath in Dawson. I recognize the personal sacrifices that our military has made.

I also feel Canada has an important role to play in world affairs, as we have since World War I. Our troops are headed overseas and today's debate will have no impact on that conclusion. But if the Premier wants to know where I stand on this issue, it's very simple: Canada should take on a clearly mandated, non-combat role, focusing in on humanitarian efforts. I do not think the Prime Minister has made the case to Canadians that stepping into a combat role is necessary for our country.

Now, I do support the motion's intention — and I quote, “to provide humanitarian aid to innocent people suffering from ISIL's atrocities” — absolutely, Mr. Speaker. I will support recognizing — and I quote, “personal contribution of Canadians serving in the Armed Forces and that the experience of war has profound and ongoing consequences for veterans by supporting our troops during combat missions, and after they return home” — absolutely.

But as the motion is worded in full, I cannot in good conscience support it. As we hear more details of the events that occurred last week it is important to keep things in perspective. The shooter in Ottawa was radicalized. He was a terrorist. But so far there is no evidence to support that he was an active member of ISIL. Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs has confirmed that.

We have a responsibility as legislators to stick to the truth and to not draw false links to justify outcomes. Canadians deserve more. Again, I am disappointed that the government chose not to work with the opposition parties today to bring forth a motion that we could all support. That was a very conscious decision.

I will continue to support our troops. I am very proud of our military, I am very proud of my family's legacy and association with the Armed Forces and I am not proud of what we are doing here today in the territory Legislative Assembly and I will not be supporting this motion.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would like to begin by making some general comments and then address the elements of this motion.

There is a clear philosophical difference here that I think we need to fully understand. In some parts of the world, the belief is that individual freedoms have to be sacrificed for the collective good. In other parts of the world, the belief is that the collective good is achieved through enabling individual success and accomplishment. We place a priority on individual rights and freedoms because we understand that our collective rights are ensured at an individual level.

One of the hallmarks of Canada is that we have a sophisticated and modern human rights regime. It is part of what makes Canada a great place to live. We have the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, but I'll come back to that in a moment.

As I prepared for today, I thought of our national anthem which speaks about “the True North strong and free.” Canada is an incredible country in which to live because we have

certain fundamental freedoms: the freedom of conscience and religion; the freedom of thought; the freedom of the press; the freedom of peaceful assembly; and the freedom of association. These are our values and Canada has stood firm for them and has committed to defend them no matter the cost, even when that meant going to war.

Mr. Speaker, I know that both you and the Member for Kluane have served in our nation's Armed Forces because you believe these values are worth defending and I thank you both for your years of service. As members of this Assembly know, Canadians and Yukoners have been at the forefront of promoting and addressing human rights. Our legacy as a place of refuge has garnered Canada a worldwide reputation as being the best country in which to live. Whether slaves from the southern States seeking personal freedom, religious groups like the Mennonites from Europe fleeing persecution, or immigrants from Asia pursuing economic and personal success — Canada was and is known as a place of safety and a place of opportunity. Personal freedoms are what allow us to achieve our personal success and in turn contribute to our national success. Sadly, there are parts of the world where people do not enjoy the benefits of basic human rights.

I can think of examples where people are discriminated against because of their gender, their skin colour, their religion or their physical disabilities. We live in a free and open democratic society. We live in a peaceful and prosperous society. Canada has partnered with others who are committed to freedom. We did it in World War I, in World War II, in Korea and Afghanistan. Today I stand in support of our nation joining the partnership to defend our values in Iraq. Canada has supported every UN peacekeeping mission because we want to ensure that oppression never finds a home, especially here in Canada. As I thought about the consequence of previous wars like World War I and World War II, I am pleased that our opponents in these wars are now friends and allies. Our countries are at peace because each one enjoys liberty.

I was in Germany this summer and I had the privilege of touring the German Naval Academy in Flensburg with Commanding Officer Admiral Carsten Stawitzki. I can assure you that our German friends hold Canada in general and Yukon in particular in very high esteem.

Early next year I will be heading to Asia to promote Yukon tourism there. Our nation and our territory is an attractive place to live and to visit, in large part because of the liberty and the security we enjoy. To me it is obvious that liberty — that freedom — is a necessity for success and prosperity for individuals, for communities and for nations. I mention this because some believe that war just generates more war. I don't believe that this is the case. I believe apathy causes violence and oppression needs to be confronted. I believe the best way for us to improve the future is to learn from our past.

Just a few moments ago I mentioned Germany. On September 30, 1938, at the Heston Aerodrome, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain spoke about the peace for our time. He was explaining the Munich agreement, in which

Britain and France abandoned their pact with Czechoslovakia and carved it up as part of their policy of appeasement toward Germany. He wanted peace; he thought appeasement was the path to peace. It wasn't. Pursuing peace by abandoning allies and breaking treaty obligations didn't work then, and I don't believe that it'll work now.

Canadians understand the difference between peace and appeasement. One is strength and the other is servitude. Millions of people around the world live in servitude. They do not enjoy any of the democratic freedoms we have. We enjoy those rights because of the nearly 115,000 Canadians who laid down their lives to secure and preserve our freedom. Canadians before us declared that oppression needed to be confronted and confront it they did — at a terrible cost. Given the horrors of World War I were still fresh in many people's minds, the decision to go to war in 1939 was not taken lightly, but the decision was made because oppression needs to be confronted.

We have seen how extremists oppress people and their response to those who stand up against them. I think of women like Malala Yusufzai, who has continued to show bravery and courage in spite of the violence done to her, because she thought girls should have an education too.

I have talked in general terms about the need to confront oppression, but let's look at the evidence before us as it relates to Iraq.

Earlier today, the Premier referenced the October 2 report by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq Human Rights Office. It detailed the staggering array of human rights abuses in northern Iraq from July 6 to September 10. As of October 1, at least 9,347 civilians have been killed so far in 2014, and 17,386 have been wounded, well over half of them since ISIL began over-running large parts of the north in early June.

The report enumerates a litany of serious violations of international humanitarian law and gross abuses of human rights that have been perpetrated by ISIL and associated with armed groups with an apparent systematic and widespread character: attacks directly targeting civilians; executions of civilians; abductions; rape; sexual and physical violence against women and children; forced recruitment of children; destruction of religious sites; malicious destruction; looting of property and the denial of fundamental freedoms. Women and ethnic and religious minorities have all been intentionally and systematically targeted by ISIL.

As the Premier has already noted, Nickolay Mladenov of Bulgaria has called the report terrifying. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, who is a Jordanian Muslim and Arab, has stated that, "The array of violations and abuses perpetrated by ISIL and associated armed groups is staggering, and many of their acts may amount to war crimes, or crimes against humanity."

That tells me that the global community — not just the western world — is outraged by what is happening. As I read the reports, the Internet, the papers and watch the news, I am profoundly disgusted by what I see from Levant. Reporters and aid workers are being kidnapped and killed in barbaric ways. I see women being treated as property rather than

people; being raped and enslaved; others killed. I see people being forced to convert or be killed. I see innocent people being kidnapped and killed. I believe that oppression needs to be confronted.

We are faced with the same choice as Prime Minister Chamberlain: Do we pursue peace through strength or do we pursue it through servitude? I know these are weighty decisions and ones that have very real, very permanent, and sometimes very painful consequences. We on this side of the House have made our position clear. Oppression needs to be confronted.

I think we need to do more than feel outraged by what we saw on the TV news. Governments in the region are requesting our assistance — our armed assistance. Allies are requesting our assistance — our armed assistance. I think we need to act. We need to confront oppression. Some may view this along the partisan lines; however, I do not.

I would like to share with this Assembly comments from some prominent Canadians. I read Bob Rae's opinion piece of October 1 in the *Globe and Mail*. Bob Rae is a former NDP Premier of Ontario and a former interim leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. He stated, "It is now apparent that the forces of radical violence have metastasized, and that Islamic State represents a clear and present danger to the people over whom it rules, to any minorities around the area, to the region and potentially to the world." He notes that both the Government of Iraq and the regional government of Iraqi Kurdistan have asked for military assistance. He writes, "This is about understanding the long term, enduring interest of our country in peace, order, and good government, for ourselves and for the world as well."

I would also note that Bruce Hyer, currently of the Green Party and previously of the New Democratic Party, supported the motion. In comments reported on October 7, 2014, on the netnewsledger.com, Mr. Hyer states that he is generally against "foreign military intervention, unless the atrocities are so terrible as to merit it." He states that "people on the ground are calling for our help So are our friends in the international communities. Canada must not refuse that call."

Then he goes on to state, "We've watched in horror as this group has slaughtered anyone that stands in their way, including innocent women and children, has beheaded journalists and humanitarian workers, has committed horrendous acts of sexual violence, and has persecuted religious minorities. ISIL will not respond to anything but force."

Mr. Hyer concludes that "Canada should not stand on the sidelines in this, and has a moral duty to save lives when it can. I think the plusses of this mission outweigh the risks. ISIL must be stopped."

As a proud Canadian and as a proud Yukoner, I am pleased that Canada has taken a stand against this discrimination. I applaud those bringing the Canadian ideals of peace, order and good government to that region.

I mentioned at the start that I had spent some time thinking about what it means to be Canadian. As I prepared for today's motion, I thought about what responsibilities we

have as Canadians to our world. As Yukoners, we live in the best part of the best country in the world. I thought about the contrast between Canada and Iraq. As I said earlier, just reading the Internet, watching TV and feeling upset really doesn't accomplish anything. Oppression needs to be confronted.

I've asked myself, what can I do to influence the situation in Iraq? As I said at the beginning, I thought about the words of our national anthem — "we stand on guard for thee". I thought to myself, there's definitely something I can do. I can stand shoulder to shoulder in determined support for our military and RCMP members in all the tasks they undertake, but right now, here in this Assembly, I can stand in support of this motion. Today I can stand in support of our nation joining the partnership to defend our values in Iraq.

I stand on guard for our women and children; I stand on guard for victims of genocide; I stand on guard for freedom of association. I am in full support of this motion and I thank the leader of our great territory, the Premier, for bringing such an important motion forward at such a crucial time in our lives. I encourage all members to support this motion.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank and acknowledge the service and sacrifices made by both you and the Member for Kluane in the service of our country. I thank the Leader of the Third Party for reminding the Premier and this House that the Official Opposition sent out a laurel leaf to work together with the opposition parties to craft a motion based on the one the Premier tabled that would be non-partisan and meaningful that we could all endorse. Sadly, that call was ignored and here we are divided.

I've spoken at length in this House of the challenges facing Canadian veterans, challenges that most of us in this House can't fully understand, because we haven't taken the oath of service and because we don't have the experiences of a service member. The oath reads as follows: "I do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second, Queen of Canada, Her heirs and successors, according to law, and the Canadian Forces until lawfully released, that I will resist Her Majesty's enemies and cause Her Majesty's peace be kept and maintained and that I will, in all manners pertaining to my service, faithfully discharge my duty, so help me God."

This oath of service is never taken lightly by members of the Canadian Forces. They know that it not only affects their careers, but it also sets the standards for the rest of their lives. Can a layperson truly understand that to serve others for the greater good of all, you must be prepared to sacrifice? Can we understand that the mission, above all else, comes first? Do we understand that service members in the course of their duties are often called upon to make significant personal sacrifices?

Do we understand the emotional impact that service members face when confronting known and unknown dangers and countless hardships? Do we fully understand the impacts of being separated from the families that they love; missing the birth of children; the death of loved ones and the everyday

nuances that we at home take for granted? Can we begin to understand the stress caused by facing the daily threat of permanent or life-altering injuries? Do we understand that these brave men and women, through their oath of service, will on occasion make the ultimate sacrifice and give their own lives for a mission that is beyond themselves?

Aware of this, they still choose to take this oath — they still choose to serve — the ultimate public service. The faces of today's veterans are very different from the stereotypes of old. Youthful faces now outnumber those formerly graced by older generations. In Canada, recent stats tell us that one person out of 35 is a veteran — one out of 35. It is currently estimated that 15 to 30 percent of returning soldiers develop PTSD. This means that 4,000 to 6,000 soldiers returning home need support and services to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder.

With its changes to the veterans charter, the federal Government of Canada has created a two-tiered support system for veterans. This *New Veterans Charter* places the most severely wounded newly-returned veterans at risk of hardship and poverty. It was never easy to be a veteran, but never before have we seen the number of veterans suing the Canadian government like we do today. Never before have we seen this happen in Canada.

For years, veterans have raised concerns about the programs and compensation under their veterans charter. Under this new legislation, ex-soldiers saw the decades-old pension-for-life system replaced with a workers' compensation style approach of lump-sum awards and allowances. Imagine being told, upon your return home, that the life sacrifice you made for your country is only worth a one-time payout. I can't even begin to imagine how betrayed I would feel.

Worse yet, since February of this year, nine Veterans Affairs offices have closed their doors to veterans. This means that those veterans in those nine Canadian jurisdictions no longer have the face-to-face access with the staff that understood their needs and histories. These veterans now have access to phone services, or these veterans can now stand in the lines at Service Canada counters. That is the very same lines where you would go to get your passport.

These cuts in service not only add to the current environment Canada's veterans are finding themselves in — this environment that can only be categorized as demoralizing. Today it still continues to be a daunting process for veterans and their families to navigate through various departmental layers. Once in the system, trying to seek benefits, the amount of paperwork and the processes involved to obtain benefits is extremely complex and often overwhelming for the people who need the help the most.

There are two federal government departments involved, two rehabilitation programs and an application process that is 18 pages long. This is not like applying for a passport. This paperwork decides your future; it decides your fate.

Many veterans left struggling in this new system feel betrayed by the very country to which they swore the oath of

service — the same country to which they swore the oath of service.

Those feeling betrayed are the very men and women who chose to serve and protect us, our communities, our country and our values. These are the men and women who are sent to foreign lands and upon their return home, are often forgotten and ignored by the very country, by the very government, whose values they went to defend. Given the daily reporting of their concerns about these sweeping changes and challenges, how can every Canadian politician and how can every Canadian citizen not be aware of issues facing our veterans when they arrive home? How can we not be aware of their reality? How can we not be up in arms for their defence when they come back and they need our help?

Whether or not you are for or against Canada's involvement in the fight against ISIL, let one thing be clear in this discussion: active members, veterans and their families deserve our full and complete support. They deserve more than words because words are just that — they're just words. Let us show our support in meaningful actions. Let's encourage the Canadian government to show their support in meaningful actions.

Wearing a poppy is not enough. I ask you to ponder: Has the Canadian government lived up to this promise it made in 1917, just prior to the Battle of Vimy Ridge, when the then Conservative Prime Minister of Canada Robert Borden said this to servicemen ready to be deployed: "You can go into this action feeling assured of this, and as the head of the government I give you this assurance: That you need not fear that the government and the country will fail to show just appreciation of your service to the country and Empire in what you are about to do and what you have already done. The government and the country will consider it their first duty to see that a proper appreciation of your effort and of your courage is brought to the notice of the people at home, that no man, whether he goes back or whether he remains in Flanders will have just cause to reproach the government for having broken faith with the men who won and the men who died. Lest we forget."

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

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I was proud last Thursday to rise and to table this motion and to lead the debate on it today: "THAT this House:

"(1) urges the Government of Yukon to show national unity and Yukon's support for the Government of Canada's decision to participate in the broad international coalition of nations working together to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and to provide humanitarian aid to innocent people suffering from ISIL's atrocities;

"(2) recognizes the personal contribution of Canadians serving in the Armed Forces and that the experience of war has profound and ongoing consequences for veterans by supporting our troops during combat missions, and after they return home; and

“THAT the Speaker of the Yukon Legislative Assembly transmit the decision of this House to the Parliament of Canada and to the provincial and territorial assemblies of Canada.”

Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the debate today. I want to acknowledge the comments that were made. I want to thank, for their comments, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Tourism and Minister of Highways and Public Works, who himself is a proud veteran.

The core value — what are the core values? Are we willing to defend those core values that we cherish, and which most of us take for granted on a daily basis? I believe, and history has shown us, that we have a responsibility as global citizens, because we have seen that peace through servitude has not worked in the past. There are many sad atrocities and aggressions that have shown us that.

It is disappointing to think that we could sit back and ponder what our role should be and what the role for Canada should be. What I heard was support for humanitarian efforts; however, as I spoke to in the debate, you cannot provide humanitarian efforts without security. Without security, you cannot have people on the ground providing those efforts — food, medicine — to people in need. There needs to be security in place.

We have an obligation. We live in the greatest country of this world and we are thankful for that. For us to say, well, you know what? We'll let somebody else worry about that — that's not our problem. I believe that's not the role of this country. We have a very proud role of peacekeeping. We have a very proud role of our military action in defence of those rights, freedoms and values that all of us cherish every day.

I think it's also very important to note that this coalition of countries includes a number of Middle East Arab nations. This is not the west against the Middle East; this is into north, south, east and west as I had articulated. This has been identified by the United Nations. This has been identified as being so atrocious that we have all of these countries doing what they can to provide their efforts. I think, again to state Darcy Grossinger's article just recently in the paper where he said that we have responsibilities — we have freedoms, but we have responsibilities, and we have responsibilities to these alliances as well.

I do believe that it's not the role of the rest of the world to defend those rights and freedoms that we enjoy ourselves. We believe that all citizens of this world should be able to agree and to achieve and to be able to live under them on a daily basis.

Certainly for the record, when we were notifying you, Mr. Speaker, of the House going back into session, at that point we also notified everyone — the parties opposite and the public — that we intended to move forward with a motion to support the Government of Canada's decision. Since that time, we had the tragic events that did occur in Quebec and in Ottawa, Ontario — in our nation's capital.

As for the motion itself, we did share that motion with the House Leaders. We asked and solicited important support in terms of possible amendments for that motion. We did receive

comments and feedback from the New Democratic Party, some of which we incorporated, but also the Liberal Party and the Liberal leader refused to provide any comment to that motion, for the record.

Again, I would like to thank those members who have supported this motion. We believe that we have a duty to support our nation's troops. We have a duty and a responsibility as global citizens to allow people the same basic human rights that should be achieved across this entire world, and I urge all members of this House to show the unity that is required, to show the support that we are seeing from countries across this world from many different ethnic and religious backgrounds, who have all united in the stand against ISIL.

At this point, I will sit down and hopefully the members opposite will reconsider their position on this important issue that I believe is important to Yukoners. I have heard many conversations on street corners and stores about what is going on in this world, and I believe that Canadians stand tall and proud with their military and with the government's support of something that we know is necessary because we will not achieve peace through servitude.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. Stick: Disagree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Mr. Tredger: Disagree.

Mr. Barr: Disagree.

Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 11 yeas, seven nays.

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

Motion No. 710 agreed to

GOVERNMENT BILLS**Bill No. 78: Act to Amend the Marriage Act — Second Reading**

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 78, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Graham.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I move that Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Health and Social Services that that Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I am very pleased to speak to these amendments to the *Marriage Act* today. As you know, marriage is a vital institution here in the Yukon and elsewhere around the world. Like most institutions, it's adapting to our times. Our *Marriage Act* was passed in 2002 and was not amended since then. We are now introducing amendments that will streamline administration of the act and modernize the language.

Civil marriage ceremonies in Yukon are solemnized by our marriage commissioners. These people perform a very valuable function in our society and should be recognized for it, but the system of appointing marriage commissioners needs modernizing. Marriage commissioners are appointed by the Cabinet and the number of these appointments increases every year. Because of this, we are introducing an amendment that will allow the Minister of Health and Social Services, rather than the Cabinet, to appoint marriage commissioners by ministerial order.

This will enable Cabinet to spend more of its valuable time on other matters, while still ensuring public transparency. Appointments by ministerial order will continue to be listed in the Yukon Gazette. This change aligns Yukon with the general practice in other provinces and territories across the country.

We're also modernizing the application process and eligibility criteria for marriage commissioners. Right now, candidates do not need any qualifications to perform civil marriages. With the new criteria proposed, marriage commissioner applicants will have to meet minimum standards. Specifically, marriage commissioners will have to be at least 19 years of age; they'll have to be a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident; and they will have to be proficient in English or French. Having such minimum standards is consistent with the fact that marriage commissioners perform a very significant legal function.

We've also introduced term limits with expiry dates for the appointments. Currently, the *Marriage Act* is silent on time frames associated with marriage commissioner appointments. By implementing either a one-day or a three-year term with a set expiry date, both the public and the department will know clearly who Yukon's active appointees are. This will also assist us with maintaining accurate administration of records.

As part of the modernization of the appointment of marriage commissioners, we will also be introducing an application fee. The fee schedule will be set out in regulation

currently under development and the fee schedule will be set out in its design to encourage serious applications for appointments and will provide revenues to cover the increased administrative cost of processing and administering appointments. The fees charged will differentiate between individuals applying for one day or a three-year appointment. The renewal fee for marriage commissioners will also be less than a new appointment. Fees will be in line or smaller than many of the other jurisdictions in Canada.

Under the proposed amendments, marriage commissioners appointed under the current legislation will be grandfathered in for a set period of time determined under the act. The minimum will be three years for marriage commissioners appointed under the current act. Allowing existing marriage commissioners to continue their appointments for a set period of time creates certainty for them and it also recognizes that they were appointed in good faith under the existing legislation.

In short, all these proposed changes will streamline appointments while creating mechanisms to ensure eligibility, modest administrative remuneration and accurate listing of marriage commissioners in the Yukon Gazette.

Finally, we've updated the *Marriage Act* to include gender-neutral language. Since the act was proclaimed 12 years ago, the definition of marriage has changed in Canada to include same-sex marriages. Because of this, the act's language needed to be modernized. In several provisions, references to husband and wife will be changed to spouse or spouses, and this proposed language change promotes the Yukon government's stated aim to introduce gender-neutral language into legislation whenever possible. The times have changed and the language in our laws must change along with them.

In summary, the changes to the *Marriage Act* are primarily administrative in nature, but they are important. By modernizing the appointment of marriage commissioners and changing some outdated language in the act, we ensure that we are meeting our government's stated goal of practising open, accountable and fiscally responsible government. I look forward to taking members through this new bill in detail during Committee of the Whole, and I look forward to any questions that may be asked in response to this bill.

Ms. Stick: I was pleased to see this bill come forward and, in particular, the assurance that there is gender neutrality when we use language in our legislation. This is a beginning. There is more legislation to follow, I'm hoping, and there are still a few more days to bring bills forward, but I am aware of the *Spousal Compensation Act*, the *Married Women's Property Act*, and the *Land Titles Act*, which all require that gender-neutral language to be inserted.

It's encouraging to see this updated legislation with regard to marriage commissioners. The legislation appears to be clear and straightforward, but I have some questions, which I will save for Committee of the Whole and look for answers at that time — but we are pleased to see this come forward.

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

Hon. Mr. Graham: I look forward to answering any of the questions that I possibly can. In addition, while reading through the bill, I noticed one part that may require a correction as we go through, but we can discuss that in Committee of the Whole.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yea, nil nay.

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

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 78 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): I now call Committee of the Whole to order.

We will be discussing Bill No. 78, *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: We will take a 15-minute break.

Recess

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

Bill No. 78: *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate in Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I think I said most of what I wanted to say in my second reading speech. However, it has come to my attention via the good graces of a couple of opposition members that there was a small error, so we will be proceeding to make or to suggest an amendment, with your indulgence, at some point in the future.

Chair: Mr. Graham, I am going to suggest that you make that amendment at the appropriate time while we are in clause-by-clause debate and after clause 2. Does any other member wish to speak?

Ms. Stick: As I mentioned earlier, we are in support of this. I do have a few questions I just would like to have clarified for the House and for me. I just wanted to make one correction on something I had said earlier about it being gender-neutral language. In fact I think it is better to describe it as “gender inclusive” in that it makes sure that when we are looking at marriage it’s not husband/wife, but it can be spouse — husband/spouse, wife/spouse, et cetera, so that it is inclusive language rather than just neutral language.

The questions I have are just more technical and certainly ones I expect to show up in the regulations. The first one would be about the prescribed application fee and whether the minister could inform us what that would be for a person applying for one day or a person applying for the three-year term as a marriage commissioner.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The dollar values that we are going to suggest in regulation is a \$50 fee for a one-day licence and \$350 for a three-year permit and, after that three-year permit licence is completed, only a \$50 renewal fee for each three years after that. Those would be the fees.

Ms. Stick: In this case, from what I understand in looking at this legislation is that any person who is currently a marriage commissioner not just for one day, but regular, when this legislation is enacted, they then have three more years before they need to reapply. So when individuals who are already marriage commissioners reapply, will that fee for them to reapply be only \$50?

Hon. Mr. Graham: That’s correct. The reason behind that is quite simple. Folks who are current marriage commissioners have already gone through the process so the administrative fee shouldn’t apply. Therefore anyone who is currently a marriage commissioner for longer than one day will not be required to pay the \$350 and their fee for every three-year period after this will be \$50.

Ms. Stick: The other piece in the act or in the amendments that someone was looking at with me and asked

for clarification had to do with the transitional piece and for “the appointment of a person as a marriage commissioner before the coming into force of this Act expires on the earliest of ...” — and then there are three examples there.

I wonder if the minister can just give an example for each one so that it is clear. The person I was working with found that it wasn't said in the simplest terms, or it was not clear, especially the first person. The day on which the person is appointed under section 5(1) of the *Marriage Act*, as amended by this act — I'll ask the minister to explain who that would be.

Hon. Mr. Graham: That would be people who were signing up after this act has been proclaimed. So they would be paying the \$350 fee. Under (b) “the day on which the appointment would, but for this Act, have expired” — would only be those persons who actually had a marriage certificate for the day that this act, the current act, expires.

The third anniversary would be people who are current marriage commissioners for longer than one day and theirs will expire in three years.

Ms. Stick: Those are basically the questions I had. As I said, it is very straightforward and I want to thank the officials for the briefing we received yesterday on this.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate?

We are going to move forward then with clause by clause.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Amendment proposed

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, I move:

THAT Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, be amended at page 2 by inserting the following clause:

“Section 6 repealed

3. Section 6 of the Act is repealed.”

And by renumbering the remaining clauses accordingly.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Graham:

THAT Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, be amended at page 2 by inserting the following clause:

“Section 6 repealed

3. Section 6 of the Act is repealed.”

And by renumbering the remaining clauses accordingly.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The amendment is quite simple. Section 6 sets a maximum price that marriage commissioners may charge for performing a marriage ceremony. We had no intention of leaving that in and, through my own negligence, it stayed and I really appreciate the assistance of the Clerk in assisting me to correct my error.

Ms. Stick: Just to clarify, by removing this, does this leave this open to marriage commissioners being able to do a marriage for free or for any amount of money?

Hon. Mr. Graham: We know at the present time that many marriage commissioners do perform ceremonies for free, but we also realize that because we are upping the fee

substantially — in fact, they were zero before. So because we are implementing a fee schedule, we should also allow marriage commissioners to at least be able to charge the cost of their licence, and that's what is intended. There will be no minimum, no maximum. It won't be regulated at all.

We still would encourage marriage commissioners to do it for free, of course.

Chair: Is there any further debate on the amendment — inclusion of section 3?

Amendment to Clause 3 agreed to

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to

Chair: The remaining sections of course are going to be renumbered but I'm going to carry on in the numbering that is in the bill at the time.

On Clause 3

Clause 3 agreed to

On Clause 4

Clause 4 agreed to

On Clause 5

Clause 5 agreed to

On Clause 6

Clause 6 agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, I move that Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, be reported with amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Graham that Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, be reported with amendment.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 78, entitled *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, and directed me to report the bill with amendment.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 79: Pioneer Utility Grant Act — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 79, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Graham.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I move that Bill No. 79, entitled *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Health and Social Services that Bill No. 79, entitled *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I am very pleased to speak to this new bill and I am very proud also of the work that is being done to bring us to this point here today.

I asked the department some time ago to begin a review of the act with a view to increase the flexibility, fairness and — very importantly — the sustainability of the pioneer utility grant. After careful consideration of various approaches and the scope of the changes that were involved, we decided that a replacement would be more appropriate than an amended act.

The act was silent in many different areas, such as providing clarity on what is required to apply and become eligible for the pioneer utility grant, including authority for the administrators to approve applications, request documentations and, where appropriate, deny the benefit to those applicants who did not meet the eligibility requirements.

The pioneer utility grant was first introduced in Yukon in 1978 and I think, Mr. Speaker, if we look back, you will find that I was a member of that Legislature; in fact, I may have even introduced the bill in 1978. It was in response to recommendations from the Yukon Council on Aging. The grant was intended to provide financial assistance to seniors to assist or to partially offset higher home heating costs during the winter months. Eligibility was restricted to those seniors who can establish that they lived in the Yukon for 183 days of each year, of which 90 days were in the winter months defined as January to March and October to December.

The pioneer utility grant was initially introduced at a rate of \$300 per year and has been increased a number of times over the past several years. In 2003, the grant was increased by 25 percent, rising from the then grant of \$600 to \$750 with future increases indexed to the annual rate of inflation thereafter. In 2005, it was once again raised by another 10 percent in addition to the annual indexed increases. In 2014 — this year — the pioneer utility grant rate is \$1,030 per year and we expect that approximately 2,100 seniors will apply and receive the pioneer utility grant, totalling approximately \$2.163 million.

The pioneer utility grant was introduced as a universal benefit that was provided to all eligible applicants at a flat rate, regardless of their income or the geographic location of their principal residence. The grant was provided directly to the applicant, and there were no other requirements to remit receipts or otherwise demonstrate proof of fuel or utility payments. The administration of the pioneer utility grant is directed by the act and related regulations. The act outlines provisions regarding eligibility, time of application and

benefit restrictions among others, and the regulations outline provisions regarding the benefit amount.

Yukon is one of three jurisdictions that provide heating subsidies to senior residents. Both Northwest Territories and Nunavut have programs, but that is where the similarities end. Our pioneer utility grant is provided to homeowners as well as those seniors who rent and it is a universal benefit. The other two jurisdictions only provide the benefit to homeowners and both are income-tested programs. Yukon's program is provided to a significantly greater number of people, both because it is a universal benefit and also because of the higher number of seniors who remain living in the Yukon.

Over the next few years, it's expected that the number of seniors in Yukon aged 65 or older will increase substantially as the baby-boomer generation ages. This demographic shift will have several service delivery and cost implications.

Population projections developed by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics estimate that the number of seniors will increase from approximately 3,500 in 2011 to well over 6,000 by 2031. It is further estimated that based on these projections, the pioneer utility grant expenditures would more than double, rising from the current or what it was in 2011 — \$1.6 million — to over \$3.7 million in 2021. I'm sorry; I may have misstated the previous date. It's 3,500 in 2011 to well over 6,000 by 2021. I should have said that instead of 2031.

In any event, this will place increasing pressure on the sustainability of the program. The majority of this future generation of seniors will have higher incomes, more retirement benefits, and/or savings and assets than previous seniors. Those seniors are not a homogeneous group and many older seniors are and will likely still be less financially well off. They will represent a minority among all seniors over the age of 65. Given the future increase and the number of seniors over the age of 65, the higher relative income and wealth among this cohort and the anticipated cost increases due to the pioneer utility grant being a universal benefit, it was time to assess whether the program was financially sustainable in the medium- and long-term. It was also time to review the act with a view to identify gaps in the administration of the program and enhancements that could be made to ensure that the pioneer utility grant remained a program that assisted seniors, while being fiscally and administratively responsible.

There were several different ways to deliver on the government's commitment to increase the flexibility of the pioneer utility grant while also addressing issues of fairness and sustainability. We have arrived at an approach we believe is straightforward and will reflect the original intent of the program, which is to help low-income seniors who require it with the cost of increasingly expensive fuel and utility cost.

To begin with, the act expands on the requirements that a person must meet in order to be eligible for a grant including a new requirement to declare net income and the responsibility for payment of utilities. The act also provides for the ability to waive the eligibility criteria in the case of exceptional medical circumstances, understanding that there may be occasions when seniors are not able to meet the residence requirements due to exceptional medical circumstances.

Changing the application date to July from October was also something requested by seniors groups, which will provide for additional time for seniors to complete their application and if all documentation is provided, to receive the grant at an earlier time in the year.

All applicants must now be 65 years or older to be considered to be eligible for the grant. Those applicants who received a pioneer utility grant in 2014 who are under the age of 65, but qualified under the old act, will be grandfathered into the program. In other words, nobody will be left out of the program. Those people between 55 and 65 who are currently receiving their pioneer utility grant will not lose their pioneer utility grant. We will continue to pay it even though they are under the age of 65. It has been determined that there will be approximately 11 applicants who fall into that category. All 11 will continue to receive the grant.

Establishing a 12-month residency requirement before applying for the pioneer utility grant will provide consistency with other programs. It will reinforce the intention of the benefit to assist those seniors who have made Yukon their home and who may require help in the winter to meet the high cost of heating their home.

Income testing is a process that allows for the adjustment of the benefit based on the net income of an individual or of a family. This means that as the income of the individual or the family increases, the amount of the benefit paid out by the government decreases. Income testing can help ensure that the benefits are received by those who have the greatest need. Income testing can also increase the sustainability of a program as benefits are reduced or no longer provided to those with sufficient incomes.

Health and Social Services has other programs that are income tested, including the childcare subsidy program, child drug and optical program and social assistance. The income-test model for the pioneer utility grant has been developed and is based on a middle-income range for testing. The middle-income range is based on the estimated middle 60 percent of incomes among all Yukon couple families, and then the middle range has been applied to senior couples and converted to apply to individuals. Individuals and couples with incomes below the middle range will receive the full amount of the grant, while those with incomes above the middle range will receive no grant.

Individuals and couples with net incomes in the middle range will receive some of the grant, but less than the full amount. Very few seniors will be cut off altogether. The detail of the income test will come later in regulation, but I would be happy to discuss it during the discussions about the bill.

Given that the number of applicants has increased — and we believe it will continue to increase as the population ages — it was determined that the administration of the program required some modernization. This is best described under the act and will increase transparency to the applicants on the application and eligibility requirements, and also clearly spells out the roles and responsibility of the program administrator, the circumstances where a grant may not be paid and the ability to recover money where appropriate.

Most modern acts that support financial programming include a section on offences and penalties. The pioneer utility grant is no different and it identifies that a person who applies for a grant that they know they are not eligible to receive, or who includes false information in an application, can be subject to a fine.

Ideally, the package of regulations would come forward at the same time as the new act. The department has fast-tracked the final review of the *Pioneer Utility Grant Act* and regulations, along with Justice, and have ensured that the new act was ready for tabling this fall. The regulations will follow shortly, but I can tell you that the new act provides much of the needed clarity on the administration of the pioneer utility grant.

I can speak generally about the regulations that will follow. The regulation-making powers have expanded to support the implementation of the act. The current regulation is silent in many different areas that provide the seniors who apply for the pioneer utility grant with the clarity to know what is required to apply and be deemed eligible for the pioneer utility grant.

The regulation is also silent on the review procedure for applications undertaken by the administrators and the process necessary to determine eligibility. The regulation will also identify roles and responsibilities of both the applicant and the administrator, and clearly defines the timing that will be required to determine eligibility and authorize payments.

During our review, it was found that the cost of fuel and utilities in rural areas — to no one's surprise — was much higher than it is in Whitehorse. So implementing a rural rate in the regulation for those seniors who live outside the City of Whitehorse acknowledges that the cost of heating homes and utilities — or heating and utility costs — in rural Yukon is more expensive than in Whitehorse. Details on the amount of the increase will also be found in the new regulation, but I'll be happy to share it with members at that point in the act. The details of the income test and the formula will also be included in the regulation.

During our meetings with organizations that provide support and assistance to seniors in the Yukon, an example of the income test was provided — without the details, as this had yet to be approved by Cabinet. Understandably, Mr. Speaker, a new application form is under development for the 2015 year, and the form will definitely include the applicant and, where appropriate, spousal information on net income, primary residence and requirement to pay utilities in that residence.

Signatures from the applicant and, in the case of a couple, the applicant's spouse, will be required. Applications will continue to be mailed out to seniors who received the grant in the previous year and will be included in other communications to seniors throughout the year.

We know that these are significant changes to the pioneer utility grant. Our administrators already provide support to many seniors who require extra help to complete the application process for the pioneer utility grant. The changes to the act place additional requirements on these seniors and

my department will continue to work with them to provide the help they need. However, we are pleased to modernize the pioneer utility grant and to ensure its sustainability as we move forward.

Once our consultations were completed and the draft act had received tentative approval from Cabinet, I had the opportunity to gather together many of these groups and talk with them about the changes to the act. Once the seniors gathered there truly understood the act and what we intended to do, they universally supported it.

We think it's a good replacement. We look forward to debating it here in the House. As I said, even though we tried to get the regulations ready for the Legislature, they are not yet, but I'll be happy to share whatever information I can.

Ms. Stick: I thank the minister for his information on this new pioneer utility grant. Many of the changes are needed. The last act was thin on details and regulations. Our concern, however, is the fact that we have not seen the regulations yet, but I'm hoping the minister will be able to answer many of the questions that I have that would be covered in the regulations. Without those regulations, it feels like we are agreeing to something without knowing the details. I'm hoping that those details will come out in the questions, and that I'm clear enough with my questions.

This is different from the last bill that we passed, in terms of regulations, because this does impact many individuals and seniors throughout the Yukon. To me, that is important. I'm pleased that the minister met with various groups. I've talked to some of them and heard their opinions on it, and many of them are in support of this.

At the same time, I've also started to receive phone calls from individuals who do not belong to the Golden Age Society or the Yukon Council on Aging — and there are many who don't. They are hearing information second-hand, and they have many questions and concerns. Many of these people are ones who feel, because they don't know what is going on, that possibly they are going to not receive as much or not be eligible. So there is still a lot of communication that needs to be done around this pioneer utility grant with individuals who are not aware of what these changes are.

The minister mentioned that they'll be sending out the new applications to people who have applied before. Maybe they could use that same mailing list to send out information to individuals, saying that these are what the changes are, before July of next year when it's time to apply.

If the minister could send out enough information to individuals already receiving it, that might appease some of their worries and concerns. Like I said, already the phone calls and the emails are coming in. Some of it is misinformation, some of them think they're going to have to go in every month and show what their income in. I'm trying to say that that's not what is intended here, but I do believe that a better communication plan needs to happen for seniors around the territory, especially in the communities where they might not have contact with the Yukon Council on Aging or the Golden Age Society.

I am looking forward to discussing this in Committee of the Whole and I do have a number of questions. A lot of it will pertain to the regulations. I'm looking forward to hearing from the minister and from his officials on this information.

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

Hon. Mr. Graham: I did make a commitment to provide as much information as I possibly can on the regulations that will be coming forward.

I guess one of the difficulties we always face in these circumstances is that I can't send out application forms and information to seniors around the territory until the bill actually goes through the Legislature. That's one of the things.

What we did ask all of the groups — and, by the way, we did have groups from outside of Whitehorse. I think the seniors association in Haines Junction was on-line, ElderActive was there and I believe the Watson Lake seniors group was consulted as well. We did have a fairly good cross-section of seniors there.

We asked all of them to make sure that they sent out this information with respect to the new pioneer utility grant in their newsletters. Many of them have monthly or quarterly newsletters, and we provided as much information at those consultation meetings as we could and asked them to then pass on that information. All of them did. My group in Health and Social Services — the folks in the seniors area are only too happy to assist. I know that when we talked with all of the people in Continuing Care some time ago about the pensions that they were receiving, we were astounded at how many were eligible for pensions who had never applied for them. We'll make sure that we continue that work in terms of the pioneer utility grant. We think that, in the long run, this will be a real benefit to seniors, especially those seniors in lower income brackets all around the territory.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 79 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 79, *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*. Do members wish a brief recess for about 10 minutes?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes.

Recess

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

Bill No. 79: Pioneer Utility Grant Act

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 79, *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I think most of what I had to say about this act was covered in my second reading, but I think it's really important that people understand where we've come with the pioneer utility grant.

Introduced in 1978 at a rate of \$300 a year, in 2003 it was increased up to \$750 — at that time it was indexed as well. In 2005, it was raised by another 10 percent, in addition to the annual indexed increase, so it resulted in this year, 2014 — the pioneer utility grant is \$1,030 per year. As I said, we expect 2,100 seniors will apply for and receive the pioneer utility grant — approximately \$2.163 million.

We expect that, by the year 2021, we will have over 6,000 seniors in this territory, and we expect that the pioneer utility grant would more than double at that point. It could put huge pressure on the sustainability of the program. It was interesting too that, in 1978, we never anticipated the number of seniors who would remain in the territory, as is happening at this time. You will probably remember — no, you won't remember back in 1970; a lot of members won't. In fact, I think one over there wasn't even born. In 1978, we really didn't anticipate — people in 1978 either moved to Vancouver Island, Kelowna, Westbank or southern Alberta. The vast majority did not stay in the territory. That has been a huge change and that has been a real positive change that people see the benefit of remaining in this territory.

I will run through a few of the things that I know will come up in questions.

We anticipate, with the modelling that we have done in terms of income testing, that the benefit will — seniors below \$39,000 — and we're talking net income. It's line 236 on your income tax form. It's not gross income; it's net income. Individuals with income of around \$39,000 to \$40,000 will receive a full pioneer utility grant. Senior couples with income in the \$55,000 to \$56,000 range would also receive the full income. Anything between those numbers and individuals with incomes — this is a single individual with a net income around \$110,000 to \$115,000 and couples with a combined net income of around \$165,000 — would receive no grant. The people between the \$39,000 to \$40,000 low income and \$114,000 high income would receive a graduated pioneer utility grant, decreasing as you approach the \$114,000.

From my experience, speaking as someone who does income tax for a number of seniors and knowing what my income would be as a senior, those numbers are actually quite good. I have a number of siblings who are also in the seniors category and I checked with them and found that the numbers do apply. If you're making \$39,000 as a single income senior, you need the pioneer utility grant. We're really looking

forward. The high-income threshold is exactly that. Truly it's a high-income threshold. If you are making, as a couple, \$165,000 a year, you probably don't need a thousand-dollar pioneer utility grant.

It gives you a rough idea anyway of our numbers and, as I said, we intend to increase the grant for people living outside the Whitehorse area immediately for the 2015 year.

There was something else I was going to add, and I cannot for the life of me remember — oh, what we also have decided as a matter of policy, and this I told to my Cabinet as well, is that what we intend to do is ensure that there will not be a reduction in the overall package of funding for the pioneer utility grant. So if the applications for the pioneer utility grant in 2015 are lower than the budgeted amount, what we would intend to do is use that surplus amount to add to the pot and therefore be able to bring up the base amount of the pioneer utility grant for all seniors.

The intent is not to save money. I think it's really important, and I made sure that I emphasized that part with the seniors groups when we met. The intent is not for the government to save money on the backs of seniors; it's to redistribute the money so those who need it most will receive it.

I think that's all I have to say, Madam Chair. Thank you for your indulgence.

Ms. Stick: I just want to be sure that I'm really clear on this so that I can pass information back to constituents and citizens who are contacting our office. As a matter of fact, even in the 10-minute break we had there, somebody called who was listening and had some questions too, so I want to be sure that I'm clear when I'm giving information back to people.

I'm going to start right where the minister started in talking about income testing. I'm glad he clarified that it's net income, because that was not clear in the act itself. It talks about income but it did not say "gross" or "net" and so that was a good thing to hear. My understanding — and I'm just looking for clarification on this — if an individual — a single person — earns a net income which is on their income tax of \$39,000 or less, they will receive the full pioneer utility grant. Their next-door neighbour is another single person. They are at \$114,000 and \$115,000 would be the cut-off where they do not receive it. The person receiving \$114,000 will still receive something, but certainly not the full amount so there will be a sliding scale between the \$39,000 and the \$115,000.

Anything under \$39,000 — they are guaranteed the full amount. The same goes for couples and I wasn't sure if you said \$55,000 or \$56,000 — anything under that would receive the full pioneer utility grant for one person. I mean, they are a couple, but for the household they would receive one pioneer utility grant. Next door there is a couple and they make \$165,000 or more, so they receive nothing. If they make less than that, it will again be on the sliding scale for the household.

So if I can just get confirmation from the minister that that is correct.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, that is correct. Don't hold me to those exact numbers, because they haven't been established yet, but they are very, very close. The \$39,000 to \$40,000; the \$55,000 to \$56,000; the \$114,000 — all of those numbers are rough. What we have to remember is that it would be graduated. So if a person made \$112,000 net — remember it is always net because that is a real important distinction — but if they made \$112,000 net income as an individual, their grant would be almost nothing. Again, it would be on a graduated scale.

Ms. Stick: I thank the minister for that confirmation. He discussed that there would be a different rate of the pioneer utility grant for individuals living in the communities. I think everyone would appreciate that outside of Whitehorse those costs are more. But those costs also vary from community to community and, currently under our social assistance regulations, there are different areas within the Yukon that receive different rates recognizing that the heating costs for Old Crow may be different from Watson Lake, which may be different from Keno. I would like to hear from the minister with regard to how those differences will be for the communities and if he knows how much of a difference it would be between the pioneer utility grant. When I ask that, I'm going on the assumption that people living in Whitehorse who would be eligible for the grant would receive the same amount that they had the previous year as well as being indexed.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The rate for seniors outside of the Whitehorse area has not yet been set, but it will be higher. We set one rate for all rural areas in the Yukon because what we've also committed to do is to have no administrative increase for the administration of this new act. That means that the people who are currently working in Health and Social Services will be handling this new act. To do it by community and vary it all over the territory, we thought at this time simply was not something that we really wanted to do. We expect that the grant for rural communities will be approximately eight percent of whatever the grant is. We see eight percent to as much as nine or 10, but eight percent is the generally accepted range for utility costs outside of the City of Whitehorse. That's what we'll try to do but we will make it a one-cost thing for all rural communities.

Ms. Stick: I thank the minister for those answers. The minister made an interesting comment with regard to the pioneer utility grant and if, after all the applications are in and the cheques are sent out and there is money left over, then that money would be rolled over and put into next year's budget line as extra monies for the pioneer utility grant. My question is a simple one. If we spend more than what is budgeted for, what would the consequence of that be? Would we see pioneer utility grants go down, up or stay the same?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Because the grant is legislated, we pay it. The government sucks it up and puts it into the supplementaries. At this time of year, if we go over in pioneer utility grant, that's what would happen. What we anticipate is that we will roughly break even because there are a few seniors who won't get the total amount, but there are even

more who will see an increase, not only because of the cost of living but because of the increase in rural communities. Those will be funded by the folks, the very few folks who will be seeing their pioneer utility grant reduced.

Ms. Stick: Just a comment on something the minister said — that by 2021, we're expecting a large increase in seniors. But he also said we expect that we will more than double the amount spent on the pioneer utility grants. My question to that was: Would we double it with this new legislation or would we double it if we just stayed the course of what we're doing now?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, if we stayed the course where we are now, by 2021 the increase will double. I gave one number of approximately 6,000 seniors in the territory. The actual numbers given to us by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, when they look at high, medium and low ranges, was that the number of seniors in Yukon will be between 6,170 and 6,460 within the next 10 years. That's a fairly substantial boost. Again, we're not trying to save a whole lot of money by doing this. What we're trying to do is make sure that it's sustainable for the longer term and that the lower income seniors get what they need to survive here in the territory.

Ms. Stick: Some of the questions that I've heard from individuals — and I have lots more on the legislation as well, but this was just a very simple one. When a person applies and fills out the application, they give their residency. They say they've lived here a year. They put down their net income into the correct box from their income tax.

Will they require proof of payment — electric bill or their fuel bill or propane bill — when making the application? The reason I ask that is because sometimes there are many renters for whom those costs are included in their rent. It doesn't mean that their rent is cheaper or more expensive, but it's included. So those individuals do not pay directly for their electricity or fuel — their landlord does — but it's included, so they are still paying those costs but they do not have that "I paid it myself — my landlord did, obviously. I'm living somewhere where I've got power and heat."

Will those people who are still paying rent and still paying utilities and fuel indirectly be eligible for the pioneer utility grant?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The way the system is intended to work is that we will receive an application, and attached to that application will be an income tax return with the name, address and box 236 — everything else can be redacted — because we're really not interested in anything else except that number.

As a part of their statutory declaration, they will sign that they did pay utilities. We're going to take them at their word for it. It's an honour system. It has been an honour system for years. We know there have been a few abuses, but not that many. What we will do is continue to make spot checks over the year to ensure — and we find too many times that people will phone us and say that, if such-and-such a person is getting a pioneer utility grant, they shouldn't be because they don't live in the Yukon over the winter at all.

We will continue to do spot checks, but basically it is an honour system but we will require a copy of their return with the box 236 highlighted and proof that they actually are living in the territory — that's for sure.

Ms. Stick: Another question someone asked of me was about the one-year residency requirement. Their question was: Well, I'm considered a Yukon resident once I have my medical health care card, which has a three-month waiting period if I've moved here from somewhere else. I can get my licence right away. I could even do my taxes and it shows I've paid Yukon income tax, but I might not have lived here yet for 365 days. Their question simply was: If this is a payment for the coming season, the coming winter, why is it so necessary that I have lived here from July to July the previous year?

Hon. Mr. Graham: This is one of those issues that seniors were a bit concerned about. As a couple of the groups put it — you mean to tell me that somebody who just moves into the Yukon should be eligible for the money even though they might not stay the whole year. They might stay 183 days and that 183 days included some winter months and they're going to get that money, and I've lived here most of my life and I get the exact same amount?

We agreed that a person should indicate — or should show — that they intend to live in the Yukon by living here one year prior to receiving a pioneer utility grant. That was something that I took to my caucus and they agreed with me. The seniors' organizations — this was a fairly important part of the proposal that we made to the seniors' organizations. As for the health care card, that is something that is across Canada. Everybody in Canada has agreed to the three-month period. That is why we do three months on the health care card, or we might want to do a year on that too — but that is beside the point. As for paying income tax, of course they come up here to pay their income tax because it is the lowest in Canada.

The way I look at it is the one year was something that was of concern to the seniors. I agreed with them — our caucus agreed with them — so to us, it is a principle that we are willing to debate. If you disagree, that's okay too. That is a principle that we believe in.

Ms. Stick: It's just a question that was asked of me — why the year, why not three months? On those same lines of a year, one of the questions that I come up against — or I often wonder about — is the — oh, wait a minute, that might have been the *Marriage Act* — no, it is under this — is what is considered a spouse. In this instance, under the pioneer utility grant, we again are talking about a spouse as someone who you have shared a home with as your spouse for a year. We know that in other regulations, such as social assistance, it is much shorter. You are considered common law — or the person living with you is considered your spouse — I believe after three months.

Again, the question is: Why a year? Why not something that would mirror other legislation?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'm not sure I understand the question. You have to be in the Yukon for a year and the spouse part would be a spouse under the *Marriage Act*. If it's

common-law, it would have to be a year. We don't want to get too complicated on this because, as I said, we want to keep the administration as simple as we possibly can. It's one of the reasons that we just want one line — net income. We're not going to request receipts for utility bills. That kind of stuff we're not going to do. We're going to trust people to tell us the truth, but we will carry out spot checks too, to ensure that they're at least aware that we're watching.

Ms. Stick: This is a matter that comes under the part of the act where we talk about interpretation and eligible persons. In this case, it talks about who is eligible, and then it identifies government, meaning the Government of Canada, the Government of Yukon or a municipality. When speaking about this, what we are talking about in this act is that, if an individual is receiving a housing grant or social assistance or some kind of grant from their municipality or the Government of Canada or the Yukon, and it's toward fuel, electricity — I believe it covered payment or benefit provided, costs of water, sewer, garbage services — anyway, housing subsidies.

My question is: Where do First Nation governments fit into this, and where do First Nation seniors and elders fit into this? Because, certainly, many elders could receive a housing subsidy, but we're not hearing about that level of government in this document.

Hon. Mr. Graham: This was a hotly debated subject because many self-governing First Nations, if we had included the original wording in our draft, felt that their seniors were being unfairly targeted because, in some First Nations, the First Nation provides not only the home, but they provide the firewood — shall we say — and electricity as well.

We also realize that, in Whitehorse, there is a grant paid to seniors and also in Dawson City. We didn't want to exclude those folks because they've received it since 1978, so we specifically took out the wording that we had originally put in that said, if you receive a grant such as you do at the City of Whitehorse, we would deduct that from the total. We won't do that. We have no intentions of excluding anyone who was formerly eligible for the grant. That means that First Nation elders or seniors will be eligible for the grant in the same manner that it was previous to this new act. The only ones we're taking out are people where we're paying the full cost, or the Government of Canada is paying for the cost of their housing and utilities.

Ms. Stick: So my understanding then is that it will not change, because it's the way it is now with First Nation elders. That will continue with this new act and the same with our tax grant that we get with the city and, apparently, Dawson. Those will not be deducted and people on social assistance still don't get this grant. Just say yes again or clarify that for me.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The member opposite was correct on all accounts. I have to tell you that it's surprising how much difference it makes. For the very first year, I received the tax grant from the Government of Yukon for a senior — it was only an extra \$50, but it felt really good.

Ms. Stick: One of the clauses is with regard to couples — so one person is 65 and the other is 60. Do we include both their incomes when making the application? Even though the

one person is not eligible for the grant, do we still include both incomes and consider them a couple?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Yes, we would. It's the household income, so it's both spouses. Even though one may be ineligible for the grant, we consider the household income for this revised PUG.

Ms. Stick: For those individuals who are under 65 but their spouse, who was over 65, has died, those people will be grandfathered on until 65 — they need to keep applying, but they will be grandfathered and then, at 65, they carry on applying as before?

Hon. Mr. Graham: That's correct. There are 11 individuals in that circumstance. Those 11 individuals will continue to receive their pioneer utility grant, as they have, until they are 65 and eligible under their own. No one will be cut off.

It was one of the things we really tried to do — make sure that anyone who needed the grant continues to receive it. What we're trying to do is increase it a little bit for the people at the bottom and in rural communities, at the expense of the people at the higher income level. As you know, under the current regulation, I would be eligible for the pioneer utility grant, but once this one is in place and I remain in my current position, I would not be. I think that's only fair because I think that, at the salaries we're talking about here, you don't need that extra \$1,000 a year that is provided through this system.

Ms. Stick: I'm just clarifying for one of my colleagues here that, with the new act, if there was a couple — one 65 and one under 65, and the 65-year-old dies, the 55-year-old will no longer be eligible for the pioneer utility grant until they reach the age of 65. But until this act comes in, the rules apply as before.

Hon. Mr. Graham: That's correct.

Ms. Stick: I thank the minister for these questions. I had a lot of them because a lot of people asked me questions about this.

One of the questions was about residency again, and the 90 days that you have to be here in the winter. It was a simple question from someone on whether it has to be consecutive. Could it be that they are here for October, gone in November and back in December — you get the idea? They are away for 90 days but it's not consecutive, and they are not here for 90 consecutive days either.

Hon. Mr. Graham: As long as they're in the territory for 183 days, and during that time frame — October to December, January to March — they live in the territory for at least 90 days, they're eligible. That part hasn't changed as well. We realize that people aren't going to live here for 90 days over the winter exactly and then go for a holiday, so that's perfectly okay with us.

Ms. Stick: This pioneer utility grant gives the minister the ability to make exceptions. One is with regard to when they apply for the grant and the other one has to do with meeting the new requirements with respect — oh no, sorry — it has to do with the eligibility requirements and that the minister can waive certain requirements. In both these cases, the exception is medical circumstances. I just wondered if

there is a reason for only medical circumstances and could the minister give a couple of examples of that please.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, we know that as citizens age, stuff happens. We wanted to make sure that we had an out if somebody got hung up outside of the territory for medical reasons. As we sat here talking about it, I can think of a couple of other instances where there is a possibility that a minister may wish to make an exception. I was just thinking about when the Alaska Highway went out and if somebody was trying to get back into the territory — and if the highway was out for two weeks and they are a week and a half late. You know, something like that — maybe. What we really wanted to make sure of is that if people were out of the territory for medical reasons, that was definitely an exception. You know, other things could be looked at, I guess, under the legislation, but it would have to be truly exceptional.

Maybe another short one and then we report progress?

Ms. Stick: I can think of one example and I would just like a comment back from the minister on this. As we're aging, so are our parents. For many of us, our parents do not live here in the Yukon. A good example might be a 65-year-old having to go back to Ontario to take care of their 85-year-old parent for an extended period of time. They're trying to move them into care — whatever. That would be an example to me that could be exceptional. You never know how long these things are going to take or what's going to be involved. I would just wonder if there is going to be room for other things besides medical.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I guess the simple answer is that we would like to keep it as limited as we possibly can because there is really no way to check on many of these issues. It will be extremely limited when the regulations come out.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 79, entitled *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 163

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, October 29, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME CONSTITUENCY PORTFOLIO

Hon. Darrell Pasloski	Mountainview	Premier Minister responsible for Finance; Executive Council Office
Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Community Services; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation; Yukon Lottery Commission Government House Leader
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Yukon Energy Corporation; Yukon Development Corporation
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Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Justice; Tourism and Culture

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Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Vuntut Gwitchin
Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
Patti McLeod	Watson Lake

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

New Democratic Party

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

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, October 29, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Women's History Month

Hon. Ms. Taylor: October is Women's History Month in Canada. Every October the Women's Directorate honours notable achievements, accomplishments and important contributions of women and girls here in the territory.

Across Canada and the north we celebrate a number of special events, such as International Day of the Girl Child on October 11 and Persons Day on October 18, to publicly acknowledge the diversity of women's and girls' contributions to Yukon. In doing so, we continue to learn from those women and girls who inspire and challenge us to be more inclusive within all spheres of Yukon society.

This year we are honouring contributions made by women living with disabilities and those working in the field of disability. This year's poster, which will be officially unveiled tomorrow evening, features women such as former Yukon Health and Social Services minister Joyce Hayden, who has been legally blind since 1983. The poster also depicts other women, including Judi Johnny, who helped establish advocacy organizations such as the highly regarded national DisAbled Women's Network along with our Yukon's very own Women on Wings.

Seven-time Paralympic champion Stephanie Dixon is also featured. Stephanie represented Canada at three Paralympic Games in Sydney, Athens and Beijing — medalled at all three games and set world records. Since retiring from swimming, she moved to the Yukon, initially to coach swimming. She is presently an official ambassador for the Canadian Paralympic Committee and, on October 21 of this year, Stephanie was named Team Canada's assistant chef de mission for the Toronto 2015 Parapan American Games. Team Canada, Mr. Speaker, is expected to send a team of approximately 200 athletes and has set a goal of finishing in the top three nations in the total medal count. As part of Women's History Month, Stephanie has been doing a number of public and school-based presentations, sharing her approach to turning physical limitations into opportunities to excel.

This year's poster also features a number of members of the Ynklude Arts Society, who will be performing tomorrow evening in a presentation entitled, *If You are Ready to Listen* — a night of original film and song. Ynklude of course has about 60 people that do performance, music and literary

creations. Along with a variety of community members, professional artists and emerging artists, the troupe is made up of women with disabilities; mothers with children with disabilities; and siblings who have either a brother or a sister with a disability. Many of the founding members are still involved from 2005, coming up on their 10-year anniversary. According to Julie Robinson, who has also joined us here in the gallery today, this time 10 years ago, we were just starting to dream about the concept of being on the stage instead of in the audience. We have realized that dream.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize at this time that we do in fact have a number of members of Ynklude who have joined us here in the gallery today. I just wanted to personally thank them for their ongoing work and their contributions on behalf of Yukon women. I wanted to point out a number of them: Aimee Lien, Breda McIntyre, Caron Ross, Cheri Wilson, Julie Robinson, Kyle Nixon, Nicole Gauvin, Rachel Dawson, Rebecca Dacko-Brink, Sam Christopherson among many others who have also joined us here this afternoon. I want to thank them for taking the time out of their busy days to be here with us in celebration of Women's History Month.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Ynklude has been fostered by the Yukon Association for Community Living. The association has been a very important facet in the development of new approaches and ideas and has fostered in some way the development of many groups such as FASSY, Challenge and now, more recently, Ynklude.

The Association is an integral part of the disability community and it works with other groups, government services and the private sector to help improve the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. The approach of community living has indeed led to people living happier, healthier and longer lives, wherein this is in fact the first generation to outlive their parents and their caregivers.

Last year, the United Nations declared October 11 to be the International Day of the Girl Child and I want to acknowledge a number of young Yukoners and their work; in particular: Madison Dixon, Julia Frasher, Emma Blair, Kathleen Limpio, Selina Heylingers-Hare, Emily Ross and Sarah Ott who put on a concert performance that very day earlier this month at the Arts Centre. The purpose of the concert was really to promote awareness of the discrimination and the lack of basic human rights millions of girls face in more than 50 developing countries.

Proceeds from admission and refreshments went toward an international campaign, "Because I am a Girl", which was first established in 2007 by the British-based children's development organization, Plan. According to Plan, 66 million girls and counting do not have access to primary or secondary school education. Plan is working to help raise awareness of the very importance of girls' education, why it counts, why it matters and provides funding in support of their education.

Women around the world have fought hard for basic rights and freedoms and now we are seeing the spread of an ideology that would undo the many gains we have made and

force back the hands of time. While we celebrate the many accomplishments of girls and women here in the Yukon, let us keep in mind that women and girls are being robbed of their human rights, dignity and futures by assailants who would surely do the same to all of us if they could.

While we celebrate women's history, let us also imagine women's future — a future where women and girls are free to walk, free to dress as they like, free to educate themselves, free to develop their talents and abilities and free to use those talents and abilities to make the world a better place.

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to pay tribute to Women's History Month, and I would like to thank the minister for her moving conclusion. We acknowledge and celebrate the strong women in our community living with disabilities and thank them for their ongoing contributions; but today, I would like to focus on a different group of strong women.

Yukon has a history that reaches farther back in time than there are words to express, and it has a yet-to-be-written history that stretches long into the channels of our collective future. Weaving in and out of this continuum are the stories — stories of the land, wildlife and the people; stories of home and community, of life and loss. Some of these stories link us to other territories through winding rivers and shared voices and experiences, and others mark Yukon as distinct and unique. Interwoven throughout this continuum of history are stories of Yukon aboriginal women. Some are shared with us through oral history, others in the written word, and still more have yet to reach our ears or our eyes.

Here are but a few glances at these rich stories. Kate Carmack, a Tagish woman born near Bennett Lake, discovered gold in Rabbit Creek alongside her husband, brother and nephews. This discovery ushered in the era of the Klondike Gold Rush and forever changed the history of the north.

Eliza Shorty Van Bibber, a Tlingit woman from Aishihik, raised 14 children on Mica Creek, gardening, fishing and trapping on the Pelly River. Eliza served as matriarch of one of Yukon's largest families, welcoming 34 grandchildren and 51 great-grandchildren into the world during her lifetime.

Angela Sidney, a Tagish woman renowned for being a great storyteller, teacher and linguist — one of the last speakers of the Tagish language, Angela received an Order of Canada for her significant contributions to preserving Yukon First Nation cultural heritage. She is the first Yukon aboriginal woman to be honoured with this award, though certainly not the last.

Edith Josie, a Gwich'in woman and writer, is known for her long-time column about life in Old Crow, entitled *Here Are the News*. It was syndicated to newspapers across the world. Edith was appointed a justice of the peace in Old Crow and she too received the Order of Canada.

Alice McGuire, a member of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, was the first aboriginal woman elected to the Yukon Legislative Assembly. Kaushee Harris, a Tlingit woman originally from Atlin, B.C., is said to have always acted with

empathy and compassion toward others. Kaushee introduced the concept of a safe home for women in the territory, leading to the foundation of the Yukon women's transition home.

Judy Gingell, a Kwanlin Dun First Nation elder and aboriginal rights activist, travelled to Ottawa to deliver the report *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, which would become the basis for Yukon land claim negotiations. Judy has done it all: chair of the Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon's first aboriginal commissioner, founding director of Northern Native Broadcasting, president and CEO of the Kwanlin Dun Development Corporation and recipient of the Order of Canada.

Norma Kassi, a Vuntut Gwitchin woman, said she gained the depth of her traditional, scientific and ecological knowledge from the Old Crow Flats. She was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize for her conservation work protecting the Porcupine caribou herd in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from industrial development. Norma also co-founded the Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research and served as a Yukon MLA.

Mary Caesar, a Kaska Dena woman and lifelong resident of Upper Liard — Mary is an artist, writer and poet, bringing traditional and contemporary Kaska people and lifestyles to life through her words, her art and her garment-making. Her pieces educate society on the social and political issues impacting Yukon First Nations, including residential schools and violence. Mr. Speaker, the list goes on.

Today, positive stories continue to be woven. Yukon First Nation women are becoming lawyers, founding businesses and implementing self-governing agreements. They are raising children, sharing traditional stories, songs and dance, caring for elders and leading sewing circles. Yukon aboriginal women are teaching and providing health care. They are going out on the land, advocating for environmental and social justice, and creating healthy communities. Yukon First Nation women are leaders in our communities and in our territory.

When we reach out and pull on the thread of aboriginal women in our territory's history, you hear stories of strong, intelligent and loving aboriginal women, yet we have dropped stitches. We have founded and enabled a history where First Nation women face the dark legacies of colonization and the residential school system, where Yukon aboriginal women are subject to systemic racism, discrimination and abuse.

We have a written history of 35 missing and murdered Yukon aboriginal women. These are stories in which we have a hand and a responsibility. If we do not take action, we risk losing more aboriginal women to these dark annals of history. In the face of deep, historic wrongs, aboriginal women have resisted and they continue to resist. They are strong and resilient. They are supported by the passionate dedication of Yukon aboriginal women's groups, by allied First Nation and non-First Nation groups, organizations, families and communities.

The story of now is not yet fully written. We are, each of us, the author. We write with our daily actions and our words, our thoughts and our gestures, our policies and our practices. We can work together to create a different history for the

future generations, one where the lives and contributions of Yukon aboriginal women are fully honoured, fully valued and considered.

I rise today in honour of the Yukon aboriginal women who have come before me and those who will come after me. I rise today in hopes of a better history and a better tomorrow. Finally, I rise today in solidarity and support of a national inquiry on missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada.

Mr. Silver: I would like to also rise today and I am going to rise on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to Women's History Month. Women have played a huge role in shaping the Yukon's history — from First Nation women being matriarchal societies to Martha Black being a pioneer in more than one way during the Klondike Gold Rush in making history as the second female ever to be elected to the House of Commons and, more recently, Yukon's first female Premier — Pat Duncan — who was only the second female Premier in Canada's history to become the leader of a province or a territory in a general election.

There are countless other great leaders who have shaped the history of the territory that we know and love today — too many to list.

I would also like to take the opportunity to recognize the great contributions that women with disabilities have made, and continue to make, in our community. Yukon will never be for the faint of heart, Mr. Speaker, and Yukon women with disabilities take on an even greater challenge than most of us in this often harsh corner of the world. I would like to echo the words from our minister responsible for the Women's Directorate for women like: Joyce Hayden, whose disabilities never deterred her from her political role within this Chamber; Judy Johnny as well for her tireless work advocating for women with disabilities; and, of course, the incredible Stephanie Dixon, seven-time Paralympian, who, as was mentioned, was named the assistant chef de mission for the 2015 Parapan American Games.

These women are absolutely an inspiration to us all.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be celebrating Women's History Month with the ability to look back on all that women have accomplished in this territory. I commend the Women's Directorate for all the hard work that they do year after year to address the challenges that women face in a world and in a country where we still have a long way to go toward moving toward equality.

That being said, I urge the House and all Yukoners to further support and enable the work of the Women's Directorate and important organizations like the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, the Yukon Status of Women Council and many more. By continuing on this trajectory toward a more inclusive Yukon for all women, we will make it better for all of us and we will have a much more inclusive and democratic society with much more to celebrate next October.

In recognition of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in application for UNESCO World Heritage Site designation for Dawson City

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise today to pay tribute to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and their application for UNESCO World Heritage Site designation for Dawson City.

The Yukon government continues to support the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in application for this important status. The World Heritage Site program was adopted by UNESCO in 1972 and aims to protect the world's cultural and natural heritage sites. World Heritage status would provide international recognition and understanding of the shared heritage of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in culture and the story of the Klondike Gold Rush.

World Heritage status would also further enrich the social fabric of Yukon in highlighting the area's fascinating culture and its history. The world's fascination with this area is summed up best by the advisory committee, which calls the Tr'ondëk Klondike one of the most legendary places on Earth.

This area has been home to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in for thousands of years. Of course, at the end of the 19th century, it was the epicentre of the Klondike Gold Rush, an international event that changed the land and people of the north forever and echoed around the world. Today this area continues to resonate with its challenging environment, dramatic historical changes and the bringing together of cultures. From rich, archeological landscapes to thriving arts communities, Dawson City and the Klondike are like nowhere else in the world.

The Yukon government contributes to the research of the advisory committee that was set up to explore the impact of gaining status for this area. This committee, formed in August 2013, includes representation from the Yukon government's Department of Tourism and Culture.

In April I was pleased to receive an update from the committee that aims to have a nomination proposal submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 2017. Earning this designation would provide a significant benefit to Yukon's tourism industry and has potential to increase the number of visitors to the territory both from Canada and internationally. An economic impact study has already been completed and predicts benefits to the region and Yukon generally through increased visitation and associated visitor spending.

There has been much talk over a number of years about the status for Dawson City. The Klondike region was placed on Canada's tentative list of potential World Heritage sites in 2004. There are 17 World Heritage sites in Canada. Out of 978 in the world, Yukon currently has one UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Kluane/Tatshenshini/Alsek park system. It would indeed be an honour and very fitting to see the Klondike receive this status. The Department of Tourism and Culture will continue to assist the community of Dawson and Parks Canada as they move toward this goal.

In closing, I reiterate the government's support for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and their application for the World Heritage status for Dawson City.

Mr. Silver: I rise on behalf of the Liberal Party and the Official Opposition to also pay tribute to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and its ongoing leadership in working toward a UNESCO World Heritage designation for the Klondike.

A diverse community-based advisory committee was assembled for this project and is reflective of the significant economic opportunity that a UNESCO designation would present at a local and territorial level.

A UNESCO World Heritage Site is defined as, and I quote: "places on Earth that are of outstanding universal value to humanity and as such, have been inscribed on the World Heritage List to be protected for future generations to appreciate and enjoy." I think we can all agree that the Klondike fits into this description alongside Kluane.

A UNESCO designation is a very rare opportunity, and even being considered is a tremendous honour. The Klondike has been on Canada's tentative list since 2004. Mr. Speaker, 150 were also reviewed and whittled down to a mere 11. Four of these have subsequently gained UNESCO status. A designation would put the Klondike among such great icon locations as the pyramids in Egypt and the Grand Canyon. The interesting thing about this designation is it is a tribute to a thriving First Nation community existing and mutually benefitting with a thriving and proud placer miner community.

Having the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in take the lead on this project is a tremendous boost and shows just how significant this designation would be. The support that Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has received comes from both our major private-sector industry associations, the Klondike Placer Miners' Association and the Klondike Visitors Association, showing just how broad this support is.

This designation was identified as a key component as part of the regional planning and the implementation of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's Final Agreement and I offer my personal support to their efforts. This designation, Mr. Speaker, would spur economic development and would help bolster tourism in our region and add to our already-strong community pride. The benefits of this designation are clear and the community support for this has never been stronger.

Speaker: Are there any visitors to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Stick: I would just like to take the opportunity and ask the House to join me in also welcoming Haley Halushka and Vicki Wilson to the House this afternoon.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 76: *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act — Introduction and First Reading*

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 76 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced?

Bill No. 77: *Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act and Other Enactments — Introduction and First Reading*

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 77, entitled *Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act and Other Enactments*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 77, entitled *Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act and Other Enactments*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 77 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced? Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to keep its commitment to Trails Only Yukon Association and create the necessary regulations for the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* to allow them to protect sensitive areas that are vulnerable to the current levels of unrestricted off-road vehicle usage.

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

THAT this House calls on the Government of Yukon to oppose federal changes to the employment insurance program, which took effect on Sunday, October 12, 2014;

THAT this House communicates to the federal government that reducing employment insurance access for precariously employed and unemployed Yukoners will place undue demand on the social and community program resources of the Yukon government, NGOs and community organizations; and

THAT this House requests the federal government to protect workers' contributions to the EI program and respects the EI account as a dedicated resource for the EI program.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House calls on the Government of Canada to establish a national pharmacare program and national pharmaceutical formulary to ensure the availability, affordability and accessibility of essential medications, and recognize that:

- (1) one in 10 Canadians have failed to fill a prescription or have skipped a dose due to the cost of their medication;
- (2) barriers to essential medications lead to poor health outcomes and increased costs elsewhere;
- (3) Canada has the second-highest per capita spending on prescription drugs in the OECD;
- (4) a national strategy on bulk purchasing of prescription drugs will help increase buying power and the negotiation of lower pharmaceutical drug prices;
- (5) Canada is the only industrialized nation that has universal health care without public coverage of prescription drugs; and
- (6) failing to ensure access to essential medications undermines public health care in Canada.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support efforts to have the Klondike designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explain how it intends to meet its goal of zero waste with a target of 50-percent waste diversion by 2015 with Raven Recycling shut down because of lack of funding.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Whistle-blower legislation

Ms. Hanson: This government committed to bringing forward whistle-blower legislation to protect Yukon civil servants. Like most of their commitments to Yukoners, this one has fallen into the ever-growing moving target category.

The minister responsible for the Public Service Commission has skirted this issue. Last spring, he said he would table the whistle-blower legislation this fall, but he has changed his script and is now talking of presenting it at some point in their mandate, or in due course.

At the same time, the minister talks about his respect for public servants, but actions speak louder than words. Will the minister confirm that he is ready to move from words to action, and will he confirm that he is tabling whistle-blower legislation this sitting?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Obviously a variety of members of this House have participated on select committees in the past on this very subject and have done a lot of hard work to the end of advancing a piece of legislation that this House will

consider ultimately. The Yukon government appreciates that hard work and the recommendations of the Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection. Our government is committed to establishing a process for disclosing serious wrongdoings within the public service and to legally protecting those who make such disclosures.

Following consideration of the committee's recommendations and feedback we received earlier this year on a variety of legislative concepts, we have prepared practical, efficient and effective concepts for the Yukon. I think that the work that we have done through our public consultation has strengthened the work that we have done so far on this. I look forward to tabling legislation in due course at some point within our mandate, as we committed in the last election.

Ms. Hanson: It is really amazing that the minister can turn a simple yes or no into a minute of rambling about consultation without going anywhere near a yes or a no. In the government's own words, whistle-blower legislation has two critical functions: (1) upholding the integrity of the public service by ensuring a transparent and effective process for disclosure of wrongdoing; and (2) ensuring those who in good faith access the process are protected from acts of reprisal. Respect for public servants is a critically important element of a healthy and well-functioning public service. Until this government actually tables and passes effective whistle-blower legislation, there is no protection for Yukon public servants who, in good faith, raise issues of wrongdoing. The question can be satisfied with a simple yes or no answer.

Will the minister table the whistle-blower legislation this sitting?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Crafting legislation is not an easy task. It's something that requires a lot of hard work and a lot of consideration.

I know the member opposite is quick to dismiss consultations as rambling, but I think public consultations are important. It's important that we hear from Yukoners. It's important that we hear from stakeholders. In this particular case, it's important that we hear from people like the Ombudsman who have some very important input to give on this subject.

There have been a number of back-and-forth discussions between the Office of the Ombudsman and the Public Service Commission to date in the development of this legislation. I'm very pleased to report that much of the input that the Ombudsman has provided will be incorporated into a bill ultimately. I look forward to tabling that legislation at some point in our mandate. We have until tomorrow to table legislation for this sitting and we will see whether or not a bill will be tabled. If not, as we committed in the last election, we will do this in this term.

Ms. Hanson: It shouldn't be a matter of hide and seek. This government is quite prepared to make announcements in the media about other legislation. Governments are elected to do the hard work. This government promised to introduce whistle-blower legislation to protect public servants who reveal wrongdoing. There have

been reports by two select committees of the Legislative Assembly representing extensive consultation. If this issue is really important to both this minister and the Yukon Party government, why is it that after 12 years they still refuse to act?

It would appear this government is hesitant to have strong whistle-blower legislation in place. I'm not alone in wondering why. What is the government afraid of? While the government delays, can the minister explain what protection he will provide to public servants who in good conscience raise issues of wrongdoing in the absence of whistle-blower legislation?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Again, I would note that we did commit to doing this type of legislation. We have had a select committee look at this issue. All parties in this Legislature participated in that process — that select committee process — and provided an excellent report to the Legislature that we have incorporated into the work we have done today in drafting legislation. I look forward to bringing forward that work as soon as possible, and I look forward to having the consideration of the House on whistle-blower legislation in due course.

Question re: Raven Recycling Centre funding

Mr. Barr: Yesterday Raven Recycling and Zero Waste Yukon held an open house to discuss the way forward for recycling in the territory. While Raven continues to mobilize Yukoners in support of recycling, as they have for over 20 years, the government stands by wringing its hands. The largest recycling organization in the territory just shut down a key part of its activities due to a lack of public funding, and the government has pledged to divert 50 percent of Yukon's waste by next year.

Can the minister tell Yukoners what concrete steps he is taking to ensure that the government will meet its pledge to divert half of our waste without Raven Recycling in the picture?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As I noted to the member opposite, in fact the Yukon government is continuing to work on this issue with the City of Whitehorse. We are waiting as well for a consultant's report that the city is waiting for to help inform their next steps. Our focus is on working with the city and other partners to identify sustainable, long-term, cost-effective solutions for processing recyclables in the Yukon.

As I noted to the member yesterday, in fact Raven requested that we more than double the combined diversion credit from \$150 per tonne, which is what they asked for and received last year, to \$330 per tonne this year. We have asked them for a breakdown of those costs. They have committed to provide it. We are still waiting for that information as of the last time I checked with my deputy minister.

Mr. Barr: The minister keeps dodging questions about recycling. This isn't a question about Yukoners' personal responsibility to recycle; this isn't a question about the City of Whitehorse's role in waste diversion; this isn't a question about Raven or P&M's operations. This is a question about a commitment by this government to divert 50 percent of

Yukon's waste by 2015, a platform promise by this government. It's about the minister's responsibility to live up to his and his party's commitments.

Can the minister give us a straight answer: Will the government fulfill its commitment to divert 50 percent of Yukon's waste by 2015? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, again what I would remind the member — I know the NDP is opposed to the concept of personal responsibility. We believe that there is both personal and government responsibility when it comes to recyclables. It's unfortunate that the members do not recognize that.

If the NDP is interested in the answer instead of heckling, we are committed to taking additional steps to working with partners, including and especially the city, in identifying long-term options for processing recycling. We have also indicated — I have personally indicated to Raven — that we are prepared to consider, as one of the potential options, increasing the diversion credits, but we've asked them for information to demonstrate why the costs have more than doubled from what they requested and received last year — \$150 a tonne for diverted material — to their current request asked for in September of \$330 a tonne. They have committed to providing that information. We have yet to receive it.

Mr. Barr: The recycling bins at the landfill are overflowing. Yukoners already understand the benefits of waste diversion. It's the minister's thinking that needs to change.

The government's diversion credit top-ups only go so far. The current diversion credit program implemented last year was set to expire in December 2014. That's just over a month from now. So what's the plan? Before we even knew Raven would close its non-refundable drop-off services, we knew the diversion credits program would expire in December. Hopefully the minister had a plan to reach his and his party's diversion commitment plan past then.

Will the minister increase the diversion credits now in the interim, or will he keep passing the buck to the public, the city and the recyclers?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I think the public sees through what the member is saying and recognizes that any department, any NGO or any entity funded by government does have an expectation that they demonstrate their needs and they account for their costs. No matter how worthy the work being done by government departments, by any NGO, by the Hospital Corporation — every one of them has to demonstrate their need, and when they are coming in with a request for significantly increased funding, they do have to demonstrate and account for what that is based on.

Raven Recycling, last year, asked for and received a diversion credit of \$150 per tonne. That, contrary to what the member said, is not scheduled to be phased out in December. It was a commitment put in place to evaluate how well that was working, and with the option of increasing that diversion credit at the end of that period. Again, the request that was received from Raven in September for \$330 a tonne —

they've committed to providing me with a breakdown; they have yet to provide that information.

We are committed to working with the City of Whitehorse and other partners in this area to identify the best solutions for Yukoners and Yukon citizens, and our focus is on solutions for recycling processing that are cost-effective, sustainable and provide Yukoners the services they need.

Question re: Klondike region, application as UNESCO World Heritage Site

Mr. Silver: The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has been spearheading a project in Dawson that would see the Klondike region be designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Klondike was placed on Canada's tentative list for consideration as a World Heritage Site in 2004. More than 150 sites were reviewed by experts, and 11 sites were selected. Very few places in the world are shortlisted, so the region is already in a very advantageous position compared to hundreds of other places that are interested in this prestigious honour.

I will start with an extremely simple question: Does the Government of Yukon support the Klondike becoming a World Heritage Site?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for his question. The Yukon government Department of Tourism and Culture has worked with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, with Dawson, on this application and this important status, and we will continue on with that good work.

Mr. Silver: I'll come back to that minister.

This project is certainly a priority for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and has received support from the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon, the City of Dawson and the Klondike Visitors Association, among others. It has also been identified as the number one private business opportunity in Dawson through regional planning resulting from implementation of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in final agreement.

The regional tourism industry sees UNESCO status as a key opportunity for growth with potentially far-reaching benefits for the whole community. The project has reached a critical stage and is now awaiting word on funding application to this government so that work can proceed from the Minister of Economic Development.

We know that the Premier did receive a letter from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in some time ago, and we are wondering: Will the government be funding this application?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I thank the member opposite for his question. It is something that I've discussed both with him and the Mayor of Dawson recently. I am aware that there is a funding application before the Department of Economic Development from the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's development corporation. That funding application is in the process that is undertaken by the department to review such applications. These processes are important, and they are in place for a reason. That is to ensure that the generous funding opportunities that the department provides are distributed fairly and for the purposes for which they are intended.

The application currently is labelled for the strategic industries fund. That may be the way we want to move forward, or there may be another fund that may be more appropriate and better suited for funding this particular project. Either way, I am confident we will find a solution and am confident that, between my department and the Department of Tourism and Culture, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the City of Dawson, we'll be able to find a way to move forward on this project.

Mr. Silver: Thank you to the minister for his time on this topic. We did sit and speak about this very candidly. I do respect that project funding happens at a certain time, but this is of the essence right now.

We will move to the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

I mentioned that the tourism industry is strongly behind the World Heritage designation and to see the great potential of the Klondike region — if this application of UNESCO is successful, there would certainly be benefits to the rest of the Yukon from a tourism perspective as well. To the Minister of Tourism and Culture specifically: What is his Department of Tourism and Culture doing to ensure that this project is successful?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: In addressing the member opposite, the Department of Tourism and Culture continues to work with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. Yukon government contributes to the research of the advisory committee that was set up to explore the impact of gaining status for this area. This committee, formed in August of 2013, includes representation from the Yukon government's Department of Tourism and Culture. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Tourism and Culture will continue to assist the community of Dawson and Parks Canada as they move toward this goal.

Question re: Teacher staffing

Mr. Tredger: On Monday, the Minister of Education's answers were less than forthcoming when it came to her government's treatment of temporary teachers. This government's dismissive approach to the concerns raised by the Yukon Teachers Association regarding long-term temporary teachers and the overuse of the exceptional circumstances clause has forced them into multiple grievances.

Recently, a grievance on behalf of a temporary teacher who wasn't granted permanent status after several years made it all the way to the Supreme Court. Unsurprisingly, the Yukon government lost a case and had to reinstate and compensate the teacher for his years of work.

What were the legal costs during the adjudication and multiple appeals in this government's attempt to prevent long-term, temporary teachers from getting the certainty that they deserve?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As I also spoke to the member opposite's question the other day, I don't have those specific facts when it comes to specific legal costs associated with any given case before the Government of Yukon, for very good reason, but what I can say on the floor of the Legislature is that in fact we are discussing issues such as these with the

Yukon Teachers Association to resolve them in a mutually beneficial way.

We recognize the importance of temporary teachers, as I mentioned. They are hired for defined periods to meet temporary programming needs in all of our schools or to replace permanent teachers who are on long-term leave. That leave includes maternity, paternity, parent leave, parenthood leave, educational leave, differed salary leave, long-term sick leave, personal leave without pay and temporary assignments to other positions.

Again, our temporary employees are very valued citizens of our community. They play a very important role in all of our education in the territory. We'll continue to work with YTA on this and on many other issues of importance.

Mr. Tredger: The Yukon Teachers Association has requested and waits for involvement from this government on this issue. This government has shown their disdain for teachers by attempting to muzzle them. They continue to keep many temporary teachers in difficult limbo situations despite a legal obligation to the contrary.

The NDP has raised the temporary employee issue for the last three years. It is not a new one. More grievances continue to be filed on this matter. Last year, 30 grievances were filed on behalf of temporary teachers who had been employed for more than two years, with 13 more so far this year.

How much money has the minister budgeted for legal costs to continue her fight with the Yukon Teachers Association and our temporary teachers?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: This government has actually budgeted — in this fiscal year — over \$81 million in support of personnel — in support of teachers, remedial tutors, educational assistants, school secretaries, school librarians, aboriginal language instructors, school council support, school growth planning, superintendents — and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

This government values the very importance of education in this territory and continues to enhance resources throughout the Education department in support of public schools; in support of early learning; in support of advanced education; the Yukon College; certainly in support of labour market programs; and in support of employment and training opportunities for Yukoners to take advantage of those job employment opportunities of today.

It is unfortunate that the member opposite continues to vote against every single one of those line items when it comes to that. We will, in fact, continue to work with our partners in education, and that includes YTA.

Mr. Tredger: What is needed is to treat our employees with dignity and respect and sit down and talk with their association.

In the legal decision in favour of one of Yukon's temporary teachers, the judge said — and I quote: "Teachers and other ordinary employees may be employed on a term or temporary basis, but only for a limited time. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, they must become permanent employees after two consecutive years."

Exceptional circumstances mean exactly that — exceptional — not whatever justification the minister can provide to avoid making these temporary teachers permanent. It is time to treat our temporary teachers with the dignity and respect that they deserve. Will the minister commit to working with the Yukon teachers and the Yukon Teachers Association to avoid more costly arbitration?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Again, as I mentioned, we are very much committed to working with YTA to come to the table and resolve these issues and other issues in a mutually convenient and also beneficial way for all Yukoners.

As I mentioned, temporary teachers are hired for defined periods of time to meet those temporary programming needs required throughout the territory. Under the staffing protocol — we have adjusted that particular protocol as well so they have priority hiring status over everyone except permanent teachers within three years' service in the same school.

I would remind the member opposite that temporary employees are also members of the YTA, they're covered by all the benefits of the YTA collective agreement, they're paid at the same rate and they have the same benefits they would if their jobs were permanent — and also as part of the staffing protocol, as I mentioned.

We do remain committed to working with YTA to address this particular issue, but also other issues of importance to Yukon educators.

Question re: Transportation of dangerous goods

Ms. Moorcroft: The Town of Inuvik is now using LNG as its primary energy source. The opening of Inuvik's LNG facility means increased numbers of transport trucks hauling LNG up the Alaska Highway to the north Klondike Highway, then on to the Dempster Highway. The recent accident in Dawson City reminded us of the impact this can have on Yukoners.

The transportation of dangerous goods such as LNG is regulated by Canada's *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act*. Drivers must carry a pre-approved emergency response assistance plan that outlines what is to be done to respond to an accident that could endanger public safety.

How are these emergency response plans shared with Yukon emergency response teams who many need to attend an accident involving a vehicle transporting dangerous goods?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I think that part and parcel of that question — a lot of that is operational stuff.

Yukoners do rely on their roads and bridges to be safe so they can get where they are going to whatever they are doing, and we meet these challenges on a daily basis. When it comes to the transportation of dangerous goods, the member opposite already alluded to some of the information that they need and some of the training that they need. I know our department — in the Department of Highways and Public Works — and our scales guys enforce that and look at every vehicle that travels on those roads.

Last year we did see an increase in traffic. We saw that with the infrastructure of our roads taking a hit there in the spring, but the department did good work in getting the roads

back up and operational again, and we look forward to another busy season and great economic boost to the economy of the north.

Ms. Moorcroft: The transport of dangerous goods might be under federal jurisdiction, but when there is an incident, the dangerous goods are no longer being transported, and it is up to Yukon crews to manage and contain the event. The responders in Dawson did a stellar job at containing the situation a few weeks ago and safeguarding public safety when an LNG trailer tipped. We are concerned about the safety of the personnel who respond to these incidents. For instance, in an isolated area, the first people on-site might be Highways and Public Works personnel. EMS crews may also attend. It is essential that these first responders have the equipment and training that enable them to look after their own health and safety as well as contain the dangerous goods that may be threatening public safety.

What specialized training is given to these Yukon crews to help ensure their response is appropriate for the situation and does not put their own safety and well-being at risk?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: When it comes to dangerous goods or dangerous-goods spills — I was a part of the Department of Highways and Public Works for a few years and did come across a spill site. When it comes to the department and our employees, we have spill kits. I know the local EMS and the local ambulance stations are trained in what they're supposed to do. I know the local fire departments are trained and they have the gear and equipment that's needed to go to these incidents.

We applaud them — and I watched that whole file when the LNG truck had rolled over on its side. I do applaud the Emergency Services folks in Dawson City for their work and being there right away. But then again, this is something that our Department of Highways and Public Works — the weigh scales and dangerous goods people — are looking at this file to see if there is anything that was missed or anything we can learn from it.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, a driver transporting any dangerous goods must carry the emergency response plan as part of the paperwork for the load. This paperwork may be reviewed by the carrier compliance personnel with Highways and Public Works when the truck reports to a weigh scale in Yukon. However, in an accident, the driver may be unable to share the emergency response plan. First responders will know what the dangerous goods are by the safety marks on the vehicle but will not know what the preapproved response plan is. There is no requirement to deposit a copy of the plan at the weigh scales.

Will the minister commit to developing a process whereby emergency response plans are registered and shared with first responders?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I do thank the member opposite for the question. I will commit to the member opposite that I will look into this.

I want to speak a little bit about our dedicated department or dedicated volunteers and competent people who do a lot of training. There are training courses constantly going on — and

I'm not exactly sure which exact training course they do on which regular day, but they asked for this training and this government is committed to make sure that they have the opportunity to get what they ask for and to have that level of training. I have confidence in them and confidence in our staff, and I will look into this matter for the member opposite and get back to her.

Question re: YESAA process

Mr. Tredger: The Premier has stated on a number of occasions these controversial amendments to YESAA in Bill S-6 are okay because they would make Yukon consistent with other jurisdictions. But the Yukon public and Yukon First Nations have no interest in having Yukon be consistent with other environmental legislation that has already been gutted by the federal government. What the Premier is essentially saying is that the bad amendments to YESAA that he supports are okay because it will make us consistent with other bad legislation across Canada.

Why does the Premier want the Yukon's environmental protection legislation to be consistent with legislation across Canada that Yukoners know has already been gutted by the Harper Conservatives?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I guess I could say I'm speechless at that question. I guess it would come from a party that, the last time they were in power, saw the massive exodus of people and the significant decline in any economy here, and I guess that's obvious.

The concern here for this government is for families — it's for jobs for Yukoners, and ensuring that our processes and our assessments are consistent across the country, including Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. This allows us to be competitive; it creates opportunities for us with the hard work we do in partnership with industry to create investment opportunities that allow projects to go forward that enrich the lives of Yukoners. We will stand up for that all day long, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Tredger: So our environment is subject to the lowest common denominator.

If we wanted YESAA to be like other environmental legislation in Canada, then we wouldn't have negotiated chapter 12 in the final agreements in the first place. The Premier has consistently stated that the First Nations have no reason to fear YESAA amendments because, if the changes are inconsistent with the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, the UFA will supersede them.

This Premier is essentially telling Yukoners, "Don't worry. If the federal ministers' binding policy direction to YESAA doesn't respect the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, the courts will deal with it." What kind of leadership is this? Why is the Premier supporting legislation that will only trigger more lawsuits?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The tabled amendments to YESAA that are now in front of the House of Commons increase the environmental protection that exists here in the territory by ensuring that potential effects of likely future

projects — cumulative effects — can now be considered in part of the assessment.

Along with ensuring that we remain competitive, we are also ensuring that we continue to reassess and enhance the environmental protection because everybody in this Chamber and everybody who lives in this territory is concerned about ensuring that we leave for our future generations the great place that exists today. We also know that those people are also interested in ensuring that their kids have jobs and an opportunity for a future here in Yukon.

Mr. Tredger: The Premier has shown before that he doesn't understand what the meaning of the word "certainty" is. It means "without a doubt." Before these amendments, there were no doubts in the YESAA process. The only thing that Bill S-6 will create without a doubt is more lawsuits. However, industry is certainly going to think twice when they look at the Yukon's political climate and see a government that has alienated almost every single Yukon First Nation.

You would think that the Premier would have caught on considering that not a single major mine is currently operating at full capacity in the Yukon.

Why does the premier fail to realize that as court cases pile up, investors begin to look elsewhere?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, there was almost seven years of consultation that occurred before the tabling of the amendments that are now in front of the House of Commons. On the five-year review, out of 76 recommendations, 73 of those recommendations received unanimous support of all the parties.

Yukon First Nations are guaranteed their participation in the YESAA process. First Nations have three appointments out of seven positions on YESAB. Yukon government has only two, as does the Government of Canada.

If there is ever any conflict between YESAA and the final agreements, it is very clear through section 4 that the final agreements will prevail. This is a good amendment to YESAA legislation. This is a good opportunity for us to ensure that we have chances for our Yukon citizens and for their children to be able to have good, high-paying jobs and create a life for themselves here in the Yukon.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 724

Clerk: Motion No. 724, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Watson Lake:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round destination by:

- (1) promoting local tourism and increasing economic opportunities for northerners;
- (2) increasing Yukon's funding for overseas marketing initiatives by \$590,000;
- (3) developing new tourism products such as the Millhaven Bay project;
- (4) enhancing Yukon's cultural products;
- (5) supporting Yukon museums and cultural organizations;
- (6) promoting events; and
- (7) fostering new and emerging events.

Ms. McLeod: I was honoured to bring forward this motion to the Legislature, Motion No. 724. It is a great pleasure to speak to this motion today, because this government has been committed to growing and investing in the Yukon tourism industry.

I would like to recognize the hard work of the industry partners who provide expertise and insight into marketing decisions by the Yukon government and thank those partners. It is truly an industry that processes tourism marketing here in the territory.

I would also like to recognize the hard work done by the minister and his staff on behalf of Yukon's tourism industry. He always mentions how great the staff are and how they continue to advance our interests on the national stage of tourism marketing.

Over the past decade, we have seen continued investment and enhancement of our marketing efforts and we have been responsive to requests from the industry. The government enhanced the highly successful tourism cooperative marketing fund that allows Yukon companies to match marketing investments dollar-for-dollar and improve their marketing reach.

After developing and demonstrating campaign success, the government merged the Destination: Yukon marketing campaign into the main funding to allow annual marketing in our gateway markets of Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and Toronto. Visitor statistics have shown that these gateway markets have the best demonstrated growth. In 2013, we saw a 17-percent increase in tourists visiting from other areas of Canada.

These strategic investments are a small sample of what is achieved through the research-based and industry-led approach to marketing taken by the Department of Tourism and Culture.

In speaking to the motion itself, investing in tourism marketing to grow visitation to the territory is crucial to enhancing a diverse and strong economy. The tourism industry continues to be one of the largest employers in the territory and generated \$250 million in 2013.

A strong tourism industry requires marketing in our key markets so that the industry can continue to create many economic opportunities for Yukoners. The 2014 budget saw

the introduction of a \$590,000 overseas marketing budget to enhance overseas marketing from the department. This investment by the Yukon government was in response to the demonstrated success of the CanNor funds that ended last year. It will allow the industry to strategically reach into key markets internationally.

The government is also working with First Nations and the private sector to develop high-end tourism attractions like Millhaven Bay. This development has the potential to be a marquee attraction and builds on the vibrant tourism sector developing in Carcross. The Destination: Carcross project that was started back in 2005 has been successful and an inspiring demonstration of what can be accomplished by successful partnerships between First Nations and the Yukon government. It has led to great achievements in the region and the government continues to invest in this region.

That the Carcross Commons has been developed by the Carcross-Tagish First Nation is another tourism anchor that provides a great experience to visitors. It builds on the new visitor information centre, the carving shed and the return of the train to Carcross. These projects have all come about over the last decade, due to work by the tourism department and the community. Hopefully Millhaven Bay can be the next step in this great Yukon success story.

We have a vibrant arts and culture scene in Yukon, and its continued development is crucial to developing product on the ground for visitors. By enhancing our cultural product, we provide a great experience and share what it means to be a Yukoner with our many visitors.

Over the past decade, the Yukon government has expanded and enhanced arts funding in the territory. We now have some of the highest arts contribution levels per capita in the country. Our arts funds support artists who travel and tell our Yukon stories. They are provided support to create our Yukon cultural products, and they're able to visit schools and teach the next generation of Yukon artists.

We have enhanced the funding for museums and cultural centres that serve as hosting institutions for all our Yukon visitors. These are often the first places they visit to learn more about us. The development of First Nation cultural centres and the development of our museum community increase demands on government funding. This government has built-in programs that continue to meet the growing pressures of these important landmarks.

The Tourism and Culture minister has done great work to support the events in the territory, including new ones. We have key events that service cornerstones of the tourism industry, such as the Adäka Cultural Festival, the Yukon River Quest, the Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous and the Yukon Quest. They serve as marquee attractions during the winter and summer months.

Other events that promote visitation include the Klondike Road Relay, Dustball, the Sheep and Crane Festival in Faro, the Dawson City Music Festival and our many other music festivals across the territory.

Nurturing new festivals for the territory is an important focus of this government. A fine example of this work is the

New Canadian Events fund that was launched with this year's budget. It's great to hear that three groups, so far at least, have accessed this fund to help host multicultural events that celebrate our diversity in this modern Yukon.

I know that Watson Lake is looking forward to increasing our presence in the tourism market. The Town of Watson Lake is working with the Watson Lake Historical Society in the establishment of a museum and I'm quite sure that the Department of Tourism and Culture will be involved in some way.

I thank the Minister of Tourism and Culture for his insights and support in moving forward with our community.

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on behalf of the New Democrat Official Opposition in support of Motion No. 724 brought forward by the Member for Watson Lake.

Tourism is a sustainable economic driver for the Yukon. Promoting tourism will continue to benefit the industry and guarantee future strengthening of the Yukon. It is satisfying to see this government finally taking tourism seriously and supporting the hard work of the staff in the department.

I also want to acknowledge the fine work of people across the spectrum of the tourism industry. Last week, I attended the Tourism Industry Association's fall roundup at the Beringia Interpretive Centre.

This dedicated group of people continues to work exceptionally hard, advocating on behalf of Yukon's tourism professionals. In some way, every person in the Yukon has been touched by the work of the TIAY. The association deserves a big pat on the back for their diligence and perseverance.

Through the promotion of the Yukon tourism brand, more people will learn about the depth of the beauty that our Yukon has to offer. Whether our visitors are flying, driving, cycling or walking, they need places to stay, food to eat, events to entertain and wilderness to explore. More people want to experience the Yukon in all seasons. This means more year-round employment for Yukoners.

Promoting local tourism and economic development for northerners is an important part of this motion. I sincerely hope this will include enhancing economic opportunities for First Nation governments, municipalities and incorporated communities through their LACs. I shout out to the Caribou Commons in Carcross for their ongoing efforts and moving forward with a vision for that community.

I would also define success as enabling these entities to flourish through networking with each other and providing each other support as they strive to reach or exceed their tourism goals. Increasing Yukon's funding for overseas marketing is one small step toward success. At a time when other jurisdictions are investing significantly more to attract visitors, it would have been satisfying to see a larger amount allocated toward marketing.

There is fierce competition around the world for the tourism dollar. To be successful, we must support the tourism industry as much as we can, not as minimally as we can.

In regard to developing the new iconic tourism products, such as the high-end experience that would be available at Millhaven Bay, and noting that it will attract more visitors, this type of project has the potential to strengthen local economies, which will in turn help develop more viable communities. I must say, though, that the wording in the motion — that this government helped in developing that specific endeavour at Millhaven Bay — it is the view of this member of the House that the Yukon Party government did more to hinder the development of that particular project.

I would say that, if we are going to be doing more of these things in the future, the government be able to address what the community is speaking to — and the developers, actually — and I will have other colleagues expand on that a little further.

Even so, it is important to keep in mind that many already feel a deep connection to Yukon's lands. They are the long-ago people and they are descendants of the first newcomers who came to the territory in the 19th century, plus many more recent arrivals. We have a vibrant, diverse population who treasure the beauty of Yukon and actively all it has to offer.

When developing any project, we must take time to understand how the land is used and enjoyed by the people who live there. It is essential to foster the social licence to use the land, which will help ensure that these new tourism products are successful.

It is also encouraging to see the intent to enhance Yukon's cultural products. Visitor surveys confirm that there is a demand for authentic cultural experiences. Visitors want a unique made-in-Yukon experience, whether that is experiencing traditional ceremonies, gingerly tiptoeing across a glacier, feeling the movement of a herd of caribou, climbing with Dall sheep or staying awake to see the northern lights.

I strongly encourage the government to develop the partnerships that will strengthen the quality of these tourism products. To best understand how this can be done without diluting the experience, we need to hear from the people who are already offering quality services and products, such as Northern Cultural Expressions Society, the Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Dänojä'ä Cultural Centre.

Product development can also include workshops for skills development, mentorship and business training. Workshops can also identify gaps that inhibit successful business relationships such as cultural awareness and sensitivity. I firmly believe that the future of Yukon is in the cultural experience. In today's modern, digital, fast-paced and sometimes overwhelming world, there is far more demand for quiet time on an iconic landscape.

I am reminded of the time that *Lonely Planet* listed Yukon as the fourth from the top of 10 regions to visit around the world. People were encouraged to visit soon because change was coming fast to the territory with the extractive industry rush and the ravages of climate change. Today, the *Lonely Planet's* website advises that any visit to the Yukon also means much time outdoors. There is no doubt that the Yukon's vast and pristine wilderness is its number one tourist

attraction. People from around the world visit to indulge in the grandeur of the landscape. Any change to that landscape will forever change the visitor experience. We must be ever mindful that mining comes and goes while tourism will be here forever.

In a nutshell, people visit the Yukon to experience what isn't available in other places. With a large market from Europe for example — and it's great to go there to see the old buildings, to see what's on the streets and the canals in Holland, and all of that is very beautiful. The people who are there live there. That's what they see every day. When they come here, they don't get to see our pristine wilderness. People come from around the world because they don't have the ability to experience what we have. I just can't reiterate enough that we have to maintain our pristine wilderness. Its value as it stands is something that only increases and will continue in time and for future generations.

Finally, when considering which new and emerging events to foster, I encourage development of more competitive sporting events and sport training camps. The Yukon also has a strong contingent of winter sport enthusiasts who also compete successfully. Groups such as the Yukon Freestyle Ski Association are developing local training facilities and garnering national interest. I ask the government to commit to sitting and meeting with local folks who want to create new sporting events that will attract national and international participants.

I'll wrap up by saying that I look forward to bearing witness to the revitalization of the tourism sector and to doing so in the good company of the many people who strive to make the Yukon the place to visit.

Mr. Silver: It's a privilege for me to rise and speak to Motion No. 724. I think this motion is fairly straightforward in that I am in agreement with it in principle, as I imagine all members of this House are, but the real question that faces us today is: How can we do the most effectively and efficiently, and support the many small businesses and NGOs that make up the industry and get the most out of our marketing efforts? In promoting local tourism, we must also recognize that we do not have the budgets to compete on the same level as many other provincial jurisdictions, and that being creative with our limited resources is extremely important for us in the north.

Fostering success in regional tourism economies, not unlike any other sector of the economy, involves having the infrastructure in place, whether it's roadways or energy securities. There are plenty of opportunities for the north to succeed in the tourism industry. We just have to make sure that the environment is there.

It is great that \$590,000 has been added to the Tourism and Culture budget and it's important that money spent by the department should have the best possible return on investment. If this money continues to meet the high expectations of the tourism industry, then it will be money well-spent. The biggest concern that I often hear from constituents who work in the tourism industry is that not enough money makes it into direct marketing efforts. Tourism

marketing money has a strong return on investment and the money that is added to the GDP could be huge. Although the amount in real dollars is great, relative to what tourism gets now, it is still relative in terms of the overall budget.

I would like to once again congratulate the Tourism Industry Association for their lobbying on new tourism marketing funds that appear in this budget. It is unfortunate that the government had to be dragged kicking and screaming into this funding program. Now they are taking credit for it and that's good to see. We would like to see a commitment from this government to make this a more permanent part of the department's core budget — and judging by the smile on the minister's face, he's in agreement with that as well and it's not just a one-off.

What we're seeing here is two years up to an election — a two-year commitment. This is too important to be handled on an application-to-application basis with Ottawa, and I believe that it should be made more permanent.

Specifically in regard with the Millhaven Bay project — the Yukon government has been in support of its land acquisition, but it is important that we help foster smaller ventures as well. Let's ensure that the policies in place can support all scales of projects in tourism. The greater the product inventory that the Yukon has to offer, the more likely those visitors will extend their stay and recommend to their friends and relatives to return again. We've seen that with Montana Mountain. The good folks who started off the Montana Mountain trail program did a great job of coming up to Dawson and helping the local kids through local grant programs and monies found through Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to help them support a downhill trail up in Dawson City. Some of the students I've taught, I've never seen them so proud of a commitment they've done. It has really turned their lives around in a lot of ways.

It's great, because one of the original things that we heard from the Montana Mountain crew was, you can't just have the one hill. Tourists are going to want to come up and they're going to want to come to a bunch of different places, so it's great to see these projects extend past just one project.

There are a number of great businesses, groups and NGOs that can help a strong industry in the Yukon. Our cultural sector specifically should be noted. All the museums, the First Nation cultural centres and theatre groups that tell Yukon stories are extremely important. It's unfortunate that the federal government's cuts to the Parks Canada budgets have meant that Yukon artifacts are no longer being cared for at the same level they were prior to 2012.

Yukon has a number of very special and unique events that are so representative of our great spirit — classic festivals like the Dawson City Music Festival and Adäka Cultural Festival. We also have important winter festivals, such as the Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous and Yukon Quest, which help bolster tourism efforts outside of the primary summer season. We had a great beer festival in Whitehorse the other week, and I was proud to be able to sit there and give people beer. It was a great event.

I would like to acknowledge some of the great events that have sprung up recently, especially the two culinary festivals in the last two years, a big part of which was the innovation of the Tourism Industry Association. It was great to see Yukon's fantastic foods getting some national attention.

This summer we also saw the first-ever YukomiCon, an event that I would never have dreamt that Yukon would have had here when I first moved here, but it was great to see and it was very well-attended. These events are great because they encourage the community and would not be possible without the hard work put in by volunteers. We all know that the Yukon is built on volunteers — absolutely.

The tourism industry continues to be a gem in our economy. It is far more stable than the ebb and flow of mineral prices, and it is the largest private sector employer in the territory. I thank the members opposite for bringing forth this motion, and will absolutely be supporting the motion as it is worded.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Given that I only have 20 minutes on this I would like to spend the bulk of my time on the first two points of the motion.

We committed to marketing Destination: Yukon in our Yukon Party platform. The list is quite lengthy, so I will mention only a few of these items. We committed to work with industry, communities, and First Nations to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round destination; enhance marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets in the United States, Canada and Europe; promote affordable domestic and international air access; work with the Yukon Convention Bureau, industry and Yukon communities to further promote Yukon as a choice destination for hosting meetings, conventions and sports events; utilize the tourism cooperative marketing fund to build partnerships with industry that improves marketing efforts for both Yukon government and industry; create a product development program to assist tourism operators in developing and enhancing the quality of their product; continue efforts to make Kluane National Park more accessible to Yukoners and visitors; continue to work with Whitehorse and Carcross to develop their respective waterfronts; continue to implement the Yukon Museums Strategy in collaboration with museums, First Nation heritage and cultural centres and community interpretive centres; continue to work with the City of Whitehorse and the Miles Canyon Historic Railway Society to promote the trolley and Yukon's railway history; continue to provide necessary support to Yukon museums to enable them to run their operations and retain and train experienced staff. We committed and we are delivering.

Prior to the start of this mandate under the watch of Yukon Party, tourism continued to grow in spite of a worldwide economic crisis. Since I have become minister, we have continued to develop our tourism marketing efforts around the globe. With CanNor's assistance of \$2 million over the past four years, the department has been able to pursue an

enhanced overseas destination awareness marketing project. This initiative has been a great success, with overseas visitation to Yukon growing by 33 percent over the life of that project. Due to the success of that project, our government has elected to maintain an enhanced level of investment in overseas marketing on an ongoing basis, allocating an additional \$590,000 to the overseas marketing budget, starting in 2014-15.

Looking at the Asian market, Japan continues to be Yukon's fastest-growing international market and ranks fourth in overseas visitation. In fact, between 2009 and 2011, Yukon saw an 800-percent increase in Japanese visitation. In 2012, Yukon hosted more than 3,500 Japanese visitors, who primarily experienced aurora-viewing excursions. On January 28 of this year, the department and I led a delegation comprised of 15 tourism-related businesses to Vancouver to attend the first-ever Yukon/Japan tourism marketplace. I'll talk a bit more about the Asian market in a few minutes.

In mid-February, we profiled Yukon's Larger than Life brand at Canada Corroborree in Australia. Australia is Yukon's second-largest overseas market, with close to 7,000 visitors in 2013, representing 19.5 percent of overseas visitors and two percent of overall visitors.

During our tourism mission to Australia, I was able to sign cooperative marketing agreements with Canada and Alaska specialist holidays with Adventure World, Adventure Destinations International, Destination Canada and Holland America Line in Australia, who promote Yukon travel experiences and products in the Australian market.

We met with the Canadian Consul General; engaged in five media interviews; met with close to 1,000 travel agents and 30 tour operators and signed five cooperative market agreements valued at \$75,000 in total. The steady growth of the Australian market is the result of the successful partnerships between industry, government, the Canadian Tourism Commission and our tour operator partners in Australia. Australia remains a strong growth market for Yukon and we have enhanced our marketing efforts including the appointment of an in-market general sales agent in late 2013.

Yukon's Australian strategy focuses on high-yield travellers — consumers who spend more, stay longer and are less influenced by exchange fluctuations and economic conditions. Yukon's iconic tourism experience that resonates in the Australian market includes the northern lights, the midnight sun, the Klondike Gold Rush, iconic drives and rich heritage and culture. Holland America is a key strategic partner in Yukon's success in the Australian market as the majority of Australian visitors to Yukon visit in conjunction with an Alaskan cruise.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the primary target markets for the department's overseas marketing program are Germany and Switzerland. Secondary are the United Kingdom, Australia and Japan, while emerging markets are identified as France, the Netherlands, South Korea and China. Overseas visitors to Yukon generally stay longer and spend more than

U.S. visitors, which aligns with our strategy to attract high-yield customers to our territory.

Yukon has benefited from CanNor funding programs for tourism-related initiatives, such as the expansion of our overseas marketing efforts, upgrades to the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport and the Yukon visitor tracking program. I think we would be well-served to ask ourselves: How successful have we been?

We know that 2013 was a record-breaking year for border-crossing stats, with an eight-percent increase in the number of private vehicles and motorcoaches crossing the border into Yukon. The statistics show a seven-percent increase in the number of visitors from the United States, a 17-percent increase from Canadians and an eight-percent increase from overseas. Year-to-date in 2014 — so these numbers run from January to August — Yukon's tourism industry continues to benefit from a five-percent increase in total arrivals and a 27-percent increase in international arrivals at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport.

Dawson City has also benefitted from a 21-percent increase in the number of combined travellers entering through the Little Gold Creek border crossing and via international arrivals at the Dawson City Airport, thanks to Holland America's 2014 tour programs and partnership with Air North, Yukon's Airline.

We committed to enhance marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets in the United States, Canada and Europe.

I was recently in Germany and Holland. German-speaking Europe is a key market for Yukon. Germany continues to be Yukon's largest overseas market, representing approximately 25 percent of overseas visitors. You'll recall a year ago that Premier Pasloski, myself and 16 Yukon tourism industry representatives travelled to Germany and England in the first-ever Premier-led tourism trade mission with a delegation from a Canadian province or territory.

The Premier's European tourism trade mission resulted in an accord between Yukon government, Air North and Condor to bring more European travellers to Yukon. The accord supports an air travel agreement that will allow seamless travel from Europe to Air North's flight network providing increased travel options for European tourists and Yukoners. The Premier and our European partners signed several marketing agreements with German tour operators. The resulting marketing efforts targeted over three million people in German-speaking Europe.

We committed to working with industry, communities and First Nations to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round travel destination.

I want to talk about the next stage of our efforts. Early next year, the department and I will lead a tourism trade mission to Japan, followed by meetings in China. The objectives of the Asia mission are to increase Japanese visits to Yukon and to explore opportunities for both group and independent travel from China. This mission will demonstrate our commitment and support for Japanese and Chinese tour

operators and facilitate long-term investments in Yukon's tourism industry from these markets.

China is the fastest growing international market for Canada, growing 30 percent so far in 2014, and China is now Canada's third-largest overseas market behind the United Kingdom and France. We committed to marketing "Destination: Yukon" and we delivered.

I now want to turn my attention to the domestic marketing initiative that we've just launched. We committed to enhanced marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets in the U.S., Canada and Europe. We have delivered and we are grateful for Canada's participation in accomplishing this commitment. The Yukon Now initiative is the largest tourism marketing program in Yukon's history and will build on a momentum over the past few years and truly put Yukon on the map. This new program is a joint Yukon-Canada investment of \$3.6 million over two years. With Yukon Now, we're primarily engaging in the domestic market but there will be key opportunities to reach U.S. and overseas audiences as well. This new investment represents the largest single investment in tourism marketing by the Yukon government in our history. I would like to provide a few highlights of this innovative marketing program that will take "Destination: Yukon" to a whole new level.

We'll hit the ground running this fall by developing television commercials for the winter tourism season and filming next summer for summer-based commercials. These highly creative and innovative commercials will target the Canadian market and will promote Yukon as a destination like never before. Our objective is to create commercials that will not only increase awareness in our domestic market, but also make Yukoners proud of this incredible place we call home.

We'll also be working with local producers to create web-based series for the www.travelyukon.com website. We're very excited to engage with new partners who will deliver tourism-related storytelling in a new format and engage potential visitors around the world.

Another exciting component of Yukon Now is the development of an innovative digital platform that will feature user-generated content from Yukoners and from visitors.

This unique initiative will harness the power of social media and tap into what Yukoners hold dear and what they want to share with the rest of the world about why Yukon is the best place on earth.

Yukon Now will also see enhanced investments in media relations and all markets, increased cooperative marketing initiatives in Europe, Japan and Australia, and strategic investments in China. In 2014-15 alone, Yukon Now will increase our existing \$660,000 investment in domestic marketing to \$2.215 million. I would like to especially thank our Yukon MP, Ryan Leef, for his hard work on this file. I would also like to extend my thanks to the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon and the Yukon Chamber of Commerce for continuing to work with the department on this increased investment in tourism marketing. This investment

responds to calls from industry for additional marketing expenditures. As well, the findings of Tourism Yukon's marketing program assessment supported increased investments in the domestic market.

The largest share of the investment will be made in the domestic market, which has experienced significant growth in the past four years and continues to show potential for incremental growth. The budget will breakdown as follows: 86 percent of the program will target the Canadian market, 11 percent will focus on the overseas market, and three percent will focus on the U.S. market. This new marketing initiative will involve an integrated approach to utilizing many marketing tools, including Yukon television commercials to be broadcast strategically in the domestic market. We look forward to working with our partners in government and in the tourism industry to maximize opportunities for a prosperous future for Yukoners.

Yukon Now will provide new opportunities for our tourism operators. New television and on-line footage produced as part of the Yukon Now program will be used to create a new show for the Whitehorse visitor information centre.

As I mentioned earlier, Tourism Yukon's marketing program assessment and market intelligence confirmed that marketing investment to raise awareness of Yukon as a travel destination in the domestic market presented a strategic opportunity. We continue to invest in Yukon travel-based companies through the tourism cooperative marketing fund, with \$700,000 in matching funds annually.

As of mid-September, a total of \$324,000 had been invested: \$165,000 in the European market, \$63,500 in Australia, \$60,000 in the U.S. market and \$35,800 in the Japanese market. We committed to utilize the tourism cooperative marketing fund to build partnerships with industry that improves marketing efforts for both industry and government, and we have delivered.

Tourism Yukon develops cooperative marketing initiatives in four areas: travel trade marketing, partnership marketing, support for Yukon marketing organizations and tourism cooperative marketing projects. Cooperative marketing investments in 2013-14 totalled more than \$1.8 million, and Tourism Yukon expects to attract a similar level of investment in 2014-15.

\$534,000 is budgeted in 2014-15 for travel trade marketing with tour operators and tour wholesalers in Canada, the U.S. and overseas.

Travel trade initiatives promote Yukon products and experiences through advertising campaigns, sales incentives, promotions and public relations events. The 2014-15 partnership marketing budget of \$611,000 includes agreements with the Wilderness Tourism Association of Yukon of \$264,000; the Yukon Convention Bureau of \$200,000, and, of course, the CTC.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hard-working staff from the Department of Tourism and Culture. I would like to extend a special thanks to those working at marketing Yukon around the globe. Over the last three years, I have had

the opportunity to travel across Canada, speaking to other tourism ministers and department officials in other provinces and territories. I have learned a lot, but two lessons stand out for me: (1) we have a unique and positive relationship with our stakeholders in the territory and we are very fortunate; and (2) our marketing team is the envy of many, many jurisdictions across Canada. They are relentless and work extremely hard and smart at building the Yukon brand to people around the globe. We committed and we are delivering.

I would like to thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this motion forward. I will definitely be supporting it.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: The Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on a point of order.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to invite a good friend of mine to the gallery — Sonny Gray. He is a landlord and property manager. Thanks for joining us, Sonny.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward this motion. I think it should be no secret to anybody in this House or elsewhere that the Official Opposition — and, in particular, I as the leader — feel very, very strongly about the importance of the tourism industry today and the potential for tourism for this territory in terms of the dynamic growth opportunities that are associated with tourism.

I thank my colleague from Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. I was sitting here thinking, my goodness, he would qualify as perhaps one of Yukon's cultural products, given his role as an ambassador, musical and otherwise, for this territory.

There are many aspects of tourism and the potential for tourism that I think we could speak to. In addition to the cultural aspects of tourism, I am particularly interested in the economic opportunities associated with tourism. I do want to spend a little bit of time on that because I think that opportunity requires our due diligence and our investment. You don't get anything unless you put something into it.

There are a number of ways of measuring the economic benefits and the economic impact of tourism in Canada. I have raised numerous times over the last three years in the Legislative Assembly, at industry meetings and other opportunities the importance of us getting the economic modelling of the tourism industry in the territory correct.

For example, the Member for Klondike referenced the severe cuts that were made to Parks Canada by the federal government. He was polite enough not to mention the fact that this government refused to stand up to the federal government and say, "That's wrong and it does have a direct impact on us."

You know, Mr. Speaker, in 2011, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada did a report on the economic impact of Parks Canada. They noted that Parks Canada is Canada's

largest provider of natural and historic tourism products. The destinations that it manages form the cornerstones of Canadian tourism. In this territory, we have those cornerstone destinations. We heard earlier about the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Tatshenshini-Atkasine wilderness site — the border comes right in from northern B.C. into Yukon — created in 1992.

The report revealed that the annual expenditures made by Parks Canada and the millions of visitors to Canada's national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas make a substantial and widespread contribution to the Canadian economy through job creation and revenue generated for local businesses. These expenditures contributed \$3.3 billion to the Canadian economy in 2008-09.

I raise that because the difficulty we face in this territory is that we, as I heard earlier today, variously say that the tourism sector contributes \$250 million to the economy. I think this is the great how-do-we-know question. When I raised the question at the Opportunities North conference a couple of weeks ago to the economists there, they admitted that the only thing the Yukon government is doing so far is measuring data about numbers of people coming in and numbers of people going out.

We have still not invested in doing the work to determine the economic multiplier effect of the tourism dollar — how many times it touches various businesses and various individuals in this territory. When we know that information, then we're better able to make the investments and to see the real impact and the real potential for this industry.

There were comments made that over the past decade this government has made increased funding for marketing. The facts show the opposite. I decided to go this morning and I was rifling through our filing cabinet. People must have thought I was crazy because I was standing there, going through the budgets. I'll just compare mains to mains because I think it's the simplest and most clear way of doing it.

In 2004-05, out of a budget of \$13.5 million, this government spent \$7.294 million on marketing. Thereafter it went down. Marketing became \$4.7 million, \$5.7 million, \$5 million. Right up until this year, marketing became \$5.8 million. Mr. Speaker, there hasn't been an increase in marketing dollars. There hasn't been an increase on the emphasis on marketing this territory.

It speaks to a lack of commitment to this sector. We heard that loud and clear when TIA said on January 23 — when they called on the Yukon government to make a strategic investment in the territory's tourism industry by committing \$2.5 million per year for a domestic television marketing program. They said that would be in addition to the existing tourism marketing program.

I thought at that time, well, maybe — because you know when you're trying to make a point, you sometimes exaggerate. They're the ones who piqued my interest when they said the tourism marketing budget for the Yukon has not received a substantial increase to its core funding in at least 10 years despite the fact that our — if we look at the difference between what the federal transfer was in 2004-05 and what the

federal transfer is now in 2014-15, there is a substantial change, Mr. Speaker. Why have we not also made that sustained investment in a sector of the economy that we say is so important, that we want to see grow? If we believe in it, then we put our money where our mouth is.

The Tourism Industry Association pointed out in January that the Yukon's marketing budget has never been big enough to allow the territory to gain much of a presence on television. If the government would have the vision to see this through, it would open doors never thought possible. It would create direct and indirect benefits for every tourism operator in the territory and that has a direct impact on every business in this territory.

I just think that there is an importance that, when we're talking about something, we actually speak to the facts and the facts are that over the last 10 years, if it had not been for the pressure by TIA on this government and the willingness of CanNor to invest, we would still be with less money 10 years later going into marketing than was spent with this government in 2004-05. That says something about priorities.

There's another aspect of this resolution that I think is interesting and bears a couple of comments. The resolution speaks and uses the language in subsection 3, developing new tourism projects such as the Millhaven Bay project. I'm glad to see, and I'm happy to see, the Yukon government embracing the potential of the Millhaven Bay project near Carcross. The Member for Watson Lake mentioned that the Carcross-Tagish First Nation has been working on a project in this area since at least 2005.

I think it's absolutely imperative to point out that it was not until the spring of 2013 at a Tourism Industry Association meeting in Haines, Alaska, that this government woke up to the fact that not only was it not helping, and clearly not supporting developing this potential tourism iconic destination spot, but they were impeding the progress.

The government stalled for many years in terms of its relationship with First Nations. It had the opportunity to use section 9.6.0 of the final agreement with Carcross-Tagish First Nation to do what is called a Crown and settlement land exchange. They chose not to.

At that meeting in Haines, Alaska, the Government of Yukon was challenged to basically step out of the way. They were told that, "You are not being asked for money. You are being asked to help us make this happen. We have a private sector investor who is willing to do this. Just step out of the way and do what you can do as a government, which is to facilitate that land swap." I thought, like many people thought, that's what it says — 9.6.0 is Crown and settlement land exchange — that's exactly what it is. But you know what? It's not what this government chose to do. It chose to issue a 30-year lease and in exchange for giving that lease, it said you must then make sure that there is land available for other development. But it's not an even playing field here, because should there be a change in the circumstances of this resort, that land would not be what would revert to the First Nation or even to the resort owners. It's going to revert to the Yukon government. Guess what if it doesn't go ahead? The Yukon

government has its cottage lots. In some places that might be called "sharp dealing".

So I think that it in terms of being truthful and respectful about what is going on here, it would be useful for us to use the language that this really would be — if we see the Yukon — it's not developing the Millhaven resort. It is not. The more correct phrase would be to "support new tourism projects such as Millhaven Bay". That would reflect what the First Nation at Carcross-Tagish and what the communities around there in the Southern Lakes area would like to see — support, but not developing it.

I have attended the public meetings and the other meetings about this development. Nobody has ever asked the Yukon government to develop this project.

In order to facilitate the conversation this afternoon and to move it to just reflect the two areas — I think one aspect must be an oversight and one is simply a change of one word. I think there is an oversight in this motion because the minister made it clear that the government has decided to address domestic marketing, which has not been a priority.

Amendment proposed

Ms. Hanson: In order to respect what the tourism industry had also requested, I would move that Motion No. 724 be amended by:

(1) deleting the word "developing" and replacing it with the word "supporting" in item (3); and

(2) adding an item (8) to read, "working with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon to provide sustained funding for domestic marketing initiatives."

It doesn't commit the Yukon to anything other than working with them to provide sustained funding for domestic marketing initiatives. I have copies, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Order please. The amendment is in order.

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

THAT Motion No. 724 be amended by:

(1) deleting the word "developing" and replacing it with the word "supporting" in item (3); and

(2) adding an item (8) to read, "working with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon to provide sustained funding for domestic marketing initiatives."

Leader of the Official Opposition, you have about six minutes.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I won't need that. I really do urge members to support this. I put these words forward because I think they reflect essentially friendly amendments to achieve the intent, I believe, of the Member for Watson Lake. I don't think that the Member for Watson Lake intended to suggest that the Yukon government is developing the resort at Millhaven Bay. I mean, that's not what the reality is. That's not an initiative of the Yukon government.

So I think that for the First Nation, for the private sector developer that's going to be putting in excess of \$40 million into this region, to hear that the Yukon is supporting that development, as opposed to developing it — I think they'd be shocked to think that there was an assertion by the Yukon government. I would hope the Yukon government's not planning to develop a \$40-million resort on its own.

So I think "supporting" is more reflective of what the intent was. I think the addition of the item, working with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon to provide sustained funding for domestic marketing initiatives, is consistent with what I hear being spoken by the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

I would imagine — again I think it may have been an oversight — because there is reference to overseas marketing, but not about the issue of domestic marketing, which we know that the Tourism Industry Association and the minister has reflected in his remarks as well. We know that TIA thinks and believes and knows from its own data and its work in the industry and across the country — and has cited the examples of successful marketing programs from other provinces and territories. I simply add these as a way of making sure that we have a motion here that does reflect what is on the ground in terms of supporting the development at Millhaven Bay and — what one would believe, I would hope — is the intention of this government, which is to work with the Tourism Industry Association toward providing sustained funding for domestic marketing. The minister in his own words has said how important this is. I would hope that taking that the next step means we would together to provide sustained funding from whatever source. I am not saying what the source is. Perhaps the minister will be able to tap into some money from some other sources but the issue is working with the association.

I commend this friendly amendment to the members and look forward to their support.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for bringing this amendment forward. I think by deleting the word "developing" and replacing it with "supporting" is fine. I don't see that we take any issue with that.

We are excited for that Millhaven project to move forward and we have been providing them an incredible amount of support as that moves forward. I would like to also thank the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for his work on this file. He has put a lot of time and effort into seeing this project move forward.

On the second item where it says, "Adding an item (8) to read "working with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon to provide sustained funding for domestic marketing" — that is something that this Yukon Party has proven to be successful over the three mandates. We will continue to work with the Tourism Industry Association; they provide great insight and great knowledge into the tourism sector of our territory and they continue to work with us as we do with them to ensure the sustainability of our tourism sector as we continue to see increases. That's all I have to say.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: D'accord.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

Amendment to Motion No. 724 agreed to

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

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would like to thank the Minister of Tourism and Culture for his remarks earlier today. I would like to thank my colleague, the MLA for Watson Lake, for bringing forth this really important and timely motion.

There has been some very interesting commentary made here today, and I will attempt to address some of it. I suppose I would like to start by saying that tourism in the territory has been and remains a key economic generator for the territory. Three key planks always come to mind — when I assumed the ministry of Tourism and Culture. I want to back up because, back when we were first elected — the Yukon Party government in 2002 — there wasn't actually a stand-alone Department of Tourism and Culture. In fact it was Business, Tourism and Culture. It was a very important platform commitment that we had run on in that particular election. The first order of business that we did was to reinstate the Department of Tourism and Culture as well as develop and establish a stand-alone Department of Economic Development — speaking to the very importance of tourism and culture in the territory and what it means to the Yukon Party government. I want to make that very clear. This government has, from the very first day of our mandate to where we stand here today and going forward — tourism will remain and continues to remain a very important plank when it comes to

our economic growth and also the quality of life that we have to come to know as Yukoners.

Of course, it has helped to diversify our economy in those times when perhaps mining has not been as robust as it has or as it could be in years past, but Tourism and Culture has very much remained resilient. That's a word I want to draw upon because from the days of 9/11, that's where the tourism industry globally — not just here in the territory and this country — really took a turn. It led all of us — as a collective, as a community, as a territory and with industry and as governments, all orders and levels of government — to come together and be very strategic in terms of where we invest dollars, in terms of how we invest those dollars, and be able to tweak accordingly. I think that because of that strategic approach to tourism marketing because of those global events that have occurred since 9/11 — and 9/11 was just the start. It could be 9/11, it could be forest fires, it could have been flooding, it could have been the SARS outbreak that happened in Toronto some years ago — all of those culminate in challenges for our tourism industry to excel as a key economic generator.

Again, every time those events would happen in the territory, we as Yukoners would come together with industry. We worked hard to come together in a formal arrangement with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon through the senior marketing committee, and being able to come together on a regular basis to ensure that our dollars are market-driven, that it's resource-based and industry-led each and every time.

Because of those three planks, I believe that we have been able to weather many storms over the years. Yes, we did have a significant increase — a record-level increase — last year. I'm also very proud to say that during those past 12 years since we assumed government in 2002, Yukon had really shone as a leader in tourism marketing in terms of visitation — not as much as we had wanted to, but we certainly held our own compared with many other jurisdictions in this country.

That is to be attributed to the marketing expertise of not only the Department of Tourism and Culture, but by being able to come collectively and work in an integrated fashion and with a very strong relationship, generating, garnering and growing that relationship with industry under the banner of TIAY.

So when we speak to the amendments that were just supported, it is really a continuation of what we have done all along. We have been working with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon as a banner organization. Under that organization, there is a multitude of different organizations in support of specific events, in support of specific streams of our tourism sector.

Kudos to all of our industry stakeholders for being able to show strength and continue to be strategic in our investments, and to be resilient, to be flexible and to readjust and to go back to the drawing board and say, "You know what? This program didn't exactly meet all of the objectives we had set out in our annual plan but this is an opportunity for us to go back and to tweak."

This motion speaks to not just tourism marketing, but all of the very attributes that make the tourism sector so very strong in the territory. Over the course of the last number of years, under three consecutive Yukon Party governments, we have invested heavily in infrastructure, waterfront development at Carcross and the Whitehorse waterfront. One only has to take a stroll through both of those particular areas and see first-hand the direct benefits accrued to our communities and to our territory as a whole.

There has been some discussion about investment in Yukon museums, our interpretive centres and First Nation cultural centres. I just want to remind the Assembly that when we assumed office, there wasn't actually a program in support of First Nation cultural centres. There is now.

In fact, not only have we worked collectively government to government with First Nation governments and self-governing First Nations, we have developed a program in support of cultural centres' ongoing operations and maintenance each and every year. But we also continue to build on the number of cultural centres — we have been able to partner with the Kwanlin Dun First Nation cultural centre sitting on the waterfront. It was an amazing collaboration; it was the first of its kind in terms of the Yukon government being able to collaborate and partner directly on First Nation settlement land. To be able to be an anchor tenant and to have a long-term lease with Kwanlin Dun First Nation was groundbreaking.

One only has to refer to comments of former Chief Mike Smith. He and I had made a joint presentation about a year ago to the ministers responsible for local governance. We talked about what can be achieved when we work together with common priorities to be able to pool our resources. Now today, we're able to see the fruits of that labour with a beautiful cultural centre that speaks to the stories and the history and all that makes the people of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation very proud people, and for the benefit of the whole territory, with the Whitehorse Public Library now being a long-term anchor tenant.

Likewise the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — the cultural centre there — again combining our resources and having a new visitor information centre housed within that particular facility. Again, it's another example of very creative ways of being able to help grow our economy in collaboration with our partners, but being able to grow the tourism sector.

Indeed, if anyone has had that opportunity — or you have not had that opportunity — to see first-hand that cultural centre and that visitor information centre and the partnership with Parks Canada, I might add as well — it is a glowing example of what our government has been able to achieve. Likewise, continued investments in our historic sites that are co-owned and co-managed with First Nation governments — Rampart House, Fortymile, Tro'chëk — there are a number of various historic sites that we are very pleased and honoured — Fort Selkirk. I was very pleased to be part of that ceremony, designating that as an official Yukon historic site — but something that has been recognized for thousands of years by Yukon First Nations — being able to continue to invest in

those partnerships. Likewise, we speak about airports and the very importance of air access and the connectivity to our growing markets, whether it be the domestic or the international front. The investment to the Whitehorse International Airport for example was just about a \$20 million investment.

When I hear comments coming from the other side about how there have been reductions in tourism-supported products, services and marketing, you know I have to go back and say, take a look at the budgets. You know, we have continued to invest heavily and again, we just have to take a look at the record level visitation rate of last year alone and how those investments of years past have helped generate and helped calculate to double-digit increases in our visitation, something that other jurisdictions very much are aspiring to do.

We have worked to expand our broadband access and the introduction of cellular access to all of our communities. There is more work to be done, but each and every one of those steps are incremental and makes us more competitive and makes us a supreme destination of choice.

One thing I will say is that, as the previous Minister of Tourism and Culture, I did have the opportunity to go on a number of occasions overseas to see some of the international travel showcases like ITB in Berlin. It opened up my eyes in terms of the competition we are up against, not just as Yukon, but as a country in Canada, and how we have always gone to bat for enhanced dollars for the Canadian Tourism Commission and partnerships. I think that through funds available — and now we speak to the most recent initiative, Yukon Now, \$3.6 million over two years in support of domestic marketing. That's a great example of a great partnership with Canada.

I want to go back a number of years to where we were in 2007 with the Canada Winter Games — the first time ever any of the three territories had ever hosted the Canada Winter Games north of 60. It was a tremendous success and we seized that opportunity working with our other two northern counterparts in Nunavut and Northwest Territories. For the first time ever we came up with Look Up North campaign. It was a tremendous success that worked very well. It had global reach — national reach — I should say.

We tied it into that tourism brand and into Larger than Life but also, the other two brands of the territories and the Canada brand in its entirety and tied that into products. It was a tremendous success and that then led into the 2010 Winter Olympics. I know some of the members across the way participated in those events and I think they would agree that it was a tremendous success. It did help boost our numbers and it really did lead to an enhanced awareness of the north.

Now you look at other initiatives, thanks to investments through the Yukon Film and Sound Commission — something that our government also invested in and actually saw to fruition. The Yukon Film and Sound Commission brought in the sound. Now you will see the *Amazing Race* and there was an amazing coverage of our territory in just the last number of months with the start of the *Amazing Race*.

All of these combine to a greater awareness of the territory and how we can collectively work together to realize our strengths and to build on that abundance of wildlife, the wide-open spaces and our history, stories and the people. Yukon First Nations, culture — all of these — to our Gold Rush history and the Alaska Highway — all of these culminate in an opportunity for us.

I think that it is a very timely motion, as I mentioned before, because of these recent investments and I want congratulate the Department of Tourism and Culture and the Minister of Tourism and Culture for coming together and working with industry, as we have all along the last 12 years — also being able to build on those successive marketing campaigns that we have grown, and we have grown capacity, so that we are able now to be able to take that \$3.6 million and be able to leverage that even further through new funds, like the tourism cooperative marketing fund and through new funds through the Product Development branch, and by being able to work with our visitor centres.

Recently, I know the Minister of Tourism and Culture, in collaboration with the Minister of Environment, worked to expand the number of days and hours available for visitor centres, being able to capitalize on the enhanced air access that we have here, domestic and international, and being able to continue to grow our market.

All of the investments in arts funding, cultural funding — those are tremendous as well, and those are something our government introduced. I believe it was just over a \$600,000-increase in those particular programs over the last number of years. More recently, there have been other added funds in support of the arts organizations and artists themselves.

I don't want to go on too much longer, other than to say that to really question the level of investment by this government in sports tourism, in culinary tourism, in meetings, in conventions, incentive travel — all those areas, we have worked to expand over the last number of years.

We continue to build on successful campaigns. The gateway cities program dated years back to where we are with Destination: Yukon and Yukon Now.

I want to commend this motion to all members. I thank again my colleague, the MLA for Watson Lake, for bringing this forth and having the opportunity just to talk about some of these investments and to reiterate our government's commitment to the continued growth of the tourism sector as we carry on.

Mr. Elias: It's a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to this motion brought forward by the Member for Watson Lake. Listening to the debate today, I'm going to try to focus on a positive, real, tangible example that exists in my riding that was 65 years in the making. It's with regard to what is now a commercial grizzly bear viewing in the Fishing Branch, in Ni'iinlii'Njik protected area, and how that came about through our *Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement*.

I have to mention this though. I just listened to the Leader of the Official Opposition. This seems to be a reoccurring theme with the Member for Whitehorse Centre where the

member picks out certain aspects of these very valuable and important agreements throughout the territory and picks out sections of these agreements, no matter what First Nation it's in, and uses that section for political gain.

That's what I've seen here today, but I'm going to go the opposite way. I'm going to show and talk about something that is positive. I'm going to talk about something where there is a partnership between the public government and the Yukon territorial government and a First Nation government and the renewable resources council and the federal government where a vision was realized. It's showing economic opportunities and benefits, not only to my constituents and in my riding, but to many others: helicopter companies, airline industries, and the hotel and service industry. It creates wage employment for some of my constituents as guides, et cetera. It begins with chapter 10 in the *Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement*, schedule B, where it talks about the Fishing Branch Ecological Reserve. In the final agreement, it provides for the creation of what is now the Ni'iinlii'Njik, or Fishing Branch, and the ecological preserve.

Over the last two decades, the settlement of First Nation land claims in our territory has led to the creation of national and territorial parks and protected areas. Fishing Branch is conserved through the 1995 Vuntut Gwitchin final land claim agreement. It is about 6,700 square kilometres, and the area protects cultural and natural resources and, most notably, unusually high concentrations of salmon and grizzly bear.

This is important to note — that the protected area consists of both public and First Nation lands. This was actually the first protected area in Canada — it could be in North America — where this type of government-to-government collaboration existed through a final agreement and self-government agreement.

This is something positive that this territory can look toward, in terms of that cooperative relationship between First Nations and public governments.

In the year 2000, a jointly developed and approved management plan identified objectives and guidelines to protect the area's natural and cultural resources. The plan allowed for commercial grizzly bear viewing in the protected area. After fulfilling these conditions, a controlled pilot bear-viewing trial started in Fishing Branch protected area in the fall of 2006.

This demonstrates the positive role land claims can have in promoting conservation and the effectiveness of partnerships in protected areas management, especially related to the development of a new, highly specialized activity within the wilderness tourism industry.

In 1995, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation of Old Crow settled its land claims, and the settlement included the creation of a 170-square kilometre territorial ecological reserve on the Fishing Branch River, pursuant to the *Yukon Parks and Land Certainty Act*. Also through the land claim, an additional 140 square kilometres of First Nation settlement land was added to this protected area.

This addition is a significant contribution to conservation and is a ground-breaking first in Canada, if not in North America, as I said earlier.

Today these protected areas are cooperatively managed by the Yukon and the Vuntut Gwitchin governments under jointly developed management plans, which were approved in 2000. The primary objective of the plan is to manage the area as an ecological unit to protect the full diversity of wildlife, particularly salmon and grizzly bears in a beringian karst landscape. While wildlife protection is the priority, the plan also recognizes the possibility of introducing commercial grizzly bear viewing as a means to provide visitor opportunity, promote ecological awareness and wilderness tourism, and provide economic benefits for the First Nation.

The Vuntut Gwitchin land claim agreement defines the management objectives for Fishing Branch protected area, which includes the protection of the full diversity of wildlife, particularly salmon and grizzly bears. The claim also identified the need for visitor services, learning opportunities, public education and economic opportunities for the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

Based on these broad objectives, the protected area management plan states that, while bear viewing is secondary to protection of wildlife in its habitat, effectively managed viewing has the potential to: increase public understanding and appreciation of bears and bear ecology; increase public understanding of appropriate human behaviour in bear habitat; and, under controlled circumstances, increase tourism and provide economic benefits.

Fishing Branch park is a wilderness park that protects a distinct and fascinating ecosystem. Each year, chum salmon travel thousands of kilometres from the Bering Sea to the Fishing Branch River, bringing valuable nutrients from the sea that sustain a flourishing ecosystem deep in the northern interior. Karst formations enhance this nutrient-rich habitat by storing thermal energy in underground reservoirs of water. The warm waters resurface and flow year-round, creating an island of temperate forests around Bear Cave Mountain and the Fishing Branch watershed. This unique environment supports a high seasonal population of grizzly bears, which congregate each fall to feed on spawning salmon. The park area also includes part of the spring migration route of the Porcupine caribou herd, as well as sheep, moose, raptors and a wide variety of other wildlife.

Commercially guided bear-viewing opportunities are available in the ecological reserve during the salmon run in September, October and November. Other recreational opportunities are still being explored in the park, so access is limited and requires a park permit. Fishing Branch territorial park is a remote wilderness park, far from the nearest road or airport. It is located between Dawson City and Old Crow, Yukon, and access to the park is primarily by helicopter.

Going to the business — the grizzly-bear-viewing opportunities are operated by Bear Cave Mountain Eco-Adventures Yukon. They offer exclusive grizzly bear viewing for photographers, artists and wildlife enthusiasts from mid-September through to mid-November. It provides the

opportunity to learn about the impressive phenomenon that results in the seasonal congregation of grizzly bears at Fishing Branch. It provides the opportunity to learn about the impressive phenomenon that results in the seasonal congregation of grizzly bears at Fishing Branch.

The people of Old Crow, home of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, know the ecologically rich areas as Ni'iinlii'Njik, which means in English, "Where fish spawn". Fishing Branch, or Ni'iinlii'Njik park is protected as a cultural and historical area for the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

Bear Cave Mountain is located within Fishing Branch, and the park protects this far northern wilderness with unique features created by limestone caves, year-round open water, salmon runs and grizzly bears. Rugged mountains, gentle slopes, floodplains and karst geology, including caves, are typical of the north Ogilvie Mountains ecoregion at Fishing Branch park. Surface features, lichens, coniferous forests, bare soil and rock, heather and herbs are also representative of the ecoregion.

Phil Timpany is the manager and a renowned bear specialist and wildlife photographer. His expertise and passion for the bears and the ecology of this area make the partnership between the Vuntut Development Corporation and Bear Cave Mountain Eco-Adventures unique and successful.

I just had the opportunity to speak to David Frost, who was a guide for Phil and the Bear Cave Mountain Eco-Adventures. I talked to him in Old Crow last weekend, and he said that the tourists who came to Fishing Branch this year were primarily from Europe, and the viewing and the opportunities there were just absolutely exceptional. He wanted me to let the Assembly know that booking for the 2015 season — for clients coming to enjoy this special place in my riding, guided by the Bear Cave Mountain Eco-Adventures — is full to capacity. That's important to note.

Bear Cave Mountain Eco-Adventures ensures visitors a full slate of activity and adventure and so they ask people to imagine your day beginning with a guided walk to the nearest viewing site, followed by some underwater photography and, in the afternoon, gain some elevation and view the entire face of Bear Cave Mountain.

The unscathed land of Bear Cave Mountain is the substance of folklore. Isolated from roads and development, this area is valuable — a zen-like wilderness that provides distinctive opportunities to connect with nature, with the past and with grizzly bears. Humans have long tread common pathways to share the bounty of the remarkable Fishing Branch River.

The chum salmon draw the grizzly bears to the Bear Cave Mountain area. To prepare for hibernation, these magnificent giants of the forest take advantage of the abundant food supply. Every fall, in the shadow of craggy mountains, as many as 40 grizzly bears shamble along the river banks, foraging their limit of chum salmon that have travelled thousands of miles from the Bering Sea to spawn and die. The grizzly excels at fishing.

By mid-October, winter settles in at Bear Cave Mountain. The elements of an arriving winter transform the grizzlies into

ice bears. During November, the frosty bears amble up Bear Cave Mountain to den in its numerous caves and crevasses. A protective layer of fat enables the bears to rest in their dens for the winter, but as they do not truly hibernate, they can be easily awakened.

The grizzly bear fur colour ranges from a cream colour to a colour almost black, as shown in many photo galleries on the Bear Cave Mountain Eco-Adventures website.

The Vuntut Gwitchin people are strongly connected to the Fishing Branch and Bear Cave Mountain. Ni'iinlii'Njik is a sacred area with a long history of traditional use. Gwitchin elders remind us how the Fishing Branch watershed and tributaries are vital for the community and for the protection of fish and caribou.

In the spring, the Porcupine caribou migrate through this area, and the Vuntut Gwitchin elders have always said that: "We know the caribou like ourselves; we live with them; we take a few; watch them go through; give them thanks and we speak for them." The unspoiled natural simplicity of Bear Cave Mountain truly showcases the ecological and cultural power of a place where nature and humans harmonize.

In talking to David again, he said that next year's clientele include people from our own country, in Haida Gwaii, Britain, Hong Kong, Switzerland and all parts of Europe. They are fully booked. Those types of initiatives where tourism marketing, "Destination: Yukon" and the efforts of our Minister of Tourism and Culture in travelling and promoting the Yukon is — in this instance in my riding, I consider it bearing fruit.

So I thank the Department of Tourism and Culture for all of their hard work and diligence and the Tourism Industry Association and all of our partners throughout the territory for making tourism such an important part of our territory.

I think that this is one positive aspect that has come from a vision and has come from 65 years of hard work. It's good to see that one aspect coming from Chapter 10, Schedule B of the *Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement* is something tangible and real and has come to a tremendous success that includes the most isolated northern remote community as well as the rest of our territory and a public government in partnership.

This is a success story that I would like to put on the floor of the House today in support of the motion from the Member for Watson Lake. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Tredger: I would like to speak a little bit about my area, Mayo-Tatchun. It's a large patch of central Yukon.

Much has been said about tourism in the Yukon and in many ways, this area is a litmus test for the rest of the Yukon — there are villages and communities and there are large tracts of intact wilderness. The people there are resourceful, they're friendly, they're entrepreneurs, they're helpful and they're welcoming. They love their land, they love their communities and they work hard to raise their families and contribute to the Yukon.

If you're travelling north from Whitehorse and get to Carmacks, take the time to get off the highway, drive along

the river — over the Nordenskjöld River to the Merv Tew Park — a beautiful place, set on the Yukon River. I've held my community barbeques there, and it's just a very nice piece of history there.

The riverfront boardwalk along the river, as you go by Carmacks from the recreation centre, all the way down to the bridge of the Nordenskjöld — it's a wooden boardwalk that follows the river. Stop at the Tagé Cho Hudän Interpretive Centre. There are artifacts there and there are local products. As my colleague from Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes — when she was there, she bought a pair of slippers from one of the local seniors, May Roberts.

As you travel further north, — Five Finger Rapids, Tatchun Creek — there are campgrounds. When you get to Pelly Crossing, be sure and stop at the Big Jonathan House to see their cultural displays, artifacts and meet the friendly local residents of Pelly Crossing. Shaheen Baker was there this summer and did a marvellous job of welcoming visitors from around the world to Pelly Crossing.

Stewart Crossing the Silver Tail Chamber Of Commerce and Tourism Association operates an information booth, a much-appreciated stop for tourists and locals alike as they go there to find out more about what is happening and when it's happening.

In Mayo, where the Mayo River enters the Stewart, there are many attractions. Mayo has long been a hub for mining and tourist activities for the Yukon.

The Binet House museum chronicles much of this and has artifacts and real in-depth insights into the life of early people in the Yukon who lived there.

There are numerous trails, and further along toward Keno is Five Mile Lake, a great campground.

Many people access the Peel River wilderness area from Mayo. Float planes leave there to fly into various parts of the Peel River, and many guided tours operate out of there.

This year is a particularly important year. It is the 20th anniversary of the Mayo Midnight Marathon held on June 20, a weekend of fun, frivolity — an extravaganza because there's the Mayo Midnight Marathon where not only do people run the marathon — they can also walk 10 kilometres or five kilometres .

There is also a half-marathon. Families and people from around Canada come and take part in that. It's also on that weekend that the Mayo arts and music festival takes place, where there are products from local artists, music performed by local people and the wider community — a great family opportunity.

The Stewart valley community market sells produce, although at that time of the year there is not a lot of garden produce, but there are bedding plants out, as well as some early lettuce, jams and things like that. On the 21st of this year, the Sunday, is Aboriginal Day and Na Cho Nyäk Dun will have many celebrations for people to attend.

Keno City is a real success story. It's a historic mining town. Businesses are opening up there — the Keno City Snack Bar, the Sourdough Café. Last summer, I was delighted to be able to attend the grand opening of the Keno City Hotel.

The Member for Whitehorse Centre and I were able to attend the Yukon Chamber of Commerce meetings at the Keno City Hotel in Keno, and what a good time it was. There is the Silvermoon Bunkhouse and the Sourdough Café. Take time to go up and see the signpost. Do some hiking along some of the magnificent trails. In Keno, again, you will meet hospitable people as you take a step into the past.

Yes, Mayo-Tatchun has lots to offer. I have taken part in the Yukon Quest since 1998, so that's quite a few years. I don't keep track, but it is fun. Whole communities get involved and people from around the world journey to the Yukon to take part in the Yukon Quest. As well, the Yukon River Quest goes through our area.

So what can we do to support tourism? First we have to acknowledge what we have. Tourists come to the Yukon for the dark skies, the wild rivers and the crisp, clean air to meet and interact with our people — people known around the world for their hospitality, friendliness and willingness to share, to stop and help somebody by the side of the road. People are known to open up their fish camps and their hunting camps. People are welcoming and open.

We have to protect that. We have to recognize the uniqueness of the Yukon in the world. The members opposite talked about the competition for tourist dollars. I say, let's build on our strengths. Let's build on what we have. We have a unique, accessible wilderness that is found nowhere else in the world. We have rivers and streams where you can spend time, where you can fish, where you can hang out, where you can canoe. We have cafés and restaurants to serve people — accessible wilderness and opportunities like nowhere else in the world.

I must commend the Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association for the work that they have done to promote tourism in the area. Volunteer people meet reasonably regularly, offer advice, support one another and are willing to work with anybody and anyone to increase tourism in the area. This spring, when I attended their meeting, they once again expressed their concern about the roads. Tourists need to get into our area. They do it, for the majority, by roads.

What we are looking for is a long-term strategy for the Silver Trail and the Klondike Highway.

I commend Highways and Public Works for the work that they have done and the maintenance that they have done on both of those roads. I especially commend the people who have worked on them, who come out in a snowstorm or after a rain, but we need to have a long-term strategy. A combination of increased and heavier traffic with permafrost melting means we need to do more than patch various parts of the road. We need some long-term solutions. Whether it means rebuilding or relocating parts of the roads, we need to assess the risks that we are encountering and develop a long-term solution.

This summer, part of the road into Keno City was repaired. It wasn't done until September when the crews could get to it after the tourist season. The fear of the people in Keno, the people in Mayo and people up and down the

highway who depend on that road is that, over the winter, it's going to deteriorate again. We need some regular maintenance. We need a plan for the major roads and for the side roads.

The Department of Tourism and Culture talks about the Duncan Creek Road. I haven't been up there since mid-summer. I believe there was some work done on that. I hope there was some work done on that because, for the last several years, it has been very dangerous. It's important that those roads be maintained so that we don't get the horror stories out there — that this road is impassable, that on that road I lost my windshield. We need to ensure that there is enough thought, money and crews to keep these roads in good, working condition.

While I'm talking about side roads, the road up to the signpost by Keno City — a very important road and mentioned in tourism brochures. We need to ensure that road is maintained. When my colleagues and I were up there a year ago, we had a flat tire on the road, and the road has had several washouts. It's important that, when a road is advertised and people go to a tourist area, their safety is taken into consideration.

The other thing that the Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association talked about was signage. It's important when you're on a highway to know where you are, and where you are going and how far it is. Often the signs get covered up or knocked down in the wintertime. It's not as if there are a lot of communities along the way to stop and figure out where you are going. It is hours between communities and it's important that we have signage, as much as we can, telling how far it is, as you leave Whitehorse, to Keno City or to Mayo. Those signs don't show up until you get to Stewart. It wouldn't take much to put a sign up saying Keno City and however many kilometres.

Stewart Crossing gets the idea in the mind of the traveller that there is a community out there. There is a way there. It's not something that I can only find on a map.

Another side road that needs attention — and we've talked about tourism — is Fort Selkirk. Fort Selkirk is accessed from Pelly Crossing via the Pelly River Ranch road. That road is used for fish camps — and Dale will smile when I say this — an iconic sustainable farm that has been in operation from 1897 — it's a living museum — by placer miners as well as access to Fort Selkirk. For two years that road has not been maintained. It's rapidly deteriorating. If we are going to advertise places and invite people into our communities, we need to ensure that there is safe way for them.

We have an intact wilderness that is relatively accessible. It's a resource unparalleled in the world. There are opportunities now and into the future, but we must act with local residents and First Nation governments to ensure that the increasing access is managed to ensure protection. I think of the increasing spider web of trails caused by ORVs cascading out around Whitehorse. We're also feeling the effects in Mayo-Tatchun. We need to work together to ensure that off-road vehicles are on trails and that that while they provide that

access, they also don't destroy the very thing people are looking for when they get that access.

We need some long-term wilderness sustainability to make tourism a sustainable industry that builds on our culture, on our wilderness, our rivers and our forests. The lure of the north — the people of the Yukon have it in abundance. It's time to preserve it and ensure a managed resource for the future. Let's work with the entrepreneurial people of the Yukon. Let's build an infrastructure that is properly co-managed for the betterment of Yukoners now and into the future.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It is an honour for me to rise today to talk about tourism. I would like to thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this motion forward, Motion No. 724.

When it comes to tourism, I think this is one of the biggest things I campaigned on when I was running to become the MLA for the great riding of Kluane. Kluane is, of course, as you know, Yukon's extra-larger than life place to be, which hosts the largest mountain in Canada, at 5,959 metres. The whole size of our national park is 21,980 square kilometres, and it is the largest non-polar icefield in the world. I believe there's a portion in Chile that would argue that point, but they lose, period. That's just the way it is.

We are, as we spoke earlier, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We had some questions in the House today. You just need to go to the Parks Canada website and have a peek-a-boo at the logo. That UNESCO World Heritage Site does play in for tourism opportunities and I am encouraged to see that this government is working with the Klondike region to move this forward.

To get started, I would really just like to talk a little bit about some people who do not get the accolades that are needed. I am going to talk about the staff that we have who work in the Department of Tourism and Culture and I am going to especially talk about our people who work in the visitor reception centres. I am going to start in Beaver Creek — we have a visitor reception centre in Beaver Creek. One of the neatest things I have seen there every time I go to Beaver Creek is that, as soon as you pull into Beaver Creek, there is an old car parked at the visitor reception centre. Everybody pulls in to see the old car. The employee who works there is a collector of old cars and — bang — there he gets his first opportunity into the Yukon to see what is going to go on and happen. You know, it is a great little visitor reception centre.

They work their way down the road a little bit and they wind up at the Kluane Museum and I know just chatting with the lady who works there this fall. She said, "It is really dusty out front here and it would be good if we could have something done." I said, "I am your MLA. Let me see if I can do something for you." That museum, which hosts the largest gold pan in Canada, I think — it might even be in the world — it is the largest gold pan, it's huge. It is an awesome museum to see and I recommend that just about everybody take their family to go see that. Some of the animal mounts inside that are incredible.

You know, every time I talk about this — everything that I talk about with visitor reception centres works into the fact that it is not just our visitor reception centre staff — Yukon government staff — it is the staff of the local First Nation and it is Parks Canada staff.

Another great working relationship and a good example is the Kluane First Nation. At the Tachäl Dhäl, which is the Sheep Mountain lookout, the Kluane First Nation partners with Parks Canada to keep that staffed. It's a great place to see the sheep on the mountains, to see the grizzly bears, the eagles and everything else there at the Slims River. Then you just need to go to the Da Ku building. It's a beautiful building. It's a beautiful partnership. It's a partnership that I was so happy to see when this came to fruition because it was a local First Nation — Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. It was the Yukon government; it was Parks Canada through a lot of work facilitated by Tourism and Culture Yukon staff that put a lot of time and effort into that to make that happen and to see it through to fruition.

While I'm speaking into the microphone and this is going to go into Hansard, this is always a plug for opportunities for Kluane. Parks Canada and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and the Kluane First Nation are the key stakeholders in managing Kluane National Park. I think our Tourism and Culture minister spoke to this a little earlier today. I'm very impressed and I'm very happy with our Tourism and Culture minister and our Economic Development minister because they're helping push and working with the business community, with the local First Nations and Parks Canada, looking at other opportunities for more access to the national park through the good working relationship with some of the park cutbacks that I heard from the Member for Klondike. I didn't see them as cutbacks; I saw them as opportunities to move forward. The governments work together. This government worked with Parks Canada to keep the Kathleen Lake day use area open and it was a huge, huge success.

I was a tourism operator, and I'm going to speak to that a little bit in a little while. As a tourism operator, I was also president of our local chamber of commerce. I was just reading through e-mails and I see there's an invite that I'll be there at 9:00 on Friday morning. The local chamber of commerce is getting up and started and running again and I'll go to show my support. I find it key.

The one thing that I did find is, since I've been elected, the work that I've — and I want to thank again my fellow colleagues, all the colleagues on this side of the House. The hard work that we've been able to put together — we had a wonderful tourism summit and there's some more stuff coming up this fall.

I did see a lack from our last MLA of concern for tourism. That was why, when I campaigned, I think that was my top priority. It's impressive to see the work that tourism has done. This motion really does get to speak to a whole realm of things in the area of Kluane.

One of the things I didn't want to lose sight of is that any time anybody thinks about Kluane National Park, they think about Kluane National Park. There's more to it than that.

There's lots of First Nation history; there's the Trail of '42, which is the Alaska Highway. For a little tidbit of information for some of you guys — I love to do this — in 1935, little did anybody know that the U.S. Congress voted \$2 million for a road to Alaska — \$2 million? That was the Alaska Highway, and it was built in 1942 and we know the rest of the story. But besides parks, there's First Nation history. We have the Alaska Highway. We have a very rich and strong mining history too. We have a very rich trapping history and outfitters and big game outfitters. All that put together makes for a great reason to be able to find yourself in Kluane, with lots of opportunities for things to do.

When I look at the motion today, I want to talk a little about each section in the motion. The tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round destination — first of all, year-round is so important. Everybody knows that in the summertime, good luck finding a hotel anywhere in the Yukon, whether you're up in Keno City or whether you're in Dawson City, Haines Junction, Beaver Creek or in Watson Lake. It's the off-season and the shoulder seasons — and I really have to give the Tourism and Culture department and the Economic Development department credit for looking at these shoulder seasons. We're starting to see more activities, whether its conventions we're starting to see with the tourism operators — partnerships with TIA are key to this and I think (8) added to the amendment really speaks to that. But the department on this side; the work from the time that the Department of Tourism and Culture has moved forward is incredible. The stats are incredible. They have to be commended in there.

Point (1) speaks to the promotion of local tourism and increased economic opportunities for northerners and I think this government is doing it. All you have to do is look at some of the initiatives that the department's coming for. You have to look at the work in Kluane. We have all the businesses coming together here on November 7 to talk about Destination: Kluane. To that point we've seen, and I think I got across to the local municipality, the First Nations and tourism operators that we have many plans. We have a 2000 tourism economic development plan, we have a 1985 tourism — there are plans on the shelf that say what to do but nothing gets done. Every time I get a chance to speak to the tourism operators out there, to the businesses out there and to the municipality, I say I'm not here to put another plan together and do nothing about it. I'm here to work with Parks, work with you folks and see things come to fruition.

That's opportunity for the north. The overseas marketing — the business I was in was a tourism business. For 10 years I ran an adventure tour company, and I can tell you — and I promised a few people that I would get their names in Hansard. I can tell you that my friend Stenjek from the Czech Republic, my friend Roger Ruust from Switzerland, my friend Otmar from Austria and Hans Rudy from Ireland are marketers for us. They've been sending clients to the Yukon — European clients — and I was so happy to see that we are working on our overseas marketing and that we're looking toward Asia. When we had our tourism summit in the spring

there were some folks from China there. They were looking for product. They went and travelled up the —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Stick: Just because we were mentioning names, I would ask the members in the Legislature to welcome Taavi Wickman, who is a participant in the Canada World Youth program and is here in Whitehorse. We extend our welcome to him and to Whitehorse.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I want to get back to the folks from China who were there who came to this. They left and drove to a local lodge. They drove up to Destruction Bay and said, “What do you have to offer? What can you provide for me? I want to bring you customers.” It was incredible.

I want to talk a little bit about supporting the new tourism product such as the Millhaven Bay Project. That is huge in a diverse economy. This government believes in a diverse economy, and that’s why this motion was put forward and why we are debating it. We also believe in economic development when it comes to mining and when it comes to many other things.

There are opportunities. We have areas of the Yukon that are untouched, but there are areas of the Yukon that have access that we can develop more product. You know what, supporting the development of some of this new product, whether it’s — I’ve seen some stats on our local First Nation wanting to do a golf course and something down by Kathleen Lake on some of their category A land. I love that. Every time it comes forward, I see the opportunity for our tourism minister — and it starts off with the Department of Economic Development, where they look at feasibility studies — and we push on this side for that stuff.

Point (4) enhancing Yukon’s cultural product — more than ever, in my riding, do you see the cultural aspect — the First Nation culture, the mining culture, the diverse culture that we have up there — being promoted. Before, you know, when you used to go to Parks Canada — when they first came in the 70s and 80s — as a child, when I went on hikes with some of the wardens, there wasn’t a conversation about what First Nations were. I’m so happy to see that diversification and a little bit of intuition from some of the locals putting this stuff together — you just have to go to the Da Ku building and look at some of the infrastructure that the local First Nation has built to showcase their history.

Supporting Yukon’s museums and cultural organizations — I do like the Kluane — I spoke to the museum at Burwash Landing. It’s incredible; it’s a great museum. But you know, Mr. Speaker, I look at the Alaska Highway, when it came through in 1942, and I see more opportunities for museums. I’ve had a conversation with the Member for Watson Lake about — there’s a big hangar at her airport. What a great place for an aviation museum from the war — right at the intersection of the Haines Road that goes to Haines, Alaska, or

up to Alaska — why not a museum with old military vehicles? There are still opportunities. We have some stuff in Whitehorse, but to diversify out locally I think is incredible.

Promoting of events — one of the key things for me when I got elected was to push and work with my local municipality on bringing more events to the community. I have had the opportunity to sit down with our local municipality and pitch an idea to them so I can move forward on development of our old rodeo grounds — which would be incredible for the community. It wouldn’t be a whole bunch of O&M, but it would be an opportunity for music festivals, for rodeos — it was the rodeo grounds — but baseball tournaments, soccer tournaments and a number of other things.

I want to put a little plug in for promoting events and new events. It says “fostering new and emerging events”. The Minister of Tourism and Culture had the opportunity to go and look at the economic value and the tourism value of Sturgis. It’s a motorcycle rally and the minister has a motorcycle. We see more motorcycles on the highway and he says, “Why don’t you do something in Haines Junction?”

In a one-hour chat with three of the businesses, this coming summer on an off weekend when we’re not interfering with the Atlin Music Festival or the Dawson Music Festival or other events, we’re going to have a motorcycle rally and a big poker run that’s going to take them from Haines Junction to Destruction Bay and back. It’s going to be a beer-and-rib-fest weekend so come out and try some ribs and beer helps to wash them down.

Point (8) actually is working with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon to provide sustained funding for domestic marketing initiatives. I was a member of TIA — our local Chamber of Commerce was a member of TIA back when I was on the chamber — and it is pivotal and it is key that rural chambers of commerce, visitor associations, and other organizations that are in the tourism industry, are affiliated and work with the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon and have memberships. You know, TIA goes after the government. There is a lot of money that this government puts toward TIA, to work with TIA and it is important that the money is distributed throughout the Yukon and Yukon-related events.

I listened to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun talk about some of the stuff that he would like to see — better opportunities — and we cannot forget our rural Yukon.

I was not going to speak as long as I did, but I just want to say that I am very proud to represent the Kluane region — and a big push for the tourism industry. I am glad that our government is continuing, through a diverse economy, to make the Yukon the best place in Canada to live, work, play and to raise a family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hassard: It is a pleasure to rise to speak today on Motion No. 724. I would like to thank the MLA for Watson Lake for bringing this important motion to the floor today.

Tourism is a vital component in the economy of the Yukon. The visitor tracking program estimated that annual expenditures by visitors to the Yukon in 2012, to be in excess

of \$180 million. That \$180 million keeps the doors open for many businesses from Watson Lake to Beaver Creek to Dawson City. As well, that same \$180 million puts the food on a lot of tables throughout the Yukon.

I am very proud of the commitment of this government to work with industry, communities and First Nations to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round destination.

We must remember that while Yukon has a very important role in the tourism industry, it's important to remember that Yukon tourism remains market-driven, research-based and industry-led. That being said, this government will continue to enhance marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets in the United States, Europe and the rest of Canada.

This government continues to dedicate funds to help out with many tourism initiatives throughout the Yukon. In my riding of Pelly-Nisutlin government provides funding for George Johnston Museum and the Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre in Teslin and the visitor interpretive centre in Faro. I'm also very happy to see the repairs moving forward on the iconic Ross River footbridge, which is an integral piece of tourism history in Ross River as well as the Yukon.

Tourism and Culture continues to provide partial funding for First Nation collaborations — \$38,000 per year for the Big Jonathan House with the Selkirk First Nation; \$100,000 per year for the Da Ku Cultural Centre in Haines Junction, in collaboration with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; \$100,000 for the cultural centre in Dawson City with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in; \$38,000 for the John Tizya Centre in Old Crow in collaboration with the Vuntut Gwitchin; \$38,000 per year to the Tagé Cho Hudän Interpretive Centre with the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation; and, of course, the \$100,000 for the Teslin Tlingit heritage centre, which I mentioned earlier.

Tourism and Culture also helps many First Nations with funding for upgrades and projects in their respective cultural centres. As well, they enter into rental agreements, et cetera — rental agreements that might house government-run interpretive centres, such as we see in Carcross and Haines Junction. These are just a few more examples of how this government works in collaboration with First Nations.

It's also important for the government, as we promote affordable domestic and international air access and work with the Yukon Convention Bureau, industry and Yukon communities to further promote the Yukon as a choice destination for hosting meetings, conventions and sports events. It's important to utilize the tourism cooperative marketing fund to build partnerships with the industry to improve marketing efforts both for government and for industry.

As well, we can create a product development program to assist tourism operators in developing and enhancing the quality of their product. This government continues to work with Whitehorse and Carcross to develop their respective waterfronts. We need to continue to implement the Yukon

museum strategy in collaboration with museums, First Nation heritage and cultural centres and community interpretive centres, as well as work with the City of Whitehorse and the Miles Canyon Historical Railway Society to promote the trolley and Yukon railways history.

We will continue to provide necessary support to Yukon museums to enable them to run their operations and retain and trail experienced staff. With CanNor's assistance of \$2 million over the past four years, the department has been able to pursue an enhanced overseas destination awareness marketing project. This initiative has been a great success, with overseas visitation to Yukon growing by 33 percent in those past four years. Due to the success of this project, this Yukon Party government has elected to maintain an enhanced level of investment in overseas marketing on an ongoing basis, allocating an additional \$590,000 to the overseas marketing budget, starting in 2014-15.

If we look at the Asian market, Japan continues to be the fastest-growing international market and ranks fourth in overseas visitation. Eight hundred percent, that's the increase we see between 2009 and 2011. In 2012, Yukon hosted more than 3,500 Japanese visitors, most of whom were here primarily to experience the northern lights.

Australia is Yukon's second-largest growing overseas market, with close to 7,000 visitors in 2013, which represented approximately 19.5 percent of overseas visitors and two percent of overall visitors. The steady growth of the Australian market is the result of the successful partnerships between industry, government and the Canadian Tourism Commission and our tour operator partners in Australia. Australia remains a strong growth market for Yukon and we have enhanced our marketing efforts, including the appointment of an in-market general sales agent late in 2013.

Yukon's Australia strategy focus is on high-yield travellers — consumers who spend more, stay longer and they're less influenced by exchange-rate fluctuations and economic conditions. Holland America is also a key strategic partner in Yukon's success in the Australian market, as the majority of Australian visitors to Yukon visit in conjunction with an Alaska cruise.

As you know, the primary target markets for the department's overseas marketing program are Germany and Switzerland; secondary are the U.K., Australia and Japan, while emerging markets are identified as France, Netherlands, South Korea and China.

Overseas visitors to the Yukon generally stay longer and spend more than U.S. visitors. This aligns with our strategy to attract high-yield customers to the Yukon. Yukon has benefited from CanNor funding programs for tourism-related initiatives such as the expansion of our overseas marketing efforts, upgrades to the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport, and the Yukon visitor tracking program, which I mentioned earlier.

We know that 2013 was a record-breaking year for border-crossing statistics, with an eight-percent increase in the number of private vehicles and motorcoaches crossing the border into the Yukon. The statistics show a seven-percent

increase in the number of visitors from the United States, a 17-percent increase in Canadians and an eight-percent increase from overseas. From January to August of this year, Yukon's tourism industry continues to benefit from a five-percent increase in total arrivals and a 27-percent increase in international arrivals at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport.

As well, Dawson City has benefited. They have seen a 21-percent increase in the number of combined travellers travelling through the Little Gold border crossing and arrivals at the Dawson City Airport. This is due in large part to Holland America's 2014 tour programs in partnership with Air North.

This government has committed to enhance marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets. I think a person would have to be pretty hard pressed to say that this government is welching on our commitment toward tourism and culture.

In closing, I would like to again thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing Motion No. 724 to the floor of the Assembly here today, and I would like to thank the others who have made comments here on the floor today.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this motion forward and to my colleagues on both sides of the floor who have spoken to this motion already.

I have a few points I want to make in relation to this motion, and I will go through in the order they appear in the motion — but before I do that I wanted to speak first of all about the relationship between the departments of Economic Development and Tourism and Culture and the strong partnership they have in advancing their mutual interest in seeing a strong tourism sector in the territory. I'm very pleased with the work done to date, and I know that the Department of Economic Development works very well with the Department of Tourism and Culture to advance these issues.

There are a number of ways that the Department of Economic Development supports the tourism industry, and the funding that is available through the Department of Economic Development is often accessed by communities, groups or business that operate in the tourism field. Whether it's the strategic industries fund or whether it's the community development fund, the regional economic development fund or any of the other support opportunities in the Department of Economic Development, tourism is often the focus of these.

In looking to the motion, the first item is relatively self-explanatory — that the tourism industry benefits northerners and, of course, more specifically, Yukoners. That's self-evident and I don't think it needs much explanation.

The second one, though, is in relation to Yukon's funding for overseas marketing initiatives. That's something that I've been very pleased to see the leadership from both the Premier and the minister on. It's an issue that is very important. It is important that we get out and market the territory for a

number of reasons. One of them is that it brings visitors to the territory, but it also raises awareness of the territory, and that increases our ability to attract finance, to attract money to the territory, which benefits not just the tourism industry, but all Yukoners.

The funding that has been provided to date has been significant, and the resources devoted to marketing Yukon — not just financial, but other types of resources as well — have been significant. I would commend the minister for his work on that to date and the work that has yet to be done. I know that there are some plans for additional activities in the coming months and years that will be led by the Department of Tourism and Culture with regard to overseas missions and other initiatives of that sort.

The third project relates specifically to a specific project, and that is the Millhaven Bay project. As we know, this is a project that stems, in part, from a memorandum of understanding arrived at between the Yukon government and the Carcross-Tagish First Nation government, which included a list of projects that would be undertaken in partnership between the two governments.

That memorandum of understanding was signed in December 2013 and was a very important step forward, not only for the tourism industry, but for the general relationship between the Carcross-Tagish First Nation and the Yukon government.

I know that the Leader of the Official Opposition in her comments characterized the discussions and developments that led up to the memorandum of understanding as being "sharp dealings" — that was the quote that she used. I have to take exception to that and disagree quite vehemently. That certainly was not the case. I personally was not involved in the discussions that led up to the memorandum of understanding, but I know from talking to those who were that that was far from an accurate characterization of how those discussions went. What we had with this memorandum of understanding was two responsible, mature, governments meeting as equals and signing a memorandum of understanding to advance a number of issues that would benefit both governments and both of their citizen groups. The memorandum of understanding was signed by the Premier and chief as equals, as leaders of their governments. It certainly wasn't forced upon us and wasn't forced upon the Carcross-Tagish First Nation. It was arrived at collaboratively through discussion. To characterize the discussions as "sharp dealings" is offensive to me and likely offensive to the Carcross-Tagish as well.

I think there is evidence of the fact that the Carcross-Tagish First Nation don't see it the way that the Leader of the Official Opposition does as well. In fact, on the day of the signing, the Chief of the Carcross-Tagish First Nation indicated that this memorandum of understanding was indeed — and I quote — "a big deal". He went on to say: "It's like Christmas Day come early." Does that sound like the language of a chief who has been dealt with sharply, who has had some sort of agreement forced upon him or forced upon his government unwillingly?

Absolutely not. That's the sign of collaboration. That's the sign of two governments coming together and arriving at an outcome that is beneficial to both of our people and, indeed, to the entire Yukon. I wanted to take a moment to dispute the characterization of the Leader of the Official Opposition there.

Included in that MOU was a commitment to — and I quote: “Develop a world-class wilderness resort at Millhaven Bay on Bennett Lake.” Of course, the language that was used in the MOU was developed and I appreciate why we made the change in this particular motion to “support” from “developing”. It's immaterial to me. I think it conveys the same support, which was the intent of the Member for Watson Lake.

What has happened since then has been strong support from the Yukon government for that process — a process that had not really been undertaken in the Yukon before. I know that the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has done a lot of work looking at other jurisdictions, including British Columbia, for how they have handled such types of processes and such types of distribution of rights associated with tourism lodges or wilderness lodges. That was an influential jurisdiction for us in achieving the process that we have currently.

The Millhaven Bay project isn't the only one that was identified in the MOU, and I think it bears exploring a few of these other projects because they relate, in my opinion, to the motion that we have on the floor today.

The second topic in the MOU was the making available of land for remote-access cottages. I think that's an excellent step forward. It's perhaps not related as much to the tourism industry but it's certainly very important to Yukoners.

The third is very much relevant to our motion debate today, and that's to continue work on the Bennett beach development. What we're seeing in Carcross on the whole — and in part because of the work done in this memorandum of understanding — is a real renewal of Carcross and a really incredible step forward for that community as they develop their assets in the community and showcase them, not only for Yukoners, but for tourists and visitors alike. What has happened in Carcross and what will happen, including the work done on Bennett beach, I think will be an important step forward for that community.

The next piece in that memorandum of understanding was the development of Conrad Campground. Again, this is an excellent example of partnership between Carcross-Tagish First Nation and Yukon government that would see the development of the campground at the property that is adjacent of the heritage site on Windy Arm, the Conrad site. That work is underway currently and is being led on the Yukon government side by the Department of Environment. That work is going on very collaboratively and is underway currently.

The most recent development in that was the exchange of letters between the Minister of Tourism and Culture and the Chief of the Carcross-Tagish First Nation indicating a mutual agreement to proceed with a heritage management plan for the

site. That was something that we had agreed to already but it is a process that needed to be formalized and now will be undertaken.

It involves the establishment of a committee that has members from both the Yukon government and the CTFN, and the list of activities that they are to undertake is articulated in the CTFN final agreement, in one of the provisions or schedules in that agreement. Ultimately what is hoped for that process is the conclusion of a management plan for that site, for the heritage site, that will consider the artifacts, the heritage resources and the history of that site and protect those important aspects.

I guess what I should say, in conclusion to that chapter of my words today, is that what's going on in Carcross is indeed an example, I think, to be looked to for great success between First Nation governments and the Yukon government in developing the resources in that community.

Before I turn away from Carcross, I did want to note one other aspect — and it's related to what I've just been saying, but it's the support we provided to the CTFN for the development of the mountain biking trails near that community. It was a very successful project, the Singletrack to Success project. It was very successful and resulted in some very interesting new developments for the Yukon, having that level and quality of trails in the territory, especially in the Carcross area. It enables us to market the Yukon as a jurisdiction for more than just viewing the wilderness, but to get out in the wilderness and experience it at a very fast pace and a very up-close view of what the wilderness resources are in the Carcross area.

While that was a great success, it has also proven to be a good example that other First Nations and other communities have taken up on. Recently the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in Dawson have undertaken a similar project to develop biking trails on the Dome in Dawson and that again was supported by the community development fund as well. In these instances, we see First Nations tapping into funding opportunities that are available for the Yukon government and really finding ways to be successful in developing interesting and new tourism opportunities in their regions.

I heard the Leader of the Liberal Party actually mentioned a few excellent points about new or different types of events that can be hosted in the Yukon. The motion indeed speaks to some of this. The sixth bullet is “promoting events” and the seventh is “fostering new and emerging events”. So these are very related, I think. Some of the new and emerging events we have seen hosted in Whitehorse and throughout the territory recently have been very interesting. The Liberal member mentioned YukomiCon, which was a very interesting event that was hosted in Whitehorse that was supported by the community development fund — a very interesting conference, I guess you could call it — an event that occurred here in Whitehorse that saw a number of people come from outside the territory to participate in the YukomiCom. It was the coming together of a number of different cultures, I guess you could say, in the less traditional sense — cultures — that occurred between August 8 and 10 here in Whitehorse.

The emphasis of that event was local contact and interactive and educational activities for the participants. Also in focus were opportunities for local creators to practice their art, to connect and collaborate with peers, to increase their expertise and to interact with the public. I think that event was a great success. I know that all who attended it thought that it was fun and very interesting and a great learning experience.

There are also other types of events that we often overlook because we associate them with other issues. The past summer, I had the pleasure of attending the Gwich'in biennial event in Old Crow. That to me was very interesting because, at face value, it's a chance for the Gwich'in from across the north to get together. What it meant, and what it led to, was a number of very full flights on Air North from the south to Old Crow. I don't think that Air North has ever had so many consecutive, full flights to Old Crow as they did when the Gwich'in gathering was going on. You had people coming from all across the North — from Alaska and from other territories. Indeed, I think there were a few people from outside the country who attended that. One person, I think, was from Japan. When you have events like that that are ostensibly a cultural event, but they really operate as more than that. They offer an opportunity for people to come to parts of the Yukon, or parts of the country even, that they may not normally visit.

Those types of events are important to support and important to recognize for being more than just cultural events, but for being tourism events.

I think that would lead me to my next point, which is that — and it has been mentioned before by previous speakers — access is so important, whether it's access to Old Crow, as I just mentioned, or access to the territory from Outside. When we speak about access to the territory, we can't overlook the importance of Air North and their operations here in the territory. The extension of their service to Yellowknife and further on to Ottawa is very important, and has allowed some new and interesting events to take place. Recently a number of minor hockey teams from here in Whitehorse were able to travel to Yellowknife to compete in competition against teams from there. That kind of cross-territorial exchange is really important. It's obviously great for the hospitality industries in both cities, especially the host city, which would have dozens of kids and parents and supporters come to the community, rent hotel rooms, eat dinners and participate in the events. It also allows that exchange of friendship and exchange of ideas between communities, and I think it's really healthy for the north to have that kind of connection.

Those are the points I really want to make. There's much more to be said. Some have referenced already the extension of services that the Parks branch of Environment Yukon has undertaken for a number of campgrounds in the Whitehorse area. I think that's something that should be referenced as well, but I won't get into that too much, because I think my time is running out.

I did want to note that this motion is an important one, and is one that certainly reflects the Yukon government's commitment to the tourism industry, whether it's through the

Department of Tourism and Culture or other departments like Economic Development, Environment, Energy, Mines and Resources. All of these departments have a role to play in supporting a robust tourism industry here in the territory and we're very pleased to support that industry through those various ways.

Hon. Mr. Kent: It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to the motion brought forward by the MLA for Watson Lake with respect to the importance of our tourism industry here in the territory. Of course, it is one of those cornerstone industries that we enjoy along with resource extraction and some other important industries — the knowledge and IT sector. The public sector, of course, plays an important role in our economy as well, but from a private sector point of view, it's really tourism and mining that are the straws that stir the drink here as far as the economy goes in the territory.

All of us in the House represent our constituents and I have a number who are engaged in the tourism industry. Many of the wilderness tourism operators who live within Riverdale North are in the service and the hospitality sector as well as owners of canoe and kayak companies. It's a great employer of individuals who live, not only within Riverdale North, but of course, throughout our territory.

I wanted to focus on a couple of things. The Minister of Environment and Economic Development spoke quite extensively about the opportunities that exist in the Carcross and Southern Lakes area.

As an owner of recreational property in the Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes riding, it's something that I wanted to expand on a little more to just build on what the Minister of Environment said. When I heard the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes give his remarks with respect to this motion, I think his quote was, "mining is short-term and tourism is forever", and I wanted to speak a little bit about the relationship between the mining industry and the tourism industry and how they can co-exist, how they have co-existed and how they are very complementary of one another when it comes to moving the economy forward.

I'll start with the issues in Carcross, particularly those that Energy, Mines and Resources is directly responsible for. When I was minister responsible for the Housing Corporation and Education, I travelled with the Minister of Tourism and Culture to Carcross. It was the winter after our election in 2011 and we stood in the middle of what is now the Carcross Commons development — there was not very much there. The train tracks were there and one building, I believe.

To see how working with Carcross-Tagish First Nation and the development corporation led to the development of that area — an awful lot of the credit has to go to the Carcross-Tagish First Nation and the development corporation for their vision for that area, but I think we were able to participate and help give it that little boost that it needed.

To see it in the summertime, whether you're down there just for a coffee or a sandwich at the bistro on Bennett or one of the many events that are hosted at the Carcross Commons, it certainly has become a gathering place not only for the

community of Carcross, but for visitors and residents alike — a great opportunity to visit that area and more exciting things in store for the community of Carcross.

When it comes to Millhaven Bay, this does give me an opportunity to provide an update for the Legislature on where we're at with that project. It's an expression of interest process. It was selected and modified for use in the Yukon by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Lands branch within my department. The process gives both EMR and Tourism and Culture a role in assessing at key steps whether the proponent's proposal is adequate and should proceed to the next stage of review.

I believe it's about a seven-stage process that has been set out. It's modelled after similar developments and similar opportunities in other jurisdictions across Canada, particularly operations in British Columbia. The government is confident that the process we've developed is thorough and will give the public ample opportunity to learn about the proposed development and make comments. It's a proponent-driven process, and the proponent has held public meetings and submitted a detailed resort master plan to the government. Both the departments of Energy, Mines and Resources and Tourism and Culture reviewed the plan and determined that the proponent is ready to begin work on a submission to YESAB.

That is one of the final steps in the process that needs to be accomplished. Like any major development, obviously the proponent will be seeking investors, and we look forward to helping to facilitate visits by investors, like we do for mining investors or fam tours — on occasion that we do — and we look forward to continuing to work with the proponent to see this exciting ecotourism opportunity come to fruition — hopefully in the not-too-distant future.

Part of that memorandum of understanding that the Premier signed with Chief Cresswell also included a number of other important developments in the Southern Lakes area. As the Minister of Environment mentioned, those are developments that benefit both governments and Yukoners as a whole. What has received attention recently is the cottage lot development that we at Energy, Mines and Resources let — 19 lots that were released and developed between Bennett Lake and Tagish Lake. They are water or lake access only, I guess would be the way to describe them. Obviously there was a tremendous uptake on the lottery. There were over three times as many applications as lots available, and all 19 lots were assigned. We look forward to those individuals being able to own land on a lake within the Yukon that's accessible by boat, snowmachine, float plane or plane in the wintertime. It is something that hasn't been done in this territory in quite some time and I'm very proud to be part of a government that was able to deliver on that promise that we made to Yukoners in 2011 — another promise that we made and a promise that we kept. We continue to deliver on our commitments to Yukoners that we made in 2011 on the doorsteps throughout the territory.

Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Economic Development touched on a couple of the other opportunities

that are contained within the MOU. Bennett beach development is proceeding; the extension of Tagish Avenue — not to be confused with the Tagish Road — but Tagish Avenue, which is located within the community of Carcross. That funding partnership with the Carcross-Tagish Development Corporation and First Nation has been completed and now work can begin on that extension — more opportunities for waterfront lot development on First Nation land in the community of Carcross, so again, bringing more people to the community and increasing the business and other opportunities that exist down there. It's something that I know the First Nation is looking forward to, and we, as Yukon government, are looking forward to that development as well.

The Conrad campground was part of that MOU, and I know the Minister of Environment was working very, very closely with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation on seeing that project go forward, and hopefully Yukoners are able to camp there, perhaps as early as next year, if not the year after. I think there are some great opportunities with that.

Currently there is an RFP out, Mr. Speaker, to assess the feasibility of a marina in Carcross. That again, I believe, is being spearheaded through the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources — another exciting opportunity to enhance the tourism sector when it comes to the community of Carcross.

I now want to turn my attention to the comments made by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes on the exclusivity, I guess — that tourism cannot co-exist with mining. I think that certainly history has proven that they definitely can; they are very complimentary. Much of the infrastructure that we enjoy in the territory today was built as a result of the resource industry and the extraction industry — thousands of kilometres of roads that we have in the territory. Many of the airports that exist in the communities were built to support the resource industry. Of course, the Town of Faro is there because of the mining industry and has grown from that into a very vibrant and exciting community, full of residents who are proud to call Faro home. I certainly know it's one of my favourite communities to visit in the territory, and I jump at the opportunity to travel there with the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin whenever we get a chance.

Some of the other aspects that come when tourism and mining benefit together — rather than talk about some of the obvious ones, like Dawson City and the placer industry, as well as the two reality TV shows that have spun out of that industry and are quite popular on their respective networks — obviously, that's an easy one, but when we look at some of the other projects that are now major tourism draws, they owe their roots to the mining industry.

One only needs to look at the White Pass & Yukon Railroad built in 1898 during the Klondike Gold Rush. It's an international historic civil engineering landmark, a designation shared with such other projects as the Panama Canal or the Eiffel Tower or the Statue of Liberty. At the time, it was a \$10-million project, a product of British financing and one of the engineering marvels of the world. The 110-mile railroad was completed at the turn of the century, in 1900, with the final spike driven in the community of Carcross.

After servicing the mining industry for a number of years, and then closing in 1982, it reopened later on in that decade. As a seasonal tourism operation, in its first year it served 37,000 passengers, but as of the year 2012, it has become Alaska's most popular shore excursion, carrying over 390,000 passengers during that May to September tourism season in 2012. So again, something that was built to service the mining industry has turned into a major tourism attraction bringing visitors to the community of Carcross and is an important part of the history of the Yukon and a great example of something that was built to support the mining industry turning into a legacy project for the tourism industry.

Moving on to another important business here in the territory — we've spoken a number of times in this Legislature about how important Air North, Yukon's Airline, is to the territory.

It was founded in 1977 by Joe Sparling and Tom Wood. The company initially operated a charter service primarily in support of the mining industry. From those very small mining roots, this company has grown into what we see today — very much an incredible and important part of the Yukon's economy, partnered with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, offering jet service now to southern destinations and out east to Ottawa, as well as an extensive network within the Yukon. To see a company like that grow from just one plane and very grassroots opportunities to support the mining industry — definitely now integral in supporting the tourism industry as well as the modern mining industry here in the territory. I believe they do charters into the Minto mine at shift change to shuttle the workers back and forth when shift changes are done at the Minto mine, and they offered a similar service when the Bellekeno mine, or Alexco's mine in Keno City, was running a couple of years ago as well. Again, an important company that owes its roots to mining but now definitely is integrated and services mining and tourism as well.

I know the Minister of Environment spoke about it, but the world-renowned mountain biking trails on Montana Mountain in Carcross — an incredible tourist attraction that is a competitor to some of the best or can stand with some of the best mountain biking trails in the country, if not the world.

The discovery of silver on the cliff faces on the east side of Montana Mountain triggered a staking rush in 1904. John Conrad, who was a financier from Montana, consolidated the mining claims and built an extensive network of mule trails, tramways and wagon roads to transport the valuable ore off the mountain. Conrad's promise, unfortunately, of untold riches did draw thousands to the shores of Windy Arm, but was short-lived. In the 2006 *Carcross-Tagish First Nation Final Agreement*, they selected Montana Mountain and have again built it into a world-class mountain biking destination — again, another tourism operation whose start was the mining industry with the development of those trails. Of course, the First Nation has enhanced them significantly since — but something where one industry is benefitting from something that another industry was able to start.

I guess the one final example that I would offer is Kaminak Gold's camp that exists near the Coffee project they

have. I believe they purchased or perhaps are leasing the Great River Journey lodge that was located there. It's something that was built for the tourism industry that is now servicing the mining industry, and hopefully will be the centre point for one of the future mines here in the territory. I know that the company is excited about that project as well.

I don't think that we have to pick winners or losers when it comes to industry. Mining and tourism can and have co-existed, and they will continue to do so. Businesses rely on both and, when it comes to events, two of my favourite events that happen in the year and in the shoulder seasons for the tourism industry are the Dawson City international gold show and the Geoscience Forum, which happens here in Whitehorse, bringing hundreds of visitors and incredible economic benefit to those who live and operate businesses in Dawson City and Whitehorse.

I hope that I have been able to convey that businesses rely on both of these important industries. They are the two cornerstones of what our private sector economy is based on, and we can continue to promote both, not one at the expense of the other. I think that is fundamental in what the Yukon Party government believes, where both of these industries are incredibly important and both need the full support of government to continue to be successful, moving forward.

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

Ms. McLeod: Thank you to all the members for their comments, those who shared them with us today. I want to thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for putting forward the amendment. I'm certainly pleased that it was something we could support.

I think we all seem to agree that tourism and culture is one important aspect of our Yukon economy. With that, I thank you all for your time today.

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

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

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

Motion No. 724, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 723

Clerk: Motion No. 723, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Watson Lake:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support recycling and waste diversion by:

(1) making all beverage containers subject to a recycling surcharge and sharing the increased revenue with recycling processors and community depots;

(2) requiring a recycling fee for all sizes of tires sold in the territory;

(3) expanding the designated material regulation to implement a recycling fee at the time of purchase for electronic and electrical products; and

(4) working with the City of Whitehorse and rural municipalities to identify and implement sustainable, long-term and cost-effective solutions for processing recyclables in Yukon.

Ms. McLeod: I am honoured to rise today to speak to Motion No. 723.

Very often, we think that because we are such a small jurisdiction this matter of dealing with waste and recycling, it sometimes gets a little overwhelming, but we have to keep it in its scope and realize that countries and cities all over the world are grappling with this same issue. That it is difficult should not alarm anyone.

The Yukon government is currently consulting on changes to refundable beverage container fees. The consultation considers raising the fees on refundables and also including all beverage containers under the program. These proposed increases will provide increased revenue to Yukon's processors and community depots. This increased revenue stream will support long-term waste diversion goals in the territory.

I am very pleased to hear of the Yukon government's support for recycling over the past decade. These have been extensive, but we must always remember that there are multiple partners in the business of waste diversion and we must make sure to treat everyone equally.

Raven Recycling Society has benefitted extensively from investments by the community development fund. Over the years, contributions have included \$20,000 to launch the first

phase of a year-long zero waste and recycling education program to raise awareness about zero waste and how recycling can help Yukon become a zero-waste community; \$13,935 to develop a website to support a three-year zero waste and recycling education campaign; \$41,500 to create a plan for a community gathering conference, develop a zero waste event toolkit — an on-your-waist toolkit and an educational video, entitled *Zero Waste Starts Now!*; \$124,793 for upgrades to customer drop-off area and yard, which includes new recycling bins and levelling of the Raven Recycling yard and public drop-off area.

In 2012, \$80,000 to purchase a new forklift with larger capacity and a bale clamp capable of lifting up to 10,000 pounds; \$75,000 to contribute to an upgrade in the customer service drop-off area. In 2008, \$75,000 to purchase an electric forklift to increase safety and efficiency and begin the process of converting to a cleaner, more environmentally responsible operation. In 2010, \$12,600 to assess the financial sustainability of a renovated facility, or the scaling back of current recycling services, as part of a larger collaborative planning process for Yukon waste management.

The Yukon government is proud to support our fine recycling processors and we have demonstrated strong support. For example, in 2008, when Raven Recycling was facing financial difficulty from lower resource prices, the Yukon Party government provided \$320,000 to Raven Recycling over two years to ensure that the non-profit society could continue to offer Yukoners a comprehensive recycling and processing service.

The federal government has been a partner in supporting our recycling processors. In 2012 they provided \$200,000 to P&M Recycling to purchase a plastic-to-oil machine that transforms unusable plastic into heating oil. In 2009, Raven Recycling likewise received \$249,000 from the Government of Canada to do a feasibility study to determine the most effective ways to expand their recycling collection system that was in place at the time.

This astounding investment over the past decade in recycling as part of waste diversion is something that I think the government should be proud of. As early as last year, the government once again demonstrated their commitment to recycling and waste diversion in the territory by responding to the joint request by both processors for increased diversion credits.

The Yukon government and their major waste diversion partner, the City of Whitehorse, each contribute \$75 per tonne of recycling processed and transported out of the territory. This \$150-per-tonne diversion credit is a brand-new revenue stream supporting our processors in support of their continuing funding pressures. The Minister of Community Services should be proud of his efforts, and the City of Whitehorse should be proud of their efforts to assist the Yukon's recycling partners.

The current consultation on increased refundable fees is a great continuation of the Yukon Party's support for recycling in the territory. The motion mentions that all sizes of tires will have a recycling fee attached at point of purchase. This point-

of-purchase fee ensures that the proper disposal will be funded in advance.

Likewise, by expanding the designated material regulation to implement a recycling fee at point of purchase for electronic and electrical products, the Yukon government ensures that we have funded the proper disposal of products. This will help ensure that the users of our landfills will not seek to illegally dispose of these products. They can simply return them to disposal depots and government will have already recouped the cost.

The final part of the motion asked the government to work with the City of Whitehorse and rural municipalities to identify and implement sustainable long-term cost-effective solutions for processing recyclables in the Yukon. I think all members realize that work to meet waste diversion goals in the territory is an ongoing issue and that there are multiple partners needed to achieve these goals. This government has a proven track record of working with Yukon municipalities to address waste diversion concerns, as recently demonstrated by the partnership with the City of Whitehorse on the waste diversion credit.

Great things have been done in recycling and I look forward to the next steps under this government.

Mr. Barr: I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party to firstly we will say we will be supporting Motion No. 723 and I have some comments I would like to put out there.

I would like to start by thanking Raven Recycling Society for the vision that they shared with Yukoners close to 25 years ago — a vision that until very recently had blossomed into a beloved community project that handled around 85 percent of the territory's non-refundable recycling. The non-profit Raven Recycling project was born out of a desire to benefit the public good, based on the notion that bringing recycling to the Yukon would result in cleaner, greener and ultimately more prosperous communities. One could even argue that the success of Raven Recycling influenced the decision of our neighbours in Alaska to implement recycling services, as Yukoners wandered through Haines or Anchorage looking for paper and metal bins and their overt educating programs continued to explain the benefits of recycling to Yukoners of all ages.

I recall back in those days when it never crossed my mind that I should maybe save the cans or I would take stuff back for the money. What else should I do about it? When we don't know what we don't know, we can't do anything about it and when we do know, we can. I remember after being educated from Raven here, walking at the Haines State Fair with cans and I looked and there were other Yukoners and some of the local folk said, "What are you guys doing?" We said, "We want to recycle this stuff." They said, "Oh, just throw it in the garbage — don't worry about that stuff." We said, "Over in the Yukon we recycle things and it's great, it's good for the environment." So they started to ask questions of different people and I was witnessing those kinds of things.

I'm very proud to say that a friend of mine who passed away just last fall from leukemia — Ray Massey, who came

up to visit me — another story where you come to the Yukon to visit the Yukon and you never leave. Well, he stayed here and he saw that, because he was involved with recycling back in Ontario. He said we better get something going here. So it's through his efforts and those others who had the vision to bring recycling to the forefront. I would just like to acknowledge that and the work of people throughout the Yukon who see the benefits and see that it's a worthwhile endeavour. It does cost money if we are going to continue doing so.

Raven Recycling deserves our full support, not just because they are a non-profit society whose role in the community is paramount, but also because they are dedicated to handling the vast majority of the Yukon's non-refundables. In that vein, while this motion does take steps to improve the diversion of certain waste materials like tires and bottles, this is only a small snapshot of the waste that we are trying to divert as the government seeks to follow through on its commitment to diverting half the territory's waste by next year.

I would also add that this morning there was a very lengthy and informative discussion with Community Services department staff. We had lots of things to discuss and we would have stayed longer, had time permitted. We had to get ready to get in here and get ready for the afternoon session. We do look forward to further conversation in the Community Services debate when it does come forward over this sitting.

Before we go further, I would like to give an example of communities taking action to make Yukon that much greener. I'll start with Mount Lorne, a community that I am very proud to represent. Through the passion of the people who run the transfer station near the Robinson subdivision, Mount Lorne has already met and surpassed their 50-percent waste diversion. Under the conscientious leadership of Mike Bailie, the Mount Lorne transfer station is a shining example of what rural recycling and waste management can look like.

Imagine turning right off the highway on your way into Whitehorse — I do this most every day for 27 years and used to look at that place when it was called a dump burning. Today it is different. You pass through the gates and are met with a very clear vision of what is supposed to be placed and where. There is a lineup of clearly marked bins, garbage, compost, non-refundables, metals, paper, plastic, even a bin for e-waste.

There's a building with multiple rooms that hold a beautifully organized free store, a place where you can drop off your loved items and leave with new-found treasures. I've taken a few home and they're there; I use them. I wear some of them, but I always buy new underwear. That's very important.

We'll get back to the task at hand here.

You can even drop off your refundables and collect your cash on the site. That's really great because a lot of people in the rural areas — we're speaking unincorporated. I believe that's the only one where you can actually do that. They always have to bring it a long distance and it's very convenient.

The Mount Lorne transfer station even has its own cardboard balers. Imagine that. I was there with Mike and he showed me them. He repairs them. He's a MacGyver kind of guy and he'll get it working. Once they have all of this together, they are committed. Once they collect all of the recyclables and have a full trailer-load, they then transfer these collected recyclables to Whitehorse. They also want to share their knowledge and successes with other communities and community members. They welcome site visits, information sharing, and advice to anyone who wants it. Mount Lorne isn't the only community taking action to divert waste. Marsh Lake takes great pride in their transfer station. It is a little tricky getting up that road because it gets washboard, so I only say this — maybe the Member for Kluane is listening — maybe we could get the grader there a little bit more frequently to grade that hill because it doesn't take long, with the high traffic going up to the Marsh Lake transfer station, to bounce waste back out on to the road.

The driver backs up, picks it up, puts it back and it is brought up the hill. I know when I have been at the LACs, they do really appreciate it when that grader makes its way to Marsh Lake.

I see the Minister for Highways and Public Works jotting maybe some of this down and we could have good news happening for Marsh Lake.

I would also like to say that, for the last three years, the tendering of contracts at transfer stations has been a bit patchy at best. Contractors are asked to be patient, and I've heard this from some that there are times when the contractors will continue fulfilling the obligations, waiting for payment for the work that they've done and still no renewed contract in place. I know this isn't happening always, but it is something that I believe we should respect — that those of us, whenever we are wanting someone to do work for us, put out tendering contracts in a timely fashion and pay in a timely fashion. What it has caused —

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

Debate on Motion No. 723 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 164

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, October 30, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

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

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Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
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Jan Stick	Official Opposition House Leader Riverdale South
Kevin Barr	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes
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Kate White	Takhini-Kopper King

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, October 30, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: Before starting with the Order Paper, the Chair wishes to inform the House of a change that has been made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 711, standing in the name of the Hon. Premier, has been removed from the Order Paper as the action requested in the motion has been taken.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Hon. Mr. Graham: I rise in the House today to recognize October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. According to the BC Cancer Foundation, breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosis in Canada for women over the age of 20 years, with one in nine women expected to develop breast cancer at some point in their life. Men also are not immune to this disease, Mr. Speaker, with an estimated 210 males this year in Canada being diagnosed.

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, both the incidence and death rate of those with breast cancer have decreased over the last 20 years. This reduction in death rates reflects the impact of screening improvements such as mammography and encouraging men and women to practice breast awareness. This means becoming familiar with the geography of our own bodies so that we can recognize changes in our breasts. It also reflects the growing awareness and willingness of women, and of the public in general, to begin to talk about things that were previously considered taboo.

While much work is being done to increase the rates of detection and treatment of breast cancer, there is still much work left to do, which is why organizations such as the Canadian Cancer Society encourage donations to help fund research to outsmart this disease. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of local organizations such as Run for Mom Yukon and the Mardi Bras. Run for Mom is a family-friendly run and walk held every Mother's Day along the Millennium Trail. The funds raised from this event stay entirely in the Yukon and have been put toward purchasing diagnostic equipment such as the digital mammography machine currently in use at the Whitehorse General Hospital.

Mardi Bras is another local fundraiser for Karen's Fund. Karen Wiederkehr was a young Yukon woman, wife and mother who died of breast cancer. She wanted her legacy to be a quiet comfortable place for cancer patients to undergo

chemo treatments. Her husband, Jack, made that wish come true with Karen's Room, a comfortable room in the Whitehorse General Hospital for patients to receive their chemotherapy treatments.

Karen's other wish was to find a way to help those women who were experiencing financial stress, while undergoing treatment for breast cancer. Mardi Bras is an evening of music, dancing and entertainment that raises money to go toward this fund. To date, Karen's Fund has supported 84 Yukon women, and this year's event raised close to \$25,000, which, in the simplest terms, means that many more Yukon women can be supported through this fund.

These examples show how community involvement can help support women and their families as they battle breast cancer. While it is encouraging to see that the incidence of breast cancer is decreasing, I am sure that every member in the House here today has known a woman diagnosed with breast cancer, which is why we continue to support organizations such as these to help fight this disease.

Ms. Stick: I too rise on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to Breast Cancer Awareness Month. I don't imagine that there's a single person in this House who has not been touched by breast cancer, whether it's a mother, a sister, a co-worker, a friend or a brother. We all know someone — and, yes, even men who have been diagnosed with breast cancer.

In Yukon, as in the rest of Canada, one in nine women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. The good news, however, is that fewer women are dying from breast cancer, and some of those reasons include earlier detection, regular mammography screening, advances in screening technology, and improved treatments that lead to improved cures and outcomes.

We are fortunate in Yukon to have many examples of groups of volunteers and organizations doing their part to increase awareness, to fund research, to help fund new screening technology tools and to support individuals facing breast cancer. We are a caring community and one that takes action.

I would like to recognize some of those individuals and groups, and I know that I will have missed or forgotten some, and for that I sincerely apologize because everything that is being done to raise awareness, support research, and assist individuals and their families needs to be recognized and celebrated.

Every summer we watch from the banks of the river just outside of this building as the Paddlers Abreast team pushes off to Dawson City in the Yukon River Quest. This team is made up of women who are breast cancer survivors. They train and paddle together to celebrate their survival, remember and honour friends, and show their strength and determination to keep moving forward, even under the most difficult circumstances. They've been doing this since 2001.

Many other Yukoners volunteer, participate in and have fun at the Mardi Bras, an annual fundraiser organized by women to raise money that stays in the Yukon for Karen's

Fund. This fund can be accessed by women with breast cancer in Yukon, including Atlin and Lower Post, B.C. This fund helps to ease some of the unanticipated financial costs of breast cancer treatment. This year the Mardi Bras event, Leather and Lace, raised well over \$13,000.

Every Mother's Day, many families, teams, men, women, children, even dogs, participate in the Run for Mom. The money raised at this event stays in the Yukon and assists in the purchase of better diagnostic equipment. In 2009, the new digital mammography unit was purchased for close to \$700,000, and all of that money was raised through the Run for Mom. Monies raised at the Run for Mom also go to provide information to women going for mammograms, and it helps support the Paddlers Abreast, just to name a few.

Breast cancer will touch all of us, possibly more than once. I want to thank all those volunteers who give so much of their time and their skills to raise our awareness, to raise funds, to have fun and to continue to support those individuals, their families and friends who have been diagnosed with breast cancer.

In recognition of Autism Awareness Month

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise in the House today on behalf of all members and as a parent of a child with autism to ask members to join me in recognizing October as Autism Awareness Month.

Autism spectrum disorder, also referred to as "ASD" or simply "autism" is a neurological disorder that causes developmental disability. Autism affects the way the brain functions, resulting in difficulties with communication and social interaction, and unusual patterns of behaviour, activities and interests.

The term "spectrum" refers to a continuum of severity or developmental impairment. For instance, this can refer to the number or type of symptoms an individual has or the age of onset. Autism affects individuals from all racial, ethnic and social backgrounds and from all income and education levels.

The cause of autism is still unknown. Research is focusing on areas such as genetics, pre- and post-natal brain development, environmental factors and viral infections. While we don't yet know the cause of autism, what we do know is that an accurate early diagnosis improves outcomes by ensuring the appropriate educational supports, treatments or interventions are established.

To help ensure an early and accurate diagnosis, Health and Social Services provides funding to the Child Development Centre, which coordinates the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder in preschool-age children. We also offer the family supports for children with disabilities program, which provides services to children with disabilities such as autism and their families from birth to age 19.

I would like to acknowledge the work of Autism Yukon, an organization that I co-founded in raising awareness of autism. Autism Yukon plays an important role in providing information and education to families and service providers.

Lastly, I would like to recognize the professionals, the current Minister Health and Social Services and past ministers

of Health and Social Services, as well as parents and caregivers who have worked diligently over the last few years to put services in place to ensure the best possible outcome for those living with autism spectrum disorder.

Autism is a disorder that needs our attention, it needs our awareness and it needs our understanding, not only during Autism Awareness Month, but throughout the year.

In recognition of A Safe Place program

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to pay tribute to A Safe Place. A safe place — it's a phrase that evokes many images and feelings. I imagine it's a phrase with more interpretations and understandings than people here in this room today.

What is safe? Is it freedom from imminent harm, protection from threats and abuse, violence and despair? Or is it something more: a right to security, to acceptance, to support and caring, to respect and dignity? What is place? Is it a physical entity like a room? Is it social standing like knowing one's place? Is it something more: a right to shelter, to a home, to community and friendship, to a sense of belonging?

When we think of a safe place, do we think of an individual feeling or a social destination? Victoria Faulkner's Women's Centre and the Yukon Status of Women's Council might argue that it's both. Since their jointly offered program, A Safe Place, was inaugurated on December 20, 2013, these women's organizations have provided a safe place for women and their children when other supportive agencies are closed or felt to be unsafe. They foster trust and provide referrals to other services, support and safety for women who have fallen through the cracks.

What may appear to be such a simple service is really so much more. A Safe Place offers a needed after-hours and weekend drop-in program provided by facilitators trained in counselling. It offers nutritious meals to women and their children, targeting women experiencing precarious housing and food insecurity in Whitehorse. It offers vulnerable women a place to gather, to develop relationships and provide much-needed social interaction for women who are isolated and who might be struggling.

A Safe Place is the spirit of advocacy and dignity. It works for social justice and change. It supports gender equity. The value of A Safe Place is clear as both a personal feeling and social destination. The number of women accessing the service has increased throughout the project's lifetime, and when program funding became scarce, Yukoners responded with resounding support, providing more than \$4,500 to keep A Safe Place up and running.

This project arose from a study on repairing the net, and that's just what it does. It is initiatives such as this — motivated by tenets of dignity and respect for all in community — that help us repair and grow. It is with no doubt that A Safe Place is as important to the individuals accessing its services as for the community to which these women and children belong.

I rise today with hope that this program is given the wings to continue. I rise with gratitude, with sincere thanks and with endless admiration for the community work that is being done through A Safe Place, as well as with the utmost respect and appreciation for the women and children it services.

Mr. Silver: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Liberal Party to also acknowledge A Safe Place.

Since last December, A Safe Place, a program run in conjunction with the Yukon Status of Women Council, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre and the Second Opinion Society, has been helping women and children with a warm meal and a roof over their heads. What had started as a pilot project had quickly grown into a necessity for the communities. A Safe Place provides a drop-in program, after-hours and on weekends where other services are not available, and it is targeted toward women who lack stable housing, have mental health issues, or are just having a hard time providing enough food for their children and for themselves.

The program comes as a response to the Repairing the Holes in the Net, a research initiative undertaken by the Yukon Status of Women Council, which identified the need for this program. The program runs for a reasonable cost of \$6,000 a month and provides support for eight to 10 women a night.

In a perfect world, Mr. Speaker, we would not need A Safe Place, but unfortunately we do not live in a perfect world and I hope that the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre is able to get the funding it needs to continue to support some of the community's most vulnerable. Members of the community can help the cause by donating to their crowd funding page at www.gofundme.com/bps2yo.

In recognition of Dana Meise

Ms. White: I rise on behalf on the Assembly to acknowledge the phenomenal achievement of Dana Meise. Dana is a forest technologist by trade, but an explorer and an adventurer by action. He had a dream of seeing Canada in a way that has not been done since the first peoples led the regional explorers over our vast landscape. His goal is to walk and canoe the entire length of the Trans Canada Trail. In 1992, in celebration of Canada's 125th birthday, a project was initiated and brought about the creation of one of the world's longest networks of multi-use recreational trails that, once completed, will connect Canada from coast to coast to coast.

The Trans Canada Trail will stretch nearly 24,000 kilometres from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic oceans. It will wind through every province and territory, linking Canadians in nearly 1,000 communities. The hope is to have this trail network completed in time for Canada's 150th birthday.

This trail system is made up of nearly 500 individual trails, each with unique and varied features. It is used by legions of Canadians for day trips or multi-day adventures. The trail offers countless opportunities to explore and discover the hidden gems of the Canadian landscape. It is designed to

connect our history, geography, beauty and, most of all, our communities.

No one person knows this trail and its treasures better than Dana. On May 6, 2008, Dana took his very first steps on "The Great Hike" and, for anyone who is near a computer, you should really check it out. His journey started in Cape Spear, Newfoundland, Canada's most eastern point. After countless adventures, the occasional mishap and six years of hiking, on December 17, 2013, he arrived in Clover Point, Victoria, on the coast of the Pacific Ocean. This marked the end of his east-west crossing of the Trans Canada Trail.

Dana completed the 16,500-kilometre journey across Canada, setting the record for the longest hike in the world, on the world's longest trail. As of this year, he has covered a total distance of 19,300 kilometres, or roughly 30,880,000 steps. He will complete the journey north of Tuktoyaktuk, becoming the first person to walk to all three of Canada's oceans. Dana has volunteered countless hours across the country, motivating and inspiring kids, one school classroom at a time.

This year, he was a keynote speaker for We Day in Ottawa — an organization meant to get the youth involved in community service — where he spoke in front of 16,000 kids live and to millions of others who watched the livestream around the world.

This year, *Canadian Geographic* named his journey the "expedition of the year". Since then, he has teamed up with them to share stories of everyday Canadians in Canada with their readers. Dana has been named a trail champion and featured in the *Globe and Mail* for the Trans Canada Trail and, if like me, you love the *Vinyl Cafe*, you might have heard his interview with Stuart McLean as he was presented the Arthur Award. This award recognizes outstanding Canadians who contribute to the colourful fabric of our country.

Dana has plans to share his epic journey with both a book and a film, to be released in 2017, to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday. His journey has been a dream come true. He has explored the country in a way that most of us never will, visited communities along the way, made new friends, all the while taking in all the knowledge possible and then sharing his experiences of Canada with other Canadians.

You could say that he's writing the definitive love letter to Canada, one that he hopes is a lasting contribution for the Canadians of today, tomorrow and the generations to come.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Dana to the Assembly. Thank you for coming.

Applause

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Stick: I would like to invite the House to welcome Mike Hodgson, a resident of Teslin and also one of the many people who have hosted Dana on his journey across Canada.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 81: *Court Security Act* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I move that Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Minister of Justice that Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 81 agreed to

Bill No. 83: *Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Act and the Legislative Assembly Retirement Allowances Act, 2007* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 83, entitled *Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Act and the Legislative Assembly Retirement Allowances Act, 2007*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 83, entitled *Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Act and the Legislative Assembly Retirement Allowances Act, 2007*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 83 agreed to

Bill No. 75: *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I move that Bill No. 75, entitled *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission that Bill No. 75, entitled *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 75 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced?
 Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to spend the remaining northern housing trust fund dollars on affordable housing.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre to ensure funding for the A Safe Place program continues.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to investigate the personal and social consequences and spillover economic impacts of unaffordable childcare on Canadian families; and

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to support affordable, high-quality childcare through a universal childcare program and recognize that:

(1) high-quality childcare spaces are scarce and have long wait-lists;

(2) over two-thirds of Canadian women with children under five years old are in the workforce;

(3) universal childcare helps parents save, reduces poverty and supports healthy families;

(4) high-quality childhood education improves success in school; and

(5) universal programs are more resilient, of higher quality and less costly to implement than means-targeted programs.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT the Yukon government acknowledges northern, rural and remote communities are at risk of lower sexual and reproductive health outcomes than other Canadian jurisdictions;

THAT the Yukon government recognizes access to high-quality sexual and reproductive health has a demonstrated impact on improving health and reducing health inequities;

THAT the Yukon government develops and adopts a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health strategy for the territory for the purpose of tracking health outcomes, service efficacy, and service efficiency over time and across the population;

THAT this strategy prioritizes prevention, develops strong partnerships and working relationships between government, health and community sector organizations; and

THAT interventions and services be designed, delivered and evaluated with the needs of vulnerable and marginalized populations fully considered and applied.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: **First Nations/government relations**

Ms. Hanson: Yukoners ask me why this government seems so intent on alienating First Nation governments. Yukoners cannot understand why a government chooses court battles with Yukon First Nations rather than building respectful relationships. Fortunately for the Premier there is a lifeline: the Yukon Forum. The Yukon Forum, established in 2005 under the *Cooperation in Governance Act* was designed as a space to discuss and resolve issues of common concern. The Yukon Forum offers a perfect opportunity for this government to improve relations with First Nations, and yet it goes unused. The Yukon Forum was supposed to meet four times a year. Unfortunately, this Premier has only participated in one Yukon Forum since his election.

The question is: Why has the Premier given up on using the Yukon Forum, which could help improve the soured relationship his government has created with Yukon First Nation governments?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I have said in this House many times, this government continues to work with all levels of government on a daily basis, making great accomplishments and moving forward items, services and programs that are important for all Yukoners.

On top of Yukon Forum, we have other methods of communicating and working with First Nations. One that was initiated by me and the First Nation chiefs is an informal meeting.

Since we agreed to an informal meeting, we've had many — five or six, I believe, since May of 2013 — where there is an opportunity to sit down on an informal basis and chat about opportunities, chat about concerns, have a conversation about specific issues and ensure that there is a forum where we can look at what opportunities exist, but also that we can have a better understanding of each other. Because that is how, Mr. Speaker, in the end, we are able to move forward on some things that before that were difficult to achieve.

Ms. Hanson: The government is fond of repeating that all is well. They get along with everyone, including First Nation governments. The trouble is that the only one buying that line is the Yukon Party. The Premier's decision to follow the federal Conservatives' marching orders with respect to YESAA demonstrates yet again that he cannot work with First Nation governments. A Premier who really and truly understood the relationships created under the UFA would use the Yukon Forum to improve relations. Instead, he chooses to ignore this opportunity and now we have First Nation governments threatening legal action to protect their rights as equal partners under the final agreements.

Why has the Premier not used the Yukon Forum to reach out to First Nation governments, rather than sending us further down a confrontational path?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Through the consultation process with YESAA, there were 76 recommendations that came forward — 73 of 76 recommendations were unanimously supported by all parties to the agreement. There were almost seven years of consultation. Yukon First Nations have guaranteed participation in the YESAA process; they nominate three out of seven positions on the YESA Board. Yukon only has two positions and Canada has two positions as well. If there is ever a conflict between YESAA and the final agreements, it clearly states in the YESA Act that the final agreements will prevail.

This is important legislation for all Yukoners. This isn't just about mineral development — when we want to build a recreational centre, when we want to build a water treatment plant, when we want to build any development, it involves YESAA. This is important; it affects all Yukoners and, with fair and consistent legislation across this country, it creates the opportunity for us to be competitive in the rest of the country. That means creating jobs for Yukoners and that's important for this government.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, it gets kind of tiresome. Everybody knows there were 73 amendments agreed to. It's the surprise ones that this government and the federal government sprang on First Nations that have caused the problem. The Yukon Forum was an opportunity to work with First Nations. The mandate is to discuss issues of common concern and identify opportunities and common priorities for cooperative action and to formulate directions that the members will endeavour to reflect.

Given the clear evidence of this government's breach of the relationship with First Nation governments, you would think the Premier would realize the opportunity provided by the Yukon Forum and would jump at the chance to reach out to the governments he has alienated.

When will the Premier reach out to First Nation governments to seek a meeting of the Yukon Forum?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I have to again remind the members opposite in both parties that, throughout the YESAA process, the Yukon government shared all of its comments with all the parties that were at the table. In fact, there were thousands of hours of consultation. It is because — we hear heckling from the Liberal leader — a bit disappointing. We did see in Ottawa, in the Senate, the unanimous support of the YESAA amendments, and that included all of the Liberal senators.

Sadly, the Liberals in the Yukon don't see the same importance and opportunity that exists here in Yukon with this amended legislation.

Question re: *Motor Vehicles Act* amendments

Ms. Moorcroft: Earlier this week, the government introduced amendments to the *Motor Vehicles Act*. Snowmobiles are one of the types of vehicles that will be regulated when operating on Yukon highways or maintained roadways. The Trek over the Top international snowmobile run and the Alcan 200 race are annual snowmobile events that have a positive impact on the Haines Junction and Dawson City tourism industries. Many of the participants are American and are unlikely to have their snowmobile registered in Yukon.

Will the changes to the *Motor Vehicles Act* have an impact on the snowmobilers who plan to compete in the Trek over the Top or the Alcan 200 race?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: The Yukon government is committed to taking care of the Yukon and the safety of all Yukoners and all those people who participate in any of these types of events. We know that Yukoners love to spend time outside enjoying this environment. I'm an active participant in the Alcan 200 snowmobile race. I've been around that race for 20-some years, helping organize and/or whatever.

When it comes to both specific events, the requirements that come forward from the actual event-holders are helmets and applicable safety equipment. It's required when you sign up for it.

Ms. Moorcroft: Where the race may be affected is with the amendments that deal with registration and licensing. The Trek over the Top has successfully run for more than 20 years

and is promoted by Travel Yukon. In Alaska, the Alaska Trailblazers encourages its members to sign up and join the fun, which includes two evenings of entertainment in Dawson City. The Klondike Visitors Association and the Dawson City Sled Dawgs welcome the participants and host numerous events for the riders who stay in the Dawson area for a full two days, taking part in the various activities.

Can the minister tell me: Were the organizations who plan and host events like Trek over the Top and Alcan 200 consulted about the proposed amendments to the act that will affect them, and how would the minister ensure that these events can continue to contribute to Yukon's tourism economy?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, these changes do not affect any of these organizations. When we consulted —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Exactly. I thank the member opposite for helping me with answering.

The operators who choose to ride on these trails are participating in these events, as the government believes these people are ultimately responsible for how they operate their equipment. Of course, you're going to see through this act that helmets are required for all snowmobile riders and passengers anywhere in the territory or for anyone, off-road or on-road, who are under the age of 16. These event holders have rules and regulations. They have requirements for insurance that we require on our portion of the roads when they get their road right-of-way permit and they have it listed in the requirements to enter and participate in the function.

Question re: Affordable housing

Mr. Silver: I have a question for the Premier.

Many Yukoners no longer trust the government when it comes to affordable housing, and with good reason. They have been burned by this government too often and now they have no confidence in the minister. Over the last three years, we have seen this government's lack of action result in criticism from housing advocates, the Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Yukon Communities, and several businesses as well.

We also saw the City of Whitehorse take the extraordinary step of asking for the removal of the current minister because of his unwillingness to work with them on affordable housing. In a statement yesterday, the Premier carefully avoided directly backing the minister, so I will ask him this question: Does the Premier have confidence in the housing minister?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: We know agreement on challenging issues is not always possible, but it is our job as elected officials to solve problems and not to create new ones. Now the approach that was taken by the City this week was disappointing, because really what it does is it polarizes and it personalizes issues that are important to this territory.

Yukoners expect their leaders to work together to find solutions. Ultimately, I'm confident we will find ways to move ahead together, because all of us are working on behalf of Yukoners.

Mr. Silver: This is nothing personal. The business sector removes CEOs all the time. It's about effectiveness and it's about the best fit. Clearly the Premier believes that this minister is the best fit, so I will move on.

The minister now has yet another new plan for this money that was hatched on the eve of this Fall Sitting. At a meeting this week, the government presented his plan which is focused almost exclusively on social and not affordable housing. This summer, the Association of Yukon Communities passed a resolution urging the government to meet — and I quote: "...as a matter of urgency with the intention of resurrecting the recently abandoned northern housing trust affordable rental housing initiative, bringing much-needed housing to Whitehorse."

Why is the government abandoning the idea of using this funding for creating more affordable housing and at the same time ignoring Association of Yukon Communities' request?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, I would like to begin by noting that we have continued to work with partners in this area, including the significant work that has been done on the housing action plan that has involved multiple stakeholders, including municipal governments, First Nation governments and representatives, and representatives at Yukon segments of business communities as well as representatives of NGOs. We have established through that process a community advisory committee and a significantly larger number of people have participated in working groups and given us their ideas.

The specific consultation to which the Liberal leader refers to on Monday was in fact consultation on potential options being considered by government. The very reason that we were having that consultation is in fact to hear feedback from the community advisory committee to the housing action plan, who were all invited to that meeting, as well as from key stakeholders in the business community, as well as NGOs who had been invited to the meeting. We will consider all of the input received from those stakeholders and from governments through their designated representatives on the community advisory committee to the housing action plan.

Mr. Silver: This spring the government tried to make a big deal out of the fact that the Yukon Housing Corporation was in charge of the northern housing trust money. It was supposed to be the Yukon Housing Corporation Board that made the decision on the money and how it was going to be spent, but instead, at the last minute, the minister jumped in, made a political decision and pulled the plug.

The new plan hatched this week also puts the minister in charge of how the money will be spent — once again, cutting the arm's-length board out of the picture and marginalizing the Association of Yukon Communities as well, in one fell swoop.

Why is the government so unwilling to let the experts at the Housing Corporation make decisions on this funding?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What the Liberal leader is not aware of or is choosing not to reflect is in fact that the options that were shared with the members of the community advisory committee to the housing action plan and stakeholders from the business sector and NGOs were options that were

developed through the board of the Housing Corporation and were presented to us and were then taken out for consultation. In fact, the Chair of the Housing Corporation Board and the president were also at the meeting with me. The board of the Housing Corporation is discussing what was heard on Monday today at a meeting that I believe may still be ongoing. It was, if memory serves, scheduled for this morning.

Contrary to what the member is asserting, the board of the Housing Corporation is very much involved in this process. The Yukon government, my colleagues and I will continue to work cooperatively with all involved, and that includes if there are areas where we can improve how we are doing things. We will certainly listen to that input and we will make decisions on that basis after listening to that feedback.

Question re: Ross River waste management

Mr. Barr: This summer, 20 dump trucks brought a convoy of waste to the Ross River waste management facility. Despite a Yukon-wide ban on the practice, much of that waste was subsequently burned. In a reply last month to my letter concerning the burning, the Minister indicated that no bids were received to manage the Ross River landfill. The people of Ross River are concerned about this situation at the landfill. We need to know what happens next. What are the concrete steps being taken to find new bids to manage the Ross River landfill and to ensure there is no more burning at the site?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would like to thank the member for raising this issue with me. As I noted to him in my response, the issue in fact was raised immediately with me by my colleague, the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin. The decisions and operations of the facility are dealt with at an operation level. Of course, the dumping of waste there — it was not something I was advised of, nor should I have been prior to it occurring — but when it comes to the lighting of it, in fact what staff have assured me is that the lighting was not done — the ignition of the facility, pardon me — by staff. They have assured me that they do not know who put a match to it, but that we are indeed complying with the permit requirements set out that, in fact, this government put in place to end the open burning of solid waste at all Yukon landfills.

Mr. Barr: Burning our waste belongs in the past, along with sending our recycling to the landfill. Unfortunately, we've had to do both in the last year, as Raven Recycling closed its public drop-off. On top of that, several weeks ago, we began hearing reports from Watson Lake that an increase in fees at the municipal transfer station is causing residents to take their garbage to Upper Liard, overloading their facility.

As we connect the dots, there's a disturbing lack of leadership on the part of the Minister of Community Services. It's approaching dysfunctional. Can the minister tell us why, despite no progress in finding managers for the Ross River landfill, the shuttering of Raven Recycling's public drop-off and the Watson Lake garbage two-step, Yukoners should still have confidence in this minister?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, I would like to thank my colleague, the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for advising me that the member had his facts wrong in his previous question.

None of the Carmacks debris was burned at the Ross River facility. I thank my colleague for that information.

When it comes to municipalities choosing to set tipping fees, it is a matter that is up to the municipality. They make those decisions. This government does not intervene or supersede their authority to make those choices around tipping fees.

When it comes to the Town of Watson Lake — we have written to Watson Lake on numerous occasions. I have sat down with mayor and council. My colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, met with them, I believe, two weeks ago to discuss matters, including our interest in seeing Watson Lake become a regional landfill. We have offered both O&M and capital funding to them, and we continue to be very interested in reaching a mutually agreeable relationship with Watson Lake for that purpose.

When it comes to Raven Recycling, as I reminded the member before, I will reiterate that the request for us to more than double the diversion credit that Raven asked for and received last year — the recent request was made only last month. They asked us to increase the diversion credit from \$150 a tonne to \$330 a tonne. We remain open to considering that, along with other options but, as I stated to the member yesterday, we've asked them for a breakdown of costs, but have yet to receive it.

Mr. Barr: I'll be happy to show the photos taken at the time of the waste burning in Ross River.

More excuses from the minister, Mr. Speaker. The million-dollar question is still on the table. We've spent the better part of the week asking this government's point man on communities about waste management, about municipal relations, about getting the job done when the chorus of voices speaking out over his inaction becomes louder each day.

I would like for the Minister of Community Services to spare us the talking points. Yukoners have been asking all week long — and we just want to know: Despite the setbacks in waste diversion of this year, does the government stand by its election platform commitment to divert 50 percent of the Yukon's waste by next year? Just answer the question — yes or no.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, the member called on me to not follow the talking points. As the member should see, I'm talking here, largely without the use of notes. The member is sticking to his script, and he is much more reasonable when he is not following his script.

I appreciate the member's concern. What I will point out to the member again is that this government last year, at the joint request of Raven Recycling and the other recycling processor, implemented a diversion credit for waste diverted from landfills. In fact, that request last year was for \$150 as a combined credit, including the City of Whitehorse's portion. We did exactly what they asked for.

In September, Raven asked us to more than double that credit and has not yet provided the information they

committed to provide. We are working with the City of Whitehorse on jointly assessing options for ensuring long-term solutions that benefit Yukoners. Through the good work of my colleague, the Minister of Environment, in fact they are currently consulting on increases to the fees under the beverage container regulations and designated material regulations, which would provide increased revenues to recycling processors and community depots. I encourage all Yukoners who have not yet commented to comment on-line and provide their views in this proposal.

Question re: Teacher staffing, on-call status

Mr. Tredger: The Department of Education is set to implement a new way to manage teacher on-call scheduling in Whitehorse. Instead of having the school secretary call the teachers, a centralized system will simply work its way down a list.

This ill-conceived project is leaving many parents and educators anxious. There will no longer be a way to match the right teacher with the right classroom. A machine will assign the next teacher at the top of the list. There is no such thing as a plug-and-play teacher. Each educator has strong subjects, unique skills, age groups and preferences, and each school has relationships with the teachers it knows. Did the minister consult with the front-line staff, the Association of School Administrators and Yukon Teachers Association before deciding to implement this new system?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: This would appear to be a personnel-related matter. It's not something that I am familiar with. It's certainly something that I would endeavour to get back to the member on.

Mr. Tredger: This new plan is a solution in search of a problem. This isn't Vancouver or Toronto. There is no need to centralize a system at the expense of the ability to find the right substitute teacher for the right classroom. As it stands now, when an on-call teacher is needed, school secretaries call substitutes based on their experience with the teacher, their knowledge of the teacher's preferred subjects and their experience with the classroom in question. Why is this government trying to overrule this well-oiled system with another centralized structure? Can the minister tell this House what contingency plans and safeguards are in place to ensure that, no matter how this system performs, every classroom has a teacher?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As per my recent response, I will endeavour to look into this situation and to consult with our department officials. It is a personnel-related matter. We certainly very much value all of our professional working staff in each of our classrooms in Yukon schools, and we will continue to improve the delivery of Yukon education in support of Yukon learners. As I mentioned, we will continue. I will certainly endeavour to make the commitment to the member opposite that we will look into the situation, but clearly I do not have that information at my fingertips.

Mr. Tredger: I know this information has been shared for school councils and I know that the minister has been attending the school council meetings.

Mr. Speaker, if this new scheme works as well as the new, improved bus schedule, there will be three teachers in one class and none in the other two.

Yukon has seen the impact of what happens when the government implements a top-down system without proper planning. The school calendar debacle and the school bus fiasco are but two examples. The minister has not consulted with the Association of School Administrators or the Yukon Teachers Association before informing school councils that they are going to roll out this automatic system.

Will the minister stop this nonsense and at least hold off implementing the new system until the Association of School Administrators, the YTA and our teachers have been given a chance for valid input?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I know the member opposite perhaps didn't hear my responses clearly, but I will reiterate that for the member opposite. In fact, we will endeavour to look into the situation.

The member is correct — I have been attending many, if not most, of all school council meetings among our 28 respective schools. I can tell you that this issue has not been raised with me. In fact, what we are talking about during the school council meetings is the rural equity action plan and how we are working to bridge the gaps between rural schools and urban schools, partnerships with First Nations, individual alternative learning programs, student support services, student attendance, early childhood programs, literacy strategies, physical literacy programs, English language learners. We have been discussing French language programs, opportunities for post-secondary education — again, there's a lot to talk about in education and we're very much focused on improving the educational outcomes for all students, and that is what I will continue to do.

Question re: Remuneration for acting chief coroner

Ms. Moorcroft: Acting chief coroners provide important services to Yukoners, both by providing their services when investigating causes of death and by the flexibility they offer to the coroner's office. It has been brought to our attention that a former acting chief coroner has still not received payment for the services that he provided while carrying out his duties. This situation was raised with the minister over a year ago and has yet to be resolved.

Why has the minister not addressed this situation in over a year?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for her question. She raises a good point and this is something that department officials have been looking at throughout this year. I have to say that I just had an opportunity to sit down with the coroner and get a bit of a tour of the coroner's office and the morgue. I was touched by the kind of work they provide in our community — not just Whitehorse, but with the community coroners.

I also had an opportunity to speak and spend some time at the coroners conference last weekend. The work that they do is invaluable for Yukon. This is something that we are looking

into. This is something that I hope we have a solution for fairly soon, but there will be some work that needs to be done.

Ms. Moorcroft: The minister's handling of this issue is a real shame. People accept appointments to become acting chief coroner because they want to contribute an important service to the community, and it's unfortunate that the minister has not reciprocated that goodwill. This is not limited to only one case. The minister's disregard for acting chief coroners is not only disrespectful to the work that they do, but it compromises their impartiality to conduct their duties. A key component of an independent office is that they are adequately compensated. To make acting chief coroners have to constantly petition this government for a paycheque jeopardizes the independent nature of their position.

Does the minister understand that when his government withholds pay from public office holders who must remain independent, it can appear to harm the impartiality of the office?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I don't think the member opposite's statement is clearly representative of the facts. The current legislation that we have working now does not provide for compensation for the acting chief coroners. That's something that I have directed the Department of Justice a number of months ago to start looking at so we can move forward so that when they do that good work, they are compensated for it.

I can't wave a magic wand and go beyond the current law — the current legislation — and do things that I'm not lawfully supposed to do. As I said in my previous statement, the work of the coroners — not just the chief coroner in Whitehorse — but all community coroners throughout the territory do a tremendous service to each of their respective communities — a lot of time. Words almost don't describe what they have to deal with in their professional capacities on a daily basis. I want to thank the coroners from this government for the work they do.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, I've been asking this minister for three years to examine the *Coroners Act* and regulations and bring them up to the date. He can do that if the political will is there.

This is not a small delay in payment. The acting chief coroner has not been paid for more than a year now. We have seen that this government doesn't respect the public service. They attempt to muzzle teachers, they overuse auxiliary on-call employees, they keep temporary teachers in a long-term limbo and they stand in this House and hide behind public servants, rather than be accountable to the Yukon public. But to not pay the acting chief coroners, who provide a difficult and an essential public service, is completely astonishing, even coming from this government.

When will the minister take this issue seriously and resolve it once and for all?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'm not even going to address the member's statements that she just made about respecting public service. I think if we go on record and look back in Hansard, we will see where the lack of respect truly comes from.

Getting back to the coroners — the issue at hand here — I have directed the Department of Justice to sit down with coroners and the stakeholders involved, to look at solutions — how we can move forward with potential amendments to legislation and ensure that people who are standing in for our chief coroner are properly and duly paid.

This is something that we're working on. Again, I just want to extend this government's thanks to the coroners throughout the territory for the very important work they do.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 82: Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 82, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Istchenko.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I move that Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Public Works that Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: First I would like to thank all those who prepared this bill for the time and effort that they put into it and the attention to detail. It wasn't easy and they did a very good job.

I also want to specifically thank the Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles for their work and research, enabling a Yukon voice in the territory-wide consultation that became the basis for these amendments.

Bill No. 82 clarifies elements of the *Motor Vehicles Act*, the MVA, that apply to off-road vehicles and snowmobiles and addresses the vast majority of the recommendations made by the Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles.

In order to regulate the activities of off-road vehicles, or more commonly known as ORVs, we must first define what an ORV is. For the purpose of these amendments, an off-road vehicle is defined as a vehicle that is designed or adapted for cross-country travel and, at this point in time, includes all-terrain vehicles, utility-terrain vehicles and motorized trail bikes. These amendments to the *Motor Vehicles Act* establish ORVs and snowmobiles as a specific class or type of vehicle under the act and regulates them together.

The amendments clarify the types of ORVs that are regulated under the act and the rules that apply to ORVs and the areas where those rules apply. The amendments address such issues as registration, liability insurance, helmet use and proper age, and clarify where these rules apply. In order to establish the area where the ORV and snowmobile regulations apply, the definition of "roadway" is clarified in the act and a

new definition of “maintained roadway” is added as part of these amendments.

This new definition defines the part of the highway where the ORV and snowmobile regulations apply. Essentially, ORV and snowmobile rules apply on the roadway portion of the Yukon government maintained highways, except those highways that have been specifically exempted under the act.

The highways that have been exempted from these amendments are community roads within the communities of Burwash, Beaver Creek, Carcross, Destruction Bay, Keno City, Old Crow, Pelly Crossing, Ross River and Upper Liard. The roadway portion is the area of the road that is designed for cars and trucks, the area between the curbs or the edges of the road. For the purpose of the ORV and snowmobile regulation, the roadway also includes any pullouts or rest areas that are attached to the road but does not include the ditches or cleared rights-of-way on either side of the road.

This bill allows for family outings and supports Yukon’s tradition and a way of life by allowing our Yukoners, at a young age, to start operating off-road vehicles. This definition will allow them the opportunity to operate an ORV in the right-of-way to access any unmaintained trail along that network of roads and trails.

Under these amendments, ORVs and snowmobiles that travel on or that cross over any maintained roadway are required to be registered annually and the owners are required to carry proof of liability insurance. There are also ORVs and snowmobiles that are not operated on or that do not cross over any maintained roadway — meaning that they are operated exclusively on trails in the backcountry — that will not require registration, liability or licence of operators.

Yukoners said they didn’t want rules made for the bigger centres like Whitehorse to apply to their smaller communities like Old Crow. We have heard you loud and clear, and we have made sure that these amendments meet the needs of all our communities right across the Yukon.

We have tailored these amendments so that the ORVs and snowmobiles are not regulated inside communities on community roads. If the mayor and council of a specific community feel the need for regulations in their community, they can choose to impose their own rules on ORVs and snowmobile operation within the community.

The government committed to amending the *Motor Vehicles Act* to address off-road vehicle safety concerns and the recommendations of the Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles, and we have done just that. This select committee recommended that legislation and regulation governing the use of off-road vehicles be inclusive and not exclude anyone to the benefit of another. The *Motor Vehicles Act* applies equally to everyone throughout the territory.

The select committee recommended consistency throughout all legislation and regulations governing the use of off-road vehicles in the territory. These amendments are consistent with the other existing legislation to the extent possible — these select committee recommendations and the legislation governing on-road use of ORVs be provided

through amendments to the *Motor Vehicles Act*. That’s what this bill does. It amends the *Motor Vehicles Act* to include provisions for regulating off-road vehicle use.

The select committee recommended that the Yukon government’s existing policy around the registration and on-road use of ORVs be preserved in legislation. These amendments meet this recommendation with respect to operating an ORV or snowmobile on a maintained roadway. The select committee further recommended that all off-road vehicles that travel on any Yukon road be subject to registration and liability insurance and that operators be required to have a valid Yukon operator’s licence. These amendments also meet this recommendation with respect to operating on a maintained roadway.

The select committee recommended that the definition of a highway in the *Motor Vehicles Act* be clarified and that the terms “on-road” and “off-road” be defined in the act. This bill amends the definition of a highway to include the roadway portion of the highway and goes on to define the maintained roadway as being the on-road area where the regulations apply. Outside of the maintained roadway is off-road, for the purpose of the ORV regulation.

The select committee recommended helmet use at all times for everyone under the age of 16 and for everyone operating an ORV on the road. These amendments meet the select committee’s recommendation to include helmet use requirements for snowmobile or ORV operators and passengers who are riding within the defined roadway area and at all times for anyone under the age of 16.

It is a proven fact that helmets save lives and it only makes sense that helmet use is now legislated for ORV users and their passengers.

Over the years, there has been a lot of media coverage and public discussion urging government to develop legislation to address Yukoners’ concerns about the safety of ORV and snowmobile activities. We have developed these amendments to the *Motor Vehicles Act* as a first step to improving safety and reducing the risks associated with ORVs and snowmobiles.

The select committee recommended government undertake an extensive advertising campaign that focuses on safe, responsible and respectful operation, as well as environmental stewardship. Earlier in this government’s mandate, the Department of Highways and Public Works and the Department of Environment undertook an education campaign that urges ORV operators to take safety precautions when operating their machines. These precautions include the use of proper helmet and protective riding gear, proper riding techniques, and making sure that operators and their machines are visible to others using the roads and trails.

Another important and common-sense approach is to reduce operating speeds to accommodate the terrain that you are driving your ORV or snowmobile on.

The select committee recommended government encourage and support voluntary driver training for off-road vehicles and snowmobile operators. Training by a qualified instructor is important for ORV operators — I think I’ve

spoken about this in the House before, and I am a trained ORV instructor — to ensure the safe handling techniques and proper trail etiquette is being followed. This government supports this recommendation and, in fact, this advice is included in the educational flyers that we distribute to local dealerships every spring.

I cannot stress enough the importance of a rider's personal responsibility, though, in ensuring safe driving habits. I would encourage responsible riding behaviour and courtesy for your neighbours, other trail riders and for every ORV and snowmobile operator within our vast territory.

While I speak of our vast territory, I also seek out every rider's commitment to respect the environment, to stay on the designated trails and to avoid damaging Yukon's fragile landscapes. It is important to maintain the beauty that makes Yukon unique and pristine and to remember the beauty is there for ORV riders and non-ORV riders to enjoy.

In concluding, an outdoor lifestyle is important to all Yukoners, and that includes using off-road vehicles and snowmobiles for work and play. Yukon government is addressing the concerns about ORV-related safety and responsibility so that this lifestyle can continue to be enjoyed by everyone everywhere.

This bill does achieve balance throughout the territory by respecting the views of both our Whitehorse residents and our rural residents. We listen to all Yukoners, including hunters, trappers, outfitters, wilderness tourism operators, guides and recreational users. These amendments improve the safety of ORV activities and clarify the responsibility of ORV users by requiring registration, licence, liability insurance for anyone operating an ORV or snowmobile within a maintained roadway, and require youth to wear helmets at all times when riding on an ORV or snowmobile. Having consistent rules around the use of ORVs and snowmobiles allows for both motorized and non-motorized trail users to enjoy their outdoor lifestyles. This bill provides for a realistic approach that considers enforcement capability, education campaigns, self-responsibility for all Yukoners and their communities.

To that note, I would really like to thank some of the organizers. The question came up earlier in the House today from the Member for Copperbelt South about some of the activities that happen and some of these non-profit groups that organize races, activities — the Klondike Snowmobile Association and many of the local organizations go out and do this stuff. I am encouraged to see how keen they are for helmet use and for making sure that they have the right gear on. I think that's pivotal. I think it starts at home. It starts at home at a young age. I believe that this is good for all Yukoners.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to speak to the *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act* at second reading.

The Official Opposition will be supporting this bill, although we are disturbed by the fact that there is so little substance in the amendments before us. The amendments before us are a step, as the minister said, toward regulating

snowmobiles and off-road vehicles, but this is a tiny step. I would like to thank the officials who gave us a briefing yesterday on the bill, both from the Legislative Counsel and the Department of Highways and Public Works.

The new provisions in the *Motor Vehicles Act* requiring that an operator hold a valid operator's licence and to register and insure snowmobiles and ATVs will only apply to off-road vehicles that are operated on roads, highways and maintained roads. This bill excludes any trails or roadways that are not maintained. It excludes ditches. It excludes trails. It excludes campgrounds. Managing off-road vehicles on highways and maintained roadways is only a tiny part of the overall concern that Yukoners have expressed. It's embarrassing to hear the minister say that it meets the select committee's recommendations.

I will speak more about those recommendations later and where this bill fails to respond appropriately.

These amendments do not address the need to manage ATVs in the Yukon wilderness. Certificates of registration are only required for snowmobiles and off-road vehicles when they are operated on maintained roadways. This includes licence plates. Visible licence plates are necessary and many people have advocated for that, but this government is not willing to require registration and licence plates for off-road vehicles if they are operated off a highway or maintained roadway.

Maintained roads in municipalities and in unincorporated communities are also excluded from the *Motor Vehicles Act* amendments. The City of Whitehorse has already exercised its bylaw-making authority to regulate the use of snowmobiles and off-road vehicles within city limits. Other municipalities may do the same. The Yukon Party government, however, is failing in leadership on this important matter.

During the 2011 election campaign, Trails Only Yukon Association sent letters to all candidates running, asking them four ATV-specific questions and informing them that their answers would be published. The four questions were: Should ATV use be managed in order to protect Yukon wilderness? Should new legislation and regulations be put in place to manage ATV use in the Yukon wilderness? Will you make new legislation and/or regulations to manage ATVs in Yukon wilderness a priority, if elected? If elected, will you bring forward legislation and/or regulatory changes to manage ATV use in the Yukon wilderness within your first mandate?

It is of interest to note that all candidates from all four parties answered "yes" to all four questions. All of the members elected to this Legislature answered "yes". The four specific initiatives regarding the issue of ATVs in the Yukon identified by the Trails Only Yukon Association were that: ATVs should be restricted to designated trails in the Yukon wilderness; that off-road vehicle legislation and regulations need to be created; that effective enforcement is essential, including identification of ATVs; and public education. These *Motor Vehicles Act* amendments do not fulfill the promise made by the Yukon Party prior to the last election to maintain and enhance the quality of Yukon's natural environment for

present and future generations. The Yukon Party has a failing grade in living up to its commitments.

The government has also failed to improve public safety. In these amendments, helmets are only required if the driver or passenger is under 16 years of age. According to these amendments, persons 17 years and older do not require helmets. Surely the highways minister does not believe that off-road vehicle accidents no longer occur after a person turns 17. The public and user groups have a big concern here, and I remind the minister that motorcycle drivers must wear a helmet no matter what age of driver or passenger. If a rider flips an all-terrain vehicle or a snow machine, age is no protection from head injuries. A helmet does that.

In 2011, the Canadian Medical Association passed a resolution calling for helmet laws for people riding ATVs or snowmobiles. The Yukon's chief medical officer of health said at the time that he hopes the Yukon government will toughen up helmet laws for ATV riders. Many of the off-road vehicle fatalities in Yukon have taken the lives of teenagers and teens are likely to feel indestructible and to take chances. The Canadian Medical Association and pediatricians have presented sound evidence about helmet use saving lives. I would like to ask the minister to re-think his approach, stand up for public safety and strengthen the provisions for helmet use.

Motor Vehicles is the government branch for registering vehicles. Trails Only Yukon Association is concerned that the Yukon Party government's failure to require all off-road vehicles to register and license will make it impossible to identify violators of any future legislation regarding off-road vehicles. The Yukon government has failed to listen to Yukon citizens and failed to follow the lead of the Government of British Columbia in this regard. In British Columbia, responsible off-road vehicle users are not threatened by the public safety measures that their government has taken. Yukoners agree that all-terrain vehicles should be registered and clearly identifiable.

Bill No. 82 is a minimalist piece of legislation that really does very little to improve the current situation with regard to off-road vehicles and the safety of people using all-terrain vehicles. It seems designed to make the general public think that the government is doing something about off-road vehicles, but in fact what they are doing is very limited.

Earlier today, I asked the minister about the effect of these amendments on the Alcan 200 and the Trek over the Top snowmobile races. These races are conducted on maintained roadways. The new provisions say that the operation of a snow machine on a maintained roadway will require that the snow machines are licensed, registered and insured. When we asked the officials about that in the briefing yesterday, they indicated that, yes, that interpretation was correct and that these provisions would apply. That's why I asked the minister if he had met with the organizers of the Alcan 200 and the Trek over the Top to make sure that they knew in advance and could inform any of the competitors what the effects of these new *Motor Vehicles Act* amendments would have on their event.

I also want to highlight that when the Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles brought forward its recommendations, those recommendations were supported by an off-road vehicle working group that included representatives from seven organizations: the Klondike Snowmobile Association, the Trails Only Yukon Association, the Wilderness Tourism Association Yukon, the Yukon Conservation Society, the Yukon Fish and Game Association, the Yukon Off-Road Riders Association and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board.

There are recommendations that came out of that select committee that have not been addressed yet and that are not adequately addressed in these amendments before us. I'm just going to speak to those recommendations now.

Recommendation 3 said that government should undertake an extensive advertising and educational campaign to raise public awareness of any and all existing restrictions on off-road vehicle use, along with penalties and means of enforcement. Recommendation 4 was that government undertake an educational campaign that, in addition to the existing laws and regulations, focuses on the safe, responsible and respectful operation of off-road vehicles, as well as environmental stewardship. The minister spoke about having done some of that public education but, with the changes to the *Motor Vehicles Act*, there would need to be additional public education measures that explain what has been done with the amendments.

Recommendation 10 was that the government encourage and support voluntary driver training on the safe and environmentally responsible operation of all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles. Recommendation 14 was that off-road vehicle legislation and regulations provide for the ability to mitigate environmental damage and cumulative negative impacts to sensitive wildlife and fish habitats, ensuring that legislation and/or regulations provide for the ability to restrict growth of trail networks in sensitive areas; to close trails or overused areas as necessary; to exclude off-road vehicles from specific types of land or habitats and to have certain areas designated as access routes only; that environmental and access restrictions be implemented in areas where problems exist or are developing and when not required for wildlife or environmental protection, efforts be made not to reduce access to existing use areas; that governments review penalties for environmental damage caused by any method, motorized or non-motorized means, to ensure penalties are appropriate.

The committee further recommends that government take steps to improve public awareness of these penalties and that government considers separate environmental protection legislation that targets and penalizes environmental damage rather than restricting specific users.

We know that these are very difficult and divisive matters. That does not detract from the government's responsibility to act on them. We need to see that people who operate any off-road vehicle, whether it's an all-terrain vehicle or a snow machine or a dirt bike, are doing so safely and that that is not strictly on the highways and the maintained roadways where very little of that traffic does take place.

I am disappointed in the bill. We will be supporting it. The minister has said that they have listened to the public, but I want to conclude by stating that this government has failed to listen to the many Yukon people who have been and continue to advocate for this government to act responsibly for public safety.

Mr. Silver: I rise today to speak to the *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*. I want to thank the members opposite for bringing forth this piece of legislation today, but given that it was publicly released two days ago and the opposition was only briefed on it yesterday, one has to ask how sincere this government is in debating such important pieces of legislation or if it mostly just intends on railroading this through.

I have a number of concerns that I would like to express prior to heading into Committee debate on this bill. First, was the public consulted on this? I know that there was feedback given to the select committee to support the final recommendations, but was there any key public consultation — or at least with key stakeholders — on the final amended bill? Having spoken to a couple of stakeholders in the last week, I know that they are not happy with the proposed legislation.

As well, the minister's press release states that the Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles' recommendations were their basis, but how many of the recommendations actually made it into the final document is up for debate and questions here today.

I am glad to see that at least one large item was left off the recommended list and has made it into the act's amendment, albeit a watered-down version. The biggest concern for me in the amendment is the section surrounding regulation of helmet use. The amendment to the act calls for some helmet use and is mandatory for minors 16 and under and on maintained roadways, but does the government truly feel that this is enough? Fewer people are protected by the law than are not. The amended legislation identifies that motor vehicles require the need to wear helmets at all time, but unfortunately ATVs, dirt bikes, snowmobiles and all other off-road vehicles are exempt from mandatory requirements.

During the previous Legislative Assembly, the Yukon Party had been in favour of helmet laws. On March 28, 2011, former minister Archie Lang put forward the following motion: "THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to amend legislation to make helmet use mandatory in Yukon for the operation of off-road vehicles such as all-terrain vehicles, ATVs, and of course, snowmobiles."

It is interesting how much the current incarnation of the Yukon Party, despite some of the members, no longer views this as a priority. Although it should be noted that one hold-over from the previous government has been a very vocal opponent — and indeed, the only opponent — of helmet laws.

During the previous election, Chris May from the Yukon Off-Road Riders Association asked every party at the Environment debate whether they would support implementation of a helmet law, as brought up by my colleague as well. All three parties agreed that it was time for

Yukon to implement regulations. Having heard from Trails Only Yukon Association on this piece of legislation, I know that they also feel that these changes do not do enough to prevent injuries.

People do not stop getting injured once they hit 17 years of age. In every other jurisdiction, helmets are required. In every major professional sports, reviews are being undertaken to prevent the numerous and severe results of brain and head injuries. Why is the Yukon holding out on a real and all-encompassing helmet law?

Last fall, the Government of Yukon introduced and passed Bill No. 64, *Act to Amend the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act*. It was the other part of the government's response to the recommendations from the Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles. Its purpose was two-fold: first, to give the government the authority to establish and make regulations in respect of off-road vehicle management areas when it is necessary for the protection of the ecological balance or physical characteristics of the area; and second, provide the authority for the minister to issue a temporary order restricting or prohibiting the use of off-road vehicles in certain areas, if it is necessary for the protection of the ecological balance or physical characteristics in the area.

Since the bill was passed one year ago, no regulations have actually come forward. Yukoners continue to wait for the government to implement this bill. I remind the government that it has been three and a half years since the select committee made its original recommendations. With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to debate on this further in Committee of the Whole and I hope that the minister will be able to help us out with some answers to some very pertinent questions.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I would like to say a few words at second reading and commend the minister for bringing the bill forward. The issues that we have discussed and heard today are all very relevant and I look forward to hearing the debate undertaken in Committee of the Whole.

It is nice to hear the ringing endorsement of the parties opposite. I know that the NDP of course have indicated that they will be supporting the bill and the Liberal Party it seems, is perhaps still on the fence as usual.

I think what we have to discuss, though — some of the criticisms that have been raised by the NDP. I think what we've put forward in this bill and what the minister has put forward in this bill is an articulation of our view on how the law should look for the Yukon with regard to motor vehicles.

The question — especially in relation to this issue of helmet use — is not whether or not injuries happen to people using ORVs or snowmobiles beyond the age of 16. The question is whether or not the law should require helmet use to be in place for adults operating these vehicles. To use a real-world example, the question is: Do members think that an individual operating a trapline in rural Yukon should be required by law to wear a helmet, or should they be allowed to wear a fur hat? Should somebody going to the grocery store in

an unincorporated community be required to wear a helmet, or should they be allowed to wear a hat or ball cap or something like what you see every day in the community of Old Crow or Ross River?

These are the questions that we have to ask. The question is not: Is there a safety concern for anybody over the age of 16? The question is: Should the law require people to wear helmets everywhere in the Yukon at all times when operating these vehicles? That's the simple question for me.

We've put forward a bill here that articulates our view on this issue. It's something that received a great deal of debate throughout the process of the select committee's work a few years ago. It's something that we've discussed and that many Yukoners discuss on a very frequent basis within social circles and within NGOs and within other groups that have been listed by members today.

What we put forward is our view of things. If the NDP wishes to disagree, I'm very keen to hear why they would like to disagree and what they would suggest as remedies — likewise for the Liberal Party. It's nice to say that you have concerns and that you have a different viewpoint, but then to conclude your statements by saying you're going to support the bill anyway leaves a very ambiguous view for Yukoners to take in.

I think if the NDP wants to disagree about this and if they want to put forward a different vision, then they ought to explain it and then make it very clear to Yukoners what they think — whether or not they think a different law should be in place and, if they do, let's hear it and let's hear it for the residents of Marsh Lake, Carcross, Mayo and Tatchun — for these communities who use ORVs and snowmobiles every day as a part of their daily life.

I urge the NDP — if they have criticisms, if they have a different viewpoint — to make it very clear and make it known so that Yukoners can see whether or not the views articulated by the NDP are aligned with Yukoners'.

Ms. White: There are a couple of concerns that I'll just bring attention to right now.

The *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act* that we see in front of us affects a very small portion of roadways in the Yukon. It doesn't affect trails; it doesn't affect ditches; it doesn't affect anything within municipalities, unincorporated communities or campgrounds.

It's addressing some concerns but it's certainly not taking them on a broader spectrum across the territory. I hear what the Minister of Environment has said, and he's right. There is not an easy answer, but safety isn't easy. When seatbelts became mandatory and you used to be allowed to drink and drive — but we decided that wasn't safe and it wasn't safe for the people around us.

No one says, "Well, you should be allowed to make the decision if you are going to drink and drive and get behind the wheel." It is not allowed, because it was for the greater good, for greater safety. There are great points. Can there be exceptions to rules? Can there be exceptions for people who are on traplines? Can there be exceptions in municipalities? I

don't know — that is part of the conversation. But to say that we're going to target the bare minimum of safety — so on very specific areas. So, only up to 16 years old are helmets mandatory, and 17 and beyond is all right. You only have to wear a helmet if you are on the highway, essentially, or just off the highway.

Part of the question is — the Yukon is very big with many roadways, many separate secondary roads, trails, ditches, campgrounds and many old mining roads. Someone can say, "Well, something can happen and a helmet can hinder you" — absolutely. But I would suggest that helmet usage brings greater safety to a person than not having one on. If there was the remote trapper in the middle of nowhere who was riding by himself in the dark and didn't see the tree overhanging and the helmet saved his life, I think that would be fantastic. Without a helmet, would he survive? Maybe; maybe not. The territory has made hard decisions before about safety — seat belt usage, and drinking and driving.

It's easy to be here and say that, if you don't have a different suggestion, then you are not entitled to an opinion, but I think there are a lot of case studies out there that say that, when you raise the level of safety, it's better for everyone. Can we make exceptions to rules? Absolutely. We have exceptions in all sorts of different laws. Maybe that was a way to go.

The fact that this only applies to highways and only very, very specific ones — so not anything that runs off in a side direction. It doesn't apply to trails, to ditches, to municipalities, unincorporated communities, and campgrounds where you have all sorts of people. That's the question: Why did we go so low with this? I look forward to the answers during Committee of the Whole.

Ms. Hanson: I did not intend to speak but I think it's important to reflect and echo the comments made by my colleague for Copperbelt South. There are times when you have to acknowledge that some progress is better than none at all. This government has been adamant — very, very clear — that it is not interested in meaningful legislation with respect to the recommendations that came out of the select committee so we have seen a small, grudging response. We have seen commitments made with respect to regulations and no delivery.

We have heard them tell stakeholder groups throughout this territory time and time again that, yes, we're going to do something — but no, we haven't done anything.

I know there is a tendency and a temptation of the members on the opposite side to try to polarize the issue of safety. I guess I can only say that it really concerns me when we do that. To suggest that, as we see off-road vehicles becoming more and more powerful and when we see trails that, if you had one of the less powerful vehicles and the trails and community roads that induce people to go at great speeds — we're not long talking about the simple days, the simple machines and the slow travel that governed the use of snowmobiles or off-road vehicles, ATVs.

I'll use a personal example of an observation that I made a couple years ago. When I first used to go to the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin's riding in the late 1970s, there wasn't the kind of speedway that now exists from downtown Old Crow up to the subdivision. There are now a couple roads, but there is the main road that goes up there. In the old days people walked. In the old days, people had some snowmobiles and they sort of went — bump, bump, bump — along those roads. These days, people are on ATVs and they're going at high speed. My concern and my worry is that an adult or a child in that community deserves my concern — as to the potential for injury — equally as does an adult in Whitehorse or along the Alaska Highway.

I think we need to really tone down the issues about it being really about what do we expect. At some point or another, we will stand charged with the responsibilities as members of this Legislature for what we did or did not do with respect to individual safety, because we chose to take the easy way out. We chose to say: "You know what? Don't worry."

The Minister of Health and Social Services is facing escalating costs. I would ask the Minister of Health and Social Services how many of those costs are associated with the long-term cost of dealing with quads and paraplegics, when you have a youth who is a quad or paraplegic. That's expensive — it's very expensive, to say nothing about the other aspects of the cost to that person's future.

It's unfortunate — my colleague has indicated that we support it, because we do think it's a small step. If it means that we have to wait until there's a new government in place that will actually respond in full to the committee recommendations, we're patient, but I hope that this government opposite will be listening to Yukoners and will be heedful of the potential damage that's being done on the personal level and to human beings, as well as to the environment, because of the half-hearted approach they take when they don't listen to what has been said by members of this Legislative Assembly through the select committee process, who are also reflecting the voices of Yukoners through those select committees.

I just wanted to put my comments on the record, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I do really appreciate the comments from the members opposite — the comment from the Member for Klondike. I do look forward to going into Committee of the Whole on this bill and having some conversations back and forth. I would like to thank the Environment minister for articulating something that I probably could not have articulated so well on some of the reasons why, but I do look forward to this when we sit down and have a conversation in Committee of the Whole.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Disagree.

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

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

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 82 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 82, *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*. Do members wish to take a brief recess?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 82: *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I just want to welcome Vern Janz, our director of Transportation Services, and Teri Cherkewich, who is one of the legislative drafters. They worked really hard on this file, so I do want to thank them for being here and I look forward to questions from the members opposite.

Ms. Moorcroft: When we had a chance to meet with the officials yesterday to go through the provisions of the *Motor Vehicles Act* amendments in detail, we had a fairly good discussion about what this act included and what it didn't include. We haven't put that on the record in our second-reading speeches, so I wanted to start with the definitions of highways and of roadways, because that sets out where these new provisions to license and insure off-road vehicles fall.

The highways and maintained roadways are all the roads that are found in Schedule 1 of the *Highways Act*, so if somebody wants to look for that, they can go to the motor vehicles regulations on the Yukon government website, and then they can look at Schedule 1, which lists all the roads that will be captured — but there are an awful lot of roads that won't be captured.

In second reading, I did bring forward our concern that this *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act* to deal with off-road vehicles is really only going to apply to on-road vehicles, because they're not bringing in licensing and registration requirements for those vehicles to be operating off-road, which is mostly where they do operate.

I would like to ask the minister to respond to why he doesn't think these amendments should bring in rules for regulating the use of off-road vehicles off highways and off roads.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: In responding to the member opposite, there are — as she articulated, the roads are covered under our schedule 1. There are over 5,000 kilometres of those roads, but when it comes to the usage off-road, that sort of falls more under the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act*, and that is what regulates off-road. That was some of the discussion that we've had with the select committee. We brought some of these things forward and that's why not everything falls under one act.

Ms. Moorcroft: Does the minister agree that all-terrain vehicles should be registered and clearly identifiable?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: When travelling on a road surface that is travelled by vehicles — absolutely I agree with that.

Ms. Moorcroft: We know that the majority of all-terrain operators, whether it is a dirt bike or a four-wheeler or a snowmobile, are responsible users, but we also know that there are people who operate off-road vehicles who have caused damage or injury. We need to respect environmental values; we need to protect public safety. Many Yukon people have come forward to say that they want to see that all-terrain vehicles are registered and clearly identifiable.

Under these provisions, will those operators who do register their vehicles get a licence plate?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I actually had this discussion with my deputy minister the other day about that. Licence registration and licence plates — just like a snowmobile on the roads, they will have to have a licence plate — absolutely — and again we go back to the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* when it comes to the environment. Madam Chair, when I worked with the Minister of Environment on looking at some of the select committee's recommendations, a huge thing was education and I spoke to that a little bit in my opening remarks — the education campaign that we put out and that we work with.

I can attest to the fact that the organizations now — some of the local organizations that are putting some events on, whether with motorcycles or ATV events — are utilizing some of this information that we have provided for respect for the environment.

Ms. Moorcroft: Could the minister explain why he thinks that people should only have to get a licence plate if they're driving on a highway? Does he understand the public concern that if someone observes damage being done by someone driving an ATV that they may want to be able to know who that was by having a visible licence plate?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I reiterated this a little bit already about the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* and the regulations under the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* as to how, when we are off-road and in the back country with the environment — I think with that in the back country, that sort of issue should be addressed and it will be addressed when we bring the regulations forward.

Ms. Moorcroft: It is the Highways minister who is responsible for the licencing. It is not the Minister of Environment who is responsible for licencing. I'm asking this Highways minister who has brought forward amendments that say you must licence an off-road vehicle if you are going to be operating it on-road whether he would agree with licencing for off-road vehicles regardless of where they drive.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Under the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act*, there are provisions that enforce damage to the land. When it comes to licence, registration, insurance and a license plate, I believe you need those when you're on the travelling portion of the road like I articulated — not off-road.

Ms. Moorcroft: Madam Chair, I have to draw to the minister's attention that the select committee's report recommended that government consider the issues of registration, operator licensing and insurance for off-road use and that government look at how other jurisdictions have approached these issues prior to determining the best approach for Yukon.

Can the minister tell me what other jurisdictions they have looked at and how government came to the decision that this approach was going to be the best approach?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: One of the first things I learned when I got into this job was to always ask that question to legislators, the people who help us — what are other jurisdictions doing? We looked at other jurisdictions, but if you look across the country, a lot of jurisdictions vary on what they require and what they don't require. So we took it

into consideration. We looked at the other jurisdictions and this is what we've come up with.

If the member opposite wants me to get her a breakdown of what other jurisdictions do and/or whatever, I guess I can commit to doing that.

Ms. Moorcroft: I appreciate that offer from the minister. I did ask yesterday at the briefing what other jurisdictions had in place and whether the department had looked at them. They indicated that they had, but they were unable to speak to anything other than what is in the bill. So if the minister is willing to provide opposition members with a copy of the review of other jurisdictions and what their regulatory regimes look like, I would very much appreciate that, as would the Member for Klondike.

The first two recommendations from the Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles were that legislation and regulations governing the use of off-road vehicles are inclusive of all and do not exclude anyone to the advantage of another. This legislation fails to respect that recommendation. It's very selective and it doesn't include everyone.

The second recommendation is that there is consistency throughout all legislation and regulations governing the use of off-road vehicles in the territory. The minister just stated here that the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* amendments deal with the issue of environmental damage and that they want to implement protection, but if there's no registration required and if the off-road vehicles are destroying habitat, or destroying sensitive environmental areas, that vehicle can't be identified if it doesn't have a licence plate.

Can the minister say how he is going to ensure that there is in fact consistency governing the use of off-road vehicles?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I think I sort of already answered this question. We are going to be consulting — of course, consultation on the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* — and that is when some of these issues will be addressed or be brought forward and we can look at that at that time — when we develop the regulations.

Ms. Moorcroft: All right, so the minister doesn't want to speak to environmental protection from ATV use.

Does the minister think that someone should be able to identify an off-road vehicle if there has been accident or a health and safety incident?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Part 6 of the act is the duty of driver at the accident, written report, and able to report — so it's in the act already.

Ms. Moorcroft: The minister said that there is a duty to report. How can someone identify the off-road vehicle if it does not have a licence plate? You might fulfill your duty to report and say that it was, you know, someone wearing a yellow helmet on a black machine. That is not going to identify. A licence plate is recognized as the way to identify a vehicle, whether it is a vehicle or an off-road vehicle.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: All rules around enforcement apply to individual acts. There are many, many other ways of recognizing a vehicle or a person or a fur hat or a pink helmet or a green snowmobile.

Ms. Moorcroft: It does occasionally happen that we have a hit and run with vehicles and I do not see how this would be any different with off-road vehicles. One of the big differences is that off-road vehicles will not be required to have licence plates. Vehicles are required to have licence plates.

Does the minister believe that health and safety should only apply on roadways? Is he not concerned about protecting safety for the operation of off-road vehicles when they are off the road?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Safety is of the utmost concern for this minister. Under part 8, the powers of our peace officers and officers are specifically stated in there. Stopping for peace officers, safety inspections, offences — everything is in there.

Ms. Moorcroft: The minister is not responding to these questions. Let me try asking it a different way. How can someone report an incident of an off-road vehicle causing injury if the description is a red sled or a black jacket and yellow helmet? How can that help the RCMP?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: The question the member is asking falls under different territorial acts. This is about the *Motor Vehicles Act*. I want to bring the focus back to what we're talking about — the *Motor Vehicles Act*.

Ms. Moorcroft: I guess the minister is not concerned about the issue of having consistency between different pieces of legislation and regulation. I think he should.

I want to move on to another definition, because a number of people have contacted my office and have said that it appears that dirt bikes will not be captured. In the definition of "motor cycle", the new definition of "motor cycle" means "a two or three wheeled vehicle, other than an electric power-assisted cycle or a motorized trail bike..." So does this mean that dirt bikes are excluded, or are they included through some other mechanism?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Page 3, off-road vehicle means — just a short little spiel. It says an all-terrain vehicle, a utility-terrain vehicle, a motorized trail bike — so it's included.

Ms. Moorcroft: So, for a motorized trail bike, they are only going to be required to have registration and insurance if they are going to be operating on a highway or a maintained roadway. They will not be regulated like a regular motor vehicle — is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: The member is correct.

Ms. Moorcroft: I want to ask the minister about helmet use. We had some discussion of that at second reading. I put on the record that the Canadian Medical Association, the Yukon chief medical officer of health, pediatricians and their associations, and a large segment of the general public believes that helmet use is an important safety requirement for vehicles, including off-road vehicles — many of which can go at very high speeds.

I want to ask the minister why he thought that the age of 16 would be a good cut-off age so that helmets are only required if a driver is under the age of 16. Did the minister give any consideration to making that age 19 and including

people up to the age of majority? As I said earlier today, teenagers are at high risk of injury. A number of the fatal accidents in the Yukon involving off-road vehicles have been with teenagers driving.

Why has the minister put such a low limit on who is required to use a helmet?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Under the licensing requirements, we just wanted to marry that because of the age of 16 — married with that.

Ms. Moorcroft: I'm not going to hold up general debate much longer on this bill. I do want to repeat that I'm very concerned that they have not given full attention to public safety. The recommendations of the select committee on off-road vehicle use have not been adequately responded to in these amendments. They are only a very small step and I'm very disappointed.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I just want to respond to the member opposite. I just wanted to clarify something that came up in general debate. You had asked about the Trek Over the Top and the question that had come over for me was whether they would have to have a licence, insurance and registration. I want to thank the staff for bringing this to my attention. What happens for both these events, of course — they are under Schedule 1, but under the *Motor Vehicles Act*, I sign an OIC that closes the road under the *Motor Vehicles Act* and the same thing will happen here. The road is closed. They require work on the road right-of-way permit, they require insurance, and then the other thing is it will be the same thing under the *Motor Vehicles Act*. We will issue them a one-day OIC — or two days — for the extent of their event. When it comes to the Trek Over the Top, that is the time of year when there is little traffic.

Ms. Moorcroft: I want to be sure I have understood what the minister has just said in response to the questions I had asked about the Alcan 200 and the Trek Over the Top snowmobile races in the winter. The minister has indicated that he, on an annual basis when those races are held, closes those roads by virtue of an order-in-council that closes those roads to general traffic. Then the licensing, registration and insurance requirements for operation of off-road vehicles on that public highway or maintained roadway no longer apply.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: To make it clear, section 123.03 states: "The Commissioner in Executive Council may make regulations ...", and it says under "(d) prescribing a highway for the purpose of the definition of 'maintained highway' in section 217.01", which would be an OIC that comes forward.

Mr. Silver: I don't have very many questions — thanks to my colleague from Copperbelt South for her questions. Exactly how many of the recommendations from the select committee have now been enacted?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. We're addressing some of them now, because they're under different acts and the *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act* that we brought forward here today is addressing some of them, but not all of them, because

some of the other recommendations fall under the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* and that will come out in the regulations.

Mr. Silver: I wanted to know a number. Does the minister have a number right now as far as how many have been actually been enacted currently?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: At this moment, I don't have the number.

Mr. Silver: If the minister can endeavour to get those numbers for us, it would be great. He is motioning yes.

Just for a little bit of context here, why does Yukon Party no longer support Minister Lang's 2011 motion that called for mandatory helmet law?

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Apparently the question was answered. I'll sit back down, Madam Chair.

I thank the member opposite for the question. I'm glad there's humour in the House today. It always makes for a better life and brings everybody's blood pressure down.

On this side of the House, we believe a couple of things. I think the Minister of Environment articulated it in second reading. We don't want to make a trapper a criminal. We don't want to make someone on a trapline a criminal. We don't want to make someone in Old Crow who is living a traditional lifestyle out there a criminal. It has to be fair and it has to be balanced and I believe this approach here is fair and balanced for all Yukoners. Rural, regulatory bodies in the municipalities and in the City of Whitehorse can increase, decrease — whatever they want.

Mr. Silver: Let me get this straight, then. So if that minor gets in his car and doesn't wear his seat belt, is he a criminal? I won't — I'm not even going to go — let me ask you this question. The Yukon Party government has, in the past, put motions forth saying mandatory helmet use. That has now been changed. Was this a Cabinet decision or a caucus decision to decide to change the Yukon Party's decision on this issue?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Of course we have this discussion at the caucus level and make decisions at the caucus level, but it's like the member opposite — he's not always agreeing with past Liberals either. We've seen this in this House many times.

Mr. Silver: The only other question is: I was wondering if the minister himself wears a helmet.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I have an 800 Ski-doo. Some people would probably argue that they like Polaris, Arctic Cat or Yamaha better and if they're listening in the House today that banter will go on and on forever and ever — amen. When I'm riding my 800 Ski-doo, I have a helmet on, an ABS bag, peeps, probe, shovel and I'm highly trained.

Mr. Silver: Can I ask one more question? Why does he wear this gear?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It's my decision and I believe that I should be able to make the decision whether I wear the gear or not, and I believe in safety.

Ms. White: How many jurisdictions in Canada have mandatory helmet use laws?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I brought up earlier in the House that I would endeavour to get the information. It's also public. You can gather it on the Internet to save paper.

I'll get back to the member opposite to look at what every jurisdiction — I remember reading through it and I remember us looking at it — you know, going back — so I'll commit to the member opposite to get a list of everything.

Ms. White: With the help of the officials at your side, do they have the answer as to how many jurisdictions in Canada have mandatory helmet laws?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: No, not at this point.

Ms. White: In Canada, out of the 10 provinces and three territories, the only jurisdictions without mandatory helmet laws are Alberta and the Yukon — two out of 13. We talk about traditional lifestyles; we talk about making sure that the trapper can do what he needs to do. Well I would think that Northwest Territories and Nunavut really looked closely at that before they enacted their helmet laws.

Does the minister believe that the traditional hunters, trappers or the people collecting wood in both Nunavut and Northwest Territories are able to perform those duties while wearing helmets?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I'm not going to speak for the people of Northwest Territories or Nunavut today or any other jurisdiction.

Ms. White: So, when you went through this process of making the decisions on the amendments to the *Motor Vehicles Act* and we talked about helmet usage, surely when we looked across Canada and saw what other jurisdictions were doing, did the fact that 11 out of 13 have mandatory helmet-use laws play a part in the decision-making process or was that just not looked at all?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I think we're kind of losing focus on what we're doing here with the *Motor Vehicles Act*. We look at what other jurisdictions are doing, but as I've said before in the House, it's a balance. I don't want the trapper to be a criminal. I don't want the person in Old Crow who is running down to check their mail — I want to leave it up to the responsibility of the responsible rider when they're out there. I fully agree with safe, safe, safe, safe, safe, but it's up to the individual, I believe. We believe that under the age of 16 there is no option. Everyone should have a helmet on. But like I said, I don't want the trapper to be a criminal and I don't want that person who is driving on the streets of Mayo or Haines Junction depending on what those jurisdictions decide.

Ms. White: There are examples. I hear — loud and clear — that you don't want the trapper to be breaking the law and I understand that. So, in Manitoba, under the *Off-Road Vehicles Act* they have exceptions to the rule. Under their mandatory helmet use, it does not apply when you are using your off-road vehicle for the purpose of farming, commercial fishing, hunting or trapping. Isn't it a possibility to look at also having exceptions to those rules in Yukon so that we can guarantee the greater public safety and still allow the hunter, trapper and wood collector to be able to go without a helmet?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I think the answer here is we looked at what the select committee brought forward, we

looked at other jurisdictions, we looked at many things and this is what we're bringing forward in this House today and that's what we've decided on this side.

Ms. Moorcroft: Madam Chair, the minister just said that they looked at the select committee's recommendations before the government brought forward these small amendments to the *Motor Vehicles Act*. As I started out with in general debate, the first two recommendations of that select committee were that legislation and regulations governing the use of off-road vehicles should be inclusive and not exclude anyone to the advantage of another and that there should be consistency throughout the legislation and regulations. The minister is changing his tune. He's trying to argue that they're responding to the recommendations, but he's not presenting the evidence that they have. The evidence is they have not.

Why did the minister not manage to convince his Cabinet and caucus colleagues of the safety provisions that have been brought into effect in other jurisdictions being an approach that the Yukon should take?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I guess the answer would be: This is about treating all people equally. There are laws in place for how old you have to be to drive or to drink and there are laws in there, but when it comes to this, we on this side wanted to make sure that everyone is treated equally and it applies to everybody equally.

Ms. Moorcroft: Madam Chair, it's not treating people equally. People who are 16 and under are required to wear a helmet for their safety, but if you're over 16, you don't have to wear a helmet. I guess helmets don't protect you then? That's nonsensical. This is not consistent and this is not responding to the recommendations that were made by the select committee.

I'm disappointed that this minister wasn't able to convince his Cabinet and caucus colleagues that public safety should, in fact, apply equally.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I'm listening to the member opposite and I thank her for her point of view.

Ms. White: The minister's always incredibly diplomatic and I appreciate that.

Is the Motor Vehicles branch the branch that's responsible for registering all vehicles, including boats and such things?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Yes.

Ms. White: Under this new legislation, will that same branch be responsible for the registration and licensing of the off-road vehicles that will be used next to roadways?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Happy to provide the service — yes, we will.

Ms. White: Knowing that this government has made loose commitments about moving forward with off-road vehicle legislation and changes, would it not make more sense to require a blanket registration and licensing of off-road vehicles now to make it possible to identify violators in the future with future legislation? Wouldn't it make more sense to introduce it now in one step, as opposed to a graduated process throughout the years?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I apologize, but can the member opposite repeat the question again please?

Ms. White: Not verbatim, but I'll give it a shot.

Knowing that this government has loose commitments about off-road vehicle use and possible legislation in the future, and knowing that we are going to be asking under the current changes for certain vehicles to be registered and licensed, would it not make sense to do a blanket requirement for registration and licensing now so that future legislation that would require the identification of vehicles be easier to do?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Are we talking about vehicles or off-road vehicles that we are talking about in this act?

I thank the member opposite for the time that we are taking to do this here.

It will have to be forwarded and when we bring the regulation changes — once the act passes, there is still the regulation change stuff and this will have to be put into it for it to be put into force.

Ms. White: If this is an undertaking that has to happen for the changes right now to the act, does it not make sense financially to look at making this a requirement for all off-road vehicles — to have the registration and licensing now, as opposed to waiting to make those changes in the future?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I think what we're talking about here is the way the act is read. Like I have said before, when you are on the road surface, the requirements are there and that is what will be written into the regulations.

Ms. White: I will try to use a different selection of words. Those off-road vehicles that will be used on the side of a roadway to traverse a roadway to get on to a wilderness trail — those will require licensing and registration.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: The way that the act is written, when you are riding on the shoulder of the road, going to a trail, you won't require a licence or registration.

Ms. White: So, to clarify — the only requirement for licensing and registration is if you plan on travelling in a linear fashion down the side of a roadway — down a maintained roadway. So, it's only if you are going to go down the side, not if you are crossing and not if you are starting and going from one point to another — so only if you are going down the roadway.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I think the way it was written and the way it is read is that if you are travelling on that highway surface, you need a licence, registration and insurance.

Ms. White: If someone starts a kilometre away from the trailhead and they are travelling down the side of the highway toward that trailhead, will they require licensing or registration?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: If they are on the travelling surface of the highway, absolutely they will.

Ms. White: If they are on the shoulder of that roadway, will they require it?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: No, Madam Chair.

Ms. White: What about crossing that roadway? They are going from one side to the other side. Will they require licensing or registration?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: They are on the travel surface. Yes, they will.

Ms. White: I appreciate this, because I'm just trying to get my head around the visual image right now. If I'm crossing the highway and I cross on the tarmac between the bike lanes — so one side of the highway to the other side of the highway — I will require licensing and registration. If I am in the bike lane on the side of the highway, on the side of the roadway, I will not require a licence and registration.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I will explain the roadway. It means the part of the highway that is intended for the passenger vehicles and includes the area from the centre line to the curb or edge and any pullout, rest area or weigh station. That is the answer.

Ms. White: Just for clarification — would that not include the shoulder of the highway where you would have to pull over if you were having problems on the highway?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It does, yes.

Ms. White: Just for clarification, because that answer was different from the one a minute ago — you require licence and registration for the shoulder of the highway, and not just the surface?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Yes. She is absolutely correct.

Mr. Tredger: I have some other things to say but I just wanted to follow up on that because it tweaked something. If I am driving my truck with my snowmobile on behind and I pull over to a pullout to access a trail, and if I take my skidoo off the back of my truck and I'm in the pullout, it needs to be registered even though I am just accessing a trail from there?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Yes.

Mr. Tredger: I meant to speak in the earlier part. This is critically important in so many ways to me, to my family and to my constituents.

For over 40 years, people have been looking and expressing concern about the increasing use of ATVs and snowmobiles, the increasing reach of ATVs and snowmobiles. This Legislative Assembly saw fit to have a select committee look into it. All of us elected legislators responded to a questionnaire, saying that we would endorse and ensure that the recommendations of the select committee were brought into force.

We're three years into a five-year mandate. I am profoundly disappointed at the slow pace of advancement. I'm upset at the way this is going. The longer we delay working with the people and working this out, the more divisive it is. The longer we delay our efforts to bring into play the recommendations of the select committee, the more damage is being done to the environment and the more children and adults we're putting at risk. The divisiveness within our communities and between us is rising.

I live in a rural area on the river. In 1993 I bought a Bravo, and I use it to get from Pelly River Ranch across the river to my place. The Bravo is a 250-cc machine. The trails

were flat and I never used a helmet. I pulled a toque over my head. When my children got to be 10, 11, 12, they learned to drive it. Often I would have a couple of trailers behind my Bravo with people standing on the back and hanging on. The helmets of the day were cold and basically non-functional. The terrain is very flat and the machines don't go very fast. It was used as a tool; it wasn't a toy.

I wrestled sometimes with maybe getting a helmet, maybe I should insist that all three or four people who are hanging off the back have helmets, but I never did, for many of the reasons that people across the way have expressed.

But I realized, as my kids got older, and they coaxed that extra five kilometres an hour out of the machine, it wasn't something I had accounted for. Fortunately, although we tipped it a few times and the trailer tipped over, nobody tipped over when there was a tree in the way. We came close a few times.

This last summer, my daughter got a job at the Ponoka Hospital in Alberta. She is an intern. Her job was to work with young adults with head injuries. The most common — speech problems — was due to drugs. The second most common was motor vehicle and off-road vehicle accidents. She said to me: "Why don't we wear helmets?" I did not have an answer. My Bravo — I still have it, but I also have a new Tundra, and when you go like this, it has a little more response than the Bravo did. I realized that — yes — the machines are changing. Our skidoos and ATVs are changing.

I wonder why and how we decided that 16 was an age that helmets should be worn before. The statistics I've read usually go from age five to 19. The age of majority is 19, but we chose 16.

I have talked to people in our communities and trappers and maybe there is room for an exception, but I can guarantee you the size and the speed of our skidoos and our ATVs are increasing exponentially every year. I could floor my Bravo and it's not going to stand up. With some of the new ATVs — even as you go over a bump or hit the bump the wrong way, it flips. Our Health and Social Services minister should be very concerned about the costs. We as a society should be concerned about the costs. Yes — it's a hard decision — I'm in a rural community — but that's what leadership is about.

As the majority of other jurisdictions have done, will the minister take this back and enforce a helmet law with perhaps exceptions that can take into account the uniqueness of the Yukon?

But we need to start coming up with some rules around this. We need to start managing our use. It's not the 1950s. These are not toys any more.

So I would ask the minister if he will consider stepping back. We haven't had a lot of time for this. I just saw it for the first time yesterday. It's of critical importance to my area and I have a number of questions around that, but will the minister consider extending the helmet use, at the very minimum, as recommended by the Canadian Medical Association and as followed in most jurisdictions in Canada — helmet use for everyone? Make a clause with exceptions, like Manitoba and

Saskatchewan have done, but for goodness' sake, please consider it.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I do thank the member opposite for bringing what he just brought forward to attention. I wanted to just say a couple of things here. As did the member opposite, I grew up in a rural community and, from the time I was little, I do remember Bravos and having those machines. Unlike the member opposite, my dad would kick my butt if I wasn't wearing a helmet, and I always wore a helmet. Maybe they weren't that great back then, but that's how we grew up.

I think fundamentally this is just a little bit different. The member opposite doesn't agree. He mentioned earlier, when will we bring legislation forward; why haven't you acted? You know what? There are a lot of legislative pieces on the legislative agenda that a government has, and we are bringing it forward. Fundamentally we don't agree on a few portions of it, and that's just how it is.

Mr. Tredger: During the election, we all promised to bring forth legislation, if elected, to enact the recommendations of the select committee. Everyone here did. I have to go back to my jurisdiction, to my citizens, and say — how was a decision made? With which portions of the select committee's recommendations was it decided that we would start with? When can we expect some of the others? Was it the minister's decision to go ahead with this? Was it a Cabinet decision? Was it individuals?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member opposite for the question. On this side of the House, it is always a government and caucus decision to move forward on anything. I want to read what it says here in recommendation 12. When I read it, I just want you to keep in mind that we considered all other jurisdictions. We looked at lots of stuff. We listened to the recommendations. It says: "THAT, helmet use be mandatory when operating an off-road vehicle or snowmobile on-road. The Committee did not reach consensus on helmet requirements for 'off-road' use."

I think we have found a balance here. Fundamentally we are going to disagree on a couple of things in this House, but I think we have found a balance here. We are moving forward on this legislation.

Mr. Tredger: I would like to read recommendation 8: "THAT, government consider the issues of registration, operator licensing and insurance for 'off-road use' and that the government look at how other jurisdictions have approached these issues prior to determining the best approach for Yukon."

So, the select committee could not achieve consensus on helmet use. I would remind the minister that that was in 2011, I believe, and it had been discussed for many years prior to that. We are now — what is this, 2014 — three years later. A lot more information has come out and what I am hearing is that the government still has not achieved consensus on helmet use.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member opposite for his comments.

Mr. Tredger: I will go to the select committee's recommendation 14 and this is one where we are seeing increasing problems in my area and around the Yukon. Recommendation 14 is: "THAT, off-road vehicle legislation and regulations provide for the ability to mitigate environmental damage and cumulative negative impacts to sensitive wildlife and fish habitats. Ensure that legislation and/or regulations provide for the ability to restrict the growth of trail networks in sensitive areas, to close trails or overused areas as necessary, to exclude off-road vehicles from specific types of land or habitats, and to have certain areas designated as access routes only."

Given the increasing destruction of our wildlife habitat, can the minister tell me why that was not a priority for this government?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: We're debating the *Motor Vehicles Act*. All that stuff falls under the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* and that is dealt with in the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act*. Today we're debating the *Motor Vehicles Act*.

I just want to add that I'm a big proponent — I work with organizations. I know the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes is an avid user of ATVs and the outdoors. We're there whether we're playing music at a function or whether we're there marshalling a function — huge advocate for environmental stewardship — huge — and you can just see that through the education that the Department of Highways and Public Works, working with the Department of Environment, has put out and there is more to follow. There is always more to follow.

Chair: Order please. Before we continue on with the questions, would members like a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Thank you. We will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. We're going to resume general debate on Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*.

Mr. Tredger: I guess one of the concerns I have with this legislation is, while it inconveniences a lot of ATV and snowmobile users, or causes them — I guess inconvenience isn't the word — to need to be registered and wear a helmet when they're unloading their skidoo on a pullout, in order to access a trail, it'll raise their ire and make it difficult in the future to come up with legislation that we will need to be able to identify people who are using their ATVs and machinery in our wilderness areas.

The way it's written is that, if I use a pullout to unload my skidoo to access — I drive out and use my skidoo, I use a pullout to unload, as soon as I get it off the trailer, I need a helmet for the next 10 feet to go over. It makes it very difficult for any enforcement people; it makes identification difficult. Have you thought of some of the repercussions around that?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member opposite for the question.

I think I've said it enough times in the House today. I just think this legislation is balanced. It's balanced for all Yukoners. We've considered — the select committee — other jurisdictions, and I think this is a balanced approach to how we regulate this.

Mr. Tredger: You keep mentioning other jurisdictions. Which other jurisdiction did you pattern this on?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I don't think we patterned this off anything. What I said to the member opposite is that we looked at other jurisdictions — what they do. We looked at the select committee, and this is what we are moving forward with. We're proud of what we've moving forward with.

Mr. Tredger: Which other jurisdictions in particular?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: When it came forward, we looked at all other jurisdictions across Canada. I've said that in the House before to — I believe — the Member for Copperbelt South or Takhini-Kopper King.

Mr. Tredger: Which ones led you to think that this was a balanced view?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: We've said on this side of the House — the government, the caucus — the government looked at all other jurisdictions and looked at the recommendations, and we figure this is a balanced approach. I've said this in the House before, and I'll say it again: it's a balanced approach for Yukoners.

Mr. Tredger: Was that supported by the Minister of Health and Social Services?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: This government, this side of the House, caucus — I've said it more than once this afternoon — supported this, moving forward.

Mr. Tredger: When I was reading through the select committee's report, I noted that no First Nations have responded. We have a mandate to co-manage our territory with the First Nations. Can you tell me what consultations occurred with which First Nations before you came up with this?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I'm not exactly sure about dates and times, but there was lots of consultation done through the select committee's work. Like I said before, we're moving forward on this legislation.

Mr. Tredger: When I read the select committee's report, it appeared to me they had asked for First Nation input, but no First Nation had sent anything. To me, I wonder when you call that "consultation" — and what it means, I assume they were waiting for a government-to-government interaction. As the government responsible for this legislation, I think it would be important, for something as critical as this, to make another effort to reach out to First Nations and the First Nation governments as this will affect many of the First Nation communities that are unincorporated.

I wonder — have there been any discussions at all with the First Nations on this legislation?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: This *Motor Vehicles Act* is talking about roadways. Like it was just passed on to me, we follow all of our obligations on the *Umbrella Final Agreement* for consultation. We always have and we always will.

Mr. Tredger: There were no direct consultations or no exchanges of information with First Nations before this was crafted?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I think I have already answered the question. I know the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin just informed me that he, probably like yourself, talked to a lot of constituents and First Nations, and he talked to his local First Nation. I have answered the question.

Mr. Tredger: I don't have a whole bunch more to say other than I am disappointed. If indeed you did look at other jurisdictions — and I guess 11 out of the 12 chose to go with a mandatory helmet.

You had no real discussions or government-to-government discussions; no interaction with the First Nations. This is just a very, very small step — yes it is a step. We need helmets — we need to have helmet use, but this is like saying you only have to wear your seat belt when you are in the city. You only have to wear your seat belt when you are in town, but when you are driving on the farm road you do not need it. It is nonsensical and I am very disappointed in the lack of leadership shown and the speed — particularly the speed which this government is making progress on the recommendations of the select committee. It is just that we are doing the citizens of Yukon a disservice. We are putting them in a difficult place.

Each day I see — this summer I saw five, six, seven times, big trucks with trailers and three or four ATVs from Alberta covered with mud. They said, "Oh, we are coming up here because there is more open land and no regulations here. We can go." I have seen the mess. I guess that raises one question. Are out-of-territory ATVs required to be registered? Do we accept Alberta registration? How does the minister intend to manage that?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Alberta residents and others will be treated exactly the same as everybody else, the way the act is read.

When the member opposite brings things forward about timely manner with legislation, it brings me to thoughts about legislation; that we are moving forward with this and how busy legislative agendas are. I listen to the members opposite quite often say, when will the members opposite change this regulation and open this act, or whatever. We have a lot of people who work within the government in the different departments — legislative writers and people who work hard on bringing this legislation forward — and they work hard so we can bring this legislation forward and get it through in a timely manner. I'm proud to say that that's what we're doing when it comes to what the select committee brought forward, but there are many other legislative items on the legislative agenda, so this does take time. I want to sincerely thank everyone in the departments who do the writing of this legislation. They put a lot of time and effort into it and they take it under their wing as their own. They're very good at their jobs.

So, Mr. Speaker, fundamentally there are a few things. I said to the member opposite, my dad made me wear a helmet when I was a kid. The member opposite didn't.

Fundamentally we're not going to agree on everything here, but I think this is a balanced approach for Yukoners, and I'm going to say it over and over again.

Mr. Tredger: I may say this over and over again too. I guess enforcement, education and identification is important. This doesn't help us identify the few — and they are a few — ATVs or snowmobilers who take advantage of our lack of regulation and who destroy our wilderness areas. They are few, but we need a way to identify them. This doesn't help us. We need some regulations around our wilderness areas because of the increasing pressure. I would ask the minister to consider that. We need a way to identify people who are using our wilderness. It's unfortunate, but there are a few — maybe five percent, maybe less, maybe more — who are abusing our wilderness areas and they're taking advantage of our lack of regulation. Unless we figure out a way to manage that, it will be like what is happening in the south where entire areas are closed off to ATV or off-road vehicle use altogether.

I remember the Kananaskis area in Alberta. I used to hike, ride my bike and spend a lot of time in that area. Now it's denoted a wilderness area and no one can get in there with their ATVs or their skidoos. That's the future we're facing if we don't manage it properly. Each year, that window of opportunity gets smaller and smaller. I know there is a lot of legislation out there and there is a lot to do. I've given you a few ideas myself. Someday you might take me up on it. But this is something we all promised.

Every member of the Legislature promised that we would enact the recommendations of the select committee during this mandate. We are three years and counting. It is time to act. This a very small step forward. I thank you for that.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I just thank the member opposite for his comments.

Ms. Stick: I hadn't had a lot of time to look at this legislation, but I feel as the critic for Health and Social Services that I do want to bring forward some information that I have found just sitting here this afternoon.

I want to talk about a report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information — CIHI. They are well-known across Canada. They keep statistics on all kinds of health care issues and concerns. I found an article that talks about ATVs and injuries. I just thought some of the information they have is important to share, because when I look at what's happening across Canada in other provinces and territories with regard to helmet use, I don't understand why we are not leading the pack — why we're not keeping up with other jurisdictions, but instead trail far behind. We really do.

ATVs, snow machines — sales are up. They're bigger, they're more powerful and they're faster. They require more strength to handle in many cases. They are not for young children to operate on their own. More and more they are being used for pleasure.

At one time, they really were the workhorses in the bush. They were what people used to go trapping and hunting and out on the land with. They were the workhorses. They weren't so much pleasure vehicles as they are now.

To me, it seems that we should be promoting helmet use and insisting on helmet use and, as some jurisdictions have done, make exceptions for commercial hunters, commercial trappers, fishers — you know. You can find that legislation; you can see where these exceptions are made, rather than narrowing it down to a group under the age of 16.

One of the facts that I found in looking at the CIHI report was that, between 2001-02 and 2009-10, there was an increase of 31 percent of not injuries, but hospitalizations, due to ATV injuries. So we're not talking about the person who has to go to emergency and leaves, is stitched up or has a cast; we're not talking about people who, the next day, might go and see their family doctor or go to a walk-in clinic. We're talking about people who were hospitalized for injuries on ATVS — a 31-percent increase. That is enormous, and that is an enormous cost to our health care system.

I'm not saying helmets would avoid all those hospitalizations. I'm not that naïve and I wouldn't pretend that it's otherwise. But of all those injuries, head injuries are the worst. They are the worst for these people. They are long term, they are expensive and they cost our health care system.

Again, helmets will not prevent 100 percent of head injuries, but it sure will prevent an awful lot. Helmets, I think, should be mandatory for everyone and if there needs to be exceptions, then make those. The other interesting thing in this article was that the greatest number of injuries was among young men from the age of 15 to 19. We have already said to them: "You do not need a helmet — you are good." We hope they will wear a helmet; we hope as parents that they will wear a helmet, but the highest rate of injury is that group and we have not even included them in this legislation.

Why would we not do that? To me, this is about health and safety; it is about the cost of our health care system and I do not understand why we are at the back of the pack. Why are we not up front with other territories and provinces that say: "No, you need to wear a helmet, it is mandatory." Yes, we will make exceptions. We recognize they are the workhorses for many individuals, so why? Why would we not have thought of it that way? Why would we not want to be preventing these injuries that are on the increase across Canada?

This was not just one place — this was a report done on injuries across Canada. When I talked about that 31-percent increase for hospitalizations, this did not include deaths either. That did not include the many deaths that are on the rise also, from this.

They did not include the many deaths that are on the rise also from this. I think a responsible government should make helmet laws mandatory. If you want to make exceptions, then do that, because it's costing our health care system. It's costing our young people's lives and we've cut it off at 16 when we know the most injuries occur between 15 and 19. We know that and we should know that. We hear it from insurance companies all the time when they talk about drivers. Your 16-year-old son goes to get insurance. Well, guess what? It's going to cost and it will cost until they are into their 20s.

If they don't have any accidents or caught with reckless driving or whatever, then they start to scale back the insurance, hopefully.

But we recognize that this is the riskiest behaviour and most likely to have accidents. I'm looking to the minister: Why wouldn't we consider those things when we're looking at helmet laws to protect people and to save money in our health care systems?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member opposite for the words that she just brought in the House. I think I reiterated this earlier, but when the select committee didn't reach a consensus on helmet requirements for off-road use and what the member opposite is sort of talking about here today, I think the approach that we looked at is a balanced approach for Yukoners. Like I said, I don't want a Canadian Ranger and his friend who are out there moving a snowmobile 20 feet off in the backcountry, cutting firewood for an elder and maybe delivering it in Aishihik, actually, or somewhere else out there — that has to be the responsibility of those people. Look at your education up front, start young with helmets like we're talking about and move forward.

But we just don't believe in making criminals of the trappers, the Canadian Ranger or the wilderness guide outfitter who is doing some trail maintenance. Fundamentally we're not going to agree on some of this stuff, but I believe this legislation is a balanced approach moving forward.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to follow up on the issue of the health statistics, and my colleague, the Member for Riverdale-South, just referred to a 10-year study that was done across Canada and put on the record some of the statistics from that. I wanted to also mention an Alberta study. Dr. Richard Buckley, a researcher at the University of Calgary, reported on a 10-year study of data from hospitals across Alberta — so it's only within that province — about the physical and monetary costs of all-terrain vehicle accidents. That study, which was released in 2012, found that over a 10-year span, there were 459 serious trauma cases with injuries such as broken spines, broken necks and serious head injuries. There were 79 deaths. The estimated cost to the health care system was about \$6.5 million. The study also showed that the majority of those injured or killed were men 18 to 20 years old. Did the health statistics factor into the government's decision to limit helmet use to under the age of 16? Was the minister aware of either of the studies that we've just talked about and what consideration did they give to the health implications to accidents and injuries?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I'm not going to comment on studies that I haven't read or studies that have been brought up in this House. We considered the select committee's recommendations. We looked at other jurisdictions and, like I said again, I believe that what we're moving and putting forward today on the floor of this House is a balanced approach, taking into consideration all Yukoners.

Ms. Moorcroft: So did the minister just confirm that he and his Cabinet did not consider the health studies that have been done about the accidents and injuries and costs of health care related to all-terrain vehicles?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I guess I can just reiterate my previous answer. Look at the select committee. We had lots of good conversation about the helmet use requirement. The committee even didn't reach consensus on this. Like I said, we have a balanced approach here, moving forward on this legislation.

Ms. Moorcroft: Well, we know that one member of that committee did not agree with the helmet use, and he said so in this Legislature. The fact is that helmet use does protect people from head injuries and is recommended by medical professionals, by many who see what damage can be caused if you're not wearing a helmet on an ATV while you're operating it.

But we're clearly not going to win anything there, so I just want to move on to another matter because we've had different answers on the one particular question related to the roadway, which is all that is captured in these amendments — highways and maintained roadways.

The definition of "maintained roadway" — and I'm going to quote from the act here, from the amendments to Section 1. The definition of "roadway" — "means the part of a highway that is intended for the passage of vehicles and includes (a) the area from centre line to the curb or edge, and (b) any pull out, rest area or weigh station that is contiguous with the area under paragraph (a)".

My recollection of the discussion at the briefing yesterday is that a shoulder would not be included, that it was only the travelled portion of the roadway. What I heard today in debate was the answer "no" sometimes and then the answer "yes" eventually. I just want to go back to that question and ask the minister to be clear about the definition of "roadway" being the area from centre line to the curb or edge and whether ATVs travelling on the shoulder of a road will need to have licences, registration and insurance.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Yes, the shoulder is within the edge, so it will apply.

Ms. Moorcroft: So the shoulder is included but the ditch is not, and the roadways on either side of the highways that are commonly used by a lot of ATV traffic will not be included in these amendments to the *Motor Vehicles Act*.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Yes — the non-maintained roadways.

Mr. Barr: I have just been listening today and hearing lots of new information — information such as the health studies, such as personal stories — regarding these changes in the act. I am out in the bush a lot on my snow machines — as a matter of fact, a Bravo — my 250 trusty Bravo, ATV 400, Polaris and a 570 Arctic Cat — so I can reel it back a bit and I can stay up high on the deep snow with my Bravo and go where a lot of 800s get stuck and pull them out, especially if you are not a very good rider. I have had experiences in the mountains, on trails and on lakes breaking trails and so on and so forth, with my family. As the Member for Mayo-Tatchun said, we used to take the kids and have them on a toboggan behind the machine.

I was recently out this last winter with a long-time friend of mine, who is a trapper. They are pushing 70 now, but they

spent all the winters out on the trapline and never wore a helmet. Neither the husband nor the wife wore a helmet. We were out last year. I don't wear a helmet out there either. I like my beaver-skin hat. I really identify with that. However, when I was out with my long-time friend, a trapper, and his wife who we've been out with other times with — and I don't like the fancy garb. I have my old parka, old pants, and I just rely on my skills to be out there and do what I do. I was out with this buddy, and we sat and talked about this together all the time — that that's what we do. However, the last time we went out, here he is wearing a darn helmet. It made me question something inside of me, because I am not one, really — I know change is necessary and struggle precedes change, struggle precedes growth. We as leaders have to take all things into account and sometimes make those hard decisions.

Hearing different stories and information here today, and then being out with a close friend — for the same reasons we've heard why we shouldn't have to, and leave it up to the responsibility of those individuals — who was up with the reindeer, way up north, and spent a lot of time up there over the winter. He's good. You should see him out there on a machine. He has broken trail all his life. He went off the side of his machine, and where he went off the side of his machine, he struck some ice. He got back on his machine and it just happened to be that they were flying out that afternoon to come back, and he had a headache. He went to emergency and they said, "It's a good thing you came in here because you would have died within the next 24 hours."

That's what he told me. I said, "What are you doing wearing a helmet?"

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Mr. Barr: No. It's that he wasn't wearing a helmet. If he had been continuing on that expedition, he would have died. It was lucky that it was the end day. They came into town, with the headaches, went into emergency and realized, and got the x-rays and so on and so forth — they took immediate action, thanks to the health care — double sight then and he couldn't drive for awhile. What I am saying is that now he wears a helmet. That's what I'm saying.

He was very much like me. "No, I'm not wearing one — right?"

This is what I do. I know what I'm doing. I have to think about when the public — and again, it kind of goes to responsibility — we are in tough positions sometimes when maybe the public hasn't really caught up to the evidence. Thinking back to when people drank alcohol and drove all the time, the general consensus out there was that's what you do. It was commented on all the time: I drive better when I'm drunk. I've heard that response by people. I might have said it myself in my younger years.

The point I'm trying to make is that change and ways of thinking about something, as we mature, has to go along with the changes and what we've heard today with the different machines and so on and so forth.

I do, and would like to encourage the members opposite and around this legislation — I'm very much re-evaluating this for me, who, until today, hasn't been there, quite frankly.

As it states in the recommendations due to point 12 of the select committee, it is because there is not a consensus yet. Whatever we do from today, I do believe we need more of the information that we heard today out there to the public. We need a heavy education program out there that is going to educate people. For example, it was the norm to drink and drive years ago. Well, it is not today. The public has been informed and there has been education around it and we just don't do that on a regular basis. It is what is more realized today and socially acceptable and we talk loudly about social licence in many different areas, which is that socially it is unacceptable to let your friend drink and drive any more. Where a long time ago, it was whoever was not as inebriated — that person drove and that was the norm. Well, the norms are changing and we have to as leaders recognize this and make those tough decisions, when it is not popular.

We have options — just like a parent does — to allow responsibility that we have heard today and make exceptions like other jurisdictions for trappers; for people that are getting wood — whatever exceptions. We are the Yukon. We can come up with them and still have a mandatory helmet law.

I would encourage this House to rethink this. It's not too late. It's also incumbent upon us to do so, because I have said before and it was one of the greatest teachings I ever learned: When we don't know what we don't know, we can't do anything about it. When we do know what we don't know, we can. This is one of those situations. The difference is that it is a collective. It's a population that doesn't know a lot of stuff to make informed decisions that would change their mind if they did know, just like my friend. I'm very grateful he is alive today because he's a great human being and I would miss him terribly, just like I miss some of my friends who are not with me because they drove drunk and are dead today.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member opposite for his comments.

Ms. Moorcroft: Yesterday at the briefing with the department, I reported a couple of typographical errors within the bill. My question for the minister is: How are those dealt with? Is there the ability to just make those corrections without dealing with them in any formal way as we go through on clause by clause?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Yes, they have been adjusted.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate?

We are going to move then to clause-by-clause reading of the bill.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Clause 2 agreed to

On Clause 3

Clause 3 agreed to

On Clause 4

Clause 4 agreed to

On Clause 5

Clause 5 agreed to

On Clause 6

Ms. Moorcroft: Could I ask the minister to just please explain this clause and the regulation-making authorities and process for Yukon government, municipalities and for unincorporated communities as it relates to the amendments to the *Motor Vehicles Act*?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: This is only affecting the powers of the Yukon government, not the municipalities. This is just an amendment to Part 9 of the act that requires changes —

Chair: Order please. We're discussing clause 6.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: We were.

Unanimous consent re revisiting clause 5

Chair: Do we have unanimous consent to return to clause 5?

I understand that Ms. Moorcroft requested the Committee to return to clause 5. Do we have unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Thank you.

On Clause 5 — revisited

Chair: Mr. Istchenko, would you answer the question regarding clause 5?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It is just a heading change and it doesn't change anything substantial.

Clause 5 agreed to

On Clause 6

Clause 6 agreed to

On Clause 7

Clause 7 agreed to

On Clause 8

Clause 8 agreed to

On Clause 9

Clause 9 agreed to

On Clause 10

Ms. Moorcroft: I hope that I'm rising at the correct place in the act to deal with my question relating to municipal powers. This is adding the division heading for municipal powers and then it's going on to dealing with powers of municipalities. The question I would like to ask the minister to answer is about the powers of municipalities to enact regulations dealing with all-terrain vehicle use. These amendments exclude municipalities and unincorporated communities. A municipality can bring in — and the City of Whitehorse has brought in — a bylaw to regulate all-terrain vehicle use.

What happens for unincorporated communities when it comes to creating regulations about all-terrain vehicle use?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: These results apply, except where the roads are exempted in Schedule 1.

Ms. Moorcroft: Let me try restating the question to see if the minister can understand what I am getting at here. I am aware that the amendments do exclude the unincorporated communities and that there is a list of them in that section of the bill. The question that I am asking him is: How would it be possible to regulate the use of all-terrain vehicles within an unincorporated community that is presently excluded from these amendments?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: The minister has the ability to make an order for those changes, like I spoke to earlier, so that's an order-in-council — the Commissioner in Executive Council — sorry.

Ms. Moorcroft: So, what I understood the minister to say then is that if a community such as Pelly Crossing wanted to have the use of all-terrain vehicles regulated within that community, they would have to approach the minister and ask the minister to bring forward a regulation to govern the use of off-road vehicles?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Yes.

Clause 10 agreed to

On Clause 11

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise to speak to this clause simply because I think it's something people are not necessarily aware of. The section that is added says that the "Driver of motor cycle is to drive in single file. Except when passing another vehicle, a driver of a motor cycle on a highway must not drive their motor cycle to the side of another vehicle that is travelling in the same direction and in the same traffic lane on that highway."

Although I think it comes later, I want to add that this also applies to bicycles. Legally, they may not travel beside each other on the highway. I just wanted to draw attention to that, because I think it's an important safety concern that should be on the record.

Mr. Barr: I would like to reiterate that — to share an experience. There are so many more cyclists coming up now, pedalling across Canada. I've been on the highway and not only double, but there were three abreast on a curve coming up on my way to Dawson.

It was very dangerous with another oncoming car. Somebody was going to get killed. I see it more and more often.

Then, as a driver of a motorcycle, as a rider for many years, I do know that there are different states and there are different places where it is legal to drive side by side, to ride side by side. It's not everywhere — same thing with helmet laws in the States — but in Canada, often what we do when we ride is that we're not side by side. It's kind of a common practice to be staggered. You may be close, but you're not totally side by side.

It is pretty much a standard, accepted practice when we're talking about a number of riders. When we have the Ride for Dad, for example, you might have 50 bikes out there at once, so a single file is quite a thing, so what we end up doing is a staggered thing. Is this going to be permitted?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Yes, the way the law reads — yes.

Mr. Barr: Yes, the way the law reads it is going to be okay to be staggered?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Correct.

Clause 11 agreed to

On Clause 12

Clause 12 agreed to

On Clause 13

Clause 13 agreed to

On Clause 14

Clause 14 agreed to

On Clause 15

Clause 15 agreed to

On Clause 16

Clause 16 agreed to

On Clause 17

Clause 17 agreed to

On Clause 18

Ms. Moorcroft: We did discuss this a bit yesterday at the briefing, so this new part is called "Bicycles and electric power-assisted cycles."

Can the minister explain the intent of adding electric power-assisted cycles and what rules of the road would apply to electric power-assisted cycles?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: There is no change at all. This is just cleaning up. There is absolutely no change.

Clause 18 agreed to

On Clause 19

Clause 19 agreed to

On Clause 20

Clause 20 agreed to

On Clause 21

Clause 21 agreed to

On Clause 22

Ms. Moorcroft: This is part 13, snowmobiles and off-road vehicles. As it was explained to us at the briefing, this is the heart of the rules. This starts out with the definition of "maintained highway". My question to the minister is relating to the fact that community roads of Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Carcross, Destruction Bay, Keno City, Old Crow, Pelly Crossing, Ross River and Upper Liard are not captured in this definition and so these new rules will not apply there. Did the minister's department conduct any consultation with any of those unincorporated communities prior to bringing forward these amendments?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: What I said earlier spoke to the balanced approach. We have the ability, if there are some concerns in these communities — they could bring it forward and we could make the changes. I spoke to that earlier.

Ms. Moorcroft: So the minister did not ask his department to contact any of the local advisory committees in any of the unincorporated communities to seek their opinion on whether they thought regulation of off-road vehicles would be appropriate in their community?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I am not sure if there are local advisory committees for all these communities or not but, like I said to the member before, we looked at the recommendations from the select committee where this government, or the government of the day, went out and brought these recommendations forward. Like I said, it's a balanced approach. But I also reiterated that the opportunity is there if a community or LAC wants this to be changed, the opportunity is there.

Ms. Moorcroft: The minister is referring to his approach as balanced, but it seems that it is largely uninformed in that he has not spoken with First Nations or

with the unincorporated communities, which may have views on whether all-terrain vehicles should be regulated, and how regulated — or on helmet use, for that matter.

Why does the minister think that he should wait for the unincorporated communities to indicate that they might want an action instead of approaching them ahead of time and asking them whether they would like to see the regulation of all-terrain vehicles and off-road vehicles apply in their communities?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I do believe I have answered that question, Madam Chair. The select committee went out and talked to Yukoners, and this is the approach we have taken, but we have made sure that, if there are any issues that arise in the future — that's good regulation that there's the ability to make changes.

Chair: Is there any further debate on clause 22?

Clause 22 agreed to

On Clause 23

Clause 23 agreed to

On Clause 24

Clause 24 agreed to

On Clause 25

Clause 25 agreed to

On Clause 26

Clause 26 agreed to

On Clause 27

Ms. Hanson: At the outset, I had said that I hadn't intended to speak and I had just raised the few concerns that I had with respect to many of the issues that have been amplified during the course of this afternoon's discussion that speak to the fact that — even accepting the minister's narrow view of the application of the recommendations of the select committee on off-road vehicles, as it pertains to the *Motor Vehicles Act*. Throughout the course of discussion this afternoon, we've heard many concerns being raised about aspects of issues that were raised during the public consultation, issues that have clearly identified that this is a piece of legislation — the amendments to the *Motor Vehicles Act* — that has gone only partway to address these issues. Then I had said, during my comments — and my colleagues have made it clear — that we feel that these matters are substantively important enough that we want to make sure that we, as legislators, demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that the issues that were discussed today do get the full scrutiny that they require. As my colleague from Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes pointed out, sometimes it takes time for people to appreciate and accept that time does change people's views.

Amendment proposed

Ms. Hanson: With that in mind, I would like to move:

THAT Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, be amended by adding the following clause after clause 26 at page 12:

“Review

27. Three years after this Act comes into force, the Government shall conduct a comprehensive review of this Act and shall submit to the Legislative Assembly, within one year after beginning the review, any amendments to the Act.”

And that the remaining clauses be renumbered accordingly.

I have copies for you, Madam Chair.

The amendment is self-explanatory. I think that it's merely putting into the legislation a provision that is common in legislation that has been passed by the Yukon Legislative Assembly previously — and in other legislative assemblies — to basically mandate this Assembly to make an obligation for us as legislators to review this legislation. Within three years, there is no doubt that there will be new facts that will come to light. Regulations do change and attitudes do change.

When I first came to the territory, the law was you could drink and drive as long as you weren't drunk. I think we need to look at aspects of the — people fought hard against the changes to the law then; you would find very few people arguing about drinking and driving. So I think there would be openness to recognizing — as members of the Official Opposition have made clear in the questions that have been pushed and the probing that they've done — that the bill has a number of weaknesses and is inadequate in a number of areas and we believe that with an opportunity for three years of experience and seeing how it works or does not work — that government should review this legislation.

With that, Madam Chair, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Hanson that the Chair report progress.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: Disagreed.

Motion negatived

Ms. Hanson: Well, I will just continue talking then, if that's what you really want to do.

Madam Chair, there is nothing that I want to say. I am not trying to be derogatory. I am not trying to do anything that is wrong about this, but what I am saying is that we have identified some weaknesses. I think that the minister himself has identified that the bill could be a bit more robust.

I have also suggested that it is common practice and I believe it would be commonly accepted within this Legislative Assembly that there have been territorial laws commonly practiced to put in a chance for a Legislative Assembly to review the legislation to ensure that — and in three years, Madam Chair, we would hope that the balance of the recommendations of the select committee on off-road vehicles have had a chance to be reviewed and the legislative changes that the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources have the mandate to deal with the legislative and regulatory changes that they promised will be in place, so that we can see how the whole package fits together with respect to, overall, how we are responding to a committee that was mandated by this Legislative Assembly.

Simply said, the purpose of putting this in is to ensure that we have an opportunity and that we mandate government

to do this, so it doesn't go by the wayside. Given, quite frankly, the fact that we have bits and pieces and sometimes a siloed approach within government — so here's an opportunity to ensure that there's a review. So we're suggesting that this legislation — I'm not talking about all the legislation. We're talking about this act — it's the *Motor Vehicles Act* — being brought back in three years.

Madam Chair, I'm not sure how much longer you would like me to keep going. I'll talk for the next hour, if you'd like me to, because you know I can do it.

Chair: If you are finished with your comments, then it is appropriate for another member to rise and speak if they wish.

Ms. Hanson: So far what we've heard is that, when we've asked the ministers, other ministers have — nobody has answered, so I'm just simply putting forward my position that this should be endorsed by the Legislative Assembly and that I would look forward to the support of all members of this Legislative Assembly.

There are many aspects we haven't — we heard data today that was clearly not part of the decision-making process with respect to the cost implications of not having helmet wear mandatory. We heard that nobody has done any research with respect to how exemptions work in other jurisdictions to respect the traditional use of off-road vehicles for traditional pursuits.

There's absolutely no reason why the Yukon can't do this kind of review.

Chair: Order please.

The time being 5:30 p.m., the Chair shall now rise and report progress.

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has met and considered Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

As the hour is 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. Monday.

The House adjourned at 5:32 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 165

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Monday, November 3, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME CONSTITUENCY PORTFOLIO

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Vuntut Gwitchin
Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
Patti McLeod	Watson Lake

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

New Democratic Party

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

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Rudy Couture
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Doris McLean
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, November 3, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of MADD Canada's 27th Project Red Ribbon campaign

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I am pleased to rise in the House today to recognize MADD Canada's 27th Project Red Ribbon campaign.

Each year, from November 1 to the first Monday after the new year, volunteers in communities across Canada distribute millions of red ribbons to the public to attach to their vehicles, their key chains, purses and backpacks. The iconic red ribbon is displayed as a reminder and an appeal to drive sober during the holiday season. This reminder is all too important in the Yukon. Yukon's rate of impaired driving convictions is four times higher than the national average. While this statistic is not something to be proud of, it is something that we can all make a commitment to improve on. Impaired driving is a totally preventable crime and every life that is lost or changed by impaired road crashes affects all of us in our communities.

Road safety is everyone's responsibility and it begins with each of us. I know the Department of Highways and Public Works continues to strive for the safest roads in the world and works to help decrease the number of impaired drivers on our roadways through enforcement, education, awareness and technology. We are always pleased to work in partnership with MADD and with the RCMP, the Yukon Liquor Corporation and other stakeholders, both within the territory and externally, to reduce the number of impaired drivers on our roadways.

Recently, MADD Canada's Citizen of Distinction Award recognized Yukon's Minister of Justice. The award acknowledged individuals or groups or organizations that have made a major contribution to the anti-drinking and driving movement in Canada. Minister Nixon was awarded for his efforts in amending the legislation to better address the rights of victims of crime and their rights to an adequate compensation.

A strong advocate for helping Yukoners understand the importance of responsible decision-making, Mr. Nixon has participated in advertising campaigns and public service announcements about the dangers and consequences of impaired driving. Minister Nixon is an enthusiastic supporter of MADD Canada's mission and partners, frequently with the MADD Whitehorse Chapter, for awareness events and activities.

I want to extend a special thank you to MADD for their tireless efforts in organizing these things and looking to get toward eliminating impaired driving. MADD continues to lead the way in public awareness and education campaigns to stop impaired driving. It is also important to acknowledge the thousands of volunteers who have worked for MADD over the years. Your dedication and hard work is helping to save lives and we do thank you.

We all play a part in the prevention of impaired driving and I encourage everyone to wear a red ribbon or place a red ribbon on their vehicle to demonstrate their support for sober driving. On behalf of my department — Highways and Public Works — and to all of Yukon government, I would like to extend our gratitude toward our local MADD chapter and our local RCMP. We are honoured by your presence here in the Legislature here today. Your dedication and hard work is helping to save lives and we thank you. We look forward to continuing our collective efforts, working together to prevent impaired driving and to remind Yukoners to make smart choices.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today we did the event up at the Canada Games Centre and I committed all our government vehicles to wear the red ribbon.

I encourage the City the Whitehorse — it looks like we're partnering with them again — so I want to thank everybody for that.

In the House today I would like to introduce Amanda Price, the vice-president of MADD Whitehorse; Daniela Martinson, the president of MADD Whitehorse; Jacquie Van Marck, the secretary for MADD Whitehorse; and Charles Behan, a volunteer. Also we have, among other representatives, some from the RCMP: Staff Sergeant Archie Thompson, we have Constable Susan Shaw-Davis and Constable Sheen Kidd. Thank you for coming to the House today.

Applause

Mr. Barr: On behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party, I rise to pay tribute to Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Twenty five years ago, MADD Canada started an awareness campaign to get the public thinking about the need for safe and sober driving. In 2003, MADD came to the Yukon where the group diligently works to eradicate impaired driving and helps make our roads safer. MADD also continues to support victims of drunk driving, which includes the families and friends of someone who is injured or killed in an accident involving a drunk driver. When families reunite to celebrate the holiday season, some feel a terrible void in their lives. Others celebrate the festive season with liquor and good spirits. This is when MADD's project red ribbon can gently remind Canadians to drive safe and sober.

Each year from November 1 to the first Monday after January 1, MADD Canada volunteers across the country to distribute red ribbons and ask Canadians to display a ribbon on their vehicle and/or key chain, or on a personal item like their purse, briefcase or backpack.

The red ribbon symbolizes the importance of planning ahead for a safe ride home in order to prevent drinking and driving. It reminds people that deaths and injuries caused by impaired driving are avoidable and preventable. Working alongside the local RCMP detachment, MADD will be very visible in the upcoming holiday season. Let's all make safe driving in the Yukon a priority — commit not to drink and drive and to help educate others to do the same.

In recognition of Movember 2014

Mr. Silver: Today I rise on behalf of the Liberal caucus and all of my colleagues to pay tribute to Movember 2014. Movember's core purpose is to change the face of men's cancer. Movember is responsible for the sprouting of moustaches on thousands of men's faces in Canada and across the world. This moustache-growing charity helps raise vital funds and awareness for men's health, specifically prostate cancer, but also men's mental health initiatives.

This year, kudos go out to Yukon College for announcing a twist on the tradition. They are encouraging Yukoners to dye their beards or style their facial hair in interesting ways that can attract attention. That means you, Mr. Speaker. You can participate this year for sure without having to shave your moustache to begin with.

For links to their Movember team and others, including mine, please go to <http://ca.movemeber.com>. We proudly display our moustaches to raise awareness of men's health and to support those who are battling or who have battled cancer. I encourage any man listening to this to make sure that you get a check-up regularly.

Speaker: Isn't there enough gray in my mustache as it is?

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I invite all members to recognize Mr. Jeff Ford. Mr. Ford works at the Department of Justice and is here — I know — in support of the tributes for MADD, but I would also like to recognize him because he is a constituent of mine, so I invite the gallery to welcome him here.

Applause

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Ms. Stick: I have a document from October 2011, Canadian Institute of Health information data, for tabling. It shows that ATV injuries continue to rise.

I also have for tabling an updated May 2012 document, entitled *All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Legislation Chart*.

Ms. Moorcroft: I have for tabling the City of Whitehorse submission to the Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions to be presented?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Notices of motions.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to fulfill obligations agreed to in the devolution transfer agreement to work with Yukon First Nation governments to develop successor resource legislation that will provide compatible, or where appropriate, common natural resource management and legislation regimes in the Yukon.

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

THAT this House calls on the government to renew its promise to achieve the diversion of 50 percent of Yukon's solid waste by 2015.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to disclose the preliminary findings of the \$600,000 Yukon diverse fibre feasibility study undertaken over the summer of 2014.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to make wearing a helmet while driving or riding an off-road vehicle mandatory for all Yukoners, regardless of age.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before we start Question Period, I would just like to remind members that we have a practice of addressing members by their constituency or by their portfolio that they hold, and not by using their names.

This then bring us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Mining sector development

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, this government rode high with the rise of world commodity prices. Its economic vision for Yukon was a single, narrow focus on resource extraction. Today we are seeing the realities of the inevitable decline. Last Friday, gold and silver sank to their lowest values since 2010. In September 2013, this government's economic forecast stated that higher mineral production and expenditures were expected to support GDP growth of 8.8 percent in 2014. By February 2014, that rosy projection was downgraded to 3.3 percent. This July, the forecast was further reduced to 1.7 percent. Reality clearly has begun to set in.

Does the Premier acknowledge that depending on extractive resource industries to drive economic growth has

made Yukon vulnerable to the rise and fall of world commodity prices?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, whenever we talk about the economy in Yukon, we have to, of course, discuss the mining industry. Obviously the mining industry is a very important component of our economy. It has been for the last 100 years or so and it will continue to be an important part of our economy going forward. It's not the only part, though, and it's important that we recognize other sectors of the economy and grow and develop those sectors as well.

We have taken a number of steps to ensure that our economy is increasingly diverse with regard to the tourism sector, with regard to the knowledge sector and, of course, the oil and gas sector, the forestry sector and agriculture sector. These are all areas that we focus on for growth. It's important to recognize that, while the mining industry is very important and it's the cornerstone of our economy, it is important that we look to other sectors to grow and diversify our economy, to strengthen and make sure that our economy is resilient despite the factors the member opposite is referencing with regard to world commodity prices and other factors outside of Yukon government's control.

Ms. Hanson: Yes, in fact, Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the Minister of Economic Development is now referring to oil and gas as one of our diversifiers.

During the years of relative prosperity, the Premier squandered countless opportunities to build an inclusive and strong economy. We have heard from Yukoners time and again about the need to invest in the renewable energy industry, in a diversified and resilient economy. Yukoners, unlike their government, have a clear vision. Yukoners know that our future doesn't have to be dependent on boom-and-bust cycles.

When will the Premier talk with Yukoners, not just with big industry, about their vision for a strong and diversified economy?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Where we disagree with the member opposite is on her treatment of the mining industry. We believe that we can grow and strengthen other sectors of the economy without taking away from the support we provide to the mining industry. We don't believe they're mutually exclusive.

The NDP would have us believe that any investment in the mining industry — any program or support the government provides to improve the mining industry in the territory — is a bad thing and we should redirect our resources elsewhere. We don't agree with that vision. We see the mining industry as a key component of our economy. It's the cornerstone of our economy and will continue to be, going forward.

We'll continue to invest and grow other sectors of our economy. We'll continue to take steps to bolster the knowledge economy. We'll continue to market Yukon's incredible tourism resources and continue to grow the tourism industry, as we've seen over the past number of years. We'll also look to other sectors of the economy and, yes, oil and gas

has been one over the past few years — so has the agriculture industry and so have Yukon small businesses.

We'll continue to take those steps to grow and diversify our economy, but that does not mean that we have to turn away from the mining industry, as the NDP would have us do.

Ms. Hanson: One has only to look at the Premier's statements to the media in Denver, or to the Senate on Bill C-6, to know who he listens to. This government took credit for the economic growth that went along with record-high commodity prices and federal transfer dollars. Now that the economy has slowed and Yukoners are feeling the pinch, this government refuses to stand up and take responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, part of being a leader is taking responsibility — not just for the good times, but also the bad. When will the Premier admit that the Yukon's economic outlook was not as rosy as he claims, and tell Yukon citizens what his government is doing to foster an economy that is resilient, that is not so dependent on the federal government or boom-and-bust commodity cycles?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I think the record stands for itself in terms of the management of the economy and what happened when the opposition parties were in power.

Mr. Speaker, this government believes that a healthy and growing private sector economy is vital to the success of this territory to allow us to continue to move toward becoming a net contributor to this country, which this government believes in strongly. It is a private sector economy that continues to provide resources for governments, to provide services and programs for Yukoners. We will continue to work on those efforts to ensure that we are as best prepared for when this downturn in our cycle of mining right now, globally, turns around. We are working on energy, we are working on roads, and we are working on ports. We are working on the creation of CNIM and also mobile trades trailers. We are also working on the assessment, regulatory and permitting processes to ensure that, when the opportunity arises, Yukon is a place that investors will look at and companies will know with confidence that they can come here and create great opportunities for Yukoners.

Question re: Education official's credentials

Mr. Tredger: On Friday, the *Whitehorse Star* reported that a senior Education official's credentials have been thrown into question. Fifteen months ago, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Public Schools was welcomed to the government as a Master of Divinity and the Deputy Minister cited the PhD he gained from Newburg Theological Seminary and College of the Bible — an unaccredited on-line learning centre with an office in an Indiana suburb.

Mr. Speakers, teachers and the public want to know: Does the minister approve that an Education ADM uses the title "Doctor" without having a PhD from a recognized institution?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I am a bit astounded by the line of questioning coming forward from the member opposite. Surely, given the background of that particular member, I am absolutely astounded that the member opposite is implying that I, as an elected official and a member of Cabinet on this

side of the House, would be responsible for personnel-related issues — I would be responsible for hiring, for dismissal, for adhering to grievances — and the list goes on.

The member opposite should know full well that I do not have the legal mandate — and I do not have any mandate, nor does anyone on this side of the Legislature have any mandate — when it comes to personnel-related matters.

We on this side of the House do have 100-percent confidence in the Public Service Commissioner, and certainly in the commission itself and in all of our departmental hiring decisions, and there are processes in place to instill confidence and fairness and transparency at every turn when it comes to personnel matters.

Mr. Tredger: This matter of the ADM's qualifications is of the public interest and should be of the minister's concern because he chairs the Yukon Teacher Qualification Board. This is the person in charge of approving new teachers' credentials to become educators in our school system. This is the body that acts as our quality control check to ensure that our educators are qualified to fulfill their duties in the classroom to a high standard of the educators already operating in the Yukon.

How does promoting unrecognized credentials of the person who reviews teachers' accreditation reflect on the Department of Education?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Again, this is a matter that involves personal information about one of our respective employees. It is a matter that — because it is of a personnel-related matter, I do not have that particular mandate. In fact, neither one of these members on this side of the Legislature has that mandate to oversee decisions pertaining to hiring, dismissal or any related issue pertaining to personnel-related matters.

As I mentioned, I am pretty sure — I'm hoping — that the member opposite is not inferring that we politically interfere in that particular process. We have processes in place to guarantee that we do have transparency, that we do have fairness when it comes to hiring personnel and when it comes to overseeing those personnel-related matters. We certainly instill and have confidence in all of our departmental hiring processes as well as the Public Service Commission itself.

Mr. Tredger: Educators have the right to a credible and timely review of their qualifications. They also deserve to know that those sitting in decision-making positions are appropriately qualified. It takes years of study and hard work to obtain an accredited university degree. It's a chance for those with the right training to have their hard-earned and accredited qualifications confirmed so they can get to what matters: getting into the classroom and helping our children learn and grow.

Can the government tell us when was the last time that the Teacher Certification Board met?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: For the record, what we do hear today is that the Opposition would politically interfere with personnel issues. We've heard many insinuations in the past from the Opposition in terms of questioning the competency of our public service. We will stand behind this public service.

We have and we always will. We admire and appreciate the job that they do on behalf of Yukoners every day, and this government will not interfere politically on a personnel issue.

Question re: Seniors facility funding

Mr. Silver: I have a question about the new Alexander Street residence. In August 2012, the Government of Yukon announced the reconstruction of the seniors residence at 207 Alexander Street. The price tag was to be \$12.65 million. Budget documents released last week put the cost of this project at over \$16.1 million. In other words, it is more than 25 percent overbudget. This project joins a long list of construction contracts that have come in overbudget under the watch of this Yukon Party government.

Does the minister think that going overbudget by 25 percent on a capital project is an example of good fiscal management?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would be happy to help the member learn to read a budget sometime. In fact, the contract is well under the original \$16-million budget. Earlier this year, we had \$12 million allocated for this fiscal year and an additional \$4 million in the next fiscal year. The project itself actually came in millions of dollars underbudget and has a total budget of \$12,637,000.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, Yukoners don't trust this government when it comes to managing capital projects and there's a good reason why. That's why we bring these questions up in the Legislative Assembly.

This is just the latest in a long list of poorly managed projects that have gone well overbudget on this government's watch, starting out with F.H. Collins, the new community hospitals, to the ambulance station as well. The government has a proven track record of going overbudget on these projects.

While the government talks a good talk and a good game about managing taxpayers' money wisely, the reality is quite different. The Auditor General of Canada has been quite critical of this government's inability to bring the projects in on budget and its inability to learn from its past mistakes.

Will the minister explain why this latest project is \$30.5 million overbudget?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I am quite enjoying this. I would be happy to invite the member — he might want to just drop his third question, because this project is well under the original budget of \$16 million. The project has a budget now — because the bid came in substantially under the original estimate — \$3.5 million under the original estimate — of \$12,637,000.

If the member would like to apologize for not reading the budget document correctly, he is welcome to do so. If he'd like us to provide him with a financial literacy course, we'd be happy to arrange that.

Mr. Silver: Unless they have another budget that they're not giving us, the numbers speak for themselves. We know that this government has been millions of dollars overbudget on many of its capital projects. The Auditor General of Canada has written an entire report about this

government's mismanagement on the Watson Lake hospital and it is obvious that this government is incapable of learning from its mistakes on the new Alexander Street project.

Why is setting a budget and sticking to it not an important thing for this minister or for this government?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Today and, in fact, on other days — both in this House and outside of this House — what the reality really is, is that someone who wants to be or aspires to be the Premier of this territory after years in this House still has difficulty understanding budgets and appropriations. I think that that is a disappointment for all people here in the territory and it is certainly a discredit to the work that is being done by the government.

Question re: Solid-waste management

Mr. Barr: Does the government intend to uphold its promise to divert 50 percent of Yukon's waste by 2015 — yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: We are taking a number of steps to improve the diversion of waste in the territory and improve recycling in the territory. Some of those steps include what is currently being undertaken right now with regard our recycling regime review that is being consulted on presently. That change, or that proposal, will see an increase to the beverage container regulation and changes to the designated materials regulation, and we believe that that is a concrete step toward strengthening the overall recycling regime in the territory.

It is not the only thing we have done. Obviously we have invested significant funds throughout the waste management recycling spectrum, but this change to the system — to the structure of our recycling regime — is a fundamental step and it is a fundamental step in the right direction — to ensure that Yukoners continue to recycle, continue to have a waste system that sees an increasing amount of waste diverted — making sure that some of those key components of the waste stream are kept out of the landfill and are dealt with properly through recycling.

Mr. Barr: It was a simple question with a simple answer. Does the government intend to uphold its promise to divert 50 percent of Yukon's waste by 2015 — yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: What we're focused on is taking steps that will benefit the long-term health of the Yukon and focus on taking steps that will improve the structure of our recycling regime in the territory. Whether that takes a year, two years or three years, that's less important than making those important decisions — those important decisions about Yukon's future and about the recycling regime in the territory.

I know the member opposite is focused on this particular goal next year, but what we're focused on is the long-term health of the recycling industry and the long-term health of waste diversion in the territory, and ensuring that our system is made stronger by changes that we're making both through the regulatory changes that we're proposing as well as the investments we continue to make in waste management and recycling throughout the territory.

Mr. Barr: This is a platform promise to do such of what I've been asking. Does the Yukon Party government intend to uphold its promise to divert 50 percent of Yukon's waste by 2015 — yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I've explained some of the changes that we have made that are forthcoming with regard to the recycling regime, but of course, as the members all know, we will continue to work with a variety of levels of government including the City of Whitehorse and southern municipalities throughout the territory to improve our recycling regime and take concrete important steps to advance our regulatory regime.

If the NDP has a different vision of how they would like to see Yukon's waste management system conducted or Yukon's recycling regime changed, I suggest that they make those clear to Yukoners because we've done that — we've taken steps. We've demonstrated our willingness to make changes to our regulatory regime to ensure that recycling is done in a more fulsome and robust way in the territory. If they have a different view of that then they're welcome to bring it forward, but that's exactly what we'll continue to do.

We will continue to improve the regulatory regime for recycling in the territory; we'll continue to invest significant dollars in waste management; we'll continue to invest significant dollars in recycling; and we'll continue to work with our partners throughout the territory to advance our waste management regime and improve recycling for Yukoners.

Question re: Liquor Act review

Mr. Barr: The Yukon Liquor Corporation's 2014-19 strategic plan lists a goal to reduce alcohol-related harm to the public and encourage a culture of moderation and social responsibility that includes decreasing the likelihood of minors illegally purchasing and consuming alcohol. The same plan indicates that this goal may not be achievable because the *Liquor Act* is cumbersome and incoherent. The act is woefully out of date.

When will this government modernize the *Liquor Act* and make it more coherent and less cumbersome for the Yukon Liquor Corporation?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the question from the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. In this case, of course, I'm not going to announce any *Liquor Act* changes here in the House, but I will certainly take the member's request under consideration. I would point out to the member that, across government, as he should be well aware, a number of steps have been taken by departments to support and address issues around overuse of alcohol. Those include a wide range of activities, including promoting social responsibility and efforts that have been done by the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Justice to support those with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, as well as steps that have been taken to assist people in coping with alcohol and breaking their addiction to it.

Mr. Barr: It is the *Criminal Code* that prohibits driving while one's ability to operate a vehicle is impaired by

alcohol or drugs. According to Statistics Canada, the Yukon has one of the highest rates of drinking and driving in the country, surpassed only by the Northwest Territories. StatsCan also says that young adults between 20 and 24 years old are the most likely to be charged with impaired driving. Over the last two years, I understand that there were 200 people with graduated drivers' licences who had roadside suspensions.

Will the minister commit to zero tolerance for this drinking and driving with graduated licences, and what preventive measures will he take to bring those numbers down?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for his question. Just this morning, the Minister of Highways and Public Works joined me, along with city officials, RCMP and first responders in kicking off the Mothers Against Drunk Drivers Red Ribbon campaign.

Over the last number of years, the Department of Justice, as well as the Department of Highways and Public Works and other departments, have worked with the RCMP, first responders and particularly Mothers Against Drunk Drivers to work on public campaigns to try to reduce the amount of drinking and driving.

We know that Yukon is — that the stats are higher in Yukon than across Canada. I think part of that is our RCMP doing the good work that they do, as well as citizens calling 911 when they suspect somebody is drinking and driving. I would like to give a shout-out and thanks to all of the volunteers in Yukon and across Canada with Mothers Against Drunk Drivers for the good work that they do.

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, it seems evasive answers are running rampant on the other side of the House today. Yukon's chapter of MADD — whom we paid tribute today for their good work — wants tougher impaired driving laws similar to those used in other provinces. But the work done by MADD doesn't replace the government's corporate responsibility. However, according to the Yukon Liquor Corporation's strategic plan, its corporate social responsibility is not clearly defined.

When will this government define its corporate social responsibility and commit to doing more to encourage responsible alcohol consumption?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I take offence to the member opposite characterizing my last response as evasive. I don't think that the work that the volunteers at MADD, the RCMP and the first responders do should be characterized as evasive.

We will continue to work with RCMP to continue to increase the number of checkpoints throughout the holiday season, but also in the off-season. They have shown to be very effective and we see that in the statistics that are coming in.

As well, Mr. Speaker, on an annual basis — sometimes twice a year, if I'm fortunate enough — I participate in a full shift with the RCMP and Mothers Against Drunk Driving just to show the presence of the Department of Justice and represent my colleagues. We'll continue with the good work. We'll continue working with RCMP and first responders and we will continue to support Mothers Against Drunk Driving Whitehorse.

Question re: Medical staff shortage

Ms. Stick: The 2014 Whitehorse General Hospital needs assessment revealed the highly disconcerting statistic that 80 percent of Emergency department visits continue to be non-urgent or less urgent cases. This is nearly twice the national average. It means four out of every five Yukoners visiting the Emergency department would be better served by other, less expensive, forms of care.

What will the minister do to address the clear gaps in health services that are causing the overuse of our Emergency department by non-urgent and less urgent cases?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Our government, over the past couple of years, has taken a number of steps to address both the perceived shortage of physicians in the territory, as well as undertaking a number of initiatives to relieve some of the pressure at the Whitehorse General Hospital emergency room. Some of those measures include setting up a Referred Care Clinic, which we then expanded to full-time from part-time. It also included a full-time person working in concert with the Yukon Medical Association to attract more doctors to the territory. It also includes ongoing discussions with the Yukon Medical Association, as well as independent doctors here in the territory, to address the difficulty of having fewer patients — perhaps we can call it — than in other jurisdictions in the country.

We feel that we have a better ratio of doctors to population than anywhere else in the country and our problem appears to be that many of the doctors aren't taking as big a caseload as we would like to see them take.

Ms. Stick: It is a problem and it's ongoing. Those statistics should be concerning to everyone. Emergency care is one of the most expensive forms of care. The Referred Care Clinic is a step in the right direction, but clearly it's not enough even full time. The Yukon is still far behind the rest of the country when it comes to non-urgent care cases showing up at emergency. Even the expansion of the Whitehorse General Hospital Emergency department — I agree, it is needed in terms of patient safety, staff safety and a better set-up but we cannot be expanding that, hoping that this will take care of the numbers.

What is the minister's plan? What other plans does he have to curb these statistics and bring the number of non-urgent cases in our Emergency department in line with other jurisdictions?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I've already outlined some of the things we're doing. We're meeting on an urgent basis with the Yukon Medical Association to try to develop some other additional responses to the difficulty. The simple fact is that doctors have independent businesses. We cannot force doctors in this territory to work on a full-time basis and take more patients.

It's a slow process. We admit that. Some physicians in the city and the territory are beginning now to expand their practices but the days appear to be gone where we have a number of physicians in Whitehorse accepting 2,000 to 3,000 individual patients and working seven days a week throughout the year in order to service all of those patients.

We now have, at the last count, 72 working family practitioners in the territory. That gives us a better population-to-doctor ratio than any other jurisdiction in this country. We're doing our job. We're now looking at other alternatives and we'll continue to do that, but we'll do it in cooperation with the Yukon Medical Association.

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, we might have the greatest ratio but we still don't have doctors who are taking new patients. We have people coming to the Yukon. We have people who are losing doctors, again, and still, the emergency room is the only option.

The other concerning group that is using the Emergency department is those with mental health or substance abuse issues. We have seen a steady increase in patients. Yes, the Referred Care Clinic has helped with that, but there is obviously a gap in mental health services if those individuals are continuing to show up at our Emergency department. Again, it's the most expensive form of care.

Will the minister at least commit to increasing the capacity or creating more collaborative care clinics — possibly in the evenings or on weekends — other ways besides just talking about recruiting more doctors?

Hon. Mr. Graham: We are actively pursuing those options at the present time. One of the things you also have to look at is that many people in the city believe that they don't wish to wait for an extended period of time to see a doctor, so one of the difficulties is low wait times. People know that if they go to the emergency room, they get a qualified doctor almost immediately.

The wait time at the ER is very short, so it's a convenient method of seeing a doctor. We also have — as I've probably already said — two new collaborative care clinics here in the City of Whitehorse. As I said, the Referred Care Clinic is expanding, and we're working actively to expand the number of walk-in clinics in the city as well as expanded care.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 79, entitled *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 79: *Pioneer Utility Grant Act* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate in Bill No. 79, *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*.

Hon. Mr. Graham: In most of the questions and comments I've received to date from people around the territory, it would appear to me that perhaps I didn't explain clearly enough about the income test model.

I will attempt to explain perhaps a little more clearly what we mean by the income test model. The income test is a process which allows for the adjustment of a benefit, a user fee or a deductible, based on the income of an individual or of that family. It typically means that as the income of the individual or family increases, the amount of benefit paid out by the government will decrease, until eventually it will be zero. One of the benefits of income testing is that it ensures that the benefits paid out by the government are paid out to those people in the territory who have the greatest need.

Income testing in this case will also help increase the sustainability of the program as benefits are reduced or no longer provided to those with sufficient or higher incomes. Currently, the pioneer utility grant has been available to all eligible seniors regardless of income. With this bill, this will change. This is not being done in isolation. We have other income-tested programs, including the childcare subsidy and others in the government. Based on our population projections, it was estimated that by 2016-17, approximately 3,000 senior households would be eligible for the pioneer utility grant and the expenditures would more than double in that time frame. That is the biggest single reason that we decided to go with an income testing model for the pioneer utility grant.

It will be based again on a middle-income range for testing. The middle-income range is based on the estimated middle 60 percent of incomes among all Yukon couple families and then the middle range is being applied to senior couple families and converted. That will be applied to senior couple families and will be converted to apply to seniors not in couple families — so in other words individuals. Based on income distributions of Yukon seniors by family type, impacts under our proposal will be felt more by couples than individuals, but very, very few seniors in the territory — with the exception of those with very high incomes — will be contained in the regulation.

Some of the numbers we'll probably discuss more but, Madam Chair, I want to really emphasize that when we're talking about income levels, we're talking about net income levels, not gross income. It's very important that that is understood by all seniors and the department is currently working on an information pamphlet. I know the member

opposite advised that as well and we're working on an information brochure that will be available to all Yukon seniors in the very near future. Thank you.

Ms. Stick: I thank the minister for that information again. I do have a couple of questions I would like to come back to just for clarification and then I have a couple of comments and I should be done.

I think one of the questions I heard from seniors who contacted our office was how the government came up with this middle-income range. Where was that developed? Is that from a national program or is that something strictly for the Yukon? How did the government come up with that?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, we looked at what other provinces and territories do across the country, but there is really no correlation between what we have here as an income for seniors and what other provinces or territories, for that matter, have. We went by actual incomes in the territory and then we used the 60-percent number as something that is — I wouldn't say it is completely used across the country, but is generally accepted.

This means that individual seniors with incomes below approximately, as I said before, \$39,000 and senior couples with combined incomes below \$56,000 will receive 100-percent of the benefit.

Individuals with incomes above — again, we're talking in general terms — \$114,000 to \$115,000 — and couples with incomes above \$165,000 would receive no pioneer utility grant whatsoever. Those are the general cut-offs. Between those ranges — \$39,000 to \$114,000 — the pioneer utility grant would be slightly decreased as your income went up. We can make changes or tweak the numbers once we know from the first year what the application rate is, but we believe that these numbers — the minimums — will hit all of the seniors in the territory who actually need it. Individuals with a net income above \$114,000 are probably not going to miss the \$1,000 pioneer utility grant in any event.

Ms. Stick: I understand that we'll be waiting for regulations that will spell out the exact range when it comes to this middle-income range of numbers. We have heard from the minister — he has given numbers that he just quoted again. I'm looking for assurances from the minister that the information he has given in this House will remain the same, or very close, to what he has quoted in this House. I just want to be clear that we are not going to see a sudden change in those numbers when the regulations come out.

Hon. Mr. Graham: That is correct. Those are extremely close. That's why I would say that they are not going to vary any more than a few hundred dollars in any one direction. What the holdup right now is — and the reason that I haven't got them here to present to everyone — is because we're working on the gradients. In other words, at what point do you lose a percentage of the pioneer utility grant? Once we have those in place, we'll be able to bring them here for everyone to take a look.

Ms. Stick: I understand that piece of it, which is the sliding range. If you are at this number, this is how much of the pie — I understand that part.

Another question I had was just with regard to administrative costs: What are the impacts these new regulations will have? I'm assuming it will take more time. There will have to be a more thorough going-through of the applications; calculations will have to be done before cheques are given or people are turned down for the pioneer utility grant. I'm wondering what those administrative cost increases will be.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I made a commitment in my opening speech with respect to the *Pioneer Utility Grant Act* changes that there would be no overall increase in administrative costs to the government. We made that based on the fact that the department feels that the first year will be a little busier than normal but, once that first year has passed, and not only the department but the seniors in the territory have experienced working with the new system, we believe we can do it within our current system.

Ms. Stick: I would just like the minister to hear some of the other concerns and he can make comment on them, if he likes. These are some of the concerns I've heard from seniors that have come to my office through e-mails or phone calls. One of the first ones — and I've heard it twice now — was that some individuals really resent having to give out their personal information, such as net income, when they've spent their lives not talking about what they earn. That was one point. That was just a comment and I'll pass that on.

There was a concern that that means tests are going to become the norm for other programs that seniors might apply for, whether that's their health care, or the drug programs.

Those were concerns. Some felt that the single net income at the bottom end was set too low at \$40,000 and they thought that, when you look at the federal levels and the amounts when you collect the OAS and government top-ups, it should be closer to \$60,000. I think the last one, again, was the cost of implementing this program. They were wondering if it will really save money if you have to spend more on administration at government wage levels.

Those are just some of the comments I have received and I'm wondering if the minister had anything to add to those.

Hon. Mr. Graham: One of the reasons that we attempted to get all of the seniors organizations in the territory together to discuss the proposals was just that — to reassure them, first of all, that we weren't going to increase the administrative costs because that would then make the whole program silly. It would be no cost-saving to the government whatsoever.

The second was that we weren't using this program as a way to reduce the amount of money the government puts into the pioneer utility grant each year. We made a verbal commitment to those people and I'll make that commitment again here today. Not only is that not the intent — in fact we will not reduce the amount of money that goes into the pioneer utility grant system as a whole. We have stated to the seniors groups that if, at some point next year, we find out that the total expenditures for the pioneer utility grant do not represent what they would have been this year with the indexing for inflation, then we would increase the base

amount to take that into consideration. It's not intended to reduce the amount of money spent by government.

We knew from the outset that there would be some complaint from some seniors who do not wish to provide — in this case, one department and one person, hopefully, but as many as needed in the seniors department — this information. We understand that, but we tried to reassure all of the seniors that the information is completely confidential. It will be held in trust and it won't be released. Those are the answers I can provide.

The other, as for what future governments will do, I can't tell you right now. Right now we're busy enough working on the pioneer utility grant that we haven't made any moves in any other area to introduce this kind of a measure. At this point, the pioneer utility grant is it. We hope that it works well and that we can make sure it's fair to everyone. We'll take a look. That's one of the reasons we put in regulation that minimum and maximum because we'll take a look. If we're excluding people who actually need it, then we can always change the regulations next year.

Ms. Stick: I thank the minister for those comments. I would like to wrap up with the communications.

There were a number of emails and stuff. I appreciate that the minister went to the seniors organizations and groups.

I think that was a good thing, but there are lots who are not connected with those groups and are just hearing words on the street or at Tim Horton's or in their community about what is happening. So I think getting the information out to those seniors as soon as possible is really important. The department has the names and addresses of everyone who received it last year, so those would be the ones I would be targeting, as well as the seniors groups so that they can include something in newsletters or at meetings that they have.

I would just suggest that they answer some of these questions that I have brought forward and remind people to hold on to their income tax return that has that net income on it so that they are not having to look for it again or are unable to apply if they do not have that. I think program changes and date changes need to be included, and I would be happy to pass on some of the comments I received in terms of concerns of people out there, people who are not involved in any of those organizations.

I think the communication is going to be critical for this program and I thank the minister for bringing this forward.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Yes, we are in the process right now of writing to every senior citizen who received a grant in the last year. We will be ensuring that every section is clearly pointed out to them and we do not anticipate a great deal of controversy among seniors in the territory — mostly because we did consult with the organizations, and we also consulted with the Haines Junction St. Elias seniors group and, in your own riding, Madam Chair, we made every effort to work with them as well.

We think that we've covered most of the territory, but any senior out there who has any questions whatsoever, I would appreciate a call or at least an e-mail from them, and I would be happy to provide any further information that I can.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate?

We are going to move on to clause-by-clause reading of the bill.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Clause 2 agreed to

On Clause 3

Clause 3 agreed to

On Clause 4

Clause 4 agreed to

On Clause 5

Clause 5 agreed to

On Clause 6

Clause 6 agreed to

On Clause 7

Clause 7 agreed to

On Clause 8

Clause 8 agreed to

On Clause 9

Clause 9 agreed to

On Clause 10

Clause 10 agreed to

On Clause 11

Clause 11 agreed to

On Clause 12

Clause 12 agreed to

On Clause 13

Clause 13 agreed to

On Clause 14

Clause 14 agreed to

On Clause 15

Clause 15 agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Graham: One short comment: I will undertake to provide all members with the package of regulations as soon as they're completed and processed through the government system.

Madam Chair, I move that Bill No. 79, entitled *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Graham that the Chair report Bill No. 79, *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*, without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 79, entitled *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 79: *Pioneer Utility Grant Act* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 79, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Graham.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I move that Bill No. 79, entitled *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Health and Social Services that Bill No. 79, entitled *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I think we've probably talked enough or at great length, but think I would just like to go over a couple of the issues here today.

The reason that we've undertaken this review of the pioneer utility grant is because the payments were becoming less financially sustainable over time, especially as the number of seniors in this territory increased. What we did, basically, was go out with a number of options to stakeholders around the territory and discovered this was the most palatable option to the vast majority of seniors.

A couple of things that we're very proud of is that this will increase the pioneer utility grant to seniors living outside of the City of Whitehorse. The senior must live in the Yukon for at least a year before applying for the pioneer utility grant. That was something that almost universally seniors' groups insisted on. We also would restrict eligibility to all applicants over 65 years of age, so that means if the spouse of an applicant who used to be eligible between 55 and 65 for the pioneer utility grant — that will no longer apply. However, the 11 people in that situation in the territory will be grandfathered in under this legislation.

We're also changing the application date to July from October to enable people to apply earlier if they have spent three months in the territory since the beginning of the year.

The reason behind these changes is that we recognize that utility costs in rural communities are much higher than they are in Whitehorse. We removed the discrimination on the basis of marital status by establishing the same age requirement for all applicants. By moving the date for application, we believe that seniors making bulk purchases of wood or a number of seniors together doing a bulk purchase

of fuel oil will be able to have the money available at an earlier time.

By clarifying some of the definitions, the ability to determine eligibility and program administration will be much simpler. As I said previously, we've also made a commitment that we will not increase the administrative costs to administer the pioneer utility grant in the territory. We believe that by doing the consultations we've undertaken and by making the increases at this time that we've done, the vast majority of seniors in the territory will approve of the new act.

I want to thank the members opposite, in particular the member from Riverdale South, for her input and suggestions during debate. That is about all I have to say.

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard?
Motion for third reading of Bill No. 79 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 79 has passed this House.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 15: *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I'm pleased to introduce to the Committee of the Whole Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, along with accompanying *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* for the 2014-15 fiscal year. The first supplementary estimates for 2014-15 provide an additional \$21.442 million in total expenditure authority, increasing total projected spending for 2014-15 to

\$1,339,800,000, of which just over \$287 million will be directed toward capital investment.

As noted, this supplementary provides for over \$21 million in increased spending, specifically additional operation and maintenance requirements of \$27.56 million, offset by a decrease in capital expenditures of \$6.118 million.

Our government continues to deliver a healthy financial position. The first supplementary estimates for 2014-15 reflect a net financial position of \$176.819 million and accumulated surplus of \$1.329 billion.

I want to emphasize the importance of having net financial assets, as opposed to net debt. Maintaining a positive net financial position means we are paying as we go; we are not sacrificing future revenue streams to pay for current programs and services today. Our financial framework remains strong and I assure Yukoners that our government remains committed to managing and directing the Yukon government's finances in a disciplined, responsible and strategic manner.

The additional expenditure authority of \$21.442 million included in the supplementary estimates provides significant investment in the Yukon. My colleagues will, of course, be pleased to discuss these initiatives in greater detail during line-by-line debate.

Madam Chair, I am extremely proud of our government's successes in providing significant investment on behalf of Yukoners while maintaining our commitment to prudent financial management. As noted, our financial position remains strong and will provide more opportunities for our government to make future significant investments in Yukon on behalf of all Yukoners.

I am confident these supplementary estimates speak for themselves in addressing the needs of Yukoners. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss them in further detail in the days ahead.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the Minister of Finance for his comments and the refreshing brevity. I also welcome the official. I don't think we have had the opportunity to have the senior official introduced to this House, and so I'm going to presume that he's the new Deputy Minister of Finance. On behalf of the Official Opposition, I extend our welcome to this Assembly and we look forward to a future briefing when we can actually have a conversation.

I just wanted to make a couple of opening comments before we get into the department-by-department review of the elements that make up the supplementary estimates for this fiscal year.

In his comments on, I think, October 27, the Minister of Finance referenced also the Public Accounts. I think it is important that we look at Public Accounts, because part of the strategic fiscal environment that we work within is not just simply today or tomorrow in what we are spending today and what we are planning to spend between now and the end of the fiscal year. It is really the number of realities that are set out in the Public Accounts over the last couple of years.

One of the realities is that we have a government who has expenditures that grow faster than revenues; a government

that does not appear to be paying attention to the trends because, despite what I hear from the Minister of Finance about sound management and fiscal prudence, the trend since he took the reins as Minister of Finance tells a different story. I think it would be worth our while just to reflect on the fact that what we are seeing is a government that spends what they get — what comes in the door — as well as spending down the surplus. It is one thing to talk about the accumulated surplus, but nobody ever expects the government to divest itself of its buildings or capital assets. We are talking about money in the bank that you and I as legislators — you and I as citizens — can count on, should there be a need to call upon it.

Madam Chair, it is interesting to note that in fact we are now projecting an annual surplus of \$45.6 million this fiscal year. That is down from the annual surplus in the Public Accounts of last year of \$92 million, which is down from the annual surplus of \$119 million in 2012-13. We're seeing a downward trajectory there.

We are also seeing a government where total revenues have increased by three percent, but expenses have gone up six percent. That means that we need to give pause to some of the processes of decision-making and how we're going about that. I absolutely agree — with the amount of money that we have coming into this territory for the size of our population, the Minister of Finance is correct: we have a lot of money. The issue is: How effectively are we stewarding those resources on behalf of all Yukoners now and into the future?

As I mentioned earlier, the surplus of the last fiscal year was a decrease of 23 percent from the previous year's surplus of \$119 million. Certainly the forecast surplus of \$45 million is a significant decrease yet again. I think it is important that we recognize some of the revenue sources and the variances between what we have coming in and the challenges that we face and the need for us to be prudent as we make expenditures — and as we review each of the departments and each of the choices that have been made by the ministers responsible for those.

It was telling that in the Public Accounts of last year — for this fiscal year ending on March 31, 2014 — although the personal and corporate income taxes were at \$6 million, that was down 17 percent. That is a significant decrease from the previous year.

We will be interested in hearing how the government is managing the decrease of 26 percent that is anticipated on the Shawkak project, and what we are doing in terms of our financial resources in managing those and the decreases in contributions and service agreements with Canada, and the impact on programs and services we already feel and that are here, day to day, and have significant implications and impacts on people who are vulnerable within the income assistance programs. We will be most interested to see more details on that.

There are a number of areas we think need to be looked at — and be mindful, because as the Official Opposition and as legislators, we are all charged with the responsibility. The Official Opposition is charged with the responsibility of

holding the government to account for how it stewards the resources and income that are generated from whatever source, and the decisions it has made in terms of allocation of those resources on behalf of all Yukoners. I think it's not just about how much money you can spend, so we need to be looking at what the trends are, as I mentioned at the outset.

We see that, in 2013-14 for example, the government's total revenues had increased by three percent, but that was down again from the nine-percent increase in the year prior.

As I mentioned earlier, we know that the federal government has made changes that will be substantive and will affect the core of our budget as we see the changes, in terms of support that has been provided — time-limited support — for our health and social programs and that those will become structural as of 2017. What kind of anticipatory actions and work is this government doing to think about that?

There are other areas it's important that, as government and as legislators, we look at — the fact that, when we see our overall expenditures increasing. Three years ago, when the Minister of Finance was elected, the year-over-year increase was two percent in terms of expenditures, and then it went up five percent, and then it has gone up six percent for the last Public Accounts period. So we're seeing a trajectory of expenditures increasing, but our revenues are not increasing at the same level.

That causes us to say we need to think about that and we need to be, constantly at the back of our mind, asking questions — what are the implications for the decisions being taken?

Over the course of the budget debate and as part of our overall questions to the Minister of Finance and his ministers, we will be raising a number of questions. For example, the second largest liability that this government faces after accounts payable and accrued liabilities is post-employment benefits and compensated absences. In the three years since this government has been in power, we see that those liabilities have increased from \$80 million in March 2011 to \$92 million in 2012. In March 2013, they were at \$98 million. So it was \$80 million, \$92 million, \$98 million and we're now at \$101 million. I know those are questions the Minister of Finance is mindful of because they affect his planning and his work with his caucus colleagues as they plan.

No doubt he will refer me to the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission on that and I will have some questions for him. Ultimately, it's the Minister of Finance who bears the burden — and the joys, when he has a good story — of the responsibility and the accountability for the finances of the territory.

We will want to speak with and hold the government to account with respect to the borrowings. I know the Minister of Finance will tell me that I need to refer to the Minister of Health and Social Services when I seek clarification on the outstanding remaining loans to the Hospital Corporation for which parts of that were paid down by loans and parts of it were paid off.

We need more information on the future plans, particularly as we know this government is making

announcements about significant capital investments in this area. It is one thing to be identifying major infrastructure projects, but it is another thing to be identifying from a dwindling surplus what money is being set aside to basically put down payments on that so we're not borrowing if we are seriously intending to build large facilities like 300-bed seniors facilities or any one of the many things that I have heard spoken to.

The Minister of Finance will no doubt tell me that despite the fact that he has responsibility for the overall carriage of this file, he cannot speak to the increasing environmental liabilities that the Public Accounts — for which he signs off — document — so we know that over the last three years, it has increased by at least \$10 million. In March 2012, the environmental liabilities — these are not the liabilities — not the big-picture ones that the federal Government of Canada holds for things like Faro or Ketzia or Mount Nansen or any of the type 2 sites. These are liabilities that, since this government has been in over the last couple of years and has the responsibility for the environment and for ensuring that there is remediation of environmental contamination — so those liabilities.

I can go back further than this but, just as I was going through this the other day as other debate was going on and doing comparisons, my notes from me say that starting in 2012 they were at \$16 million and in 2013 they were at \$22 million. As of March this year, the Yukon government has recorded \$26 million as a liability for the costs related to the remediation of contaminated sites for which the government is responsible.

We will, of course, be raising questions — as we do — with respect to how the government determines what is a reasonable amount to set aside in terms of security for activities that can generate contamination. We know, Madam Chair, that a significant portion of these liabilities — 38 percent — are coming from highway maintenance camps and 27 percent are coming from landfill sites for which the government is responsible. They have the responsibility for maintaining those.

That is a worrisome trend — going back to my opening comments — when we talk about budgets and budgeting. Trends are really very important, and so if we are seeing an increase in environmental liabilities in terms of our highway maintenance camps and our landfills, what are the ministers responsible doing to ensure that those are reduced, if not contained?

There are a number of matters that I think, as the Minister of Finance quite rightly pointed out, that, as we get into departmental debate, we can have a frank and open discussion about these various issues. I look forward to that.

I think I'll leave that for now. There have been a number of interesting opportunities to reflect on Yukon's economy, and some of the opportunities that we have and face, which all have significant implications for us, as we move forward as a territory. Unless there's an intent to continue, I would leave it to moving on with department-by-department debate. Yes, I'll leave it there for now, Madam Chair.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I would like to first start off — I would be remiss in not acknowledging Mr. Stephen LeClair, who is the new Deputy Minister of Finance. I did mention Mr. LeClair in my second reading speech and acknowledged the work of him and his team, and in fact also the work of the previous deputy minister, Mr. David Hrycan, along with all the people within the various departments who work to put the supplementary budget together. I do want to acknowledge Mr. LeClair's assistance and support here today and the good work he's doing, leading the Department of Finance.

I will just speak a bit to some of the things that were said.

Certainly the Leader of the Official Opposition made a lot of comments, and it would be difficult to answer all of those things in the time limit that is required, but I thought that, as she has suggested, we will get into some of the detail when we get into department-by-department debate.

There were a lot of comments made regarding Public Accounts. Of course, we know that the Public Accounts audit is conducted by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada. During that audit, the Auditor General did again give Yukon government an unqualified opinion — a clean bill of health.

It was noted during that audit that the Yukon government posted its 11th surplus in 12 years. In 11 of the 12 previous years, this government has had a surplus. It acknowledges the financial strength that this government also has, which allows us to be able to respond to priorities or to pressures as they do occur. We have seen that from time to time where there can be different things that might occur. I am thinking of the flooding that occurred in your riding, Madam Chair, on the Liard River in Upper Liard. I think of the forest fires. There are many different things that can occur that create funding pressures on the government.

The good news is that this government, through good financial management, has the money to pay for such things as they arise. We don't have to use borrowed money from tomorrow to pay for services and programs today.

What Public Accounts did say is that, on a consolidated basis, there was a surplus of \$92 million and \$346 million of net financial assets. There was \$82 million invested in buildings and infrastructure. On a non-consolidated basis, there was a surplus of \$58 million and net financial assets of \$195 million. As of March 31, 2014, this government had a cash balance in the bank of \$233 million. They also noted the \$27 million given to the Yukon Hospital Corporation to reduce its debt. We saw an increase in revenue of \$22 million — \$11 million of that \$22 million was an increase in corporate income taxes as well.

Just for comment, because the Leader of the Official Opposition implied that our tax revenue had gone down in 2013-14, which is incorrect — taxes increased by six percent between 2012-13 and 2013-14.

When it comes to budgets — as we have said in this House many times, budget really is a best estimate at that time through all the diligence and information that we have. We do that when we table our budget mains in the spring and, as I have noted, this can and does in fact change over time. A lot of times, those changes can occur because of things that can

be beyond our control and I mentioned a couple of examples already as we were speaking.

That is no different from a business that I used to run or even people who are doing a home renovation. Somebody might budget an amount of money to do a renovation on their bathroom, but once they start tearing the walls apart, maybe they realize, "Oh, geez, I need to do some electrical work. I have to change this because of this code." Inevitably, there can be things that can occur. As I mentioned before, one of the great reasons why this government has that flexibility is it is able to pay for these things as they occur because we have the money. We want to focus our energy on receiving the most value for every dollar that we spend. We can afford to move forward with programs and services that we have done because of that financial management.

I think that there is some confusion by the Leader of the Official Opposition in terms of the difference between "surpluses" and "net financial assets." There was a conversation where she was talking about environmental liabilities. In fact, I remember precisely my conversation with the Auditor General complimenting this government on the work that it has been doing on environmental liabilities and recording environmental liabilities. Certainly, we are following standard accounting policies that exist today in this country. They did compliment that work, of course. What we do see is transparency in terms of recording environmental liabilities. You also see annual work that is done to address those liabilities.

As I have stated, if you take all of the cash and the assets of this government and you subtract all of the liabilities — the money that we owe, the money that is acknowledged as required for environmental liabilities — so you take everything that we have and you subtract everything that we owe, we still have over \$170 million in the bank of net financial resources.

The Leader of the Official Opposition brought up highway camps. We can't turn back the clock of time to deal with the way things were done previously that resulted in some of the liabilities that occur today. Of course, practices today are much different from what they were at that time but, as we move forward, I will again mention that this government has the ability to address these issues and not be mortgaging the future of the next generation of Yukoners.

We continue to work hard to put ourselves in the best position to ensure the greatest opportunity for success for Yukoners. We listened — in fact today in Question Period, the Minister of Economic Development talked about the mining industry being a primary source of our primary economy in the Yukon's economy, but we're not resting on that. As I mentioned, we continue to address issues that we have at least some control over, such as preparing people for training for jobs, looking at assessing roads and the capacity they have, working with our neighbours to the west in discussions about ports, and working on creating energy solutions for the future, where our main goal for the long term will be the creation of more hydroelectricity.

But while we're doing this, and while we've seen in the past 12 years approximately 7,000 people move back after a number of years of NDP and Liberal governments where we saw — you know I saw an illustration one time using the famous picture from the gold rush. People were going up the Golden Stairs, and it was described that when the Yukon Party was in power, you saw everybody climbing and the economy moving forward. When the NDP and the Liberals were in power, everybody was going down the other way and exiting the territory. I thought that was a good reflection of the realities of what has happened in the past under the governance of the Liberals and the NDP.

We continue to work on ensuring that we create a very strong environment for our primary industry and I believe that the work that we are doing in our support of the federal government's amendment through Bill S-6 helps us. That is one of those pieces that we think is important to ensure more certainty and more consistency in terms of environmental assessment. While we continue to do what we can there, we continue to invest in tourism and we continue to look at opportunities for creating a second fibre optic cable to the south which can have tremendous opportunities for the IT and knowledge economies.

We're very proud of the work that is going on at Yukon College as they move toward the creation of their first degree program and building toward the goal that we had set in terms of exploring models to move toward a university in the long term. There is some great news out of the Yukon Research Centre again this year in terms of the amount of money that they continue to be able to attract for research and the work that goes on with industry collaboratively with researchers through the Yukon Research Centre. There are some great exciting projects that continue to go on.

We are looking at things like continuing to update business legislation as well to make sure that we remain competitive for businesses in addressing the needs of business in the year 2014.

We are continuing to move ahead. The member opposite discussed long-term care facilities and yes, we are proceeding with creating a new long-term care facility. We believe it is something that is very important for the overall health of this territory. We see that as the gooseneck right now, in terms of the delivery of programs and services. I want to commend the work of the Minister of Health and Social Services and what he has done with the physicians and also working with the Hospital Corporation.

We have made big investments in home care. We are looking forward to breaking ground on the new hospital expansion in 2015. We are looking forward to the ribbon at the opening ceremonies of the MRI very shortly. I have to acknowledge all of the businesses and Yukoners who responded to the call to raise \$2 million. They set a goal of raising \$2 million in this small economy over three years and what did they do? They raised it in two years. That speaks volumes to the people and the business that very proudly live in this territory. We're very proud to not only match but exceed that to ensure that we could deliver that MRI to this

community. I know that people are very excited about that as well.

We opened a Referred Care Clinic, we have been investing in telehealth in our communities and we were expanding the hospital. We do see that providing services for long-term care is an area where we still have an opportunity and we're going to address that. I'm very disappointed in the characterizations of the opposition on how they've described a facility like this. Of course there are modern-day standards. We are not building boxes. We're building homes for people where they are provided with the care that they require but in an environment that will essentially address the fact that this is in fact their homes.

Those are a few things that I picked out of the comments that were made as the Leader of the Official Opposition did articulate. I expect that there will be questions for each of the ministers who will stand up to talk about items in detail that are reflective of what was asked for in what we are requesting from this Legislative Assembly through this supplementary budget.

Ms. Hanson: It is unfortunate that we get into base partisanship right off the bat. I was simply talking about trends based on what the Public Accounts say. I did say to the Minister of Finance that the Official Opposition would be raising those questions based on what the Public Accounts said with respect to environmental liabilities. Those reflect the government's current liabilities, not historic ones. I was very clear about that.

I just wanted to point out for the Minister of Finance that perhaps he has confusion between the comprehensive audit that the Auditor General performs on an annual basis on a select department or entity of the Yukon government, but it's not the Auditor General who prepares or does the audit. The preparation of the consolidated financial statements of the Government of Yukon is the responsibility of management of the Department of Finance not the Auditor General. What the Auditor General does is perform an annual audit of those financial consolidated statements. He's not going in to do a performance audit to see whether or not you've done a swell job on it. It's simply: Do your financial records reflect what you said they did? It's a financial audit, Madam Chair.

From that, he makes observations, and the detailed notes are prepared by the Government of Yukon. So when we talk about the retirement benefits or when we talk about the leases and the increases in payments for leases, we're getting that not from the Auditor General. He has simply verified that, financially, transaction-wise, putting it from one column to another is correct. This is not a comprehensive value-for-money audit that's performed by the Auditor General, as we see on an annual basis, as we will see in the new year when he comes forward with his comprehensive value-for-money audit of correction services, for example.

So yes, there are many aspects of the performance of the government and of the various ministries, and that's what we'll focus on. The purpose of raising the issues as they come out of the Public Accounts was, as I said at the outset and throughout my comments, to follow the trends. One of the

things I've been advised over my many years in public administration is to follow the money — follow the trends.

The trends here are telling. That is simply the point I was making. I was not getting into the specifics, as I alluded to. I said that I expected the Minister of Finance to deflect those to the ministers responsible. I pointed out what the Public Accounts had said in their summary comments at the very first — so you can see in the summary comments before you get into the detailed consolidated statements. These are the highlights. Those highlights are based on what the Government of Yukon provided to the Auditor General.

We are very much looking forward to the discussions and the debate by department. I'll turn it over now to my colleague from the Liberal Party. I'm sure he has many comments to offer.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I guess I didn't address one comment in the member opposite's first questions, and that was about monies that have accrued for severances and pensions. The reality is that those monies accrued are a result of negotiations that we do with collective bargaining units on behalf of employees. That is done. Quite simply, this government respects those negotiations. If the NDP or the Liberals want to renege on those, that will be their choice, but what has accrued and what is there is a result of negotiations that have occurred. We as a government will continue to respect and honour those contracts.

I guess the other thing that I wanted to bring up as well was just a comment on the Standard & Poor's assessment of our credit rating to the Yukon government. What we have seen is a reaffirmation of a double-A rating that this government has and the territory has. The Yukon has a long-term user credit rating of double A with a very stable outlook. The YDC bond has an issue level rating of double A as well. As you know, double A is a very strong rating. There are only three jurisdictions in this country that have a triple-A rating and that would be the three western provinces of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Some of the highlights were that Yukon has a strong economy, very low debt and exceptional liquidity compared to that of domestic and international peers. Healthy economic growth in 2012 and 2013 was noteworthy, as Yukon has experienced 10 consecutive years of growth. There isn't another jurisdiction in this country that can say that — continued growth going forward through 2014 as well.

I think that this wasn't brought up by the opposition because it is just another example of the good news that is out there as a result of the management of this government and of the good work that occurs within the departments and at the Department of Finance.

I think another thing that was noteworthy to this discussion is the fact that, again this year, no department exceeded its vote authority. Again this year, we did not table a final supplementary budget for the year ending March 31, 2014. The last time that occurred was in 2010-11. Since this current mandate has occurred, all departments have lived within their means — have not exceeded their vote authority.

For the record, I want to acknowledge the work of their departments in ensuring that they meet that commitment.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate?

We are going to proceed then into departments, starting with the Department of Tourism and Culture. That would be page 13-3.

Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes while we await officials.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. We are going to start with general debate in Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture.

Department of Tourism and Culture

Hon. Mr. Nixon: It is my pleasure to introduce the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* for the Department of Tourism and Culture for the 2014-15 fiscal year. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the department officials for joining me in providing support today — Jonathan Parker, who is the director of policy and communications, and Jeff O'Farrell, who is my deputy minister.

This budget reflects the many programs and activities the department undertakes in its mission to facilitate long-term economic growth for the tourism industry through developing and marketing Yukon as a year-round travel destination and maximizing the socio-cultural benefits to Yukoners and visitors by preserving and interpreting our heritage and supporting and promoting the arts. I am pleased to say that in both of its aspects and mission, the department has made great strides in building on the work of previous years.

I would like to begin with the Tourism branch and highlight its recent success, particularly in the marketing of Yukon as a Larger than Life tourism destination. In 2014, in recognition of growth opportunities this industry provides, we are making the single-largest investment in marketing that the government has ever made in the tourism sector. In September, the Yukon government and the Government of Canada announced joint funding of \$3.6 million over two years to increase our marketing efforts and to draw more visitors from Canada and around the world. This historic investment has already generated several exciting and innovative marketing projects that are captured under the program name Yukon Now. Working with our industry partners, the program will include a television advertising campaign targeting other Canadians — currently Yukon's second-largest tourism market. The first commercial will be soon in production and will be aired in February.

The advertising will take an innovative approach and will promote Yukon as a destination like never before. Yukon Now will also engage Yukoners in an unprecedented call for user-generated content that will be distributed through a digital platform. This will include both a web series created by local producers as well as content provided by Yukoners and visitors alike.

The department will be taking advantage of social media by inviting Yukoners and visitors to tell their stories about our great Yukon. While the 2014-15 component of Yukon Now focuses on the domestic market, there is funding allocated to our overseas and U.S. markets as well. Yukon Now will also include an increased investment in media relations in all markets, so the program represents an integrated approach using many marketing tools. This can be seen in the allocation of Yukon Now funding, which is outlined in the operation and maintenance supplementary budget.

The department is requesting an increase of \$2,686,000 in supplementary funding for operation and maintenance expenditures. This funding includes revotes of \$721,000 and \$1,965,000 in other funding requests. The Tourism branch has \$11.9 million identified for operation and maintenance. This includes a revote of \$288,000 and \$1.8 million for Yukon Now, 50 percent of which is recoverable from CanNor. \$1.5 million of the Yukon Now funding will be spent on marketing activities targeting Canadian travellers. This will be combined with the existing \$1.7 million allocated to the domestic market, for a total of \$3.2 million. This investment responds to a request from our industry partners, the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon and the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, and to our own research on the growth potential of the domestic market.

Yukon Now funding will also include a \$50,000 increase in marketing directed to U.S. travellers for a total of \$596,000. Marketing efforts overseas with our partners in Europe, the U.K., Australia, and our growing Asian markets in Japan and China will receive a boost of \$195,000 additional dollars through Yukon Now for a total of \$1.5 million.

I would like to mention that in the spring of 2015, I will be travelling to our Asian markets with department officials and Yukon businesses. I hope that these visits will have the same positive impact as the government's previous missions to overseas markets, including German-speaking Europe, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Australia. The Industry Services Unit has been allocated \$2.1 million for its work to support Yukon businesses in the development and enhancement of tourism experiences. The funding includes a revote of \$176,000 for the tourism cooperative marketing fund agreement, which is in place but not claimed by the applicants before year-end.

The \$1.9 million allocated to Visitor Services includes the additional \$70,000 required to extend the visitor information centre season to September 30. In August, I joined the Minister of Environment to announce the visitor information centre extended season and Environment Yukon's extension of full services in 10 key campgrounds.

As we know, Yukon government's visitor information centres play an important role in increasing tourism revenues for Yukon businesses through the provision of high-quality travel counselling services to literally hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. Over the past number of years, at the request of industry and communities, the Carcross and Dawson City visitor information centres have periodically extended their seasons to accommodate the lengthening of

cruise tour itineraries, Diamond Tooth Gerties' operating season and the growing September market, particularly from German-speaking Europe.

Beginning in 2015, all visitor information centres will open their doors to the travelling public on May 1 and stay open until September 30. The visitor information centre in downtown Whitehorse will continue to stay open year-round. Visitors from all over the world will now have access to Yukon travel information from qualified travel counsellors for a longer period than ever before and enjoy full services at many campgrounds throughout their September visits. It goes without saying that I offer my great thanks to the Minister of Environment for working collaboratively on this initiative with me.

Between September 20 and 30, 2014, Yukon visitor information centres provided services to 5,990 visitors. Yukon government's investment in visitor services, industry services and, of course, tourism marketing speaks to the importance of the tourism industry to the economy and we are committed to supporting the sector in realizing its significant potential.

I would now like to speak to the exceptional work that is being done by the Cultural Services branch and its mission to preserve and interpret our heritage and support and promote the arts.

The Cultural Services branch has a budget of \$11.3 million for operation and maintenance, which includes \$600,000 in the supplementary funding. The arts section budget of \$4.2 million enables continued support of Yukon's dynamic arts community.

In July, I was pleased to announce \$70,000 increased funding available to individual artists through the Advanced Artist Award. The annual budget for the Advanced Artist Award is increasing from \$80,000 to \$115,000 this fiscal year, and then to \$150,000 in 2015-16 and beyond. This award is funded through Lotteries Yukon and is the cornerstone of the Yukon government's arts funding system. Support for artists at this level ultimately contributes to a vast array of events, exhibitions, tours, literary works and concerns. Together, these make up Yukon's vibrant arts scene and benefits Yukoners and visitors alike.

One project supported through the Advanced Artist Award is visual artist Sandra Storey's solo exhibition titled "We are Golden", which is now showing at the Yukon Arts Centre.

Kaska Dena artist Dennis Shorty received funding to explore new methods in jewellery making, while musician Sarah MacDougall will work with a mentor to create string arrangements for an upcoming album. These are just a few of the many innovative projects Yukon's advanced artists are undertaking thanks to this award.

The arts fund supports a variety of creative, community projects throughout our territory. A few recent projects supported through the artist fund include the Yukon Film Society's media arts programming project for the Available Light Film Festival and the Yukon Educational Theatre Society's plans for events highlighting the arts as a vehicle for community-building.

A revote of \$253,000 is requested for arts fund projects approved for various art groups, but not expended by year-end. The \$50,000 new Canadians event fund, which was announced in March of 2014, has been accessed by three organizations to date to host cultural events that help promote multiculturalism and diversity in our territory. These events include "A Night of Africa" showcasing African traditions and cultures, a Chinese cultural show and a Chinese new year celebration planned for February 2015. This fund supports newcomers in sharing their unique culture, which in turn helps reduce the potential for isolation of new Canadians and strengthens the expanding cultural fabric of Yukon.

Heritage Resources has a budget of \$1.1 million for all aspects of land-based heritage resources, including archaeology, palaeontology, place names, scientists and explorer licensing. Yukoners take great pride in the fact that their home produces the most abundant and significant ice age mammal fossils in Canada. The palaeontology program continues to provide an enhanced presence in the Klondike goldfields, where seasonal staff from the palaeontology field office work with the placer mining community to ensure the territory's incredible fossil heritage is managed for the benefit of all Yukoners.

In cooperation with the placer miners, the palaeontologists acquired over 3,000 new fossils during the summer of 2014 for the Yukon palaeontology collection. Based on the abundance and quality of fossils recovered, 2014 has been the most successful field season to date for the palaeontology program.

The field office is one way that the department is fostering a new positive working relationship with placer miners and the Klondike Placer Miners' Association. At the annual general meeting of the Klondike Placer Miners' Association in September of this year, the association voted unanimously in favour of a resolution supporting the development of a palaeontology facility in Dawson. The resolution also supports the development of a program to voluntarily report fossil finds in the goldfields and to legitimize the ownership of woolly mammoth ivory. I don't have the actual resolution in front of me.

The government is presently considering these requests, which would support scientific research while celebrating and preserving Yukon's rich fossil heritage. The palaeontology program's success in the Klondike is exemplary of the relationship building that happens in every unit of the Department of Tourism and Culture. The Yukon government continued its support of museums and cultural and heritage centres in the summer of 2014 with \$1.5 million through the museum contribution program and the special projects capital assistance program.

There was a revote of \$144,000 that is being requested for the 2013-14 transfer payment commitments made by the Museums unit to First Nation cultural centres. The unit is also requesting a revote of \$61,000 for the heritage and cultural essential skills program funded by northern strategy and delivered by Yukon College through a transfer payment agreement.

There is a revote of \$40,000 that is being requested for the 2013-14 commitments from the museums assistance program.

Madam Chair, since 2001, the number of institutions receiving annual funding from the department has grown from eight to 19 and annual operation and maintenance funding has increased from \$178,000 to over \$1.17 million. An independent consultant's report indicated that operational costs have increased by approximately 20 percent to 30 percent since operational funding was last increased. As a first step in addressing this concern, the department met with the museums community on October 20 to discuss options. Community input on the consultant's report will guide discussions on potential changes to the program for the 2015-16 year. The museums community plays an essential role in preserving and presenting Yukon's history and First Nation culture and we are committed to finding solutions to support them in their work.

Yukon's built heritage is supported by the Historic Sites unit, which has been allocated \$1.3 million for the research, preservation, management, development and interpretation of Yukon's historic sites and routes. A revote of \$8,000 and supplemental funding of \$11,000 is requested to cover three outstanding 2013-14 transfer payment commitments under the attraction site support program. In addition, funding of \$16,000 is requested for the Yukon historic resources fund to replace interest earned when the fund was characterized as a trust.

The Yukon historic resources fund assists special projects that are focused on native language preservation and local history and helps build historic legacies for both residents and visitors now and into the future. We applaud the work of the Yukon Historic Resources Board for facilitating this important funding.

The department is requesting an increase of \$243,000 in capital funding. Supplementary funding requests include \$50,000 for an assessment of riverbank erosion at Fort Selkirk. Fort Selkirk is a designated Yukon historic site and one of the most historically significant sites in the territory. Yukon government is working with Selkirk First Nation and consultants to investigate options to mitigate effects of erosion at this site. There is a revote of \$110,000 that is being requested for the replacement of heating, venting and cooling systems of the Transportation Museum, as well as a \$5,000 request to complete a transfer payment with the MacBride Museum for artifact assessment. Beringia Centre revotes include \$14,000 to complete upgrades to theatre seats and \$16,000 for mechanical system controls.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention that this fall, the Beringia Centre partnered with the Yukon Arts Centre to present the long-awaited travelling exhibition "Ice Age Mammals". Prior to coming to Yukon, the exhibition has been on the road and has been seen by almost one million people in Canada and the U.S. The centre also worked with Yukon palaeontologists to produce a publication, called *Ice Age Mammals of Yukon* to accompany the exhibition and provide people with a book so that they can enjoy it at home or on-

line. The centre plays an important role in communicating Yukon's fossil history to Yukoners and visitors.

I would like to close by thanking the staff at the Department of Tourism and Culture for their dedication and commitment to their clients and stakeholders. Initiatives such as Yukon Now, the Advanced Artist Award funding increase, the Yukon palaeontology field office and the extended visitor services season are just a few examples of the many activities the department undertakes to foster a prosperous tourism industry, rich heritage resources and vibrant cultural communities. Thanks to the expertise, skills and enthusiasm of its employees, the department continues to deliver programs that benefit all Yukoners.

Mr. Barr: I am happy to rise today and speak on behalf of Tourism and Culture and also to acknowledge the hard work of the departmental staff in Tourism and Culture. I was attending the KIAC open house last week, and there was some great stuff going on there with the department in facilitating discussions and talking about the Yukon Now initiatives and so on and so forth.

I would also like to extend a huge shout-out to TIAY themselves for their tireless lobbying and work on behalf of tourism and culture in the territory. I'm happy to hear about the funding changes — however, realizing that advocating for that myself, as with TIAY — to encourage the government to come forward with this money — it still is \$1.4 million short of what was being asked for in the total amount.

So we would continue to push for the rest, knowing that, from what I hear, it is a welcome amount. I would just reiterate what I've said before, which is that we could have had it a long time ago. It would have been great to put this kind of money toward tourism and culture in the territory long ago and build. One more thing about this funding is that I would like to impress that this become core funding, and it's only the beginning of what has been long awaited for the tourism culture economic growth in the territory.

Before I get too far into the rest of all of that, I would like to also say that I'm very proud to stand here and represent those in my riding of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, and maybe just acknowledge some of the great things that are happening by the efforts of local entrepreneurs — the CTFN Development Corporation — for the Caribou Commons, for example. I realized when I was out and around my community of Carcross that also the Caribou Hotel looks like it'll be open in the springtime. It's going to be a great opportunity for the attraction through the hard work of the other local businesses at Caribou Commons, such as Scoop 'em Jim's, the Bistro — which is now open — the Caribou coffee shop, Frisky Fresh Fish, and so on and so forth.

Then there is the Tin Man and you can get stuff there. It's going to be exciting as it was this year, but I think even more exciting to know that people will have a place such as the Caribou Hotel to stay overnight. I know they're working hard. The rumour has it that it will be open in the spring. We're really hoping that the Caribou Hotel can be open. There are other places in that area that do provide accommodation — bed and breakfasts. There are Cabins over Crag Lake and

Dunroamin' on Crag Lake. There are tourist opportunities in the Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes areas that are going to benefit — by information at Southern Lakes, for example and that association that helps people advertise the amenities that are available.

That reminds me — I would like to make this point to the minister. I know that for the folks in Tagish and their opportunities, they are still waiting for the highway signs on the Alaska Highway to let people know that these new amenities are available in the Tagish area. People are still stumbling upon places such as the Six Mile River Resort and the great ice cream stand that is at the Tagish bridge where many people gather to fish, as with the fishing bridge at Carcross.

I know that people come up from Marsh Lake and stand there all day, stay at the campground, have something to eat and catch a fish and cook it at the campground or, if they're unlucky, they go to one of the new places that are open right in Tagish to eat as well as in Carcross.

I know the Premier was out there and also the Leader of the Official Opposition and I and others — members from Copperbelt South, Riverdale South, Mayo-Tatchun, Takhini-Kopper King. We were at the pole-raising in Carcross this summer and if you weren't there and you have not gone down to see that new totem pole, it was an amazing effort by the carving shed and also, I believe, Wayne Price from Alaska was involved with the Northern Cultural Expressions Society totem-raising here by the old White Pass building — Keith Wolfe Smarch who headed up this totem pole — and there will be more coming. I noticed that while we were pulling on the ropes, the tourists were in amazement that day — and the dancing that happened. Also what commemorated that day were the Dakh Ka Days, which were on the same weekend as the Moosehide Gathering this summer.

People were commenting — and although I had previously committed up to Moosehide, I was up there but came back down for part of the Dakh Ka Days in Carcross — that both communities were swelling with not only tourists, but local folks from around the territory to participate in both of those celebrations and look forward to that being biannual, I guess it will be — off and on with the coastal Tlingit gathering celebration that happens in Juneau.

The vision of those operators and the culture of First Nations continues to grow and I can see that these domestic dollars will only attract more and more folks to a tourism industry and the economy that it brings to the territory, especially in these times when we see the mineral prices dropping again. It recognizes tourism as a main thrust for our economy in the Yukon. The amount of money, when I think the Yukon Party government's stats — for every \$1 there is a \$28 return in tourism from your stats. When we think of that, it's important that we do recognize what tourism and culture brings to this territory.

I was speaking to that with one of my colleagues back at the caucus office. People who come here come because they don't have the pristine wilderness, they don't have the aboriginal culture that we share — especially with the markets

from Europe. If you've been there, it is great to go see that, but when you have the same meal every day, if you will, from wherever you are at, you want to go experience new things.

What we have here is unlike anything in the world, and we can be very proud to know that we live here and that we care about our culture, our environment, and just the intact wilderness that we do have is something nowhere else can be matched in the world.

I would like to remind that the Tlingit gathering will be July 24 to 26 in Teslin, and there will be people coming from Alaska and all over the north, as far as other provinces and territories, hopefully, with the commercials that will be heading out over the airwaves. We'll have to build more places for people to stay, and that's exciting.

I would also like to mention that the road up Mount Mountain was upgraded this spring and was a welcome. I took a drive up there. I hadn't been up there for many years, but through the efforts of the First Nation development corporation getting on the ball — because there had been complaints for the last few years that it was starting to become impassible.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Mr. Barr: Really. I only have 20 minutes in this part? Is that correct, Madam Chair?

Can you give me a few more? Just kidding — eight minutes left.

I would like to keep going on this. We'll ask questions and things. We have time. I will wait before we get into line-by-line to ask some questions of the minister and the officials who are today. I'm not going to rush things. There is just so much going on out in my riding that I want to mention.

In Marsh Lake, the bed and breakfasts are there. There was a great Canada Day celebration, and I happened to be able to lead the parade this year — a bunch of us on our motorcycles. We had young teens with helmets on on their little dirt bikes going in the parade. We had fire trucks and floats. I know that out in my riding — Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes — that parades are a big deal. They are happening in other communities also out in the Southern Lakes.

In Mount Lorne, it's ongoing — the cultural opportunities there that people can attend in Mount Lorne at their community hall. We had great local food, using wild ingredients and homegrown ingredients in the cooking. We had live music. It was so well-attended. I got to do the bread — slice the bread. I had an apron and all that kind of stuff. People were testing; there were homemade spirits that people were sipping on. That's just another example. If you're not doing that for people who are coming through Mount Lorne — like I say, there are wilderness tours offered, dogsledding adventures and cabin rentals, gardening that you can go help WWOOFing at. So for the traveller who is thrifty, or counting on being able to attend those things, they can — as they do at Muktuk Kennels — work for part of the week and enjoy what we have to offer.

I know that when I can, I'm so happy to be able to visit with the folks in the riding out there.

I didn't mention this, but I would like to mention that my sister passed a couple of weeks ago.

I was very touched by the LACs that sent cards in support of the passing of my sister — just the phone calls I received from the many constituents in Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, as throughout the territory. As you know, this disease of cancer can carry on a long time. Just the support in general of this going on up to two years that I've spent lots of times with my family — the encouraging letters and just stops on the street asking me how things are going — that "we're behind you." Comments like, "You work hard" and "we just want you to know to take care of family at times". I wanted to just say thanks, from the bottom of my heart and our family's for all that happened over this last while. When I combine a lot of that with just what is available with Tourism and Culture, we have a great community in Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. People care about each other.

All of these things that I've been talking about are just an extension of when people get to come and visit there, wherever they are in that riding — it's personable. It's personable that the people in any of these ice cream shops or whatever you got going on — it makes people want to come back.

I realize that I have four minutes. I have a lot more that I would like to speak to about this.

However, I do think that just in that Southern Lakes loop — the Tagish loop — that people very much welcomed the asphalt going to Marsh Lake this summer, which was a surprise, given that there wasn't going to be any more asphalt paving. People are wondering if it could be the whole loop with bike lanes.

In the meantime, the people who are waiting at Pennycook Lane were still hoping that the rest of that work would be done when we can do things such as paving. I'm happy that some folks in the riding get these opportunities and it's great for the travelling public coming to visit and the tourists who can ride on the roads like that. I would encourage the minister opposite — with his counterparts — to have these same opportunities even for places like Pennycook Lane — for that work to get completed. It's very important when ambulances have a hard time getting to somebody who needs their assistance or maybe can't get down the road.

I would like to maybe ask a question to the member regarding the UNESCO funding that would be coming to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's application for the Klondike to be recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We support that here on this side of the House, and so I would like to ask the minister to tell the House if he has made any commitments to providing the territorial funding to this important project?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: To start off, I would like to talk about a really crucial component of the department — one that works with many stakeholders and one that has particularly been involved with some of the community members in the Kluane region — which is the product development in Industry Services. The Industry Services Unit, in their 2013-16 strategy, had identified three goals for the territory: first, to provide tourism businesses and entrepreneurs with the

education and training needed to make better business decisions; second, to support industry development and consultation with non-governmental organizations and industry stakeholders; and third, to ensure tourism interests are represented and communicated.

Industry Services continues to engage NGOs and tourism industry associations on tourism-related issues and development opportunities, and they continue to participate in a variety of interdepartmental committees and other initiatives, including the labour market strategy, land use planning and environmental and socio-economic assessments.

In 2014-15, their initiatives to date include 23 one-on-one business counselling meetings with tourism entrepreneurs, consultants and not-for-profits, providing feedback on tourism community development projects and administering the product development partnership program, or the PDPP.

Through the PDPP, funds have gone to TIAY — Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon — for its spring conference and the Alaska Highway Heritage Society Yukon for its nomination of the Alaska Highway as a national historic site. In addition to these initiatives, the Tourism branch has held tourism open house events in Dawson City and Watson Lake, and has held meetings in Haines Junction with the departments of Economic Development and Community Services, Parks Canada, the Village of Haines Junction, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Kluane First Nation and tourism stakeholders along the north Alaska Highway.

As I mentioned, through the 2013-16 product development strategy, the Industry Services unit of Tourism and Culture continues to provide tourism businesses and entrepreneurs with quality education and training programs. The strategy supports industry development, in consultation with non-governmental organizations and industry stakeholders, and it ensures tourism interests are represented and communicated.

During 2014, the department led a Kluane tourism leadership summit, and the Member for Kluane was present at that. A Kluane tourism industry summit in Haines Junction will be leading up with a follow-up Kluane destination development forum this Friday at the Da Ku Cultural Centre. I would like to thank the Member for Kluane for working with his community on this important initiative.

The member opposite was speaking a little bit about the Yukon Now funding that we announced in September. This is a historical announcement for Yukon — for the Department of Tourism and Culture — the single-largest investment in marketing in Yukon government's history.

Tourism Yukon has made investments in television advertising since the late 1990s. These investments have included leveraging and integrating Yukon TV commercials through partnership initiatives with television networks. It has included marketing and partnership with the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, supported by CanNor. It has included commercials associated with the hosting of TV programs including *Canada AM*, *Gold Rush* and several overseas TV productions, as well as the development and airing of TV

commercials integrated with hosting of *The Amazing Race Canada* and through the Yukon Now marketing program, the development and airing of directed purpose-shot Yukon TV commercials. Given the high cost of television advertising, the approach that Tourism Yukon has taken has been to leverage partnerships to create a strategic, effective and affordable presence in TV. Generally this is accomplished by developing a marketing campaign in partnership with a media partner. Value is provided through contests, hosting TV programs — for example, *Canada AM* — and contributing to the development of broadcast content to appeal to existing audiences and to attract new viewers. As well, Tourism Yukon has partnered with Global TV, CTV and TSN on this matter.

In 2007, Yukon, Nunavut and N.W.T. — collectively the pan-north partners — were successful in securing four-year funding from CanNor in support of a domestic marketing campaign that included TV as a core component. Working as a consortium with the support of CanNor made TV marketing possible and delivered a good return on investment in terms of raising awareness of Canada's north as a travel destination. This campaign resulted in TV commercials launched in advance of, and during, Yukon's hosting of the 2007 Canada Winter Games. Subsequent to the 2007 Canada Winter Games, the pan-north partners continued the TV marketing effort — again with the support of CanNor — that leveraged the 2010 Olympics as the campaign anchor. In 2011 the pan-north partners received \$3.4 million from CanNor in support of a four-year marketing program that again focused on TV and digital broadcast media.

There was also a key activity in the pan-north marketing program in 2013 — that was investing in the first *The Amazing Race Canada*, with each northern jurisdiction hosting an episode. The pan-north TV commercials were produced by CTV and were fully integrated into *The Amazing Race Canada*. John Montgomery, the show's host, was the celebrity in the pan-north commercials.

In 2014, Tourism Yukon went it alone and was the exclusive investor and host of *The Amazing Race Canada* 2014 — 3.18 million people saw the Yukon episode of *The Amazing Race Canada*. Our commercials reached over 8.65 million people during the season.

Also in 2014, as part of the 2014 Destination: Yukon summer campaign, Yukoners saw Yukon commercials placed on Global, HGTV, History, Showcase, National Geographic Canada and National Geographic Wild domestic channels during the Yukon theme shows like *Yukon Gold* and *Dr. Oakley, Yukon Vet*.

The recently announced \$3.6 million Yukon Now program includes a significant investment in the development and airing of new Yukon TV commercials over the next two years. This will be the first investment of its kind by Tourism Yukon. More than \$1 million has been committed to produce a series of winter and summer TV commercials, with a further \$1 million plus to be invested in the purchase of media to air the commercials.

The Newfoundland tourism marketing campaign was launched in 2006 with a budget of \$6 million per year. This was subsequently increased to \$13 million a year before being reduced to \$9 million for the 2013-14 fiscal year. As of early 2013, Newfoundland has spent a total of \$94 million on their campaign. Yukon is much smaller than Newfoundland, yet Yukon compares favourably with Newfoundland on a number of tourism-related metrics. At 526,000, Newfoundland's population is over 14 times that of Yukon, and the Newfoundland government's annual budget is roughly six times greater than Yukon's. However, when it comes to tourism marketing expenditures, Newfoundland's tourism marketing budget in 2014-15 is \$13.4 million, 1.7 times larger than Yukon's budget of \$7.6 million.

In terms of visitation, Yukon again holds up well. Newfoundland had 497,933 visitors in 2013, compared to Yukon's 442,200. That's an interesting fact, Madam Chair.

We know that both the president of TIAY and the president of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce had some very kind words and have been very good working together. Neil Hartling, the chairman of the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon, indicated, "Past programs overseen by the Department of Tourism and Culture that are researched-based and driven by industry representatives have shown substantial return on investment... By building equity for the destination in the minds and hearts of identified tourism targets, these programs build sustainable demand for the products offered by our industry members and have a lasting impact on the growth of the tourism economy." He also went on to say, "It is a sensible way for the Government to invest in a fashion that delivers strong returns."

Rich Thompson, the chair of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, added, "This outcome is a great demonstration of how the Yukon Chamber is able to act in partnership with organizations dedicated to specific industry segments in order to gain important outcomes for Yukon businesses. We take our hat off to the Yukon Government" — those were his words — "for bringing this funding forward in a manner that is supported by the Federal Government; and to the opposition parties who have also advocated for support for the tourism industry."

It is a great example of business associations and political parties of all stripes working together to create an outcome that has a high likelihood of really paying off for the tourism industry. This is certainly the way things should work in our territory. I thank both of those organizations and individuals for their comments.

The member also asked about the funding that was allocated both in a partnership with Canada and Yukon. Yukon government is continuously re-evaluating its marketing investments and strategic opportunities to grow sustainable tourism revenue. I think the key word there is "strategic". The government will carefully review the impact that this enhanced marketing initiative has on awareness of Yukon within Canada and also within the U.S. and overseas markets, and the overall impact on Yukon visitation and revenues. Yukon maintains strong partnerships with the private industry,

and we continue to work together to build a sustainable tourism industry.

Earlier, I spoke about a tourism trade mission that we have committed to take part in early 2015. I will be leading a mission of tourism businesses to Japan from Yukon from February 22 to around February 27. This will be followed by meetings in China potentially during the first week of March. The dates are still being worked on.

The objective of the Asia mission is to increase Japanese visits to Yukon and to explore opportunities for both group and independent travel from China. This mission will demonstrate our commitment and support for the Japanese and Chinese tour operators and facilitate long-term investments in Yukon's tourism industry from these markets. We see great growth potential for both of these markets.

I also spoke briefly about our U.S. markets to Yukon. Yukon leverages the Alaska tourism brand in all of its consumer and trade marketing initiatives in the U.S. The \$177,000 joint Yukon-Alaska program is a core component of Yukon's U.S. consumer marketing strategy delivered in partnership with the State of Alaska.

Yukon invests \$122,000 in the Tourism North marketing program, a joint marketing initiative with Alaska, B.C. and Alberta that targets the highway travellers.

Yukon conducts trade marketing activities with U.S. tour operators, including a \$50,000 cooperative marketing program each year with Holland America Line.

The Yukon attends key trade marketplaces in the U.S., including the United States Tour Operators Association and the National Tour Association marketplaces to maintain and grow U.S.-based tour operating listings of Yukon products and experiences.

Yukon participates in Canada Media Marketplace and the Alaska Media Road Show to recruit high-profile U.S. travel writers to Yukon.

I have had the opportunity to attend Quartzsite, Arizona, and it's really something to see. It's a small town — the population base can't be over 5,000 people and, in the course of this RV tradeshow that they put on once a year, I believe the numbers are upwards of one million people going through this small town in the course of a week or 10 days.

The U.S. is Yukon's largest visitor market, with more than 230,000 visitors in 2013 representing 67 percent of Yukon's total visitors and an increase of seven percent over 2012. Through August 2014, U.S. visitation was down four percent, due in large part to travel interruptions on the south Klondike Highway and issues with the Skagway dock earlier in the season. Yukon invests more than \$500,000 annually marketing in the U.S. through consumer trade and media relation channels. In 2014 and in 2015, an additional \$50,000 will be invested in the U.S. marketing through the Yukon Now program.

In the Yukon Party platform, we committed to work with industry, communities and First Nations to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round destination. We committed that and we've delivered. We also committed to enhanced marketing of

Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets in the United States, Canada and Europe. We committed and we have delivered. We also committed to promote affordable domestic and international air access — we have committed and we have delivered.

Finally, to the member opposite's point on the UNESCO World Heritage Site, we continue to support the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in their process, moving forward. The Department of Tourism and Culture will continue to assist the community of Dawson and Parks Canada as they move forward. But the application, as the member should know, is currently within the Department of Economic Development and it would be better suited to be answered by that minister.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister opposite for his comments. I do want to state that, although it isn't the CanNor funding that requires the applicant to secure other sources of funding, the deadline is coming close and so, in order to secure this funding, I would encourage the Minister of Tourism and Culture to speak with the — or hopefully he is — Minister of Economic Development. I see him shaking his head that he isn't. I know that we can have a little bit of humour here, but this is a very pressing timeline for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in application that they've been working on. I would just like to hope that we, in the Yukon, do not pass over or get passed over on having another world heritage site in the territory.

I would like to ask the minister: When can we expect to see the first commercial from this new funding?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Madam Chair, in my earlier remarks, I talked about the Klondike Placer Miners Association's resolution. I think it's important to come back to that because this is an interesting resolution that was passed on in a letter to me — I'm just looking for a date on it; there doesn't seem to be one — just about a month ago. The resolution that they put forward says the following: The KPMA supports the creation of a voluntary disclosure and reporting of mammoth ivory and the development of a certification program to assist miners and buyers in the legitimization of mammoth ivory ownership and the right to sell and export ivory. The KPMA would like to support and assist the government in the development of this program and would like this program to be as efficient and easy to use as possible. The KPMA also thinks it's important that the government build and staff a palaeontology museum and research centre in Dawson City to showcase ice age fossils and as an example of the cooperation between miners, researchers and the local community.

That's a very interesting resolution. I thank the KPMA for their continued relationship with the department. It's an important one.

I just want to back up one step. The Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes indicated that he wanted a UNESCO site in the Yukon, and there is already a UNESCO site in the Kluane region. I'm not sure that he was aware of that, so I just wanted to bring that to his attention.

I want to come back to our Yukon Party platform again and some of the commitments we've made. Another one was that we committed to work with the Yukon Convention Bureau, industry and Yukon communities to further promote the Yukon as a choice destination for hosting meetings, conventions and sport events. Again, we committed and we have delivered.

The member opposite was asking about the TV commercials and production. Perhaps he didn't hear me when I was talking about that earlier, but the first commercial goes into production this month and will be ready, complete for airing, in February. Starting in the summer, they'll produce a summer-type commercial that will be used to promote summer travel. We look forward to those commercials being produced and aired. I believe that the goal of the department and the agency is to have a final product, or products, that Yukoners are extremely proud of.

I would like to talk for a few minutes about our tourism. The visitation data from January to August revealed some very promising trends, including a five-percent increase in total arrivals and a 27-percent increase in international arrivals at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport. Visitation from overseas markets is also up seven percent and overnight stays by overseas visitors are up 14 percent compared to the same period last year. Overseas visitors spend more money per person per day in Yukon than any other market segment.

As well, arrivals to Dawson through Little Gold border crossing, combined with international air arrivals at the Dawson Airport as part of Air North, Yukon's airline's, new jet service from Fairbanks for Holland America, are up 21 percent compared to the same period last year.

In 2012, the department conducted a major tourism study called the Yukon visitor tracking program. The tracking program had two objectives: to provide detailed information about Yukon's visitors and their trip characteristics consistent with the previous visitor exit surveys, and to develop a model to estimate the total monthly visitors to the territory.

Along with the new model, the department also developed a new Tourism Yukon visitation report that tracks total visitation to Yukon on a monthly basis. This report estimates total visitation using the new YVTP, which is the Yukon visitor tracking program model, and also incorporates traditional tourism indicators, including border-crossing numbers, airport passenger counts and visitor information centre statistics.

From January to August 2014, the Yukon visitor tracking program estimates that 345,200 people visited our territory, a decrease of four percent compared to the same time last year. Monthly border-crossing statistics are provided by the Canada Border Services Agency and include the number of people who cross the Yukon/Alaska border and who arrive at Yukon's airports on international flights. Visitors' country of origin and length of stay — same day or multiple day — is recorded at land border crossings. Vehicle types are also captured. For our purposes, we exclude Yukon residents,

transport trucks and visitors travelling by train from Skagway to Fraser and back.

From January to August 2014, a total of 270,926 travellers entered Yukon through CBSA's air and land border crossings. This is a decrease of five percent over the same period in 2013. This decrease can be attributed primarily to a reduction in the number of visitors entering from Skagway via the Fraser border crossing.

This summer, Skagway experienced a number of unfortunate incidents that affected that flow of traffic from Skagway to Yukon, including the sinking of the ferry dock, washouts on the Klondike Highway, and the train derailment. These factors, combined with the very wet and cool summer, appear to have had a negative impact on excursions to Yukon.

Passenger counts at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport are another reliable visitation indicator. Statistics collected by the airport include the number of passengers arriving in Whitehorse. However, no breakdown by country of origin is provided with passenger counts.

From January to August 2014, 105,694 passengers were counted arriving at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport. This figure is approximately five percent higher than the same period in 2013. These passenger counts do include Yukon residents.

Another key tool the department uses to help assess tourism visitation is major visitor studies like the Yukon visitor tracking program that I mentioned earlier. Major visitor studies typically occur every five to eight years and provide an in-depth analysis of visitors to Yukon over a defined period of time. The benefit of major visitor studies is the very detailed information that they capture about our visitors, which provides the most accurate estimate of total visitation. Their weakness is that they are expensive and only provide a snapshot of visitors at the time the survey is conducted. However, if conducted regularly over a long period of time, they could potentially become an excellent tool to show visitation trends.

The 2012 visitor tracking program differed from past visitor exit surveys since it was the first study to include surveys of both summer and winter visitors and it included the development of a model that allows the department to estimate the total number of visitors to Yukon on a monthly basis. Results from the Yukon visitor tracking program indicated that from 2004 to 2012, visitation to Yukon had increased 26 percent and visitor expenditures increased by 31 percent. This equates to an average growth rate of three percent per year.

The Yukon visitor tracking program indicates that the growth in visitation since 2004 was fuelled primarily by other Canadian jurisdictions and our overseas markets.

Other notable findings compared to 2004 were increases in visitors arriving by air and in the length of stay. Yukon also received strong satisfaction rates and visitors indicated a strong interest in visiting again and referring the destination to others, which should really come as no surprise to any of us in this Legislature.

Tourism visitation has been growing, which leads to growing business revenues and a stronger, healthier economy. All the reports from the Yukon visitor tracking program can be found on the department's website at www.tc.gov.yk.ca.

The member opposite had made some reference to marketing the territory. I have certainly spoken to that many times in this Legislature. Tourism Yukon has embarked on the largest tourism marketing initiative in Yukon's history. As I've mentioned before and as we announced in September, \$3.6 million in enhanced marketing primarily focused on our domestic Canadian market.

The Yukon government supported *The Amazing Race Canada* with its 2014 episode in the territory, and the impact of the show was significant in raising the profile of Destination: Yukon. Our Twitter handle @travelyukon received the most mention of any tourism organization and the Yukon episode was the second-most tweeted in season 2 — that's 2014.

2013 was a record-breaking year for border-crossing statistics with an eight-percent increase in the number of private vehicles and motorcoaches crossing the border into Yukon.

The stats show a seven-percent increase in the number of visitors from the U.S., a 17-percent increase in Canadians and an eight-percent increase in the overseas market in 2013. Year to date in 2014, January to August, as I've mentioned, Yukon's tourism industry continues to benefit from a five-percent increase in total arrivals and 27-percent increase in international arrivals at the airport. Dawson has also greatly benefited from a 21-percent increase in the number of combined travellers entering through the Little Gold border crossing.

Another successful tourism trade mission to Europe resulted in three new cooperative marketing agreements with German tourism operators and its new ties with the Netherlands market. In February, a Tourism Yukon delegation attended Canada Corroboree, Canada's premier travel trade event held in Australia each year. The delegation signed cooperative marketing agreements and discussed marketing opportunities with the Australian travel trade and met with Canada's Consulate General. Australia is Yukon's second-largest overseas market as of February 2014.

Last year in February during Winterlude in Ottawa, the department hosted and supported several events to promote Yukon as a travel destination and to introduce Air North's new Ottawa service. We will continue with that work in the upcoming Winterlude in early 2015.

I again look forward to travelling with my colleagues and with some of our stakeholders from the territory to really showcase Yukon as a destination for people living in Ottawa.

The department led a delegation of 15 tourism related business to Vancouver to attend the first-ever Yukon-Japan tourism marketplace on January 28. Japan is Yukon's fastest growing international market. As I mentioned, we will be taking a tourism mission to Japan and China and we will look for other opportunities to meet with the Japanese travel trade in Vancouver. I think that was a very valuable exercise.

Yukon also hosted the tourism minister's meeting in September 2013. The meeting was focused on Canada's tourism competitiveness. The ministers discussed improving visitor access, marketing and tourism attraction development. I just came from the 2014 tourism ministers meetings in Alberta and I can tell you that they all speak to the same issues on how competitive the tourism market is on a global scale.

As you'll also remember, Premier Pasloski and I and 16 — I need to back up, that was under my justice portfolio in Alberta.

In September I was in Charlottetown, PEI, for the tourism and culture ministers meeting. I have to tip my hat to the minister there and the department for hosting some very successful meetings — still, the outcome remains the same. The competitiveness is heard from every jurisdiction across Canada as being perhaps one of the number one issues when it comes to marketing.

As I was saying, the Premier and I and 16 Yukon tourism industry representatives travelled to Germany and England for the first-ever Premier-led tourism trade delegation from a Canadian province or territory. Madam Chair, I think it is important to note that — with the commitment of this government — a common theme that we see over and over is "first-ever." I think that is important for the members opposite to note.

The Premier's European tourism trade mission resulted in an accord between Yukon government, Air North and Condor to bring more European travellers to Yukon. The accord supports an air travel agreement that will allow seamless travel from Europe to Air North's entire flight network, providing increased travel options for Europe, European tourist and Yukoners. I know that Air North and Condor continue to work on an agreement such as that.

The Premier and European partners signed several marketing agreements with German tour operators. The resulting marketing efforts targeted over three million people in German-speaking Europe.

The Government of Yukon and the City of Whitehorse signed the first formal collaboration on tourism marketing promotion and a visitor services MOU. This MOU outlines a range of partnership initiatives including joint work on fam tours, sharing of tourism inquiries and joint management of the visitor parking passes. I have to tip my hat to the City of Whitehorse for working very collaboratively with the Department of Tourism and Culture. Their partnership is certainly appreciated.

The Government of Yukon and the State of Alaska renewed an agreement to market both regions as tourism destinations. This joint Yukon-Alaska cooperative marketing partnership began in 1989, delivering Canadian and American advertising campaigns to increase highway travel and promote summer adventure experiences in Alaska and Yukon.

Yukon was designated — the Member for Klondike will remember this one — by *Lonely Planet* as one of the top-10, must-visit travel destinations for 2013. Subsequent global media coverage generated tremendous exposure for Yukon

and expanded awareness of Yukon as a premier outdoor travel destination.

Improvements to the Whitehorse visitor information centre include brand-new painting of the entire centre, updated equipment to improve the audio-visual experience in the theatre, new hanging banners, wall-mounted televisions to present Tourism Yukon's photos and videos and a refreshed look to the interior displays.

To help further develop Yukon's shoulder tourism season, and in response to requests from European tour operators, as I mentioned earlier, the visitor information centres and key campgrounds — 10 of which were extended this year and will be extended further. Again, I thank the Minister of Environment and his department officials for their collaboration with the department.

Mr. Barr: I would like to make a few comments and ask a few questions in succession and hopefully get moving forward on this portfolio.

I wanted some clarity. I know that the woolly mammoth ivory — with the placer miners as it comes out of the ground — for those who want and are able to create art out of this ivory do find it difficult to sell because of the difference in the ivory from here and other parts that can be on an endangered species list. I'm happy to hear that there are going to be some changes regarding the woolly mammoth ivory, but I want to seek some clarification from the minister. Will this woolly mammoth ivory still belong to the placer miners or whoever unearths it? I was listening in earlier in the discussion where the ownership would fall to the Yukon government as far as palaeontology assets. I'm seeking some clarification on that. While I'm speaking about Dawson, I know that the Holland America deal struck with Air North this summer was a welcome increase to the stay for folks in Dawson City this summer. However, the number could be higher if the tarmac received the upgrade at the airport that we had asked about. I asked if the minister had any updates on that, knowing that in terms of dollars, profit margins and the ability to compete in the tourism market and also in the airline business, which Air North's doing such a great job at — where that's at.

One of the other questions would be with the Yukon Now funding, what is in place to measure the effectiveness — so what we would see as a return. What tools are in place to let us know that we're getting a fair return for our dollars and to ensure that we will know that this is going to be core funding and not just a two-year increase in funding for domestic marketing with the other small amounts for the other markets — the States and European markets?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The member opposite spoke briefly about the paleo and the collection of fossils in the Klondike region. The department will work with the placer miners. They have established a really excellent relationship with many of the placer miners up there. This is something that we believe moving forward will legitimize particularly the trade of the woolly mammoth ivory and perhaps present some opportunities to locals who wish to carve and sell some of these items.

The department and the placer miners will ultimately decide on the significance of the find. If an artifact or fossil is deemed as a significant find, then it will remain in the ownership of Yukon government and be collected by the palaeontologist or archaeologist. If it is not a significant find, then a certificate will be issued to that placer miner and from there, they can sell it, keep it or do what they want to do. But I think the key here is that the relationship between the placer mining community and the Department of Tourism and Culture has blossomed and done very well over the last number of years.

The member also asked about the Dawson City airport. I'm going to refer any questions about the Dawson City airport to the appropriate department, being the Minister of Highways and Public Works. He will have more information on where that is at.

The member asked about the Yukon Now program and tools of measurement. We'll continue to use the same tools that we use year-in and year-out and even on a monthly basis, which I spoke about earlier. The member opposite perhaps missed that, but we use border crossings, airport passenger counts, and major visitor studies like the one that was conducted last year. Those continue to give us really good numbers.

I want to just for a second come back to some more commitments that we made through the Yukon Party platform. We committed to utilize the tourism cooperative marketing fund to build partnerships with industry that improves marketing efforts for both government and industry. We committed on that and we have delivered. We also committed to create a product development program to assist tourism operators in developing and enhancing the quality of their product. We have committed to that and we have delivered on that. In fact, I look forward to our meetings in Kluane this coming Friday. I think there will be some tremendous opportunities in that region.

Coming back to measurements in visitation, we know that the measurements will give us a sense of increased awareness. Those tools also give us a sense of reach, and a sense of frequency, impressions and audiences, especially with some of the digital marketing that we're doing. The department continues to work with those stakeholders to acquire that information. I thank the department and those involved in working with that.

Speaking about Industry Services, we know participating in tourism open houses in the Whitehorse, Kluane, Dawson and Watson Lake regions has really helped identify new opportunities for tourism growth and to work together with communities to adapt to changes to our patterns across Yukon. We see that especially in Kluane — since Holland America made some changes to their travel patterns, people want to get perhaps Holland America to consider doing day trips back to that area.

I just want to — within the Industry Services Unit — talk about the visitor information centres. I have already spoken to the point that the season has been extended from May 1 to September 30. That is an extension of approximately four

weeks. We have six visitor information centres in six Yukon communities that provide travel information to over 209,000 visitors — almost 210,000 visitors — through until the end of August of this year. We still have another month of data to collect with those numbers.

I have been around and visited all of the visitor information centres and spoken to the staff. I have spoken to tourists who are travelling through those communities and accessing some of the information and speaking to the staff. I have to commend the staff at the visitor information centres. All the staff do a tremendous job at providing information on road conditions, weather conditions, products that are available within those communities and products that are available in other communities. My hat is off to the good public servants who work in the visitor information centres providing our tourists with some real quality information.

Speaking about some of the information that they might provide, we can look at the Cultural Services branch. We see lots of new cultural products that are coming on-line. The Cultural Services branch has a budget of \$11.3 million for operation and maintenance and this includes \$600,000 in Supplementary No. 1 for revotes. The Cultural Services branch is responsible for historic sites, museums, arts, archives and heritage resources, which include palaeontology and archaeology.

Heritage Resources has a budget of \$1.1 million for all aspects of land-based heritage resources, including archaeology, palaeontology, place names, and scientist and explorer licensing.

The Historic Sites Unit has been allocated \$1.3 million, and this includes a revote of \$35,000 for the research, preservation and management, development and interpretation of Yukon's historic sites and routes.

The Museums Unit has a total budget of \$2.3 million. This includes a revote of \$245,000 to enable continued partnerships in support of Yukon's vibrant museums and cultural centres.

The Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre has an annual budget of \$442,000 for operation and maintenance. The department provides over \$500,000 to directly support operation and programs at seven Yukon First Nation cultural centres.

The Arts section budget of \$4.2 million this year enables continue support of Yukon's dynamic arts community. We do not need to walk very far downtown or around town to see that the arts community is truly thriving. I continue to be impressed with some of the displays that are at Arts Underground and at the Yukon Arts Centre. The individuals associated with bringing those displays in and meeting with artists are really to be commended. They do a tremendous job in our territory.

The Arts section received ongoing funding of \$70,000 to increase the funding for the Advanced Artist Award, as I spoke about earlier. The department provides \$814,000 in operational funding for the Yukon Arts Centre.

The department is supporting the Old Fire Hall with \$150,000 to enable artists and community groups to showcase

and market performing arts, literature, visual arts and crafts. Yukon Archives has a budget of \$1.5 million to enable its continued operation. The department provides \$345,000 to the Northern Cultural Expressions Society in funding to support its carving programs that help emerging artists to develop the artistic, social and business skills required for personal success. \$50,000 has been allocated to establish a program to provide funding for festivals and events that celebrate the multicultural diversity of Yukon's communities of new Canadians. I spoke earlier about the three organizations that have access funding for this year and we continue to work with those multicultural groups. We have seen a number of festivals that have been put on over the years. Now this just gives them a new tool to use to maybe step up their game and to continue to provide opportunities for Yukoners to take part and maybe have a full understanding of where those individuals have come from and some experiences in their life. I look forward to continuing to see some of the festivals that will come out of this new fund.

Madam Chair, \$3.2 million will be spent on marketing activities targeting Canadian travellers. This includes \$1.5 million from Yukon Now funding, and we've seen the domestic market increase over the last number of years, a steady increase of visitation, and as I travel around to places like Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa — some of the strategic key markets for Canada — we continue to see the presence of Yukon built up. It's becoming more familiar to people living in those areas of Canada and we're excited. We're excited to continue share stories of Yukon and opportunities of Yukon with people living in those jurisdictions. We have a tremendous product here to share with Canada, the U.S. and the world, and the department does a tremendous job at marketing Yukon in very strategic sectors across the globe.

There is \$1.5 million to be spent on marketing activities targeting overseas travelers. This includes \$195,000 additional from Yukon Now funding. As I go to places overseas — like Germany, Australia, Netherlands, Switzerland — people are excited. People are excited when they know Yukon's in town. When we host receptions to attract the travel trade, we talk about competitiveness — and these people could be going to other receptions. They could be going to other meetings but in many cases they choose to come to Yukon because we have something exciting to share with them.

Madam Chair, \$1.2 million is spent in support of all marketing activities including the development of our website, our brand, publications and fulfillment.

The Industry Services Unit has been allocated \$1.9 million. This includes a revote of \$218,000 to provide industry and entrepreneurs with the education and training they need to make better business decisions and to support industry development in consultation with non-government organizations and industry stakeholders. We saw this not long ago with cuts to Parks Canada and the private sector stepping up to the plate to take on some of those tours in Dawson at Dredge No. 4 and the *SS Klondike*. The Member for Klondike

will be well-familiar with how well the private sector has taken over those initiatives.

The tourism cooperative marketing fund will spend \$876,000, including funds revoted from 2013-14 to help tourism businesses market the territory and tourism products to prospective visitors around the globe. Also \$1.9 million has been budgeted, which includes the additional \$70,000 to fund the extension of the visitor information centre season. Visitor Services Unit supports the operation and maintenance of all the visitor information centres that provide vital traveller and visitor information in communities throughout our great territory. There will be an ongoing additional funding of \$86,000 that has been allocated to the Visitor Services Unit to extend that season.

There is \$43,000 has been budgeted to market Yukon's tremendous opportunities for sports tourism. I thank the Minister of Community Services for his work on that file too. I know that sports tourism is something that is near and dear to his heart and that he continues to work with his government officials to promote it in our territory. There is \$244,000 to support the work of the Tourism Industry Association Yukon to promote and develop tourism in Yukon.

The members of TIAY, including Neil Hartling, who is the president, continue to work collaboratively with the department to address some of our marketing — I'm not going to say issues — of the territory across Canada and truly around the globe. There is \$200,000 to support the work of the Yukon Convention Bureau society to attract and support visiting meetings, conventions and events. I understand they too will be a part of the Winterlude opportunities in Ottawa in 2015.

There is \$75,000 to support the Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous society's annual celebration. We have seen through the past number of years that little society having a huge impact in Yukon, especially here in Whitehorse at really a much-needed time — February — after we have gone through a long and cold winter. That organization continues to impress upon me and the department and my colleagues on this side of the Legislature and we thank them for their hard work, their dedication and their goal of providing Yukoners and visitors with a fantastic product at a crucial time when it's really needed.

I talked earlier about the new Canadians event fund. As I have indicated, since that was announced in March 2013, there have been three organizations that have accessed it to host cultural events.

This is a fund that's particularly important to many of the cultural organizations in Yukon and one that they're very excited about being able to access it. In speaking with the president of the Canadian Filipino Association of Yukon and the Chinese-Canadian Association of Yukon — they're very excited to be able to access funds to use to pay for the venue, so they can promote their culture and bring people in. I think that's perhaps one of the most important components of this — bringing people together from one culture into one venue and having them feel great about showing other Yukoners where they come from and what their culture means to them. I

think that we see that when we go to events like the Chinese New Year or some of the Filipino events, Korean events, Japanese or the African event — Yukon African Caribbean Association — they're so proud to be able to share with us what their culture means to them.

In August 2014, the arts fund supported a variety of creative community projects, dispersing close to \$110,000. As well, five recipients shared \$30,000 through the touring artist fund, allowing them to tour nationally and internationally to showcase their work to a wider audience.

The Government of Yukon and the City of Whitehorse signed an MOU, which I spoke about earlier. The member was also asking about the — and I spoke a little bit about it earlier — paleo in Dawson. We continue to be excited to work with the KVA in that community and the placer miners to come up with something that is going to work for everybody.

Mr. Barr: I would like to ask a little bit more about the woolly mammoth — the palaeontology. What constitutes a significant find?

There are a few unrelated questions I will ask. I understand that in developing the campground, which people come to and they love to stay in — the Conrad campground that is coming up — there has been the commitment to work hand in hand as this opens up to deal with heritage and cultural sites. Is there anywhere in this budget — because that development is happening now? From the cultural side of things, will there be monies put toward place names and so on and so forth with the Conrad campsite? I will just leave that for the moment.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for his questions. The member first asked about the paleo and the significant finds, especially when it comes to fossils and woolly mammoth ivory in the Klondike gold fields. As I mentioned earlier, the relationship and the partnership between the Department of Tourism and Culture and the placer miner community has been one that has been very impressive, to say the least.

Certainly, I am not a palaeontologist or an archaeologist, but when the palaeontologists go into the field and when a placer miner reports a find, they will meet up. They will take a look at what is coming out of the ground and what they have taken out of the ground — and I guess what would constitute a significant find is, for example, if a full skeleton of a woolly mammoth was unearthed. That would be a significant find. If a full intact tusk was unearthed that would be a significant find. In circumstances where maybe a broken tusk was unearthed, that might be an area where they would determine on the ground whether it would be a significant find or not. A “significant find” is a technical term and is truly determined by the experts in the Yukon palaeontology program, and I thank them for their work and for being able to build those relationships with the placer miners in that community.

It has certainly helped us to get to the point where we are now. I truly hope to see in some of the jewellery stores and souvenir shops, some Yukon-made carvings up for sale that can be taken out of Yukon and used on the trade market.

The member opposite talked a bit about the Conrad campground. Before my time runs out here, we have started the process as far as a letter going from me to the First Nations and the community that calls for their participation in a process to determine some of the significant areas in the Conrad site. Our department will continue to work with the Department of Environment when looking at that campground, but I know when I talk to Yukoners and my good constituents in Porter Creek South, they're really excited about new campgrounds. There was even talk about potentially a private campground coming on-line. I cannot announce that, but people are excited to have those kinds of opportunities because they know that when they go to Wolf Creek campground or Fox Lake on a Thursday afternoon or a Friday afternoon, they pull in and the campground is full. Sometimes they're disappointed that they have to either come home or go find another campground in a different area.

We'll continue to work with CTFN. Many of the details of this site will be determined through this planning exercise and we certainly look forward to working with them.

Seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, seeing the time, I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:25 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 166

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, November 4, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

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Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Community Services; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation; Yukon Lottery Commission Government House Leader
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Yukon Energy Corporation; Yukon Development Corporation
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Environment; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Highways and Public Works
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Justice; Tourism and Culture

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Yukon Party

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Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
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Jan Stick	Official Opposition House Leader Riverdale South
Kevin Barr	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes
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Kate White	Takhini-Kopper King

Liberal Party

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, November 4, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Woman Abuse Prevention Month

Mr. Elias: I rise today to pay tribute to Woman Abuse Prevention Month. November is Woman Abuse Prevention Month in the Yukon. Although we call it woman abuse, the phenomenon is not limited to adult women. Sexualized violence and brutality occur against the smallest female infants and to young girls as well. It is not limited to a territory or province, nor is it limited to any country or culture.

Through the powerful immediacy of social media and the ubiquity of television cameras, we are now almost unavoidably witness to sexualized acts of brutality. Hundreds of schoolgirls were abducted in late-night raids by the Islamist terror group Boko Haram. Over the weekend, this group sought to assure the world that all is well. The girls have been — and I quote: “...converted and have been married off.”

Abducting a human being, forcing them to convert to a new religion and subjecting them to sexual servitude and torture with the threat of death violates every sacrosanct human right imaginable.

Under the control of ISIL, Iraqi women doctors, women lawyers and women politicians have been tortured and publicly executed because of their perceived threat that educated and professional women — by reason of their existence — pose to men. The mere fact that a woman is educated or holds a degree of power over her own life is enough for ISIL to torture her, murder her and return her broken body to her family so that other young women might get the message. This is not a fog of war or propaganda or telling tales. The United Nations has corroborated and verified these reports.

Closer to home, we have seen again and again women and girls slain in acts of domestic violence. There is an epidemic of missing and murdered aboriginal women in this country. Recently there has been shocking and disturbing reports of sexualized brutality allegedly committed by public figures in the fields of professional sport and entertainment. To the credit of the National Football League, they have initiated the No More campaign to set the example in professional sport where they initiated a policy that deals with the economic abuse of women, the emotional abuse of women and the physical abuse of women.

Violence is everyone’s issue and the solution lies with everyone. Here in the Yukon, front-line workers, shelters, hospitals and first responders are to be commended for their ongoing efforts. Groups such as the Yukon Status of Women Council, the Victoria Faulkner Women’s Centre, Les EssentiElles, Yukon Aboriginal Women’s Council, the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women’s Circle, the Liard Aboriginal Women’s Society, the Elizabeth Fry Society, Kaushee’s Place, Help and Hope and the Dawson City Women’s Shelter are all doing excellent work and we should all be grateful to them.

It is also important to note that on the First Nation front, there are so many initiatives in our rural communities that address the empowerment of our women and girls. Mr. Speaker, November 12 to 15, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories will be hosting the inaugural Indigenous Circumpolar Women’s Gathering that will include workshops, panel discussions and cultural events. The gathering aims to highlight barriers and success stories facing women leaders across the north.

I also want to commend the male leaders everywhere who fearlessly speak up and take a stand against woman abuse. The work of groups such as the White Ribbon campaign is absolutely essential to this fight. To stop this violence, we need strong and unafraid men and boys to use their influence with others, especially in our Yukon communities.

Given that the perpetrators of violence against women are unlikely to be moved or persuaded by a gender for whom they have so little regard, it is vital that male allies use their influence. As men, we can do this by challenging a man who is abusing his partner; refusing to participate in sexualized shaming of women for fun, and acknowledging violence within one’s own community, whether this is a First Nation community, a public school, a workplace, a church or a mosque or even at home. Most importantly, men can help by challenging those who intimidate, bully and shame victims of violence who are brave enough to come forward. The simple act of calling out someone for shaming victims of abuse on Twitter or Facebook or even in person can have a profound effect on our culture.

Women have been fighting this fight against brutality for far too long and the time has come for our uncles, our brothers, fathers, colleagues and friends to step up their assistance in stopping this abuse. All people are entitled to live free of violence and abuse — all human beings, regardless of their gender.

I would ask that each and every day, not just the month of November, each and every one of us in this Chamber and those who are seeing and who are listening to this broadcast — that each and every one commit to taking a personal stand in their own sphere of influence and help put an end to violence and brutality against girls and women.

I will conclude with this sentiment: When our women and girls feel safe and secure, our children feel safe and secure and that translates to a healthy and happy community.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to acknowledge Woman Abuse Prevention Month.

Each year in this Assembly we draw attention to the disturbing facts on violence against women in contemporary society. We use many names for this: woman abuse, intimate partner violence, spousal abuse, spousal assault, sexual harassment, sexualized assault, stalking, cyber harassment, financial abuse, mental abuse, emotional abuse and rape. Take a moment to reflect on this reality. These terms are just a sample of the many used to describe the unacceptable and reprehensible abundance of men's violence against women in our society. While some of this violence is visible or at least increasingly understood, the real violence that must be addressed is ingrained in the social relations of our society in how we view and treat women and girls.

If anyone listening to this tribute today takes away just one lesson, let it be that woman abuse is the most vivid manifestation of gender inequality, with women representing 85 percent of sexual assault victims.

In Canada, men are responsible for 83 percent of police-reported violence against women, and 45 percent of those offenders are a woman's intimate partner. Intimate-partner violence is four times higher for Canadian women than men, and about half of female victims suffer injury. Approximately every six days in Canada, a woman is killed by her current or ex-partner.

Collecting the body of evidence of gender-based violence is essential to first recognizing and then addressing the problem of men's violence against women. Since the first profile measuring violence against women was published in 2002, the federal-provincial-territorial status of women forum has led the way in forging this body of evidence in collaboration with Statistics Canada.

Looking locally, the February 2013 Statistics Canada report *Measuring violence against women: Statistical trends* reveals some alarming figures. In the Yukon, the rate of spousal violence against women is four times the national average. This rate doubles for aboriginal women. Yukon women's shelters are used between three to 10 times more frequently than in the provinces on any given day.

The likelihood of calling the police is linked with the increasing severity of violence. Reporting is higher for women victims who sustain physical injury or fear for their lives. In the Yukon, 60 percent of women who were beaten, choked or had a weapon against them, and 53 percent of women sexually assaulted by their spouse, contacted the RCMP.

We know that many women choose not to report violence because often they are not believed. Canada, like other countries, has a low rate of charges being laid when women report violence and a low conviction rate when charges are laid. It is clear that we have not even begun to hear the stories of all women who experience violence in this territory. It is also clear that swift and accurate social and justice responses are needed to address the unacceptably high rates of violence against women in Yukon.

These statistics on intimate-partner violence highlight what many of us already know: that too many Yukon women suffer violence by the hands of their partners. But such statistics are not meant to exist in a vacuum or to showcase the

horrifying nature of violence against women. Male-perpetrated woman abuse must be considered within a broader understanding of violence against women and the deeply entrenched gender discrimination and victim blaming that permeates our society. Statistics on violence against women in all its many forms are a mirror placed before us, calling us to look deep within ourselves, at our roles in society, and in our relationships to both victims and abusers, and to ask: What can I do differently? What can I do to change society to end violence against women in the Yukon? It is our responsibility as Yukoners to look after one another.

If the task at hand seems too large to manage, if the magnitude seems too great, I invite all of us to look at the many groups in the territory who dedicate their days and nights to the elimination of violence against women. I am encouraged by more recent campaigns to bring men into the conversation and into the movement to end violence.

In the past week, a national discussion about the issue of consent to sexual activity has exploded in media reports, Facebook, coffee shops and kitchen tables. This is a necessary and long-overdue conversation. It is bringing in people aside from the volunteer groups who work so hard on a daily basis to combat violence against women. Ask these groups what is next on their roster and how we can help them. They are endless fountains of lessons and knowledge, compassion and support. I thank each of these groups for their tireless dedication and look forward to continuing to work with them toward our common goal of a safe and compassionate society for all women, and not just during Woman Abuse Prevention Month.

Mr. Silver: I rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to recognize and to tribute Woman Abuse Prevention Month. The month of November is a time for us to reflect on our societal responsibilities. We need to ensure that our boys grow up to be caring men who understand that there is absolutely no situation where abuse is okay. As men, we have the responsibility to help ensure that the women in our lives have a safe environment. As legislators, we need to ensure that the resources are there for those who need them.

In the last week there has been a high-profile case of violence in the Canadian media. If anything positive has come from this, it has at least shone a light on the prejudices that are too many — even in the media.

We need to do a better job of creating an environment and a society where women can speak out, a society where hashtags like “#BeenRapedNeverReported” do not exist.

There are a couple of notable events that will be taking place this month. The White Ribbon Yukon has scheduled their pre-campaign meet and greet for November 15, and the 12 Days to End Violence Against Women campaign will begin on November 25, culminating on December 6 with the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

I just want to do a shout out for the women's shelter up in Dawson City, which is also putting on the 12 Days to End

Violence Against Women campaign. They will also be doing a variety of public awareness events.

In recognition of National Skilled Trades and Technology Week

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I rise today in recognition of National Skilled Trades and Technology Week, organized by Skills/Compétences Canada. This week from November 3 to 9 is the time to honour the contributions of tradespeople in Canada and to showcase the range of career options available in these exciting fields. Tradespeople, technicians and technologists provide essential services to our society. They build our homes, they pave our roads, they prepare our food, they repair our cars, they improve our bandwidth infrastructure, they stop our taps from dripping, they cut our hair, they paint our nails at the salon, and so much more.

People working in trades benefit from rewarding, fulfilling career paths. Mr. Speaker, my father alone was a building contractor of close to 50 years in the Town of Watson Lake, and so too did my brother step into his shoes, as well, as a journey-level carpenter. It was very ironic that it was some 25 to 30 years into his occupation as a building contractor that he actually stepped up to receive his apprenticeship as a journey-level carpenter.

Like my father's occupation and that of many others, he was able to provide an excellent quality of life and a high standard of living for his family, and found measurable job satisfaction in being able to provide necessary services in all of our communities.

There is a shortage of skilled trades and technology workers in our country and in our territory, and our Department of Education strives to meet the current and future needs of our regional labour market by encouraging Yukoners to pursue a career in the trades. Advanced Education promotes industrial and apprenticeship training and interprovincial red seal programs, as well as working with employees, employers and certification bodies to support skills development in the Yukon.

This year, Yukon is celebrating the 50th anniversary of apprenticeships and the apprentice training ordinance of 1964. In 1964, this legislation recognized and regulated apprenticeships for aero engine mechanics, automotive partsmen, barbers, electricians, grader and heavy-duty equipment operators, hairdressers, millwrights, painters, plumbers, lawyers and so much more.

The world today looks very different from what it did back in 1964, but tradespeople remain at the heart of our communities and our economy. Last month, during the apprenticeship awards banquet, our department honoured the accomplishments of some 44 individuals who trained and earned trade certification over the past year. Of those graduates, 41 people received the interprovincial standards red seal in their trade. We were also able to present some 77 awards of excellence to 63 apprentices who scored 85 percent or higher on their particular exams.

Yukon's secondary schools also offer industrial arts programs to interested students as well as dual credit

programs in partnership with Yukon College. A great example of this partnership is the mobile trades trailer from the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining that was in Dawson City earlier this year, which provided a pre-employment welding trade course that could be used as a credit for apprenticeship requirements for high school.

In September, 105 students participated in Dawson City's second rural experiential model for a week of intensive experiential study. A number of senior rural students at REM had the chance to learn about woodworking, ancestral technology, quilting, food preparation, outdoor skills, First Nation fine arts, robotics and music.

The Department of Education has many amazing partners who dedicate their time and energy toward promoting trades and technology, from Yukon Women in Trades and Technology hosting the Young Women Exploring Trades conference to the Association of Professional Engineers of Yukon organizing the bridge building competition, more recently the robotics challenge, and many more organizations.

I would particularly like to recognize Skills Canada Yukon for providing Yukon youth and communities with experiential learning opportunities through motivating workshops and skills clubs related to the trades and technology sectors. This group hosts skills competitions to showcase the dynamic and diverse skills and trades that Yukon youth are involved with in our communities.

Likewise, the national skills competition allows these young tradespeople and apprentices to compete with one another and celebrate achievements every year. Its friendly competitions expose participants to current ideas, lessons learned and best practices in their fields. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Team Yukon. Part of this success, of course, is attributed to their support network, from families and staff, volunteers and coaches to the national technical committee members, the judges and board members as well.

I would also like to recognize our other key partners — Service Canada and Yukon College. Annual contributions from Government of Canada enable our Advanced Education branch to provide in-school training for Yukon apprentices. The Government of Canada provides funding for trades training and support for our apprentices while they're off the work site and in the classroom. This kind of support makes it possible for people like all of us to be able to pursue a career in the trades. Yukon College is also an important partner as it trains so many of our apprentices. Yukon College's excellent facilities and first-class instructors also offer apprentices a well-rounded high-caliber education in their fields.

I would also like to recognize members of the Apprentice Advisory Board and other tradespeople who participate in working groups and committees year-round. Their expertise is helping us guide our apprenticeship program to continuing success. We are very fortunate to be the home of many forward-thinking and caring employers who invest time and money to train employees and improve their skills in trades and technology. Let us take this week to thank all of our tradespeople for all that they do for us, building our homes,

our communities and our economy through their hard work and innovation.

Mr. Tredger: I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to pay tribute to National Skilled Trades and Technology Week. This is an annual, national public awareness campaign to promote the many career opportunities for people to get involved in skilled trades and technologies in Canada. I think we can all agree that there is a definite need for more people to be trained for careers in trades and technology. However, sometimes we encounter a disconnect. It is not always clear to young people how to go about seeking a career as a skilled tradesperson or how to follow a career in the technology field.

We, as adults and leaders, know it is a growing sector of the job market, and that is why it is so important to have a National Skilled Trades and Technology Week where we recognize and encourage young Yukoners to take advantage of the opportunities.

As a rural high school principal and teacher, I've seen the benefits that training and exposure to the skilled trades and technology provide to people living in communities. I sometimes lament the lack of introductory skills training that I remember so fondly as a child taking shop classes or home economics classes that are not always available to our early teens. Sometimes it was the only training in skills that young people got.

By celebrating nationally, we acknowledge the importance of helping Yukoners and Canadians get involved in the skilled trades and technology industry. I know the importance of skills training, life skills and the exposure to experiential activities. I've seen the confidence that comes to students from achieving success in the skill trade. A can-do attitude makes a difference. I've seen how skills training transfers to other courses and to life.

I would like to especially acknowledge all the work the Yukon College has done to help establish the trades in the communities, through their commitment to community colleges. I remember in Pelly Crossing, one of the most successful courses was when we had a small engine repair shop on the high school campus, and it was shared by the high school students and the college students — success all around.

I would also like to thank Yukon schools, the teachers therein, Advanced Education, Skills Canada Yukon and all those others who help to advocate, advance and provide opportunities for Yukoners to take up careers in the skilled trades and technology fields.

Mr. Silver: I rise on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to National Skilled Trades and Technology Week. Skills Canada puts on this week every year, with the goal of promoting the great opportunities that careers in the skilled trades can bring. Skilled trades are important to the continued success of the Canadian economy and Skills Canada works to educate and to inform our youth about opportunities and careers that trades can provide.

Very few young Canadians realize just how diverse the trades field is. Skilled trades are not limited to carpentry and plumbing, but there are also red sealed chefs and other culinary pursuits, or estheticians, like hair stylists or other beauty treatment skills, just to name a few. The opportunities in the skilled trades are absolutely endless.

I would like to thank Skills Canada Yukon and also the Yukon College for working to promote skilled trades and for delivering the training necessary that our economy needs to grow and to be successful. The Yukon College has been working very hard to increase awareness for trades programs in the communities, as we saw with the mobile trades trailer program in Dawson, which the minister referred to in her tribute.

This will be incredibly beneficial to our economy in the long run as we can fill skilled jobs with local Yukoners. I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate the members of Team Yukon who brought home three medals in this year's national skills competition in June. Congratulations to: David Lister, silver medalist in the mechanical CADD for the second year in a row; Nicolas Filteau, who brought home bronze in electrical installation; and finally Spencer Tomlin, who brought home bronze in sheet metal. You make us very proud and you are a shining example of how Yukon can compete with the best in the country.

In recognition of Yukoners involved in citizen engagement

Ms. Hanson: I rise in behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to the many Yukon citizens who respond to the challenges of citizen engagement. Over the past three years, we in Yukon have witnessed an awakening of citizens willing to actively engage in addressing issues that they believe are fundamental to the integrity of Yukon, now and into the future.

Most of us find it difficult to speak out on issues. Sometimes we worry that there are people who are more informed or that there will be an expert out there somewhere whose knowledge or understanding is greater than our own. It is truly remarkable when people who believe deeply in the values of democracy come to the profound realization that democracy is not just a ritual carried out every few years, but that the principles of a democratic society include responsibilities and obligations.

As Canadians, we explicitly recognize those rights in our Constitution in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which reaffirms our fundamental freedoms: the freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media; freedom of peaceful assembly, and freedom of association.

It is one thing to know that our democratic rights are protected, but even knowing that, it takes an awful lot to move us to exercise those rights. Many of us assume that government, especially as it has evolved in our Canadian democratic tradition, is premised on respect for citizens, for the law, and for the social contract that is the basis for the trust placed by citizens in their government.

When there is a perception of a violation of that sacred trust, societies react in a variety of ways. In Yukon, citizens are often vocal, but increasingly over time, we see citizens joining together, both to show their respect as well as their dissent when it comes to how government does or does not carry out its obligation. There is a refrain I hear frequently. It goes, “You know, until now, I never got involved,” “politics is someone else’s job,” or “government will do the right thing.”

It’s difficult to pinpoint the exact tipping point, the moment when individual citizens realize, “It’s not just me,” but that others share their deep feeling that there comes a time when just being a passive citizen is not enough. Deep within each of us, there is a well of compassion, a sense of what is right and what is not. When citizens begin to engage in trying to understand where the balance is between rights and responsibilities, they begin to ask questions about the common good and who defines it. It takes courage to exercise your right to dissent, to say, “I disagree with an action or a decision or a policy,” and then to say, “Here is why I disagree.”

It takes even more courage to reach out to your friends, to your neighbours, to complete strangers, and to ask them if they have thought about the issues that drive you to rise from your silence; that drive you to take the risk to knock on a complete stranger’s door and offer to engage in conversation. It takes thoughtfulness and respect — thoughtfulness in preparing to explain to others the basic facts and the background to an issue and why you believe it is important how decisions taken today will impact what you hold sacred about the place, the people and their future that you value so much. There is respect in listening, actually hearing the opinions of others, encouraging them to begin the hard process of critical thinking, of not assuming that just because an expert says so, just because the media says so, just because political figures say so — there are many “just because” today.

So over the last number of years, we have seen ordinary Yukon citizens exercise extraordinary thoughtfulness and respect and demonstrate the real courage of their convictions. Rather than fearing, ridiculing or attempting to suppress those who question government policies and practices, responsible and representative governments find ways to engage, knowing all the while that democracy is active, it is at times boisterous and messy, but at its core, democracy is all about how we, as citizens, exhibit our stewardship that is our sense of being responsible for our community and all that community means — communities, our relationship to each other, our land, our water, our air.

Recognizing the value and human dignity of each person, citizens engaged in actively promoting ideas that challenge the status quo, who push us as legislators to think beyond today and beyond partisan positions and do us all — and in turn our community — a great service. Yukon’s democracy now and into the future is made stronger by those who dare to question, and we owe them all a debt of gratitude for having the courage, the willpower and the fortitude to stand up and speak out for what they believe in.

Applause

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.
Are there any returns or documents for tabling?
Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions to be presented?

PETITIONS

Petition No. 7 — additional signatures presented

Ms. Hanson: It is my distinct honour to rise in this House today to present the following petition to the Yukon Legislative Assembly, signed by over 5,200 Yukoners, supplementing the 2,200 signatures previously submitted.

This petition of the undersigned shows:

THAT, as there are significant concerns about negative effects of hydraulic fracturing related to oil and gas exploration and extraction on environmental interests and related social and economic interests in the Yukon; and

THAT, as there are significant concerns about negative effects of coal-bed methane exploration and extraction on environmental interests and related social and economic interests in the Yukon;

THEREFORE, the undersigned ask the Yukon Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Yukon to introduce to the Legislative Assembly legislation to:

- (a) ban the use of hydraulic fracturing for the exploration or extraction of oil and gas resources;
- (b) ban the exploration or extraction of coal-bed methane; And to implement an immediate moratorium on:
 - (a) the use of hydraulic fracturing for the exploration or extraction of oil and gas resources; and
 - (b) the exploration or extraction of coal-bed methane.

Petition No. 18

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, I also have for presentation the following petition:

This petition of the undersigned shows:

THAT the citizens of Mayo and surrounding areas are opposed to fracking in the Yukon because: it harms our traditional ways of life including fishing, hunting and harvesting; fracking pollutes the water, land and air resources which threaten healthy eco-systems; no regulations of fracking has been not been proven effective in other jurisdictions; the economic benefits and jobs created through fracking are very few and short lived and it is the next seven generations to come who will be greatly negatively impacted;

THEREFORE, the undersigned ask the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Yukon to ban hydraulic fracturing in Yukon Territory.

Speaker: Are there any other petitions to be presented?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to examine the compensation paid to coroners for death investigations, for standby pay, and for serving as the acting chief coroner, and to address the vicarious trauma and other workplace stresses coroners experience by enabling greater access to counselling services.

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

THAT this House shall stand adjourned from its rising on Thursday, November 6, 2014, until 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 12, 2014, and from its rising on Wednesday, November 19, 2014 until 1:00 p.m. on Monday, November 24, 2014.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

- (1) acknowledge that thousands of Yukoners do not support the practice of hydraulic fracturing taking place in Yukon;
- (2) acknowledge the opposition of many Yukon First Nation governments and their citizens to hydraulic fracturing; and
- (3) recognize that hydraulic fracturing does not have social licence in Yukon.

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

THAT this House congratulates the City of Whitehorse for its leadership on recycling and urges the Government of Yukon to provide certainty to Yukon citizens and municipal governments by:

- (1) contributing the appropriate capital dollars for improvements to the territory's recycling efforts;
- (2) establishing partnership agreements to ensure a Yukon-wide recycling solution for the long term; and
- (3) taking the lead to provide an interim solution until there is a new system in place.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to protect Yukon's water resources and the environment by:

- (1) protecting source water, including surface and groundwater;
- (2) protecting wetlands and headwaters;
- (3) restricting deleterious land uses that may contaminate drinking water sources;
- (4) banning bulk water exports;
- (5) protecting drinking water; and
- (6) strengthening data collection, monitoring and training.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: YESAA process

Ms. Hanson: This fall at the Denver Gold Forum, the Premier boasted in a tweet that Yukon is building a robust LNG industry. This was before he attended the Senate committee to offer his unconditional support for amendments to YESAA, amendments that were never discussed with Yukon citizens, and which fundamentally undermine the independence of YESAB. The Premier has consistently stated that he supports amendments that weaken Yukon's environmental assessment process because he apparently thinks weak environmental protection promotes investment.

In the real world, a politically stable environment and clear rules that are clearly communicated are what industry needs to attract investment. Land claims and YESAA provided that.

When will the Premier stop bowing to outside pressure and start listening to Yukoners who want to maintain the independence of the YESAA process?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I have risen in this House before and articulated, there were almost seven years of consultation that existed since the beginning of the reassessment of the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* — seven years of consultation. There were 76 recommendations; 73 of those 76 recommendations were approved and accepted by all parties who were involved. The amendments to this legislation will ensure consistency with other jurisdictions in this country. They allow us to be competitive with other jurisdictions. That allows the opportunity for more growth and responsible development here in this territory. This government is focused on the prosperity of Yukoners — creating more jobs, building our economy by adding more people to this economy — and we will continue to stay focused on that now and in the future.

Ms. Hanson: The Premier conveniently ignores the fact that the decision to give binding decision-making power to a federal minister was never discussed during that seven-year period.

On numerous occasions, this government has chosen to disregard the recommendations of the independent Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board when those recommendations don't dovetail with the Yukon Party political agenda. This disregard for the YESAA process when it doesn't align with their ideology or the needs of their friends undermines Yukon's entire environmental process. This approach also alienates Yukon citizens, First Nation governments and other Yukon governments. Yukoners want a government that takes environmental protection seriously all the time, not just when it suits them.

When will the Premier start respecting the independent environmental assessment process that is important to so many Yukon citizens, governments and businesses?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I would start by suggesting that the Leader of the Official Opposition actually read the legislation. This legislation increases the environmental protection that exists by allowing the assessors to assess potential effects of likely future projects to look at cumulative effects.

Policy ensures a common understanding between the government and the board, and that helps to reduce uncertainty and delays. Policy must be consistent with YESAA, the UFA, individual land claims and, of course, Yukon's other legislation as well. Policy direction is very common in other jurisdictions and, as I have already stated, this government has the ability to provide policy to the Water Board through the Yukon *Waters Act*.

I will again say that there were 76 recommendations through seven years of consultation — a total agreement on 73 of those recommendations. That is an outstanding achievement.

Ms. Hanson: The Premier can continue fishing for red herrings, but you know what? The Premier says he supports the YESAA assessment process — Yukoners know better. Last December, this government advanced \$18 million to the Yukon Development Corporation to begin purchasing the new diesel-to-liquefied natural gas conversion project a full six months before it received YESAB approval.

So you'll forgive the people of Yukon for not believing the Premier when he says that he takes YESAA seriously. EFLO Energy told the select committee in this very House that the vast majority of the natural gas remaining in the Kotaneelee could not be accessed through conventional means. They stated they would need to frack to get at the gas. EFLO has recently filed a YESAB application for the Kotaneelee.

Has this government given EFLO Energy any assurances that, regardless of the outcome of the select committee on fracking, EFLO can proceed with their business plan to frack in southeast Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As we know, Bill S-6, the amendments to the YESAA act, did recently pass unanimously through the Senate, including all the Senate Liberals as well, with no recommended amendments. This government supports the oil and gas industry, an oil and gas industry that has existed in this territory since the late 1950s. As a result of this oil and gas industry, this territory has benefitted in approximately \$45 million in royalties. Of that, settled self-governing First Nations received approximately \$10.5 million from these royalties.

We will continue to focus on ensuring the prosperity of Yukoners by growing our economy and growing our population and increasing opportunities for jobs and businesses for Yukoners.

Question re: Renewable energy strategy

Ms. White: Energy experts warn us that our continuing use of fossil fuels means we have an unsustainable global energy system. In addition to the emissions from our use of fossil fuels, we are forced to deal with the significant fugitive emissions during production — emissions which are not usually included as part of the equation. With the anticipated two-degree rise in global temperatures, we must act now to reduce our reliance on oil and gas products. This means changing our habits and working together to build a sustainable, renewable and effective energy future.

When will the Yukon government turn words into action and implement a territory-wide renewable energy strategy?

Hon. Mr. Kent: It's my pleasure to respond to this question from the member opposite.

As members know, last fall in this Assembly, I tabled a motion with respect to a renewable energy future for the territory. Part of that motion evolved into a directive that we issued to the Yukon Development Corporation to explore next-generation hydro. In this current 2014-15 budget, there is \$2 million appropriated to that project. Of course, that is a long-term vision for renewable energy in the territory. We also need to focus on that short- and medium-term, including renewables. That's why we've implemented the microgeneration program. We're finalizing an independent power producers program. We're exploring wind, but, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to wind energy, of course that's an intermittent energy source and does require backup power generation in most southern jurisdictions that is supplied by natural gas.

We are looking into options — what the existing grid and existing backup power can absorb when it comes to wind generation. If we do expand that wind generation, there will need to be backup and, in this case, in all likelihood it will be fossil fuel backup.

Ms. White: Again we hear about the fossil fuel backup. As the Yukon government continues to promote fossil fuel development, the rest of the world is turning toward renewables. The Yukon led the north in the development of wind energy projects in the 1990s. Sadly, some of this wind energy equipment stands still on the horizon. It's a disappointing testament to this government's disregard for renewables that only one wind turbine is producing energy for the grid. Experts tell us that wind and solar are viable, and they are more affordable now than ever before. Wind and solar, when paired with Yukon's existing hydroelectric production, would mean less dependence on fossil fuel power generation for backup energy.

Will this government commit to diversifying our supply of clean, sustainable energy beyond hydroelectricity?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The microgeneration program that I mentioned does apply for microhydro projects as well as wind and solar and biomass. The independent power producers policy will look to alternative renewables as well.

When I talked about wind power, as Yukoners know, that is an intermittent supply of power. Sometimes the wind doesn't blow and you need backup power to supplement that energy when the wind doesn't blow. In many cases in southern jurisdictions, that backup power is provided by natural gas. We are, of course, in the process of installing the natural gas backup at the Whitehorse Rapids facility.

Yukoners need that assurance that when the power goes out, their lights will continue to be on, their furnaces will continue to operate. I know that when the Minister of Environment and I attended a PNWER meeting in Anchorage a couple of summers ago, Kodiak Island was brought forward as a presentation. They supply most of their power with wind generation, but of course they have backup power as well

when that wind is not blowing. That is something that is very important and it is something that we need to ensure — that when peoples' lights go out or their furnaces turn off, we have reliable backup to ensure that the safety of Yukoners continues to be respected.

Ms. White: Yukoners want to see government invest their own money in a renewable future and stop depending on others to take us into that future. We are also told that the Yukon has considerable geothermal potential for power production, with the Yukon's resources being second only to British Columbia. This could be a huge boon to our economy.

The Yukon Party, when presented with a choice in recent years, has not chosen geothermal as a power producer. Economists estimate that more than \$6 trillion will be invested in the renewable energy industry. Wind, solar and other renewables are technologies — technologies that cost less over time, whereas fossil fuels are commodities — commodities with fluctuating costs that increase over time. Yet the Yukon Party to this day continues to be stuck in the dark ages.

Will this government devote as much effort into developing clean, renewable energy as it does to promoting the oil and gas industry?

Hon. Mr. Kent: In my first response to the member opposite, I stated our long-term plans and our short- and medium-term plans for renewable energy. Mr. Speaker, over 99 percent of the energy produced on the grid by Yukon Energy Corporation was renewable energy. The vast majority of that of course being hydroelectric, with a small portion of that being wind.

There are many sources of renewable energy that we need to look at, but again, I think that Yukoners need to have an informed conversation when it comes to renewable energy. We need to look at the costs — what those costs could be for rate payers and what opportunities exist.

When it comes to renewable energy future it's something that we're definitely committed to, not only in the long term with that next generation hydro project, but in the short and medium term with the micro generation program, with the independent power producers policy and looking at other sources of renewable energy that will help to supplement the Yukon's energy grid.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: I would like to remind people in the gallery that you are to listen, not to participate. That includes applauding or showing pleasure or displeasure with any comments made here. This is a timed event. Your interference takes time away from the members.

Question re: Internet connectivity

Mr. Silver: For two years now, I've been asking questions of this government's plan to improve our Internet connections to the rest of the world. We have known what happens when our fibre optic line to the Outside is cut. The government's preferred option for a secondary Internet connection would see a link from Whitehorse though

Skagway to Juneau and then on to Seattle. The minister said this spring that this was his preferred option and the Premier reiterated their support in a letter to the editor recently.

Yesterday, the government of N.W.T. announced the construction of a fibre optic line from High Level, Alberta to Inuvik. This opens the possibility of creating a link from the Dempster corner through Inuvik instead of going through Seattle.

Mr. Speaker, is the government open to considering this all-Canadian option?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member opposite is quite correct that we are very much interested in improving Yukon's redundancy when it comes to telecommunications, in particular our fibre optic cables. We've done a lot of work on this file to date so far, and we indicated previously that we are willing to invest in this kind of project at a capital level. I have to say that our intent with this project is to be outcomes-based. What we want is fast, affordable, reliable telecommunications for Yukoners, and we want it at a level that's comparable to the rest of Canada. That is the outcome we are seeking in this project. Which route we choose and how we go about achieving that has yet to be determined, and we are doing the work right now to determine the best course of action.

To answer the member's question directly, yes, we are absolutely open to that option and we have had discussions with Northwestel and a number of other consultants about that option. It's still very much on the table but, as I've indicated previously, up until this point the Skagway-Juneau option has looked a little bit more attractive but, with what's going on in the Northwest Territories, that may cause us to reconsider the Dempster alternative.

Mr. Silver: I guess the question now is how far down the Juneau rabbit hole we've gone. A great deal has changed in this file since the last time we discussed it in the spring. The project in the Northwest Territories is now a go and it certainly changes the economies for the entire discussion. A link through Inuvik would also ensure that there's redundancy for communities north of Whitehorse, whereas the minister's preferred option — as he called it before — through Juneau does not, other than a few communities.

Another advantage of this route through Inuvik is obviously that it's all-Canadian and it avoids the United States altogether. We know the government is spending approximately \$600,000 on this project this year. I guess the question is: Is the all-Canadian route going to be looked at as well? Also, does the minister acknowledge that an all-Canadian route could have more opportunities for partnerships with various levels of Canadian businesses and governments?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, both options — whether it's the Juneau route or the Dempster route — provide the opportunity for investment by the Yukon government, by First Nation development corporations and by a range of businesses, including Northwestel, which is the main player when it comes to telecommunications in Yukon.

We haven't ruled out any option. I know the member has a very derogatory opinion of the Juneau option so I'll take that into consideration. I should note that —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry. I'm a little distracted by the heckling from the Liberal leader here.

We haven't ruled out any option. We have undertaken a number of studies of both options. We are currently advancing that work, and we look forward to presenting that work in due course and making a decision that makes sense for Yukoners. But, as I said, our primary concern is the outcome of this project. We want fast, affordable and reliable telecommunications for Yukoners because we know that will make us more economically competitive and will diversify our economy to a greater extent than it is currently.

Mr. Silver: I must apologize to the minister responsible. I'm not picking a plan one way or the other. I'm just wondering if he went too far in one direction so far with this new information — that's all.

An all-Canadian route opens the door to partnerships with Yukon First Nations, funding opportunities with the Government of Canada and, as I mentioned previously, redundancy for communities north of Whitehorse, including Dawson City. The Juneau option enjoys none of these benefits and limits the benefits of redundancies to only a handful of communities. Let's move on.

The consultants' report on this project is due in December of this year. Will the minister commit to making that report public when he receives it?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I guess I misinterpreted the question when he said that we had gone too far down the foxhole in the project in Skagway —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Sorry — rabbit hole. Whichever animal's hole he used to characterize that project, I think it's clear that he has an unfavourable opinion of that particular route.

In any case, he is quite correct. We have engaged Stantec Canada to provide us with some expertise and some opinions on how to move forward on this project. They are going to consider all options that are on the table and the communication that we have given to them so far is that the Yukon government's position is that we are outcome-based. We want fast, affordable and reliable Internet and telecommunications available to Yukoners. That is the goal of this project; that is the goal of this government. Now, which route we ultimately choose will be one we give careful consideration to and we will take into consideration all of what is going on in the Northwest Territories, what is going on in Alaska and what is going on in points elsewhere. I will obviously commit to making that decision public. How we make that decision will happen in due course, and I look forward to sharing it with Yukoners.

Question re: Solid-waste management

Mr. Barr: From our exchange yesterday, it seems clear that the government will not meet their platform promise on waste diversion. With that in mind, I would like to offer the minister another opportunity to give Yukoners the clear answer they deserve.

Does the government intend to uphold its promise to divert 50 percent of Yukon's waste by 2015 — yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I think it's worth reminding both members of this House and the public what our commitment was in the last election. Our platform — and I'll quote it right now — is to commit to, and I quote: "Endeavor to meet the target recommended by the Solid Waste Advisory Committee that Yukon develop a goal of zero waste with a target of 50% waste diversion by 2015." That is what we are doing and that's what we are committed to. We have taken a number of actions that are endeavouring to meet that target. We have made investments in our solid-waste management throughout the territory. We've made investments and taken measures to improve waste diversion and recycling in the territory.

Most recently, we've announced proposed changes that would be significant, systemic changes to our recycling regime that will benefit Yukon, not just between now and 2015, but in the long-term going forward. What we have to ensure is that political expediency is not our primary imperative. We have to ensure that the strengthening and financial sustainability of our recycling regime is sound, going forward to the future. That's the focus of this government and that's what we'll continue to focus on going forward.

Mr. Barr: Another day, another non-answer — tick-tock, tick-tock.

The Yukon Party platform promised action on waste diversion, but instead, that responsibility is being downloaded to municipalities through chronic inaction.

In Mount Lorne, local leaders have found a way to divert approximately 75 percent of the hamlet's waste on an annual basis. Last night the city of Whitehorse filled the leadership void left by this government and commissioned a study on a city-wide recycling collection service. While the city has the vision, they don't have the money, so the program may involve passing on the cost of waste management to residents in the form of a \$15 monthly charge.

Does the minister realize that his lack of leadership might have a direct impact on Yukoners' pocketbooks?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: What's important to recognize is that in the long-term our recycling regime needs to be financially sustainable. That's why we're taking the proposed actions that we've put forward to date with regard to the increase in the beverage container regulation and the expansion of the designated material regulation. All of these actions do have financial implications. Right now they are primarily being borne by the taxpayer through the Yukon government. When we have to take hazardous e-waste out of the dump and deal with it, that costs the taxpayer dollars. When we have to remove tires and ship them south, that costs the taxpayer dollars.

So what we're talking about is shifting the burden from the taxpayer — from the public — to the individuals who purchase the products at the till. What that means is that there is a surcharge on these products up front, but we think that, in the long run, that is a more sustainable model for the territory.

With regard to what other levels of government have done, obviously we're working very closely with the City of

Whitehorse. We provided funding for the study the member referenced and have supported the city in that work. As recently as last week, the Minister of Community Services and I met with the City of Whitehorse to express our support and to continue a dialogue about how best to move forward together. Obviously the City of Whitehorse is a very big player when it comes to waste management in the territory, and we would be foolish not to engage them, as we have.

So we'll continue to provide leadership, we'll continue to take action and we'll continue to invest in ensuring that Yukon has a solid-waste plan moving forward.

Speaker: Order please. The member's time has elapsed.

Mr. Barr: The city is doing its part, and Yukoners are doing theirs. The only people not chipping in right now are the government caucus. The waste-management woes are getting worse every day. I recently learned, on top of open-pit burning at Ross River waste-management facility, there's a large pile of contaminated soil that has been sitting idle and half-covered in plastic sheeting since this July. I have the photos. It's 2014. When it comes to waste management, instead of bringing the Yukon up to snuff with the rest of Canada, this minister is letting open-pit burning happen and letting contaminated soil continue to sit idle at the landfill.

As winter sets in and the snow begins to fall, what does the government plan to do about the contaminated soil languishing at the Ross River facility?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, the soil that the member is referencing — my understanding is that it is going to be safely transported to Fort Nelson and that it is safely stored at this point in time.

I would remind the member that open-pit burning is in fact illegal and is not allowed under the permits; so anyone who lights a dump is committing a violation of the permit. I would remind the member that, contrary to his mistaken assertion that the Yukon government is not doing anything as my colleague the Minister of Environment pointed out, in addition to jointly working with the city on exploring options for long-term solutions for our recycling system, we have in fact contributed to the costs of the consultant's study that they are doing.

The Minister of Environment and I both reiterated to city council as recently as Friday, we continue to have money identified under Building Canada fund for investing in recycling equipment and capital upgrades that could include Whitehorse and throughout the territory. In fact, this current budget includes the money that the member has mistakenly characterized as being cut from the budget — \$841,000 — under Building Canada, earmarked for investment in recyclables. That is in addition to the \$896,000 that is contained in the supplementary budget for investing in equipment at the Whitehorse landfill, including a chipper and composting equipment.

Question re: FASD diagnoses

Ms. Stick: Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder is a permanent, lifelong disability. An individual with FASD can

have cognitive, physical and social challenges throughout their lifetime. This makes it a disability with significant implications for those with FASD as well as their families and their communities. It is widely acknowledged that an FASD diagnosis or assessment is the first step in ensuring appropriate supports are in place for individuals.

Despite the urgent need for such diagnoses, Yukon lacks a coordinated, territory-wide approach to adult FASD assessments.

Can the minister tell us how many assessments and diagnoses for adults with FASD have been completed by his department for Whitehorse and the communities in this fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Graham: No, I can't give an exact number. I believe it is somewhere in the neighbourhood of seven, which is one of the reasons that the Yukon government is in the process of establishing our own FASD team that will be able to more appropriately supply those diagnoses as required during the year.

Up until now, Mr. Speaker, we have relied on outside expertise to give us those diagnoses. We no longer will do that. We will be taking on that responsibility ourselves and establishing our own teams that will be responsible for providing those FASD diagnoses.

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, I believe the seven that were completed were done in the last fiscal year. On October 27 of this year, the minister responsible said — and I quote: "We are requesting a revote of \$105,000 for the fetal alcohol spectrum initiative that supports the development of a common case-management approach and also the development of a local adult diagnostic team."

The minister just spoke to that. Previously, FASSY did that work. But why now the revote? Is this for the Yukon prevention gap analysis, or does this mean the local adult diagnostic team is not in place and has not been doing the assessments of adults with FASD?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'm not quite certain which revote the member opposite is talking about so we'll wait until we reach that part in the supplementary budget. What I can inform the House of is that the Health and Social Services department is in the process of developing the local FASD diagnostic capacity. It's in process at the present time. I can't give you an exact update as of today, but this approach will give us availability of these diagnoses through the year.

Ms. Stick: Nearly a year has passed since the last assessments were completed by FASSY. It has been just about a year. That's too long. It is only looking at the people in Whitehorse, not the communities. We have lost the opportunity to complete those assessments and to start helping individuals in Whitehorse and the communities who need support.

The job was being done, it was taken away, and we're now waiting for the department. Can the minister please tell this House how soon that new diagnostic team that we're going to have to build from scratch will be in place and how many assessments do we anticipate to be completed this fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Once again, the member is absolutely incorrect in her assertion that we've now lost the ability to deal with these diagnoses. We simply haven't. We're changing the focus because we felt that we were not getting the appropriate service under the previous method of doing things. By bringing the assessment process in-house, we will have the process available to all Yukoners throughout the year, as the member opposite herself stated.

It was only available to people in the City of Whitehorse. We do not intend for that to continue. This is a service that has to be available to everyone throughout the territory, and it will be available to all residents once the diagnostic team is established.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Mr. Silver: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, November 5, 2014. They are Motion No. 740, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike, and Motion No. 741, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike.

Ms. Stick: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, November 5, 2014. It is Motion No. 715, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre.

Government House Leader's report on length of sitting

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 75(4) to inform the House that the House Leaders have met for the purpose of achieving agreement on the maximum number of sitting days of the current sitting. The House Leaders have agreed the current sitting should be a maximum of 30 sitting days.

Mr. Speaker, that would usually mean the final sitting day of the 2014 Fall Sitting would be Tuesday, December 16, 2014. However, earlier today I gave notice of a motion that, if adopted by this House, would have the House not sit on Monday, November 10 and Thursday, November 20. Should the motion be adopted in its present form, the final sitting day of the 2014 Fall Sitting will be Thursday, December 18, 2014.

Speaker: Accordingly, I declare the current sitting shall be a maximum of 30 sitting days with the final sitting day to be determined as explained by the Government House Leader.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, in Bill No. 15 *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 15: *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, in Bill No. 15, *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Department of Tourism and Culture — *continued*

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would like to welcome back Jeff O'Farrell and Jonathan Parker — officials from the department — and thank them for their assistance today.

Madam Chair, as I mentioned yesterday, this budget reflects many programs and activities that the department undertakes in its mission to facilitate long-term economic growth for the tourism industry through developing and marketing Yukon as a year-round travel destination, as well as maximizing the socio-cultural benefits to Yukoners and visitors, by preserving and interpreting our heritage and supporting and promoting the arts.

I am pleased to say that in both of these aspects of its mission, the department has made great strides in building on the work of previous years.

In our Yukon Party platform — as I mentioned yesterday — we committed to working with industry, communities and First Nations to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive, year-round destination. We committed to that and we have delivered.

In 2014, in recognition of the growth opportunities this industry provides, we are making the single largest investment in marketing the government has ever made in the tourism sector. You will recall last September when Yukon government and Government of Canada announced joint funding of \$3.6 million over two years to increase our marketing efforts and draw more visitors from around Canada, the U.S. and overseas. This historic investment has already

generated several exciting and innovative marketing projects that are captured under the program Yukon Now.

Working with our industry partners, the program will include a television advertising campaign targeting other Canadians, currently Yukon's second-largest tourism market. Commercial production — the winter production for the commercial will get underway soon and will be available in February. The summer commercial will be shot next year. These are commercials that the department and this government feel Yukoners will be very proud to see on TV.

Yukon Now will also include an increased investment in media relations in all markets. The Yukon Now program represents an integrated approach to using many marketing tools; \$1.5 million of Yukon Now funding will be spent on marketing activities targeting the Canadian traveller. This will be combined with the existing \$1.7 million allocated to the domestic market for a total of \$3.2 million.

The investment responds to a request from our industry partners from the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon and Yukon Chamber of Commerce. I would like to thank them for their ongoing support and the relationship with the department and myself. Thank you also to our own research on the growth potential of the domestic market. Marketing efforts overseas with our partners in Europe, U.K., Australia and our growing Asian markets in Japan and China will receive a boost of \$195,000 additional dollars through Yukon Now for a total of \$1.5 million.

In our Yukon Party platform, we committed to enhanced marketing of the Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets in the United States, Canada and Europe. We committed to that and we are delivering.

We have also announced that in spring of 2015, I will be travelling to our Asian markets with department officials and Yukon businesses. I hope that these visits will have the same positive impact as the government's previous missions to overseas markets, including German-speaking Europe, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Australia.

In our platform, we committed to promote affordable domestic and international air access — another thing we are delivering. A couple of months ago, the Minister of Environment and I announced the extension of all VICs in 10 key campgrounds and again, I would like to thank the Minister of Environment for his continued support, as well as department officials, on that file.

Visitors from all over the world will now have access to Yukon travel information from qualified travel counsellors for a longer period of time than ever before and enjoy full services at many campgrounds through their September visits. This is something that we heard specifically from the German market when we met with them down in Vancouver at Rendezvous Canada this year.

This is something deliverable that we were able to take over to Germany in September, and our key tour operators in Europe were very pleased with this announcement.

An interesting number I reported to members yesterday — between September 20 and September 30 of this year,

Yukon information centres provided services to 5,990 people. I think that number is significant to the good work that the department is doing, marketing around the world. Yukon government's investment in visitor services, industry services and, of course, tourism marketing speaks to the importance of the tourism industry to the economy, and we are committed to supporting the sector in realizing its significant potential. We also see continued investments, as I mentioned yesterday, in areas like the arts fund, the Advanced Artist Award, the tourism fund, and the new Canadians event fund that will help Yukoners host cultural events that help promote multiculturalism and diversity in our great territory.

We continue to make investments in our heritage and our culture. The palaeontology program's success in the Klondike is really exemplary of the relationship-building that happens in every unit of the Department of Tourism and Culture.

In our Yukon Party platform, we committed to continue efforts to make Kluane National Park more accessible to Yukoners and visitors, and we committed to work with Whitehorse and Carcross to develop their respective waterfronts. Again, we have made those commitments and we have delivered.

We continue our investments in support of museums, cultural and heritage centres with \$1.5 million through the museum contribution program and the special projects capital assistance program.

First Nations-related tourism has tremendous growth and potential in Yukon. Yukon First Nations have rich cultures to share and there is great demand around the world for authentic First Nation cultural experiences. The Yukon First Nations Tourism Association is a strategic tourism partner. The organization participated in the Premier's 2013 European trade mission to Germany and the United Kingdom. The Yukon First Nation Tourism Association is also prominently featured within the department's six marketing pillars under heritage and culture on the travelyukon.com website.

Starting in the summer of 2014, Holland America modified its Yukon land excursions and announced that they would no longer be travelling through the Kluane area on the north Alaska Highway. The shift in land-based routes was to address changes in Holland America's consumer demand, and we spoke about this before in this Legislature. To mitigate the impacts these changes would have on the tourism industry in the Kluane area, the Department of Tourism and Culture has been working with stakeholders along the north Alaska Highway to facilitate discussions on ways to grow tourism in the area. As I mentioned yesterday, we will be hosting another tourism day out in Kluane on Friday. I thank the Member for Kluane for his hard work in addressing that need in that region of Yukon.

The Yukon government also recognizes the social and economic importance of preserving and presenting First Nation heritage and culture. The Department of Tourism and Culture works in partnership with Yukon First Nations to advance their visions for the creation, development and operation of cultural and heritage centres. The department is providing over \$500,000 for operations and programs at seven

Yukon First Nation cultural and heritage centres, so good work continues to be done in that area.

Again, in closing, I thank the Department of Tourism and Culture for working hard and working smart. Their strategic approach to marketing our territory around the globe is just one example of working smart. The department's dedication and their commitment to their clientele and stakeholders is exemplary. Initiatives such as Yukon Now, the Advanced Artist Award funding increase, the Yukon palaeontology field office and the extended visitor services season are just a few examples of the many activities the department undertakes to foster a prosperous tourism industry, rich heritage resources and vibrant cultural communities. Thanks to the expertise, skills and enthusiasm of its employees, the department continues to deliver programs that truly benefit all Yukoners.

Mr. Barr: I'm just going to ask a couple of questions here in succession and make a few comments, and turn it over to my colleagues. I would like to welcome back the officials from Tourism and Culture and thank you once again for your hard work.

While in Carcross this summer — and thinking back to last spring, I am encouraged and thanking the minister for following through with my request to extend the visitor information centres' timelines.

I think that it's a welcome initiative right across the board. I know that when I was bringing that forward last spring — it's taking tourism seriously in the Yukon — and not having our visitor information centres open while people are already a week in the territory. At that time, I was thinking that it impacted Carcross, but more so people who would be up the highway — it might take them longer. While I was at Kluane and the community meetings around increasing tourism opportunities in Kluane, it was noted by me and by the minister opposite that the visitor information centre — people had been circling around that information centre for days trying to find out what was available to them in that region, and so on and so forth. I do congratulate the minister on moving forward on this.

One of the questions that I have is that I know that wi-fi is available in the Carcross VIC. I also noted that it was rather slow, so I'm not sure if this year the minister will be increasing the speed at which people can access wi-fi and if it's right across the territory in all our VICs.

My other question is: which communities will be receiving the monies for the maintenance of museums? If the minister has that information, I would appreciate receiving it. I know that Big Jonathan House in Pelly was one in particular that was looking forward to fixing the roof there.

Can he explain that process? When will the consultant's report for erosion control assessment for Fort Selkirk be completed? Will the minister forward that to me when he has that? With that, I'm going to wait until we get to line-by-line and I thank everyone for your contributions.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: It is a real honour to be able to work with the department and especially defend the very important budgets that are before us in this Legislature. I'm particularly pleased to be able to report that we have received

new tourism indicators for September. Yesterday, I reported that year-to-date border crossing stats from January to August of 2014 showed a reduction of four percent. Today I am able to say that with September figures now in, the year-to-date figures reflect a moderate decline of three percent. September border crossings were up 11 percent, year over year, making a net positive contribution to the overall year-to-date numbers. Within this increase, we saw a very encouraging increase of 16 percent in U.S. travellers and 17 percent in overseas travellers. While year-to-date stats show an overall decline of three percent, overseas visitation continues to grow with a nine-percent increase so far in 2014.

I'm also pleased to report that visitation to Dawson City — including Little Gold border crossing, combined with air arrivals at Dawson City airport — are up 21 percent compared to the same time last year. Of course, year-to-date figures as of September do not tell the whole story for 2014 as we have three months left in the year to report. These figures suggest, however, that with a modest three-percent decline, visitor performance in 2014 is on track toward ending the year with border crossings being close to the all-time record year observed in 2013.

Yesterday I spoke about how the department plays a key role in advancing the commitments made to Yukoners through four pillars: better quality of life, the environment, the economy and good governance. As a part of the Department of Tourism and Culture's commitment to good governance, we work closely with various levels of government, First Nation governments, non-profit organizations and the business community, just to name a few.

As I describe in further detail the various activities we are involved in, you'll see how our day-to-day operations are closely linked to the entire community and how we work efficiently and openly with all our partners. Tourism contributes to a sustainable economy through visitor spending, job creation and business opportunities. The Yukon government uses two key surveys to assess the economic impact of tourism in our territory — the Yukon visitor tracking program and the Yukon business survey, conducted by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics.

The Yukon visitor tracking program provides detailed information on visitors to Yukon, including volume, trip characteristics, travel behaviours and expenditure information. The 2012 Yukon visitor tracking program estimates that annual expenditures by visitors to Yukon are about \$180.5 million. The Yukon business survey provides information on Yukon businesses, including revenue levels, employees, hiring and expected growth, just for example.

The 2013 Yukon business survey indicated that Yukon businesses attributed to approximately \$250 million of their gross revenue in 2012 to tourism and that tourism gross domestic product accounted for 4.3 of Statistics Canada's estimate of Yukon's total GDP in 2012.

The Yukon visitor tracking program is one of five major visitor studies the department has conducted over the past 27 years. Similar to past visitor exit surveys, the department first began implementing major visitor studies in 1987 and then

again in 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2012. These major visitor studies provided the base for demand-side estimates of visitor volume and spending in Yukon because they survey visitors directly. Surveys like the Yukon Bureau of Statistics' Yukon business survey provides base for supply-side estimates of revenue attributable to tourism because they survey Yukon businesses that sell products and services to visitors and other businesses that serve the tourism industry.

Combined, major visitor studies and Yukon business surveys provide a general understanding of the impact that tourism has on the Yukon's economy at a specific point in time. Nationally, Statistics Canada relies on the travel survey of residents of Canada, the TSRC, and the International Travel Survey which is the ITS, to track tourism performance and measurement of this particular industry. These surveys help to inform the Tourism Satellite Accounts, TSA, and the National Tourism Indicators, NTI, which provide tourism GDP and employment nationally.

While the Tourism branch attracts visitors to Yukon and helps build a sustainable economy, the Cultural Services branch contributes to the quality of life for Yukoners and helps make Yukon a great place to live, work, play and raise a family, and visit.

The Arts section is receiving \$3.9 million to continue building and celebrating our dynamic cultural sector. The annual budget for the Advanced Artist Award is increasing from \$80,000 to \$115,000 this fiscal year and then to \$150,000 in 2015-16 and beyond. The maximum individual funding awards are doubled to \$5,000 and \$10,000 per category.

The Yukon government values the creativity, dedication and discipline of individual professional artists who make a significant contribution to core arts development in Yukon and to our diverse cultural fabric. This award is made possible thanks to Lotteries Yukon, which commits a portion of its yearly revenue to arts funding programs run by the Department of Tourism and Culture. Since its inception in 1983, 644 grants have been awarded in over 65 application cycles.

Yukon government is committed to supporting a diverse and dynamic arts sector for the benefit of each and every Yukoner. The Yukon arts policy, the *Arts Act* and the Yukon Arts Advisory Council provide the foundation for how programs are designed and delivered.

Peer review and arms-length assessments continue to be the cornerstone for decision-making. The department works with the arts community by participating in arts events and providing outreach and learning opportunities. Meetings with individual artists are held to ensure the programs are operating as they are intended.

Yukon's cultural spending ranks first among all provinces and territories at \$539 per capita. This past spring, the Department of Tourism and Culture announced the creation of the new Canadians event fund. This new program supports festivals and events that celebrate the multicultural diversity of Yukon's new Canadians. The fund also recognizes Yukon's long-standing openness to and acceptance of new Canadians

and new Yukoners. Organizations such as the Yukon China Community Association, the Teenage Life & Young Adults International society and the Chinese Canadian Association of Yukon have already accessed this fund. According to the 2011 national household survey, just over 3,600 Yukoners — 11.3 percent — were born outside of Canada. Whether Yukoners are hosting events here at home or outside of the territory, we are so very proud to support them in their contributions to culture and to diversity.

Fort Selkirk is a designated Yukon historic site and the department works with Selkirk First Nation to ensure this site is around for future generations to enjoy. Bank erosion threatened the schoolhouse at Fort Selkirk during the 2013 spring breakup. The schoolhouse has been safely moved back from the eroded area of the bank. Yukon government is working with Selkirk First Nation and consultants to investigate options to mitigate the effects of erosion at this particular site. Fort Selkirk is part of the homeland of the Selkirk First Nation and a place for spiritual and cultural renewal. For others, it is a cherished reminder of the past, a rare glimpse into the First Nation way of life and a look at the history of trade and settlement here in the north.

Yukon has rich heritage resources and the department takes preserving and protecting them very seriously, for the benefit of future Yukoners and visitors to our territory.

The Yukon government also acknowledges the important role of museums and First Nation cultural heritage centres in protecting, preserving and interpreting Yukon's heritage. The Department of Tourism and Culture provides over \$1.54 million annually in operation and maintenance and project funding to 18 museums and cultural centres under one umbrella organization. The department met with the museums community on October 20 to discuss options to improve funding allocation. We are working to develop a model that will benefit our clients.

Museums and First Nation cultural centres are among the most popular tourist attractions in Yukon, welcoming over 125,000 visitors a year to these institutions. The Yukon government recognizes the social and economic importance of preserving and presenting First Nation heritage and culture.

The Department of Tourism and Culture works in partnership with Yukon First Nations to advance their vision for the creation, development and operation of cultural and heritage centres. This year the department is providing over \$500,000 for operation and programs at seven Yukon First Nation cultural centres.

In 2014-15, the special project capital assistance program provided \$370,000 to support 15 projects that included artifact inventories, cooperative marketing ventures, exhibit planning and building upgrades. As members will be aware, significant components of the Cultural Services branch are the Archaeology and Palaeontology units, which collect and preserve Yukon's rich artifacts and fossil heritage.

One example is the ice patch research, which, in 2014, has proven very successful. First Nation students and elders participated in site visits to ice patches and archaeological sites in August 2014. All participants have committed to

reconvene to review the results of the 2014 season and hold preliminary discussions on future research. Yukon ice patch research began in 1997 when a 4,000-year-old wooden dart fragment was discovered melting out of an alpine ice patch near Kusawa Lake.

Another way the Cultural Services branch preserves and protects our collective history and heritage is through the Yukon Archives. The Yukon Archives acquires, preserves and makes accessible the valuable and irreplaceable documentary heritage of our territory. The Yukon government is committed to ensuring the Yukon Archives continues to preserve Yukon's rich documentary heritage. The existing storage vaults are nearing capacity. The Yukon Archives has undertaken initiatives to maximize current storage.

With \$879,000 identified in the 2014-15 budget for capital design, the Yukon government issued a request for proposals for archives vault expansion design on September 24, 2014. The departments of Tourism and Culture and Highways and Public Works will review the conceptual and schematic designs over the course of this winter. I would like to thank the Minister of Highways and Public Works for his assistance on this file.

Yukon Archives provided service to 1,500 researchers and retrieved over 7,500 archival records last year. Yukon Archives holds over 6,500 linear metres of archival and library material.

As you'll recognize, the Department of Tourism and Culture is involved in a wide variety of activities, whether supporting the arts, attracting visitors, preserving our rich heritage and artifacts or supporting our museums and First Nation cultural centres. Yukon's tourism and cultural sector is robust. It is resilient and it is vital to the ongoing social and economic prosperity of the territory.

In conclusion, the department truly supports the government's four pillars and each branch and unit plays an important role in contributing to a better quality of life, the environment, the economy and good governance.

The member opposite had asked about wi-fi provided to all Yukon visitor information centres this summer. This is something that I had asked for and this government had committed to provide to our visitors, whether they are visitors coming from out of the territory or visitors coming from Whitehorse to Carcross or to Dawson City — this is available. This is another first for this government in the territory. It is greatly appreciated by tourists when making onward travel arrangements and booking Yukon activities, hotels and so on. Wi-fi has made our visitor information centres even more vibrant than they had been in the past.

As for the speed of the wi-fi in Carcross being limited by DSL line and modem, we're looking at potential upgrade options, but it will be limited by that particular technology. I know that the Minister of Economic Development is also looking at options for the territory as a whole.

A few minutes ago, I talked a little bit about the Fort Selkirk Yukon riverbank erosion. As I have indicated, Fort Selkirk is a designated Yukon historic site and one of the most historically significant sites in the territory. We know that

bank erosion threatened the schoolhouse during last year's spring breakup. As I indicated, the schoolhouse has been safely moved, but the Yukon government will continue to work with Selkirk First Nation and the consultants to investigate options to mitigate the effects of the erosion at this particular site.

Yukon government also acknowledges the important role of museums and First Nation cultural centres in protecting and preserving Yukon's heritage. I could go through some of the funding, but I don't know if I'm going to have enough time. We continue to meet with the museums community in understanding their needs moving forward and have committed to work with them on potential solutions.

Mr. Silver: At risk of continuing all afternoon with a public service announcement, I am just going to put all of my questions on the list and the minister can choose to either answer them now or continue with his marketing of the tourism industry. I'm glad that there will be new funding for that.

I'll put these questions out here and, of course, if I don't get the answers today during Committee of the Whole, then we will be asking these questions in line-by-line.

I'm going to start with an interesting one that came to my attention. The department has paid a number of times a team of researchers to come and look at the abandoned sternwheelers in Dawson City. I've seen the report and I'm just wondering what the department intends to do with the information it sponsored.

We've talked a bit about the Dawson City runway. This summer has been the first year for Air North and Holland America flights between Dawson City and Fairbanks. The cruise ship traffic these flights are carrying accounts for a substantial amount of Yukon's visitation. An issue I brought up in the past, and will continue to bring up, is the paving of the airport runway. Is the Department of Tourism and Culture working with Highways and Public Works to get the Dawson City runway paved?

We talked a bit already about the Klondike palaeontology centre. We're wondering — in 2012, a report was done by Cornerstone Planning Group. Was this report released publicly? If not, may I request a copy of that?

The minister went on at length about different missions to Germany. I believe he visited there again this summer. While he was there, he signed three trade agreements, and we're wondering: Who did the government sign the trade agreements with and what is the estimated impact of these agreements, in terms of both dollars and visitation as well? Also, what is the total cost of the minister's trade missions, specifically with the Netherlands? Given that the Netherlands is not listed in the top 10 of Yukon markets, we were wondering if the minister can explain to us the importance of this, as one of the designations of the places he visited.

This brings us to TV marketing money — the new Yukon Now tourism campaign has been unveiled recently and I commend the minister for listening to the tourism industry on the funding of this campaign. However, the money currently depends on CanNor to fund 50 percent of it. Is the government

looking to extend this program should it prove successful? Will the Yukon government pay the additional 50 percent if the federal government is unable to continue funding television marketing?

I believe that these are all of the extra questions that have not already been asked by my colleague, the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for his questions on the floor of the Legislature today.

Madam Chair, as you know, steamboats were the main mode of early transportation in Yukon — a total of 266 sternwheel and sidewheel steamboats operated on the Yukon River from the time of the gold rush until the 1950s, when the construction of the Mayo Road put an end to large-scale river traffic. There are currently more than 24 documented sternwheel steamboat sites. Together these vessels comprise the largest documented collection of historic sternwheelers in Canada.

Since 2005, the Institute of Nautical Archaeology, working closely with the Department of Tourism and Culture, has led field studies of the Yukon River steamboats with local, national and international researchers. The project has led to the advancement of knowledge in Yukon steamboat history and design.

The institute's 2013 Yukon field research was featured on the cover of the institute's fall 2013 magazine and was presented at the Society for Historical Archaeology's annual conference in January. In 2013 and 2014, researchers have focused on the West Dawson sternwheeler graveyard. This graveyard contains seven vessels located on the Yukon government heritage reserve and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in settlement land.

The Department of Tourism and Culture has supported this collaboration with researchers on documenting the over 24 sternwheeler sites in the territory. As I've indicated, the Institute of Nautical Archaeology team has spent 10 seasons researching and conducting detailed site assessments of Yukon shipwrecks and Yukon River steamboats. This research has resulted in the discovering of the *A.J. Goddard* shipwreck, which is now a designated Yukon historic site, and also the publication of technical reports and popular articles in *National Geographic* television programs.

The member opposite spoke briefly about the Paleo in Klondike. As I mentioned yesterday and previous times, Yukon government is working collaboratively with the placer mining community to ensure the continued stewardship of fossils uncovered in the mining process. In 2010, a study commissioned by the Klondike Placer Miners' Association recommended the Yukon government explore the possibility of developing a palaeontology research and display facility in Dawson City.

Since 2010, the department has operated an enhanced palaeontology program in the Klondike during the summer months. During this time, the Yukon palaeontology program has collected over 3,000 new fossils each year in those gold fields. The potential for a palaeontology facility in Klondike is being assessed in the context of the government's capital

planning. In 2014, the Heritage Resources Unit published two new best management practice booklets to assist the placer mining industry to protect both fossils and buried sites in the Klondike goldfields. Copies of these publications were mailed out to all placer miner operations.

As I mentioned yesterday, at the annual general meeting of the Klondike Placer Miners' Association in September of this year, the association voted unanimously in favour of a resolution supporting the development of a palaeontology facility in Dawson and the development of a program to legitimize the ownership of fossil woolly mammoth ivory. At present, my colleagues and the government are considering these requests.

In addition to conducting active palaeontological fieldwork in the summers, the Department of Tourism and Culture is considering the feasibility of developing that facility in Dawson — more work to be done. The facility would certainly support important scientific research while celebrating and preserving Yukon's rich fossil heritage.

The member opposite also asked about Holland America. I have to thank Holland America, as well as Air North, for creating some new opportunities for the territory and for visitation.

As you know, Holland America made changes to its 2014 Yukon and Alaska tour offerings to meet changing consumer needs and interests. This exciting development will have positive impacts on our Yukon economy. These changes resulted in a shift in the way passengers travelled between Fairbanks and Dawson. All Holland America passengers to Yukon now travel between Dawson and Fairbanks on Air North's daily charter flights from mid-May until mid-September. Half of the passengers arrive into Canada from Alaska and require customs and immigration clearance by CBSA, the Canada Border Services Agency, at the Dawson airport.

To accommodate inbound passengers, the Yukon government invested in a new modular unit for CBSA, located beside the existing Dawson terminal. Holland America is considering minor revisions to some of their 2015 Yukon tours by increasing the number of two-night stays in Dawson City. I have to extend a great thanks to the Minister of Highways and Public Works as well as his officials for working with the department, Air North and Holland America on this file.

The member opposite asked about the overseas travel to Germany this year. Germany continues to be our largest overseas market — German-speaking Europe, I might add to that effect, so that would include the Netherlands, Switzerland and Austria. As I mentioned, the European market contributes significantly to Yukon's overall visitation.

In 2013, 17,870 European travellers visited Yukon, representing a three-percent increase in visitation over the previous year. This year, border-crossing statistics for overseas markets are also looking strong. In August, overseas markets were up 17 percent, compared to August 2013, and year-to-date — that's January to August and the numbers that

we have available — overseas markets are up seven percent compared to the same period last year.

International arrivals at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport are also up 27 percent year-to-date. These are positive indicators for Yukon, as overseas visitors spend more money per day than any other market.

Yukon has been actively marketing in Europe since the early 1990s. Germany, Switzerland, Austria and the Netherlands form Yukon's largest overseas market and the third-largest market overall, with 8,740 visitors crossing our border in 2013. This market contributes \$9.3 million annually to Yukon's economy through direct spending.

Yukon has been targeting the United Kingdom market for several years. This secondary market for Yukon represents the third-largest overseas market, with 4,176 visitors crossing our border in 2013. Tourism from the United Kingdom contributes \$3 million annually to Yukon's economy through direct spending.

Emerging markets include France, as well as Belgium — the Netherlands is part of that — and Luxembourg, collectively referred to as Benelux. Together, these markets account for over 2,000 visitors to Yukon each year and provide future growth opportunities for our industry.

Part of our success in Europe is the strong international connections Yukon enjoys for European travellers, whether it's with Condor on their direct non-stop weekly charter flight or through connections provided by Air North, Yukon's airline, Air Canada and WestJet via our gateway cities in southern Canada — that would be Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton. Yukon is easier to get to from Europe than ever before.

This fall, I led a successful tourism trade mission to Europe and that resulted in three new cooperative marketing agreements with German tourism operators and new ties with the Netherlands market. I met with many leading tour operators at a function hosted by the Canadian ambassador where I heard directly about the potential Yukon holds as a travel destination, particularly for the Dutch.

I just mentioned the Netherlands as an emerging market. There is a new expanded airlift to Canada through Air Transat, AMS to YVR — Amsterdam to Vancouver — three times a week, so that is up from two times a week. I think that answers the member's questions.

Mr. Tredger: Just a quick question for the minister on the Yukon Heritage Resources Board. They were housed in the Taylor House. The Heritage Resources Board is an offshoot from chapter 13 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*.

I attended several functions at the Taylor House. It was the centre of many activities. I know it was used for stick gambling — there are several organizations and cultural activities that go on there. I look forward fondly to their open houses each year. However, this year it was decided that the Commissioner of the Yukon should take that space over. I know at the time there was some talk with the Heritage Resources Board as to where they could go. It was unfortunate that they had to vacate it. They were not pleased, and they didn't receive a lot of notification. But at the time I understand

that — I assume it would have been the minister responsible for Tourism and Culture who would have helped to make arrangements for the Yukon Heritage Resources Board to have new accommodations, which would allow them to continue to do many of their activities.

Can the minister report on where that is and any recent conversations that he has had with them?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Tourism and Culture is responsible for maintaining the historic integrity of Yukon's signature buildings. Highways and Public Works is responsible for building spaces and manages all leases and government-owned buildings.

The Yukon Heritage Resources Board was formally informed in August of 2012 of the intention to reallocate the Taylor House. The Taylor House lease expired on April 30, 2014. Highways and Public Works delivered a 30-day notice under the lease on July 28, 2014 to be effective August 31, 2014.

For the past year, Yukon government has held vacant space for the board in the T.C. Richards Building, another signature heritage building. However, the board elected not to take us up on this space.

Extensive maintenance and minor renovations are planned for the Taylor House. I know the Commissioner has a vision for that property and we will continue to work with the Commissioner on his visions. I think he will probably announce that vision at a later date.

Historic Sites is working with Highways and Public Works to ensure the work will not impact the significant heritage values identified in its designation as a municipal historic site.

The Department of Tourism and Culture supports and values the key role that the Yukon Heritage Resources Board has in the heritage community. The board has a long-standing relationship with the department, jointly participating in historic site designation ceremonies and adjudicating historic resources fund applications. The department works with Highways and Public Works to ensure that the important heritage values of Yukon government's signature heritage buildings are preserved.

Mr. Tredger: Is the minister working with the Yukon Heritage Resources Board to find a new home? How successful has that been?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As I indicated to the member opposite in my last response, the Yukon Heritage Resources Board was formally informed in August 2012 of the intention to reallocate the Taylor House, as that lease expired on April 30. Highways and Public Works provided the notice and, for the last year, as I have just mentioned, Yukon government has held vacant space for the board in the T.C. Richards Building; however, the board elected not to take the space.

To answer the member opposite, the Department of Tourism and Culture continues to work with the Yukon Heritage Resources Board on a number of fronts.

Mr. Tredger: That sounds quite unfortunate.

Could I get a copy of the July 2013 Cornerstone report on Klondike palaeontology?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I think I just heard the member opposite say that it was unfortunate that we continue to work with the Yukon Heritage Resources Board. I'm a little bit concerned about that statement. He may want to retract or rephrase that statement for the record.

Mr. Tredger: My question was: Would the minister please release a copy of the July 2013 Cornerstone report on Klondike palaeontology?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member for his question. That's something I'm going to have to look into.

Mr. Tredger: As the MLA for Mayo-Tatchun, I'm sure the minister is aware of the beauty and the value of tourism in my area. It is a very rich and diverse area.

For the past number of years, Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association have been writing an annual letter to both the Minister of Tourism and Culture and the Minister for Highways and Public Works expressing concern about the state of roads and access for tourists to the area. Just this past May, on May 20, 2014, they raised a number of issues in letters to both ministers. I realize that the Minister of Tourism and Culture is not responsible for all of it, but we would assume that the government is not working in silos and is working together. My question for the Minister of Tourism and Culture is: Has he been advocating on behalf of the Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association business owners in the Silver Trail area and in Mayo-Tatchun? There are four major points here.

The one is the main road from Mayo to Keno. The majority of the road has no surface remaining, so blading is ineffective. A major reconstruction of this part of the highway needs to be a budget item as there are public safety issues. The second aspect of that is that the side roads are very difficult to traverse. In particular, the Duncan Creek Road loop is a challenge and is unsafe in some areas. As well, the Keno Hill Signpost Road is again in danger of washout. Both of these roads are important to tourism infrastructure along the Silver Trail as they are identified as destinations and are part of our Stay Another Day program. I refer to the 2014 vacation planner for that.

The less proper repair and maintenance is done on all our roads, locals and visitors alike will not have a good driving experience on the Silver Trail. Recently they have been very concerned about Duncan Creek Road and it is an alternative road to Keno. There is an increasing number of tourists and people who want to access that.

I've spoken very proudly in this House about the merchants and business owners in Keno, who have continued to open buildings and need some support in terms of access to the area. I have recounted my visits to the grand opening of the Keno City Hotel, the experiences there — I have enjoyed the Sourdough Café — of course, Mike Mancini's Keno City Snack Bar is famous throughout the Yukon, and I'm sure everybody likes to go there. There are a number of other places opening up — the Silvermoon Bunkhouse. However, the Duncan Creek Road is an important part of that. Has the minister sat down with the Minister of Highways and Public Works to look at ongoing maintenance in an integrated

approach to maintaining both the Duncan Creek Road and the Signpost Road in order to meet the needs of the travelling public? It would be important for the ministers to get together to come up with a plan, or a long-term strategy, so we don't have a road crisis every spring.

Finally, that letter referred to the signage along the Klondike Highway and along the Silver Trail to ensure that tourists know where they are and to know some of the attractions along the Silver Trail, so that on their way to Dawson they may consider staying another day, which is a great idea. I commend the Department of Tourism and Culture for coming up with some of their promotions.

Right now, there are some infrastructure points and I'm asking the minister if he has advocated with his colleague, the Minister of Highways and Public Works. If they are working together, will they make a long-term commitment to the Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association, avoiding the annual rite of spring or what has become the rite of spring — the annual road crisis?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for his question. One thing I have to do. I remember driving up to — I believe it was to Dawson — on a motorcycle with a friend this summer — and passing by the new kiosk at Stewart Crossing, which is the little visitor information centre they have there. They have done a phenomenal job on that little site. There must have been about 10 cars parked there when I went through and it was just impressive to see that the community pulled together and they now have a bit of a refresh happening there, so my hat's off to them. I would like to thank the Minister of Economic Development, through the CDF fund, for working with the community to develop a new kiosk.

As the member opposite knows, when we're marketing the territory, it's important that the Department of Tourism and Culture advocates not just for one tourism business in the territory, but really, all of the tourism businesses in the territory. We continue to work closely with them on an equal basis, but we will continue to advocate on behalf of all tourism businesses in the territory.

The member opposite was asking about highways and I benefit from a great working relationship with the Minister of Highways and Public Works. I know that he works very hard. He is usually the first one in the office in the morning working on behalf of Yukoners, and I would like to thank him for that. I will refer any questions pertaining to road or road maintenance to the Minister of Highways and Public Works when we debate that department on the floor of the Legislature.

I need to go back and talk about marketing and advocating on behalf of all businesses. I think where we have been successful — when we look at 2013 being a record-breaking year for border-crossing statistics with an eight-percent increase in the number of private vehicles and motorcoaches crossing the border into our territory. Those vehicles could potentially be travelling through the member opposite's riding. The stats show a seven-percent increase in the number of visitors from the U.S., and a 17-percent

increase in the number of visitors coming from Canada. It was those numbers and that data that led us to believe that marketing domestically within Canada was a great idea — and working with TIAY and the Yukon Chamber of Commerce in developing the Yukon Now program. We also saw last year an eight-percent increase in overseas visitation, something that this government is very proud of.

I also hosted the tourism ministers' meeting last September, in 2013. The meeting was focused on Canadian tourism competitiveness, and I touched on that yesterday.

Truly, how competitive marketing — a jurisdiction in Canada as small as Yukon — around the world when we are dealing with — even in Canada, provinces like Ontario that have hundreds of millions of dollars for marketing their area. We were fortunate to have the leadership of the Premier on the Premier's European trade mission that resulted in an accord between Yukon government, Air North and Condor, which I spoke to yesterday.

The Premier and European partners also signed several marketing agreements with German tour operators. The resulting marketing efforts targeted over three million people in German-speaking Europe.

When I was in Germany just a couple of months ago, we continued to build upon the relationships with the tour operators in that area. It is very, very important that we have a positive relationship, that they remember who we are, and that we continue the dialogue and the communication with those companies.

For example, we signed three cooperative marketing agreements when we were in Europe. One was with SK Touristik. Our contribution to that agreement was \$18,000. The stakeholder contribution to that agreement was \$57,000. So you can see that when I mentioned earlier about the Marketing Unit — one that the Member for Klondike referred to as a public service announcement, but the Marketing Unit works very hard and they work very smart at stretching the marketing dollars.

Another cooperative marketing agreement that I signed was with CANUSA — another great company over in Germany, one that is very proud to carry Yukon product. Our contribution to that agreement was \$40,000. Canusa's contribution was \$80,000 — again, stretching our marketing dollars.

Now with CRD, which is a slightly smaller company over there that is very excited about building into the Yukon visitation, we signed some small agreements with them and that was a \$12,000 Yukon contribution to their \$12,000 stakeholder contribution.

We'll continue to work with CRD, with CANUSA and with SK Touristik on marketing our very great and wonderful product of Yukon within German-speaking Europe.

Mr. Tredger: I think the minister for the brief answer. I'm glad that he did mention the kiosk at Stewart Crossing. I know that the Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association worked very hard on that. I would like to also mention that they had some partners in that — Victoria Gold and Yukon Energy Corporation as well as the

Village of Mayo worked in partnership with them to create that. It's a sign of things to come.

I hope the minister, when he said that he had to be responsible for all of the operators in the Yukon, was not implying that there was only one operating in the Keno area. There are many and the Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association represents many businesses. Their simple question is: Would the minister seriously consider road maintenance and safety issues on the Silver Trail and the associated secondary roads — and the signage issues — as part of his commitment to work in collaboration with the government with the Highways and Public Works minister?

It's a serious issue and it is affecting tourism in the area. The minister should be advocating for that. There's another road that springs to mind, and I'm assuming there are many across the Yukon. I'm just talking about ones in my area.

The minister stood up and spoke about Fort Selkirk and the resource that it is. I've mentioned it before in this House. The minister at that time said he had never heard any concerns about the roads. I will repeat that concern: There is a road from Pelly Crossing to the Pelly River Ranch that provides access by boat from there to the Fort Selkirk historic site. That access is also used in a cultural way for many fish camps. It's used by people going into the area for hunting, fishing and hiking. It's also used by placer miners. It's a widely used road; it has not been maintained for two years by this government.

I've asked the Minister of Tourism and Culture if he would consider advocating with the Minister of Highways and Public Works to have that road serviced and maintained so it doesn't fall apart. Local residents are doing what they can. In fact, at the historic Bradley Ranch — the Pelly River Ranch — which is an iconic tourist attraction in and of itself, they maintain most of the road by plowing and keeping it open throughout the winter. They do not have the resources to rebuild the road, as is soon becoming evident as necessary. It's another situation like the Duncan Creek Road. I'm sure members from all rural ridings have areas like that and roads like that, which need our attention.

Is the Minister of Tourism advocating for these important infrastructure venues into our historic sites and our tourist sites?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I need to first remind the member opposite that today we're debating the Department of Tourism and Culture, not the Department of Highways and Public Works — just in case he was a little bit confused about that.

When he talks about highways — and I won't get into the other minister's department — but iconic drives through the territory are one of the six pillars to our marketing campaign.

When we talked to tour operators in Australia, German-speaking Europe, in U.K. and in the U.S., they continue to be impressed by the iconic drives that we have in this vast territory. I think it's important to note when I'm talking about iconic drives that we have to give credit partially where credit is due and that is to the six visitor information centres, including the kiosk in Stewart Crossing. When our visitors have questions about where to go and what to see, the good

staff at the visitor information centres are able to direct our visitors to some pretty spectacular places in this place that we call home. Thanks to all of the staff at both government and non-government visitor information centres around the territory.

Mr. Tredger: I just have a follow-up for one of my previous questions. I asked for a copy of the July 2013 Cornerstone report on Klondike palaeontology. The minister said he would have to get back to me.

Will the minister commit to getting that report to members of the Legislature?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: What I can do is commit to reviewing the report and looking into the option of perhaps providing a copy of that.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate on Vote 54?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: May we please take a 5-minute recess?

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 5 minutes.

Recess

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

We are on Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, going into line-by-line debate.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Cultural Services

Cultural Services in the amount of \$598,000 agreed to

On Tourism

Tourism in the amount of \$2,088,000 agreed to

On Total of Other Operation and Maintenance

Total of Other Operation and Maintenance in the amount of nil cleared

Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$2,686,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

On Corporate Services

On Building Maintenance, Renovations and Space

Building Maintenance, Renovations and Space in the amount of \$15,000 agreed to

On Cultural Services

On Historic Sites — Fort Selkirk

Mr. Barr: I had asked previously if the minister would forward the consultant report for erosion control assessment when it was completed. I didn't get a response to that.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: That report has not been completed yet.

Mr. Barr: Will the minister forward it to me when it is completed?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I can't make a commitment on something that I haven't received. I will have to wait to see the report before I can make that commitment.

Historic Sites — Fort Selkirk in the amount of \$150,000 agreed to

On Historic Sites — Forty Mile

Historic Sites — Forty Mile in the amount of \$33,000 agreed to

On Museums — Military and Industrial Artifact Assessment

Museums — Military and Industrial Artifact Assessment in the amount of \$5,000 agreed to

On Museums — Museums — Capital Maintenance

Mr. Barr: I also asked previously and did not get a response — which communities will be receiving the money? For which museums — does the minister have that information?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'm a little bit confused by the member's question. We're on line-by-line debate here on Museums — Capital Maintenance, an increase of \$110,000.

This \$110,000 was to replace the HVAC system at the Transportation Museum.

Museums — Museums — Capital Maintenance in the amount of \$110,000 agreed to

On Museums — Beringia — Capital Maintenance

Museums — Beringia — Capital Maintenance in the amount of \$30,000 agreed to

On Museums — Beringia — Exhibits Renewal

Mr. Barr: May I get an explanation of this amount please?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: This fund was reallocated to the renewal project to the Fort Selkirk historical site erosion control project.

Museums — Beringia — Exhibits Renewal underexpenditure in the amount of \$100,000 cleared

On Total of Other Capital

Total of Other Capital in the amount of nil cleared

Tourism and Culture Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$243,000 agreed to

Tourism and Culture Total Expenditures in the amount of \$2,929,000 agreed to

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I move that the Chair report progress on Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Nixon that the Chair report progress on Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Motion agreed to

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, continuing debate on the amendment to clause 27 moved by Ms. Hanson.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 82: Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, continuing debate on the amendment to clause 27 moved by Ms. Hanson.

On Clause 27 — continued

Ms. Hanson: When we left off the other day, on October 30, I had introduced to the Legislative Assembly an amendment that I intended as essentially a friendly amendment to allow for an opportunity for this government or a future government to fulfill the commitments that were established and set out in the select committee on off-road vehicles, which had tabled its report and which formed the basis, we had thought, for the legislative initiatives of this government with respect to those 14 recommendations.

In addition to the 14 recommendations, members will recall that the committee also identified a number of other actions that were required to be implemented with respect to environmental and access restrictions and penalties for environmental damage and separate environmental protection legislation to target and penalize where damage was done, rather than restricting specific users.

In my comments — and I just want to reiterate them for the record — it's clear from the conversation and debate that has occurred to date on this legislation that — I'm not going to go as far as some public commentators have, which have described it as being completely useless — and that's a quote — and that it speaks to off-road vehicle use only on maintained roadways. Some people see that as an oxymoron when we're talking about off-road vehicles and we're talking about off-road vehicles only on highways. My colleagues and others have clearly identified the deficiencies in this legislation as it speaks to the issues of helmets and helmet safety.

We heard the minister speak repeatedly about his personal commitment to the issue of safety and we laud him for that. We find it unfortunate that he's not been able to convince his Cabinet colleagues that safety is of paramount importance. We were disappointed that, for example, the Minister of Health and Social Services has not taken a strong stance on this and recognized the data and the evidence with respect to the cost to the health care systems from even one paraplegic, quadriplegic or brain injury that results from not wearing helmets as a result of an accident with one of these off-road or all-terrain vehicles.

We pointed out that despite what the members opposite have said, other jurisdictions have found ways to address the concerns that I think we heard coming from across the floor, which is that you can't just have a mandatory helmet law because some people might not agree.

We pointed out that in British Columbia, yes, there is a mandatory helmet law with no exemptions; similarly with Alberta. In Saskatchewan, there is a mandatory helmet law, but it doesn't apply to when you are operating one of these off-road or all-terrain vehicles on land that is owned by the immediate family member. We pointed out that in Manitoba there is a mandatory helmet-use law, but again there is an

exemption when operating an ATV for the purpose of farming, commercial fishing, hunting or trapping. In Ontario, we pointed out again, there is a mandatory helmet law, but it doesn't apply when operating these vehicles on land occupied by the owner of the ATV. Quebec has a mandatory helmet law. New Brunswick has a mandatory helmet law, as well as Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. That leaves Yukon, sadly — as this government uses its majority to push this legislation through — as a government that clearly does not listen to the citizens, does not listen with respect to the recommendations made by user groups, nor listens to the other level of government, which has spent a significant amount of time and energy talking with citizens of the City of Whitehorse with respect to off-road vehicle use and has made explicit requests.

In their submission to the select committee on off-road vehicle use, they had seven key points. I'm not going to reiterate them, given the time factor that we're dealing with here, but I commend members opposite to actually read the submission in particular made by the City of Whitehorse so that we could actually demonstrate that the senior level of government, the territorial government, and the municipality can actually work together with a view that how we ensure that our legislation works in a coherent manner so that drivers of off-road vehicles moving in and out of municipal boundaries are not subject to the vagaries of the law — sort of changing different jurisdictions. We're not a huge territory. You would think that the territorial government, that has the lead on this, and the municipal government would be able to find a way to work more effectively with our sister governments.

I didn't spend much time in my comments and I know others have and certainly would, if given the opportunity, speak to the opportunity that is provided by doing a review to ensure that when government has actually enacted the necessary legislative amendments and regulatory changes to give effect to all 14 of the recommendations made by the all-party select committee, keeping in mind that there was no dissenting opinion. This is a consensus report. It reflects the values and the interests of the members of this Legislative Assembly and the voices of several thousand Yukon citizens and many, many submissions to that committee.

The opportunity that is provided to government to work to not only reflect the values and the interests that were expressed in the select committee on off-road vehicles use — it also ensures that, as we go forward as government, we're working with all levels of government, including First Nation governments, on this important issue so that if there are issues as we've noted in some jurisdictions where there are exemptions for certain purposes — perhaps for trapping, commercial fishing or other issues, hunting — those are taken into consideration by government as amendments. It's one thing to actively engage in those discussions — it's completely unacceptable for government to run, hide and say, "Gosh, this is too hard. We won't be popular with somebody so we're not going to do it." That's not what government is all

about. Our job as legislators is to make the hard choices and to actually do the right thing for the right reasons.

As I've said, the amendment calls on this Legislative Assembly to agree to review that three years after this act, the *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, come into force, the government should conduct a comprehensive review of this act and shall submit to the Legislative Assembly within one year after beginning that review any amendments to the act.

I would hope that any future government would read that in an expansive way that would include and recognize that it is intended to reflect all of the recommendations of the select committee. It is intended to ensure that the required amendments with respect to lands and legislation with respect to our lands and our environment — the *Environment Act* — are also covered off here — and the regulatory changes that were identified by the members of the select committee who spoke to the need for environmental and access restrictions to be implemented — and which have not been acted upon by this government despite repeated commitments by the Minister of Environment that something was coming, something would be happening in due course, in due time.

The fact of the matter is that every day in the fall season and the spring season, we see again more damage being done. It doesn't matter how many times we talk about the majority of responsible users. It's the same as the majority of drivers do not drink. It is the irresponsible ones who cause the deaths and the damage. We have a responsibility as legislators to ensure that we go up to the highest bar. We also recognize that there are times when there will be transgressions, and that's our responsibility.

We have to ensure that we follow through on the commitments made. The commitments made, I would argue, are reflected in the good work that was done by that select committee. I would encourage all members to support the amendment as proposed.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I would like to start by acknowledging the work of the minister and his department in tabling this legislation. I want to certainly also acknowledge the hard work that went on with caucus on this issue. It is certainly something that affects Yukoners' way of life throughout this entire territory.

I also want to acknowledge the work of the select committees. I also want to acknowledge the fact that it is this Yukon Party government that has essentially used the process of select committees entirely. I believe there has only been one select committee that ever existed by either the Liberals or NDP. This has been a very useful tool that the Yukon Party government has consistently used to engage citizens and also to engage both sides of the House on issues that are important to Yukoners.

What we see here in this proposed amendment is really the opposition's solution to most problems, and that is to create legislation and regulation. Once they do that, then they can pat themselves on the back and congratulate themselves that they have done a good job. I would like to say that I believe the Minister of Environment stood up and articulated some of the challenges and some of the lifestyles that exist in

this territory — the things that were discussed earnestly before the legislation that you see tabled before us today. Of course, municipalities always have that opportunity to provide further enhancements through their bylaws as well as we are aware.

The reality of the amendment is that this government will not support the amendment simply because, if the legislation is working fine, there is no reason to waste time and money to do a review. If the legislation is not working, then any responsible government has an obligation to look at the legislation. Legislation should be looked at if it requires modification, not because we set a timeline on it, and then we waste time, we waste peoples' time and we waste taxpayers' money to do such a thing. We won't support this amendment. If there needs to be changes in the future, government at the time would do that because that's the right thing to do. The government will not support the proposed amendment to the legislation.

Ms. White: Just to add a bit more depth to the conversation, to have a comprehensive review of an act built in is not unusual. You can look at different legislation across Canada to see it. You can even look to our own *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* where, for the review in 2009 of the statutes of Yukon, there was a clause put in, entitled "Review of act". It talks about how at least once every six years the minister must cause there to be a comprehensive review of this act and must submit a report respecting the review to the Legislative Assembly within one year after the commencement of the review.

This is not an unheard of step. It is a check and balance and it gives the minister the opportunity — or the government the opportunity — to take a look at how it has been going and to come back. If it's going great, that's fantastic, and if it's not, then there is that ability to fix the problem. It is not unheard of to have this built into legislation, and we can look no farther than our *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to find a similar comprehensive review built into legislation.

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

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Count

Chair: Count has been called.

Bells

Chair: Would all those in favour please rise.

Members rise

Chair: Would all those opposed please rise.

Members rise

Chair: The results are six yea, 11 nay.

Amendment to Bill No. 82 negatived

Chair: Is there any further debate on clause 27?

Clause 27 agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Madam Chair, I move that Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Istchenko that Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, be reported without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, and directed me to report progress.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 82: *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 82, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Istchenko.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I move that Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Public Works that Bill No. 82, entitled *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I just want to thank everybody for their hard work — our officials — on this bill. I also really want to thank the select committee for the hard work that they did on this. You know, Mr. Speaker, a lot of legislation goes through where the opportunity to comment and the opportunity to speak, for me, is engaging and it is something that I look forward to, but this bill — what we have done here — is very important to me. I like the balance that we have had between rural Yukon — my phone rang off the hook — when the City of Whitehorse did some of the stuff that they did. I think we have a balance there for rural Yukon and the City of Whitehorse has an option to move forward on stuff, but there

is always that opportunity in future to look at different acts and different legislation. There is always a legislative agenda out there that can be opened up and changes can be made.

For me, I think it is key — the education in this. I think that, as a government, we are finding a balance here to ensure the safety, the protection of our children in putting the responsibility for a person's safety in the hands of the adult riders. The amendments require that youth under the age of 16 wear a helmet wherever and whenever they are travelling. Anyone else who is travelling on our roads has to wear a helmet and all the drivers that are on the roads have to hold a valid operator's licence, registration and insurance. I think that is also very important. I do commend the House for the debate on this and I do thank everyone for their input.

Ms. Moorcroft: I stand here to say that I am going to disappoint the Yukon Party government.

I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to state that our caucus will not be supporting an *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act* at third reading for many reasons. We've had considerable debate about the amendments when they were first brought forward last week. There is no question that the government had a difficult task before it to respond to the 2009 report from the Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles. The committee itself was divided about people wearing helmets as a safety measure when riding snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles or motorized trail bikes. As we questioned the Highways and Public Works minister during committee debate, it became clear he is in a difficult position.

On October 30, the Minister of Highways and Public Works said, "helmets save lives and it only makes sense that helmet use is now legislated for ORV users and their passengers." He said, quote: "Safety is of the utmost concern for this minister." He said: "I fully agree with safe, safe, safe, safe, safe, but it's up to the individual, I believe" when we were talking about the need for safety measures that protect all people from brain injuries when they are riding an off-road vehicle by wearing a helmet.

What this minister failed to grasp during the previous afternoon we spent debating these amendments is the validity of opposition concerns about the safety of all off-road vehicle drivers, including those riders over the age of 16 who, under this bill, will not be required to wear a helmet.

The minister has dismissed the evidence of two major health studies. I want to thank my colleague, the Member for Riverdale South, who presented information from a report prepared by the Canadian Institute for Health Information looking at all-terrain vehicle injuries in Canada from 2001-02 to 2009-10.

There was a 31-percent increase in ATV injuries requiring hospitalization across Canada during that period. The greatest number of injuries was among young men aged 15 to 19. Dr. Natalie Yanchar said that kids are risk-takers and can lack judgment. They don't perceive danger the way adults do, including speed, approaching vehicles, rocky ledges or sharp inclines. Doctors have called for measures to reduce the

inherent hazardous risks when young people ride off-road vehicles.

In December of 2010, the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Calgary released a report on 10 years of all-terrain vehicle injury, mortality and health care costs. They noted that all-terrain vehicles are increasing in popularity worldwide. The Province of Alberta accounts for 25 percent of Canadian ATV sales. The study examined the records of the Alberta trauma registry and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of Alberta.

ATV accidents resulted in 459 serious trauma cases, 395 trauma centre admissions and a 17-percent mortality rate. A 17-percent mortality rate — that's a lot of deaths. Male patients aged 18 years to 19 years had the highest incidents. Head, neck and cervical spine injuries were most common and predictive of mortality. Vehicle rollovers, vehicle ejection, alcohol intake, helmet use and incident location were predictive of mortality. The cost of these injuries was \$6.5 million to the Province of Alberta over this 10-year period. The cost to families of those lives that have been lost cannot be measured in a dollar amount.

The Canadian Medical Association passed a resolution to make helmet use mandatory. Following that resolution being passed at the national body, the Yukon chief medical officer of health expressed his hope that the Yukon government might act to support mandatory helmet use. But the Yukon Party government and the minister have chosen to ignore all of that evidence and the advocacy supporting the use of helmets. The Yukon Party government response was, "We don't want to make a trapper a criminal."

I'm going to quote something the minister said: "But we just don't believe in making criminals of the trappers, the Canadian Ranger or the wilderness guide outfitter who is doing some trail maintenance." I would remind the minister and the government that our sister territories of Northwest Territories and Nunavut have safety laws in place for mandatory helmet use. I know the members opposite are aware that Nunavut and Northwest Territories both have trappers, and that they will have taken those trappers' interests into account before enacting legislation requiring helmet use. If the government believes that there needs to be any exceptions to helmet use, other jurisdictions — Manitoba, for example — have made exemptions. The requirement to wear helmets in Manitoba does not apply when operating an ATV for the purpose of farming, commercial fishing, hunting or trapping.

In Committee debate, I asked the minister for a copy of the information they considered from other jurisdictions, and we're the last jurisdiction to consider safety measures to do with off-road vehicles. But the government decided what it wanted to decide without regard for what other jurisdictions have done. They made their decision without regard for the recommendations of the Canadian Medical Association, the chief medical officer of health's position, and without regard for two national studies.

I would like to turn now to the lack of respect this government has for other levels of government.

In considering these amendments, the government excluded unincorporated communities without even approaching them to ask whether they wanted to be exempted, or whether they would like to have protections related to licensing, registration, helmets and other safety measures.

The government sent notices to Yukon First Nations, and when they did not receive any responses, they left it there. They did not take the opportunity to address the issue of amendments to the *Motor Vehicles Act* at the Yukon Forum through the *Cooperation in Governance Act* so there is another statute that they have ignored. It would have been really useful to have had that discussion with Yukon First Nation governments.

The government also has paid no heed to the City of Whitehorse submission to the select committee on off-road vehicle use. The city requested a number of amendments, which included requiring that all off-road vehicles be registered with the Motor Vehicles branch at the point of sale and requiring all drivers of off-road vehicles to hold a valid driver's licence. They requested that the amendments require all off-road vehicle riders in the territory to wear a helmet when operating an off-road vehicle. There were explanations of the reasons for those requested amendments, Mr. Speaker.

The off-road vehicle registration and licence plate — the city considered this to be the single most important amendment to the legislation being sought by the city. Currently, it is extremely difficult to identify offenders, as their vehicles have no licence plate and drivers are difficult or impossible to locate.

City bylaws are near impossible to enforce under the current circumstances. The city responds to a number of complaints over off-road vehicle use that involve minors operating a motor vehicle. A valid driver's licence would help ensure driver education was obtained and help prevent minors from driving ORVs.

The City of Whitehorse, as in most jurisdictions in Canada, requires helmets to be worn while operating off-road vehicles. Having territorial legislation would help bolster this safety effort and provide a united message to the public on the importance of ORV safety.

Mr. Speaker, I hear the minister heckling about the issue of requiring a valid licence. We have to emphasize here that these amendments only apply to people who are driving an off-road vehicle on a highway or on a maintained roadway.

We had some inconsistent and confused statements coming from the minister during debate on that. At one point, the minister said, "The way that the act is written, when you are riding on the shoulder of the road, going to a trail, you won't require a licence or registration." Then that was corrected, but it highlights the need for good public education measures in communicating to the public what exactly is and is not included in these amendments. There's a lot more that is not included than is included.

I also want to speak to the fact that the off-road vehicle select committee report addressed both environmental concerns and safety concerns.

We saw some amendments to the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* previously but there have been no regulations put in place in over a year and a half since those amendments were made to put any substance to that bill. There is not protection offered for ecosystems and for preventing harm that can be done by some, by few, who are not responsible riders and who might damage sensitive alpine areas and other parts of the Yukon.

The minister said, “I think with that in the back country, that sort of issue should be addressed and it will be addressed when we bring the regulations forward.” That was in response to a question about a visible licence plate. Well, that’s exactly the point. The legislation can allow for regulations, but if no regulations are brought forward, then no action is taken.

So we are left with these amendments, which only apply standards for licensing, insuring off-road vehicles when people are riding on highways and maintained roadways. Similarly, helmet use is only required on highways and maintained roadways and for people under 16. I have spoken about the two reputable studies that have been done about the harm, about the deaths and about the injuries that can occur when people ride off-road vehicles without a helmet.

I’ve spoken about the fact that these studies show that young men aged 18 and 19 are most at risk of injury or death when they are riding without a helmet. There had better be a really solid public education campaign that will encourage people over the age of 16 to wear a helmet. I don’t want to be standing in this Legislature when there has been another fatality in our community by a young driver who is over the age of 16 but the law didn’t require him to wear a helmet and so he didn’t. This is a very serious bill before us, and it is an inadequate bill before us.

The minister spoke about balance. The minister said that his government was confident that they had struck an appropriate balance. I don’t think there is a balance here. I think I have illustrated the lack of information. I think I have illustrated that the government has not responded adequately to the recommendations of the select committee on off-road vehicles.

I will not be supporting this bill. We are sorely disappointed in the amendments before it. I urge all members to vote against it. I ask the people responsible for health in the government to think about what they’re doing if they vote in favour of these amendments. I urge members to vote against the amendments before us.

Mr. Silver: It’s a good debate. I wanted to echo some of the comments made by my colleagues here across the floor.

When I was 18-years-old, I had a couple of different motorbikes. I had a Shadow 750 and I had a Suzuki 185. Of course, the Shadow is a street bike — the highways — and you have the law enforcing the rules for that — but the 185 was the bike for the beach, for the high fields — and back home the rules are the same. You have to wear your helmet; it doesn’t matter if you are on the highway or if you are on the trails in Nova Scotia.

At the time we had an officer named Ziggy Seewald — Officer Seewald. It is because of him that I kept my helmet on when we were off the trails. He was quite a mentor for all of those who raced bikes back in the day. He taught me how to do my first camel jump. He also, through the RCMP program, was instrumental in teaching everybody how to drive motorbikes properly.

There was one day that he gathered us around to show pictures of head trauma. I’ll never forget those pictures, ever, for as long as I live. He said, “Boys, keep your helmets on.” The most important thing for us when we were 18-years-old on the trails and on those bikes was looking good and having fun. I tell you — it was instrumental. Those pictures were really important. We have all seen it around here. We’ve seen the boys booting around on the bikes and in their cars around town. You hear it late at night, people screeching around town. The number one thing on their mind is not safety.

At some point there comes a time when legislation needs to step in and save some peoples’ lives. We have had a great debate, and I’ve talked to the member from Old Crow about traditional hunting and these types of things. I’m not arguing anything that has to do with responsible Rangers or elders hunting — not that type of stuff. I just remember being 18 years old, and that kid needed a rule for a helmet — absolutely.

As I had stated in second reading, the biggest concern for me in this act is the regulated use of helmets. The amendment to the act calls for selective mandatory helmet use but excludes large demographics and areas.

I brought up former members — former Minister Archie Lang — putting forth a motion that did urge the government to amend the legislation to make helmet use mandatory. People don’t stop getting injured because they turn 17 years old, and they certainly don’t stop getting hurt just because they’re not on a major highway. This bill is an improvement — absolutely — to having no regulations at all but, unfortunately, it doesn’t go far enough and, for that reason and for that reason alone, I will continue to say that I will not support this bill.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I would like to thank the minister for bringing the bill forward and I would like to thank members for their comments today. I think there has been an array of very passionate and articulate viewpoints on this issue, and I’m happy to add my voice to debate on this issue and to speak at third reading for this bill.

This bill obviously goes a long way toward implementing the recommendations of the select committee of the Legislature on the safe use of off-road vehicles, which reported in 2011. It doesn’t address all those recommendations. Some of those recommendations have been addressed already through other measures.

But, in particular, I think recommendations 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 12 are best addressed through this piece of legislation. We have begun to address recommendation 14 through the amendments made last year to the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* and I know that the regulations pursuant to that act are

forthcoming. I look forward to seeing those regulations implemented, as those are the ones that deal specifically with the environmental concerns related to this issue.

Obviously the majority of the discussion we have had is related to the various provisions of the bill, but I think the issue of helmet use is probably the one that has received the most attention and for good reason. We have a legitimate and honest disagreement about this particular issue. I don't think it's a bad thing. I don't think any less of any member for having a different viewpoint on this. I think the members who have spoken already have raised strong arguments in favour of their viewpoint, and I certainly can't fault them for that. But at the end of the day, this comes down to a very simple and clear disagreement on the philosophical approach to this issue.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As I was saying, I believe this is a philosophical difference about the role of government — vis-à-vis the law — and the role of the individual — vis-à-vis liberty — in the decision around safety and the role that the individual needs to play in personal safety. I could tell from the off-mic comments that the Leader of the Official Opposition is making that she disagrees with me.

That's fine. This is something that we are very clearly disagreeing about and the members on the various sides of the House are disagreeing about. That's not wrong. That's not bad. That's just the way democracy works and I'm happy to say that this kind of debate is a healthy one, I think.

Each one of us, as representatives from our communities from our areas of the territory, has to justify our positions that we take in this Legislature to our constituents, and I and all those members on this side of the House will have to do that when we go speaking to people in our constituencies — knocking on doors or visiting with people in the communities — about why we've taken the positions we have and likewise the members across the floor will have to do the same as well.

At the end of the day, I think all of the information that the members opposite have presented we appreciate. It's not that it wasn't considered and it's not that we aren't aware of these issues; it's that we have a different approach and we've decided to go with a different approach. That's not to say that we ignored anything. That's not to say we ignored any other jurisdiction, report, piece of evidence or commentary from others. It's simply to say that, on the balance of what we heard and on the balance of what we know, we decided to go a certain direction. That's evident here and I look forward to voting on this bill because I am in favor of it.

I appreciate the viewpoint that we've taken in this legislation and the approach that we've taken and I respect why the members opposite are disagreeing and will be voting against it. I appreciate that they supported the second reading and then through the course of debate decided to switch. I understand that happens from time to time — except for the Liberal member, he voted against it in the second reading as well, I should note.

I look forward to voting in favour of this bill. I appreciate the debate that we've had today, I appreciate the differing

viewpoints on this important issue and I look forward to supporting the bill.

Ms. White: I thank the Minister of Environment for his comments and his delivery of those. I appreciate that we will have a difference of opinion in this House and this is an example.

I'm going to reference two different jurisdictions, because I think there's a lot to learn there. I'm going to talk about Manitoba and about British Columbia, because we have one jurisdiction that made laws in 1987 and we have one that just passed laws on March 24, 2014 — so 27 years apart.

I think about the difference of children growing up in Manitoba now — so in 1987, I would have been 10 years old and laws would have changed there. The reason why I'm citing Manitoba as well is because they're also the jurisdiction with exceptions to the helmet rule. In their law, under section 28, it talks about when helmets are required. In 28(2), it says when they're not required. But I know that any kid who grew up in Manitoba, from 1987 onward, will have incorporated helmet use into their daily life because that's what's required. So anyone who would be my age now, or anyone who is younger than me — this wouldn't be an issue for them, because that's what they would have grown up with — this requirement. It would have been law. So it's interesting, because they would have had these conversations in their legislative assembly 27 years ago, and they would have had the hard talk about for and against and why and why not.

I think it's also really fascinating to know that, in 1987, they had the foresight to say that vehicles needed to be registered with visible licence plates and insurance. What that does is it gives that ability — no matter where that vehicle is and no matter what it's doing, it's identifiable. We have talked about our concerns — that the only ones in these amendments that have to be identified are the ones that are on the highway.

It is interesting — so that is 1987 — and I cannot imagine the conversations that they had there. I mean, they have got a different landscape and they have different things happening, but it would have been fundamentally the same. Do we restrict rights and freedoms, or do we turn it toward safety? Do we ask for identification? Do we not ask for identification?

Then we can flip to Bill No. 13 in British Columbia. This received royal assent on March 24 of this year, which I think is really relevant because it is very recent. The chart that was tabled about legislation across Canada — at the time it was done in 2012, B.C. had no requirements and the only laws that affected off-road vehicles were under Chapter 319 of the *Motor Vehicles Act*. Now, in 2014, they have the off-road vehicle act that they passed. It is interesting to note that they made the hard decision that helmets are mandatory and they have not excluded people from the forestry industry or people from northern B.C., who are trappers. They have not excluded them. They have put everyone in there. That must have also not been an easy conversation.

It also bears mentioning that just in the beginning of this year they also had the conversation about registration and it has a couple of different ways that your vehicle can be

identified. I will bring it up so I can cite it properly — it talks about number plates, decals and stickers. It talks about vehicle identification numbers and insurance and how that's important to have.

I think again it's the idea that a vehicle is recognizable and identifiable if something untoward is going on. I would have appreciated to know that if I saw something that was being done that wasn't kosher, I would be able to say to someone that this happened. You just have to talk to people who have had near accidents or accidents, people who have been run off trails, people whose dogs have been run over and the person has left. I can't imagine how it would have been for the person on the vehicle, but I can imagine the person left behind with an injured animal, vet bills or even the possibility of that loss — there's nothing that they can do, because you can't describe what a vehicle looks like well enough to have the RCMP go and have a chat with the person or issue a ticket.

I just wanted to highlight that across Canada, with the vast landscape and the different lifestyles that we have, most jurisdictions have decided that helmets should be mandatory, and that's because of safety, right? It's not because of the restriction of rights and freedoms, it's because, ultimately, it comes back down to safety.

So Manitoba — I don't know how they came up with it in 1987, but my hat is off to them for their legislation, for the foresight, for figuring out what industries they didn't think required helmet use, for the foresight of insurance and vehicle registration, and then to British Columbia which, until very recently, had no legislation. I just want to highlight the differences and where we fall in there.

Thanks for the opportunity and I guess I'm looking forward to voicing my opinion with the vote.

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

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. Stick: Disagree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Mr. Tredger: Disagree.

Mr. Barr: Disagree.

Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 11 yeas, seven nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 82 agreed to

Speaker: I declare the motion carried and that Bill No. 82 has passed this House.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is Vote 7, Department of Economic Development in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

A five-minute recess has been requested. Committee of the Whole will recess for five minutes.

Recess

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

Bill No. 15: *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 7, Department of Economic Development, in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Department of Economic Development

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It's a pleasure to rise and speak to the fall 2014 supplementary budget. This supplementary budget is pretty straightforward for the Department of Economic Development. I know that members of the opposition parties have had a briefing on this, so I look forward to hearing what questions they might have about this budget.

Ms. Hanson: It is refreshing indeed to have brevity, at least at the outset, when we're dealing with a supplementary budget.

I did have a number of questions prepared, but I will be frank and honest at the outset in saying that, given the experience over the last three years, it's very unusual to have the minister stand and actually proceed immediately to questions. So I have to take second here and find my notes,

because I was expecting him to go on for 15 minutes, as has happened in the past.

I just wanted to follow up on a number of matters that we had raised in this Legislative Assembly, and then we can come back to them when we resume. They're matters that deal directly with the department and are not often dealt with in Question Period so I just wanted to raise with it the minister — because I think in this budget debate that we have the luxury of a little bit of an opportunity for an exchange of ideas, as opposed to just throw it out there for a minute and then get a minute and a half of some sort of response.

I just wanted to go back to a question I had raised when we were — the issues that had come out when we were doing the debate on the mains in April. At that time, there was some discussion by the minister with respect to the budget amount of over \$1 million for business incentive programs that offer rebates to businesses that hire Yukoners. I would like to ask — so these are rebates to businesses that hire Yukoners, use Yukon-manufactured goods and hire apprentices and Yukon youth to work on eligible Yukon government projects.

I would be most interested if the minister could elaborate for us the actual breakdown of how that works and whether or not it is a matching kind of a program. If you could give examples of which businesses — yes, the businesses that have received rebates for hiring Yukoners — and does that apply, for example, when the Government of Yukon brings in employers to work on major capital projects, such as F.H. Collins Secondary School or others?

So that is one area that we have not — given that we have such limited time in Question Period to discuss — that is an area that is of interest to this side of the House. As well, the minister has said that the department would be conducting a review of its business incentive program, and so I am interested if the minister could elaborate on the outcomes of the review of the business incentive program and whether or not that review is actually a public document. If so, will he be tabling it in the Assembly? It is an issue that — clearly when the economy is having some struggles — I do hope we have an opportunity to revisit some of the statistics that were put forward by the economists for the Yukon government at the Opportunities North conference. Again, I am signalling to the minister the areas that I think would be helpful for debate.

I think I did raise some of these with the officials the other day, and I forgot to thank them at the outset for their briefing. Business incentive programs — an area where there has been some discussion in the context of the support that the Government of Yukon provides to culture and cultural businesses — but it's actually, as I found to my edification during budget debate a couple of years ago, that the Film and Sound Commission and related activities are under Economic Development.

One of the questions that I would like to raise with the minister and put on the record now so we can have further discussion in budget debate is the current Film and Sound Commission's project funding process and what review, if any, has been done with respect to how that incentive program operates — what review has been undertaken with respect to

the objectives of that program, with a view to further supporting and recognizing this is an area of the economy that is often undervalued in many ways? It will be no surprise to the Minister of Economic Development that I will be asking him, because I have raised it with his officials and I raise it in any venue that I can. I did raise it with the economist for the Yukon government at the Opportunities North conference as well.

What analysis and what tools has the minister responsible for Economic Development directed to be both developed and utilized to assess the multiplier effect of the cultural industries? That is why, when I raised the question about the Film and Sound Commission and the incentive programs that we have for that industry — in order to know whether and how much to invest in an area — it's about what kind of return we get. What is our ROI on any dollar that we are putting in from government? What is our track record and how do we project going forward on the cultural side — film and sound — that Economic Development is doing?

The Minister of Tourism and Culture has spoken at length about the statistics that are employed by the Department of Tourism and Culture, but those are all static data. They are exit/entrance data. What the TIAY — the question I have asked various economists and I'm looking to the Minister of Economic Development is what work is being done to determine the economic multiplier effect of the tourism dollar?

I have asked this before and I gave notice to his officials that I'll continue to ask this question, because when I see and I hear statements being made by ministers opposite, including the minister responsible for Economic Development, that we put a value — we can say we have a value to the resource extraction industry — and, at the same time, when I look at his strategic plan for his department, a couple of the main pillars of that economic planning process for this government includes not just the resource-extraction industry and resource-extraction sector, but also tourism.

So as legislators, I think we need to be mindful of making sure that where there are opportunities to increase that investment, and we all know we make decisions — at least I do, and you do, I'm sure, Madam Chair, in terms of your investment of resources — based on what you anticipate your return on that investment will be. So I'm looking for either the evolution of or the actual econometric tools that this government is using as it's assessing how to increase investments in that broad tourism sector.

As I said, I think I referenced — I know the minister has picked up on some of the work and some of the suggestions that were made by Dr. Norman Foster, when he talked about considering the opportunities for Yukon's economy, if we just set aside the paradigm we operate within now and look at the opportunities. We've heard him talk about the data centres and that notion — the potential that might be there. There are economic models that underlie that.

I'm looking for the minister to be able to address and to speak to the economic modelling and the multiplier effect —

specifically, what research. I'm asking him to share that with the Legislative Assembly.

I appreciate that some of my questions — I would be leaping out a little bit more than I would like to and I would like to be able to present the minister some additional questions but, given the time, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Hanson that the Chair report progress on Bill. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 167

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, November 5, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

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Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Community Services; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation; Yukon Lottery Commission Government House Leader
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Yukon Energy Corporation; Yukon Development Corporation
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Environment; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Highways and Public Works
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Justice; Tourism and Culture

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OPPOSITION MEMBERS

New Democratic Party

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

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Clerk of the Assembly	Floyd McCormick
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Sergeant-at-Arms	Rudy Couture
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Doris McLean
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, November 5, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Veterans' Week

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I rise today to pay tribute to all Canadian veterans. During Veterans' Week of November 5 to 11, we recognize the selfless dedication of the women and men in uniform who have helped to define and defend Canada's values of freedom and democracy. Through their sacrifices, Canada's veterans have ensured not only the protection of our country, but also the promotion of peace around the world. Members of the Canadian forces have helped to build a safe and secure society for all citizens.

The recent incidents in Ottawa and St-Jean-sur-Richelieu remind us that we must continue to stand on guard for the freedom that we do hold so dear. These tragic events emphasize the need to support our military and police forces, as they are the ones who put themselves at risk and step forward to protect Canadians in times of crisis.

This year, Mr. Speaker, we also mark the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War. During the Great War, Yukon punched far above its weight with 561 Yukoners enlisting, which was a per capita rate far higher than the rest of Canada. Each Yukon resident also donated more money to the war effort than those of any other part of this country.

Commissioner George Black, his wife Martha Black, Joe Boyle and Sam Steele are just some of the prominent Yukoners who made a significant contribution to Canada's war effort during World War I. Throughout the Great War, particularly at the battles of Passchendaele, the Somme and Vimy Ridge, regiments from across this country fought valiantly and helped to create a new sense of what it means to be Canadian.

Veterans deserve to be recognized and appreciated this week, not only because they have served our country, but because of the work they do and continue to do in our communities. We pay tribute to our veterans by proudly wearing poppies on our left lapels. The poppy is recognized around the world as a symbol of our shared history of sacrifice and commitment. We can also take time to remember by attending a Remembrance Day ceremony, or visiting a local cenotaph or monument, or by sharing our thoughts of remembrance on-line.

We can also take time to personally thank one of the more than 250 Yukon veterans who have served our country

through times of war and peace from the Second World War to the most recent conflicts in which Canadian forces are proudly and bravely playing a role.

Veterans, including you, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister of Highways and Public Works — together in this Legislature, it is important to acknowledge and show respect to our Canadian veterans but, above all, we must never forget.

While I'm standing I would like to recognize and have the honour to recognize some members who are in uniform today — veterans and members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I would like to recognize Joe Mewett, Red Grossinger, Constable Brian Harding and Master Corporal Terence Grabowski who have all joined us today.

I would please ask you to join me in welcoming them here today.

Applause

Ms. White: It is an honour to rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to Veterans' Week. The days and week leading up to Remembrance Day give us the time to reflect on the meaning of November 11. We do this in different ways and in different places across the country.

I want to express my gratitude, my sadness, my pride and my admiration to the men and women of the past, the present and the future who have chosen and continue to choose to put their lives on the line for the cause of peace and freedom around the world.

In Canada, we have a special place that documents these sacrifices, a place where Canadians can go to see the names of the fallen. The Memorial Chamber is a beautifully crafted room with a vaulted ceiling. It has stained glass windows and intricate carvings depicting Canada's record of war. It's a restful place for peaceful remembrance. The centrepiece is the *First World War Book of Remembrance*. It sits on an altar in the centre of the room in a glass case of finely tooled brass. Small statuettes of angels kneel at each of its corners.

The steps leading up to the altar are made from stones from Flanders Fields. The remaining six books are displayed resting on their respective altars around the room. These books of remembrance commemorate Canada's young soldiers, nurses, sailors, merchant marines and airforce men and women who lost their lives during times of peace and conflict. These books are testaments to the valour, the sacrifice and the selflessness of those Canadians who have died in military service. The first book commemorates the First World War. It is the largest of the books and it contains more than 66,000 names on its pages. The second volume commemorates the Second World War, and it contains more than 44,000 names. The third volume commemorates the men and women of Newfoundland who gave their lives in defence of freedom during both the First and Second World Wars, even before Newfoundland was a province of Canada. It contains more than 2,300 names.

The fourth volume commemorates those Canadians who gave their lives during the Korean War and it contains 516 names. The fifth book commemorates Canadians who died during the South African War and the Nile Expedition. It

contains almost 300 names on its pages. The sixth book commemorates the men and women of the Merchant Marine who gave their lives while serving Canada at sea during both the First World War and the Second World War. It contains 570 names. The seventh book lists the names of more than 1,800 members of the Canadian Forces who have died while on duty in Canada or serving abroad since October 1, 1947. Tragically, new names continue to be added to its pages.

Together, these volumes commemorate the lives of more than 118,000 men and women who, since Confederation, have made the ultimate sacrifice in giving their lives for the cause of peace and freedom. These volumes contain more than three times the population of the Yukon. Through their courage, determination and sacrifice, generations of Canadian veterans have helped to ensure that we live in a free and peaceful country. We owe it to them to learn, to understand and to be thankful for the tasks that they have undertaken and to not forget the lessons we have learned at their expense. Lest we forget.

Mr. Silver: I rise on behalf of the Liberal caucus to also pay tribute to Veterans' Week.

Each year in the week leading up to Remembrance Day, we are asked to take time to remember those who sacrificed their lives for the freedoms and liberties that are a fundamental part of life in Canada. Unfortunately, those sacrifices seem closer to home this year than in past years with the recent deaths of Corporal Nathan Cirillo as well as Warrant Officer, Patrice Vincent.

We as Canadians have a duty. We have a duty to ensure that our veterans are taken care of. In the last few weeks, our military men and women have departed for overseas duties in the Middle East. We need to take action today, Mr. Speaker, so that when they return, we are ready to support them.

As we approach Remembrance Day, we must not remember only the sacrifices of the first and second World Wars, but also those who have served in NATO and in UN missions, and also those who have most recently served in Afghanistan, Libya and, once again, Iraq.

Our veterans are our community leaders and it is important to pay tribute to them not just during November, but every day. They return home with the scars of conflict, lest we forget that democracy is not an easy undertaking. It is a privilege awarded to our citizens by our current serving forces and by our veterans.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before going to the next tribute, I just want to add that, during the week of remembrance and this whole time, people wear poppies. There is a bit of a misnomer in that people say, "I bought a poppy." The poppies, in fact, are free. If you choose to make a donation, it's gratefully accepted. The donations do not go to the legion organization. They go to the poppy trust fund that branches administer on your behalf, because it is your money. All that money in the poppy trust fund must be used to support veterans and their families.

Thank you all for your generous donations to the poppy trust fund and all the work that it does as well.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Kent: I know that introduction of visitors is a little later on, but I just want to thank the Minister of Education for allowing me to interrupt tributes to introduce some special people who are in the gallery today. Of course, my wife, Ms. Amanda Leslie, is joining us — and her parents, Tom and Louise Van Soldt of Union Bay, British Columbia, and our new addition, Eli Timothy Aviugana Kent. I would just ask members to join me in welcoming my wife, her parents and our son.

Applause

In recognition of Take Our Kids to Work Day

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to this year's participants in the annual Take Our Kids to Work Day. This program has been giving secondary students opportunities to explore future career paths and to connect with the world of work since 1994. On this day, the 20th anniversary of the Take Our Kids to Work program, students will be visiting and learning at workplaces across the territory and across the country. Since its launch in the Greater Toronto area back in 1994, the Take Our Kids to Work program has grown to involve some 250,000 students and 75,000 organizations across this country.

This opportunity to see a day in the life of a parent, friend or volunteer in their workplace is a hands-on way for students to explore the workplace and future career options. Students can make a direct connection to what their future may bring at a time when they are making the decisions that will directly affect their future.

So Mr. Speaker, today I would like to welcome a couple of very special guests to the Legislature: Madison Gauvin and Elisha Klassen are two grade 10 students who have joined us here from Vanier Catholic Secondary School here today.

They have offered themselves to be part of Take our Kids to Work Day today. I have had the opportunity to spend the entire morning with them, or at least the lion's share in between our meetings, and these two young women are indeed emerging leaders in our territory, and it has been a real pleasure to be able to work alongside them this morning. So I would like members to extend a warm welcome to Madison and to Elisha for joining us here today.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Maddy and Elisha have expressed obviously an interest in a future working with Yukon government and possibly as elected members of the Legislative Assembly here in the Yukon. As one of Canada's top 100 employers for 2014, we are really pleased to be able to show them some of the opportunities that exist here within our workplace.

This morning, as I mentioned, we spent some time together and they have learned first-hand the schedule of what an elected official looks like — in particular the Minister of

Education, and minister responsible for the Women's Directorate and also French Language Services Directorate. Hopefully that is not a deterrent for their continued work and interest in the area of politics. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon they will have the opportunity to meet with some of the other hard-working staff of the Yukon government.

I think that by bringing students like Maddy and Elisha into the Assembly and into our workplaces, we are giving these students an opportunity to see for themselves what a day in our lives looks like. The Department of Education, of course, is dedicated to developing an inclusive, adaptable and productive workforce that meets the needs of each of our Yukon employers.

Take Our Kids to Work Day gives employers an opportunity to engage with the employees of tomorrow. Take Our Kids to Work Day is an exciting opportunity for young people to find career inspiration and for employers to connect with the future workforce.

I would really like to express my personal thanks to Madison and Elisha and the many students across the territory who chose to spend time with the workforce today. I would also like to thank the workers and the employers who made time to show these students around and to answer each of their questions today. The Department of Education's mission is to support success for each and every learner. This has just been one more practical example of making education experiential and engaging for Yukon students. This day gives our students an opportunity to see what success might indeed look for them.

Thank you to Elisha and to Madison for joining us here today.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon francophone women

Hon. Ms. Taylor: [*Member spoke in French. Text unavailable.*]

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier in French, it very much gives me honour to rise today in tribute to recognize three very special Yukon francophone women. These women were selected for their contributions to the Canadian francophonie last month — or in September of this year, I should say, by the Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne. Angélique Bernard, Jeanne Beaudoin and of course the late Émilie Tremblay were among the 100 francophone women who have influenced Canadian history over the past 100 years. They were honoured for their outstanding dedication to Yukon's francophone community and to our territory in general.

In 1995, Angélique Bernard visited Whitehorse for the first time as a translation intern and it wasn't long before she decided to settle permanently in our territory. She found employment in the childcare field, as well as with the advocacy group, the women's organization Les EssentiElles. She was also heavily involved in theatre and sports. She chaired the board of directors of Whitehorse's women soccer team and I think that everyone is very much familiar with Ms. Bernard's commitments to the equality of women —

advancing the equality of women and their participation in activities such as sports.

In 1996, she also received the remarkable woman award at the Gala de la francophonie. Of course, she is also the chair of l'Association franco-yukonnaise's board of directors and it has been a real honour to work alongside Angélique these past number of years.

Likewise, Jeanne Beaudoin arrived in our territory in 1982 and discovered a passion for her new home. She was elected vice-chair of the l'Association franco-yukonnaise in 1984. She worked on the relaunching of the newspaper *L'Aurore Boréale* and on the development of French-first language instruction in Yukon.

Ms. Beaudoin played a major role in establishing the Garderie du petit cheval blanc daycare, l'École Émilie Tremblay school, the Yukon francophone school board and, of course, the Centre de la Francophonie du Yukon. She has passionately and tirelessly dedicated her time to developing services, organizations and infrastructure for the benefit of our territory and is a very valued member of our own French Language Services Directorate here in Yukon government.

Likewise, Émilie Tremblay arrived in Yukon on June 16, 1894 after crossing the Chilkoot Trail with her husband. She was a very brave woman with an unwavering social commitment, and she founded the Society of the Ladies of the Golden North, was chair of the Yukon Women Pioneers and a lifetime member of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire. The Tremblay home was always open to travellers, missionaries and widows. Whitehorse's French language school bears the name of this incredible pioneer.

On behalf of the Legislative Assembly and all members of this House, we offer our sincere congratulations to you, Angélique, and to you, Jeanne, and recognize you and say bravo for your continued contributions on behalf of our territory. Thank you.

Before I wind up, I also — as you can see, there are a number of individuals in the gallery who have joined us here today in support of these two dynamic women, and I would like to just point out a few — and there are a few.

In the gallery is Emilie Beaudoin-Herdes, daughter of Jeanne Beaudoin; David Comchy, husband of Angélique Bernard; Samuel Comchy-Bernard, son of Angélique. There you are — thank you, David, husband of Angélique Bernard — hanging in there; André Bourcier, vice-president of l'AFY; Josée Belisle, a representative from l'AFY — welcome; Christian Klein, also from l'AFY; Isabelle Salesse, from l'AFY, directrice générale; Rock Nadon; Nancy Power; Frédéric Nole; et aussi Edithé Bélanger, also from l'AFY. Welcome, all of you.

From our own French Language Services Directorate we have: Sarah Cloutier-Hébert; Michel Lemaire; Catherine Huot; Anne Savoie; Myriam Lachance-Bernard; Sylvie Painchaud; Marie-Alexis Dangréau; Joe MacGillivray, who has also joined us here as the deputy minister for the Executive Council Office; Patrice Tremblay, our director for French Language Services Directorate; Yann Herry; I'm not sure if Hélène Saint-Onge has joined us. No? Okay. Luc

Laferté, if Luc is here — all right. Mr. Rénaud Rémillard has also joined us here as the director general for the Federation of French-Speaking jurists from Manitoba.

Also, in the gallery is Danielle Bónneau, Pierre Luc-Lafrance, directeur de l'Aurore boréale, et aussi Emily Thibault. Merci everyone for joining us.

In recognition of Medical Radiation Technologists Week

Hon. Mr. Graham: I rise today on behalf of all members of the Legislature to ask my colleagues in the House to join me in recognizing the national celebration of Canada's medical radiation technologists from November 2 to 8.

Sponsored by the Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists, this annual event raises awareness about this area of health care. It has touched the lives of more than 30 percent of Canadians in at least the last six months and celebrates the crucial role that medical radiation technologists play in the health care system. There likely isn't anyone in the House who hasn't been involved with a medical radiation technologist or had a family member who has seen one in the last six months.

The medical radiation therapy profession today includes a wide array of professionals who represent various technologically related disciplines in the health care field. MRTs specialize in one or more of the four disciplines of medical imaging and radiation science. These include general radiography, magnetic resonance imaging, nuclear medicine and radiation therapy. These individuals provide a delicate balance, Mr. Speaker, between technical knowledge and the adaptive patient skills, generally in a hospital or in a clinic.

Many MRTs, including those in the Yukon, specialize in radiological technology using X-rays to produce images of body parts and systems, including CT scans, breast imaging and, in the very near future, MRI scans, as well as operating room procedures.

These individuals are experts in the use of complex medical equipment, which is used to better differentiate between normal and diseased tissue. At the same time, these medical radiation technologists provide comprehensive, compassionate patient care. Yukon is fortunate to have 17 MRTs currently on staff at Whitehorse General Hospital. We appreciate and recognize their contribution to the health care of all our citizens.

In recognition of Financial Literacy Month

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I rise today to note that November is Financial Literacy Month in Canada. Very few endeavours are as important to one's quality of life as attaining financial literacy. Financial literacy is generally defined as having the knowledge, skills and the confidence to make responsible financial decisions. Understanding the basic concepts of budgeting and saving is absolutely essential for the success of every Yukon family. Mastering the fundamentals of money management is as important to determining one's success in life as reading and writing, and results in financial security.

It's never too early to introduce children to basic financial management. By instilling good financial habits in childhood, we can increase the likelihood of sound financial practices throughout life, yet very few parents talk to their children about money. In fact, studies tell us that money is one of the least discussed issues between children and their parents. This is not ideal because it is clear that financial literacy is an essential life skill.

It is not only children who are lacking in financial literacy. A great many Canadian adults lack the skills and knowledge they need to manage money well. Some 60 percent say they worry about their financial future, and 23 percent worry so much that they regularly lose sleep just thinking about it.

What can be done to help people attain the knowledge and the skills to direct their own financial affairs with confidence? Work is underway.

Parents can help by having regular conversations with children about, for example, the difference between needs and wants. Everyone wishes that they could just have everything they wanted without cost or consequences, but we live in a real world where we must all make decisions about how we invest time, energy and our money. By becoming more money savvy, we become more empowered as individuals, as citizens, as consumers and as providers for our families. Understanding the costs of using credit cards, how to take advantage of the power of compound interest, being strategic about incurring debt, and saving for the future are keys to achieving financial security and peace of mind. Not everyone wants to or needs to become an expert economist or a financial planner, but we can all become more mindful of how we manage what we do have.

It is a cliché to say that we need to teach our children the value of a dollar. Such a notion seems outdated and quaint in an age of plenty. As I child I was taught that a penny saved is a penny earned, or, if you look after your pennies, the dollars look after themselves.

However children who are not furnished with an understanding of personal finance are vulnerable to the lure of marketing and peer pressure. As adults we know that even we are not immune to the immense power of advertising and social pressures to buy things we do not need and cannot afford. A young person with an inadequate financial grounding can easily fall into some very bad financial habits and can make poor financial choices that could ultimately lead to disempowerment and despair. When we feel powerless we are vulnerable to even more dangerous influences that can only keep us further mired in personal difficulty. This is why good financial habits are so important.

Although it may not be a glamorous topic, sound financial practices are as essential to our health as good oral hygiene and proper nutrition. Understanding household or kitchen table economics will stand them in good stead as they provide for their family, start a business or finance further education. The federal government is currently consulting Canadians in shaping the development of a national strategy

for financial literacy and we support this endeavour wholeheartedly.

Additionally, I encourage Yukon public schools and school councils to adopt financial literacy into their curriculum.

I wish all my colleagues a happy Financial Literacy Month.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I have for tabling yet another beautiful document published by the wildlife viewing program, entitled *A Common Guide to Yukon Mushrooms*. This was done in conjunction with the Forest Management branch of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I have two documents for tabling. The first is the annual report for 2013 of the Yukon Energy Corporation and the second is the 2013 annual report of the Yukon Development Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I have for tabling the new Yukon coroner's service pamphlet, entitled *Yukon coroner service speaks for the dead to protect the living*.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees? Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 7 — additional signatures received

Clerk: Mr. Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly, I have had the honour to review two petitions presented by the Leader of the Official Opposition on November 4, 2014. The first petition constituted a number of different petitions, one of which was originally presented to this Assembly on November 21, 2012. That petition, being Petition No. 7 of the First Session of the 33rd Legislative Assembly, was deemed read and received on November 22, 2012. Additional signatures were presented on December 3, 2012 and the government responded to Petition No. 7 on December 5, 2012.

The additional signatures presented yesterday by the Leader of the Official Opposition will be added to those already received for Petition No. 7. No further action is required with regard to this petition. The other petitions will be returned to the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Petition No. 18 — received

Clerk: The second petition, being Petition No. 18 of the First Session of the 33rd Legislative Assembly meets the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Speaker: Petition No. 18, accordingly, is deemed to be read and received. Pursuant to Standing Order 67, the Executive Council shall provide a response to a petition which

has been read and received within eight sitting days of its presentation.

Therefore, the Executive Council response to the Petition No. 18 shall be provided on or before Wednesday, November 19, 2014. This response date may change, subject to the decision of the House with regard to Motion No. 751, notice of which was given yesterday by the Government House Leader.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: As a matter of procedure, I would like to remind members that when they are presenting additional signatures to a petition already presented to the House, they are not to read the text of the petition, as that information is already in the possession of the House.

Are there any further petitions for presentation?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to encourage parents, teachers, as well as Yukon's community as a whole, to promote financial literacy and responsibility in Yukon's youth from an early age.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that Yukon's regulatory regimes are clear, consistent and competitive with other jurisdictions, while also providing for sustainable and environmentally friendly, responsible development of Yukon's resources.

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

THAT pursuant to Standing Order 60(1), Bill No. 78, *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, be reprinted and tabled in the Legislative Assembly in its reprinted form before the House proceeds with third reading and passage of the said bill.

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

THAT it is the opinion of this House that the Government of Canada's income-splitting proposal will disproportionately benefit high-income Yukoners, deter lower income spouses entering or re-entering the workforce and fail to provide any benefit to lone-parent households.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to consider an all-Canadian route through Inuvik to address the ongoing issue of Internet reliability.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Oil and gas development

Ms. Hanson: Yukoners know that this government does not listen. Yesterday we had another example when the Premier misunderstood a very simple question I asked about his government's communication with EFLO Energy. On January 31, EFLO Energy told the select committee on fracking that the majority of the gas in the Kotaneelee is shale and that hydraulic fracturing will be necessary to extract the gas. They also said that they — and I quote: “would like to develop the significant shale gas resources that we feel exist in southeast Yukon.” EFLO is clear that they need to frack to continue operations, and this government has a track record of sidestepping consultation and assessment processes.

The question the Premier refused to answer yesterday was — and I'll ask it again: Has this government given EFLO Energy any assurances that, regardless of the outcome of the select committee on fracking, EFLO can proceed with their business plan to frack in southeast Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Kent: What we witnessed in this House yesterday was the Leader of the Official Opposition trying to scare Yukoners, thinking that everything that we authorize on this side of the House will lead to some sort of hydraulic fracturing in the Yukon.

There are certainly two different issues at play here. The application that is before the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board right now clearly states — I would invite her to go to the online registry, look at the project description — that that project does not involve hydraulic fracturing.

We are awaiting the report from the select committee on hydraulic fracturing that was due in the spring session and then we granted an extension to that committee, a committee that includes three government members and three members from the opposition. Thankfully it doesn't include those members from the opposition who have held placards or played lead guitar or vocals at many of the anti-fracking rallies.

We need that committee to produce a report that we, as legislators, can consider. Again, an all-party committee — something that is a track record of the Yukon Party government, this one as well as previous Yukon Party governments — allowing important issues to be considered by all members of the Legislature.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, at no point did we indicate that EFLO's current YESAB application involves fracking. The Premier's and the minister's statements are simply not in line with the fact. What we are raising are matters of public record. EFLO has stated that their future viability in Yukon requires fracking, and this government has a track record of ignoring public consultation processes and the outcomes of the select committees of this Legislature.

There is no need for the government to get so defensive. They simply need to give Yukoners a straight answer and tell

them whether or not this government has given any assurances to EFLO that they will be able to frack in southeast Yukon.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I will remind the member opposite that the establishment of the select committee also included a halt — I guess I would call it — that there would be no permitting of hydraulic fracturing until the report of the select committee is presented. Of course there are considerable shale resources in the EFLO play and the Kotaneelee field, but the matter before YESA Board right now does not include accessing those shale resources. It's simply an application to go in and do work on existing wells and some other work.

All Yukoners can see that application. It is on the YESAB on-line registry. I invite the member opposite to go and review that.

These processes are in place so that the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board can produce a recommendation that the appropriate decision bodies can consider. That process is still underway with respect to this EFLO application. I should also mention that there is a Northern Cross application that is also currently before YESAB to do work in the Eagle Plains Basin.

Unlike the members opposite, we recognize that the oil and gas industry has a long history here in the Yukon. The first well was drilled in the late 1950s — 1957. We have received \$45 million in royalties — the Yukon government shared with First Nations over the years from those producing wells in the Kotaneelee fields. The oil and gas industry has a long and storied history here in the Yukon, and we hope it has a future as well.

Ms. Hanson: I guess another fact is useful then. The peak period for resources coming to this territory — oil and gas — were 1995 to 2002, and in most recent years it has been zero. One thing the Premier has been clear on — this government is clear — is that they are all in when it comes to oil and gas. They have made it clear that they will do almost anything to make Yukon competitive for these companies.

In a recent report, the B.C. Auditor General stated the province has already subsidized the oil and gas industry to the tune of \$1.25 billion. These extensive subsidies have already been given out, even though many of the projects are not fully operational, and now, despite the PC government bending over backward trying to satisfy the oil and gas industry, companies are postponing or pulling their projects entirely due to fluctuating prices.

We know that this government is modelling B.C.'s oil and gas regulatory regime. Does the Premier believe that Yukon should follow B.C.'s example and subsidize the oil and gas industry in order to be competitive?

Hon. Mr. Kent: When it comes to developing industries here in the territory, there are a number of industries that are very important and there are a number of industries that do get government assistance — the tourism industry, the mining industry, to name but a couple — and they are cornerstone industries here for the territory.

It's interesting to hear the Leader of the Official Opposition talk about the royalties. Of course, successive governments used those royalties. Successive Yukon Party,

NDP, Liberal — and the last 12 years of Yukon Party — governments used those royalties to spend on such lavish things as hiring teachers or hiring doctors or paying for nurses. Those are important contributions to our economy. We're able to deliver on the social programs and education and health care — things that are important to Yukoners — by utilizing those royalties.

The member opposite is correct; it has been a couple of years since the Kotaneelee wells have produced. Again, there are conventional targets there that EFLO is looking at, and we hope they are successful and that those wells can once again contribute to the royalties here in the territory that help us deliver on those strong commitments of education, health care and infrastructure for Yukoners.

Question re: *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*

Ms. White: I would like to take this House back to the winter of 2012, during that December day almost two years when this House passed a new *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* that, coupled with regulations, would address some concerns of both landlords and tenants on a number of issues. Fast-forward to this March, when the government completed a round of consultations on the regulations needed to be enacted so that the act that was passed in 2012 could come into force.

This is where the trail runs cold, Mr. Speaker, because we have not heard a word from government since that day. Landlords and tenants want to know: When will the necessary regulations be implemented so that the new *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* passed two years ago can finally come into force?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What the Member for Takhini-Kopper King may not be aware of is the good work that has been done in the Department of Community Services in establishing the Residential Tenancies Office and, in collaboration with other departments, conducting consultation this spring and giving thorough policy consideration to the important issues that were raised during that discussion and to the feedback from Yukoners. That work is progressing and I look forward to, in the not-too-distant future, being able to announce regulations, once they have been reviewed and approved by Cabinet.

Ms. White: The reality is that nothing has changed for landlords and tenants since that new act was passed in 2012. Staff have been hired and an office does exist, yet they can't provide the promised services because there are no regulations in place. Public consultation was critical for the process, but that process ended eight months ago. It has been nearly two years since the act was passed, as the government continues to drag its feet on implementing regulations that need to exist before the new act can come into effect. Nothing has changed for landlords and tenants.

When will government start making landlord-tenant relations a priority and finish what they started in 2012?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I would remind the member is that this legislation, in fact, has had a very thorough and involved process. It included the work of an all-party committee; it included the work that was then done by staff of

Community Services, in consultation on the act and, subsequently, on the regulations. There has also been work with other key departments, including Health and Social Services, to understand and very carefully consider the effects of any and all of the proposed elements of the regulations. We appreciate very much the public feedback that was received earlier this year. That feedback and policy options relating to it have been given thorough consideration and, as I indicated in my previous response, I look forward in the not-too-distant future to being able to announce the regulations, once Cabinet has considered and approved them.

Again I remind the member that this is replacing legislation that was 50 years old, and remind the member that there were three terms of NDP government that did absolutely nothing to modernize this legislation. We recognized the need to do it, unlike the NDP and the Liberals.

Ms. White: When we talk about housing in the Yukon, we're talking about a file that has been faced with chronic mismanagement by this government and, most recently, this minister. We continue to be faced with an affordable housing crisis in the territory —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, on a point of order.

Mr. Elias: The member from the New Democratic Party identified the minister as responsible for mismanagement of finances in this Assembly and I require an unqualified retraction of that statement and an apology to this House.

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

Ms. Stick: I heard from the member opposite; I haven't heard him refer to any standing order that this might have something to do with and I would suggest this is a dispute between members.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: It is a dispute between members.

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about housing in the Yukon, we're talking about a file that has been faced with chronic mismanagement by this government and this minister. We continue to be faced with an affordable housing crisis in the territory as millions of dollars earmarked by the federal government for affordable housing in 2006 still sits idle. Of course, we have the mutual frustrations of both landlords and tenants as they continue to wait for regulations. We know that this isn't about the shortcomings of the public service; they're doing their job. This is about the political will to develop the regulations needed to bring the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* into force.

Can the government give us a timeline for when the necessary regulations will be in place so that this multi-year process will finally see an end and give Yukon landlords and tenants the protection they both deserve?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It's really unfortunate the approach that the member takes, which is passion uninformed and untempered by reason. In fact, I would point out —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on a point of order.

Ms. White: Standing Order 19(i): "uses abusive or insulting language...in a context likely to create disorder." That, to me, was offensive.

Speaker: Government House Leader, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: On the point of order, I was criticizing the member's policy positions and statements. I don't believe it was contrary to Standing Order 19(i).

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: There is no point of order, to start with, but I can see that the tensions are getting a little high and people are getting frustrated on both sides. I will caution you and remind you to be careful of what you say because it will come back to you.

I believe the Minister of Community Services was next.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In conclusion, I would note, first of all, the member again was mistaken. The federal money to which she refers was not specifically earmarked for affordable housing. It was housing money made available to the Yukon, of which we actually provided the lion's share to Yukon First Nations to address their needs.

We've seen a significant increase in the Yukon population over the last number of years due to economic growth. That increase of thousands of people — I would remind members that, in 2003, the population of the Yukon stood at a mere 28,500, and we've seen a significant growth of the population to over 36,000 now. All those people need somewhere to live. Shortage of lots caused by decisions of a former municipal council in Whitehorse did create an issue and, as a result of that, the lots that have been made available in Whistle Bend have taken some time.

I know the members clearly have no interest in this subject, as evidenced by their heckling, but I would remind the members that, in fact, this government has taken action and made investments in lots — significant investments — over \$100 million of investments within Yukon Housing Corporation's portfolio since 2008.

Question re: F.H. Collins Secondary School reconstruction

Mr. Silver: I have a question about the new F.H. Collins Secondary School. When the government of Yukon decided to award the contract for construction of this school to an Alberta company, the minister said at that time — and I quote: "The final objective here was to tender a project that would create local jobs and promote economic activity." Local companies told me at the time that they were quite worried with the

decision to go with an outside contractor and that would probably result with very few local people getting hired. I did write the minister this fall to see if those concerns from those local companies had materialized.

Can the minister confirm that to date there have been only 29 Yukoners working on-site at the F.H. Collins replacement project?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member opposite for this question. I was waiting for this question. Of course the Yukon government is pleased with the construction progress on the new F.H. Collins School. I was through there a couple of days ago. Things are coming along greatly. It is an affordable design for a modern facility that meets LEED silver standards and our efficiency standards. Construction started earlier this year and is well underway — you can see that. The project is on budget and on track for completion in the fall of 2015. We're confident that we're going to build a world-class facility that meets the current and long-term needs of our school community in a fiscally responsible manner.

The member opposite asked me about the jobs — this project provides the community with an efficient and technologically ready facility to accommodate current and future teaching trends. Several local contractors are working there as we speak and so far the project has created up to 33 new jobs, of which 29 are Yukoners.

Mr. Silver: When I shared that number with one of the local unions they described it as absurdly low for a project of this size. We know that the total budget for this project is \$51 million. That includes millions of dollars for a design that was never used and then years of delay on top of that. We do know as well that promises to create local jobs have not necessarily been fulfilled.

The minister himself has admitted that only 29 local workers are at the F.H. Collins replacement project since the work began — as of the letter he sent me. We know, for example, that there will be no apprentice Yukon carpenters. We also know that a majority of the individuals who attended a job fair for this project in the spring have never been hired.

Does the Minister of Highways and Public Works think that creating only 29 jobs for Yukoners on a project of this magnitude is good fiscal management?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It is a little disappointing to hear the numbers from the member opposite. There are Yukoners working there. Our focus is to manage our capital projects responsibly, plan government space efficiently and maintain our buildings adequately. Managing and maintaining our buildings and budgets are priorities for this government. It's a balancing act and we are responsible for making sure that we use available funds in our most effective way and responsible way as possible. Sometimes this means making some difficult decisions. I know the member opposite would have loved to have seen the old school and wasn't happy with the decision we made, but that's the decision we made on this side.

We have over 12 capital projects underway in various stages of completion. We have successfully promoted economic activity here, kept our local suppliers and

contractors busy and created local jobs. We have much to be proud of with our capital project tendering.

This government continues to make the Yukon — through creating jobs — the best place in Canada to live, work, play and raise a family, and I'm pretty proud of that.

Mr. Silver: I totally agree. These numbers are disappointing. They're not my numbers; they're his numbers. The government didn't think that there was a Yukon company that was qualified as the general contractor for the F.H. Collins school project. That's why the tender was written to basically exclude local companies — or at least to target specific Outside companies.

The consequences of that decision are now finally being realized. There are very few jobs for Yukoners on this project. Instead, the Government of Yukon has spent \$50 million toward this project and they are putting Albertans and British Columbians and others to work. The profits from the job are heading outside the territory to general contractors and their headquarters in Alberta.

Can the minister tell the House how much of that \$50 million price tag has gone outside of the territory?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: You know, the Government of Yukon takes procurement very seriously. We are modernizing how we pick our goods and services to make this government's contracting procedures fair, consistent and accessible for all Yukon businesses. We are responding to the input we hear from our contractors and suppliers and we are simplifying our procurement processes so that it is easier to do business with this government. We are working on providing supplier development services to local businesses. There was some stuff going on in the fall when it comes to this.

We have 12 capital projects underway at various stages — Yukoners are working. I stated 29 of the 33 jobs — that is, 88 percent of the jobs — have Yukoners working there. This government continues to make the Yukon the best place to live, work, play and raise a family in Canada.

On this Veterans' Week, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank a veteran for the freedoms I have to stand in this Assembly and answer this question.

Question re: *Motor Vehicles Act* amendments

Ms. Moorcroft: On October 30, the Minister of Highways and Public Works said, "Helmets save lives and it only makes sense that helmet use is now legislated for ORV users and their passengers." Yet the amendments to the *Motor Vehicles Act* failed to ensure the safety of off-road vehicle drivers ages 16 and over, who will not be required to wear a helmet when they ride off a roadway. The Canadian Institute for Health Information and the University of Calgary studies reveal that young people, ages 15 to 19, are most at risk of ATV-related hospitalization and death. Wearing a helmet lowers the risk of head, neck and spine injuries.

Is the minister satisfied with his amendments, which do not require helmet use for 16-, 17-, 18- and 19-year olds, those at highest risk of injury and death from ATV accidents when they ride off-road?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: We have had much debate on this in the House within the last little while. The Yukon government is committed to taking care of the Yukon and the safety of all Yukoners. We know that Yukoners love to spend time outside enjoying what we have to offer in the Yukon. One of the most popular ways to do this, of course, is off-road vehicles — for recreation, for work, for hunting.

We want to make sure that Yukoners travelling around the territory on off-road vehicles are safe, and we are introducing these amendments to the *Motor Vehicles Act* in a balanced approach, ensuring safety, protecting our children and putting the responsibility for the personal safety in the hands of the adult riders.

Ms. Moorcroft: Last week, the Minister of Highways and Public Works said safety is the utmost concern for this minister, and he told the House — and I quote: "I fully agree with safe, safe, safe, safe, safe, but it's up to the individual, I believe" — in reference to off-road helmet use for all people ages 16 and over.

A University of Calgary study, entitled *Ten Years of All-Terrain Vehicle Injury, Mortality, and Healthcare Costs*, states that not wearing a helmet is significantly linked to an increased risk of death. All but one other jurisdiction in Canada, including Northwest Territories and Nunavut, have mandatory helmet laws.

Why is the minister ignoring evidence based on comprehensive research and 10 years of medical data that proves that helmet use saves lives?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: The amendments to the *Motor Vehicles Act* that we are speaking to require all youth under the age of 16 to wear helmets whenever and wherever they are travelling; anyone else who is travelling on our roads to wear a helmet and all drivers to hold a valid operator licence, vehicle registration and insurance wherever they are on the roadway or part of our maintained highways. These amendments deliver on this government's commitment to Yukoners to take action on the select committee's recommendations. I've said this before in the House and I'll say it again: There is a huge, large traditional lifestyle out there that we also want to respect.

Question re: Oil tank replacement

Ms. White: The integrity and safety of oil tanks has long been a concern of Yukoners, so it was timely to see the oil tank handbook released earlier this week by the Yukon Housing Corporation. In the announcement, the minister responsible correctly advised that leaking fuel oil tanks can be a significant and costly problem for property owners and the environment.

The news release also reminded property owners that underground fuel oil tanks can pose a fire and explosion hazard under certain conditions and may be prone to leaks.

The Yukon government owns and manages many properties with above- and below-ground oil tanks. Can the minister responsible for those tanks tell us how the government is identifying and prioritizing the upgrades and replacements of oil tanks it owns and operates?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: This Yukon government works hard to make sure that our buildings are clean, safe and warm for all Yukoners and for all Yukon students. We know how important it is for Yukoners and their students to be comfortable and secure when they are earning a living and while they're learning to pursue their goals.

Highways and Public Works identified 21 underground tanks as a priority to be replaced by 2015-16, with above-ground tanks that will be easier and less costly to monitor and repair, which in turn will enhance the safety of Yukoners and our environment. Staff is working on this.

Ms. White: When an above-ground oil tank is leaking, it's apparent, but when an underground tank that contains oil leaks, it can flow out into storm sumps and waterways, causing contamination of soil and water or even leach on to a neighbouring property.

We know some of the government's oil tanks have already caused environmental damage. The underground tank at Macaulay Lodge did not have an overflow protection or a vent whistle. The tank was accidentally overfilled and there was environmental damage from spill. The cleanup of the site included exposing the underground tank. Can the minister confirm that the old non-compliant tank has been replaced with a new above-ground tank with functional safety features at Macaulay Lodge?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: My staff are working hard so Yukoners can be assured that all our oil tanks and equipment and all YG facilities are being affected and managed in good working order and meet appropriate building codes.

In response to the member opposite's question, I don't have that answer for her right now, so I'll have to look into it.

Ms. White: Can the minister tell us how many oil tanks on Yukon government property do not meet safety compliances today?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Working within our finite budget to administer across a variety of competing interests, we are prioritizing the tanks that need to be looked at — decisions possible in the interest of all Yukoners to benefit all Yukoners. Like I've said, we've identified 21 underground tanks as a priority to be replaced by 2015-16. A lot of this other stuff is more operational, but my staff are working hard so that we can have safe, accessible buildings.

Question re: Off-road vehicle use

Mr. Tredger: Recently, a letter was published in local newspapers describing the events that led to the death of a horse due to the impact of off-road vehicles on trails. The outfitter's horse suffered a laceration on its abdomen after it traversed a section of the trail that had been turned into a swamp by extensive ORV use. This horse's death was a direct result of unrestricted ORV use on the land.

This may be an isolated incident, but government inaction and the actions of a few irresponsible ORV users causes more damage to Yukon's environment every day. Last spring, this government passed legislation that allows them to create regulations to protect sensitive areas from ORV use. Yet another season has passed and nothing has changed. When

will this government respond to identified concerns and protect sensitive areas of Yukon from unrestricted ORV use?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Just to correct the member opposite, the amendments to the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* were actually debated and passed last fall in this Legislative Assembly. Of course, we do need to develop the regulations. I believe the Minister of Environment spoke at third reading yesterday on the *Motor Vehicles Act* amendments that we are anticipating within the next few months — for those regulations to go out for public consultation. That will enable us to accomplish exactly what the member opposite was talking about, which is the protection of sensitive habitat areas from ORV use.

Mr. Tredger: This is not a new issue and it will continue to get worse as this government keeps dragging its feet. Yukoners have made it clear to this government that inaction is damaging the Yukon environment, yet there have been no steps taken to protect Yukon wilderness. The 2011 select committee recommended that the government have the ability to legislate and regulate the use of ORVs to protect the environment, fish and wildlife habitat. This House gave the government that authority last spring, yet no action has been taken. The minister has the ability to step in temporarily when it is in the public's interest to do so.

Will the minister use the authority afforded to him under the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* to restrict ORV use in highly sensitive and vulnerable areas?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With regard to the changes we made to the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* within the last year, it is worth noting that the direction we indicated we wanted to go — and what we have said repeatedly in this House — is that we want the ability to target specific areas in the Yukon that are threatened or have the potential to be threatened by irresponsible ATV use or ORV use.

The process by which we choose to establish to target those areas will be very important and is something we need to consult fairly widely on to ensure that we get it right. I know that is frustrating for members opposite because they like to see things move more quickly, but when we don't consult, they criticize us for not consulting enough. This is one of those issues that we need to get right. We need to ensure that important bodies like the Fish and Wildlife Management Board, renewable resource councils and First Nation governments are aware of and are comfortable with it before we move ahead.

When we undertake closures like the member is talking about, there are implications for First Nation users as well, and that is something we would need to consult First Nations on. Before we do anything, we want to make sure we have a clear process, a process that is understood by Yukoners and supported by the numerous UFA-mandated boards as well as Yukon First Nations.

Mr. Tredger: I was taken aback when this government passed the amendment and changes to the *Motor Vehicles Act* without undertaking consultation with First Nation governments. Last year the Minister of Environment said that the reason he would not use his authority under the

Environment Act to protect vulnerable areas was because he had not yet consulted with First Nations. Another season has passed with ever-increasing damage to the environment and nothing has changed.

Has this government consulted with First Nation governments about protecting sensitive and vulnerable areas from unregulated ORV use — and if not, why not?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: What I just said is that in order to target those specific areas to protect from either existing or future use, we will need to set up a process by which we identify those places. The member can try to talk over me and heckle me when I'm speaking, but he won't get a very good answer if he does that.

What's important is that we set up a process to identify those areas and to implement restrictions on ORV use in those specific areas. In order to identify those areas, we need to consult with First Nations and we need to consult with the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the renewable resources councils where appropriate.

Any time we undertake a restriction on First Nations' use of ATVs, they need to be consulted. Obviously, before we do anything like that, we would have to consult the respective First Nation. That's why we want a process set up to do that. We will go out later in the coming months with regard to the regulations pursuant to the new *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* to bring into force a process by which we can target specific areas in this territory for protection. That process, we hope, will be supported by First Nations, by the renewable resources councils, by the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and by other groups throughout the Yukon that want to see parts of this territory protected from irresponsible ORV use.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 740

Clerk: Motion No. 740, standing in the name of Mr. Silver.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support efforts to have the Klondike designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Mr. Silver: This motion represents an historic opportunity for the territory in many ways. It is my goal to capture them here this afternoon. Before I begin, however, I did want to talk a bit about the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, which has taken a leadership role in this community-building initiative, and recount a little bit of history.

Klondike — Tr'ondëk, as the First Nations refer to it — is one of the Earth's legendary places and, because of that, it

deserves UNESCO status. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in people occupied and lived off the bounty of this region for thousands of years. They were not isolated from exposure to Europeans or other cultures in those times; however, in less than one generation, the eon-old way of life did change.

As I have said, it was difficult for us to comprehend this transition. Today, virtually every square inch of the world has been mapped or monitored by satellites or aircraft, unmanned drones. Our parks, and now even our shopping malls, are being mapped, photographed and turned into huge virtual tours.

Soon there will be no place on earth that cannot be experienced through a smartphone screen. Contrast this to the 1870s — a time of canvas, horses and steam. Travel was hard and slow, making the Yukon a crazily remote and harsh place for southerners to explore. However, prospectors started moving inland here and, in the mid-1880s, small mining camps were starting to crop up on the Yukon valley. You can imagine Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in likely encountering a few prospecting strangers along the creek beds, around the woods, and then more. A fledgling trading culture started to develop, and the two cultures would in tandem shape the next 150 years of their region.

After Skookum Jim and George Carmacks discovered gold on August 16, 1896, the region would see a veritable flood of humanity. Between the summers of 1897 and 1898, the Klondike, Tr'ondëk, would see more than 30,000 people arrive. Within the space of a few summers, there were saloons, opera houses, hotels, newspapers, schools, libraries, gambling houses — all the trappings of a southern society sprung up in the region. Just like before, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in had carried out subsistence lifestyles.

While these stampeders adapted to this harsh, northern environment, the aboriginal people were adapting to this strange, jarring and often harsh new climate and culture. The miners and the aboriginal people of the Klondike valley, Tr'ondëk Klondike, started grappling with this new relationship and working out its terms.

Today, roughly 120 years later, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the rest of the community are still working out that relationship. It is a unique partnership, an accommodation of widely disparate cultures, and it deserves to be recognized and celebrated.

Karl Knutson is a great example. He is a young man who is now an international television star on the History Channel's *Yukon Gold*. His father is of European descent. His mother is First Nation. His family runs one of the largest placer miner operations in the Klondike. His mother and his sister are amazing artists; his father, a mining icon. I am sure that the importance of this designation is not lost on them, and it is not lost on the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in general. It recognizes this potential. They have taken a leadership role supporting UNESCO World Heritage designation, but it is not alone. This initiative is broadly supported throughout the Klondike. The First Nation's efforts are being supported by the Klondike Placer Miners' Association and the Klondike Visitors Association.

I am not saying that there aren't any unresolved issues here but, as they did with the gold rush, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the mining and the business communities are working together to celebrate and to shape the future of the region by collaborating on the UNESCO file.

To expand on that, there was a partnership formed many years ago that still exists today. It is based on the Athabaskan principle of having a formal obligation to all in the community, regardless of the background — a formal obligation, Mr. Speaker. Everybody I talked to who is living in that community now — whether they are from away or whether they are born and raised — believes in that principle.

I was born in a culture of giving the shirt off of your back for those members of your community. Up in the Klondike and in the Yukon in general, we all share this common goal and this understanding of the Athapaskan culture is what keeps a lot of us in the community. It is not lost on the placer miners either. There is never an event where somebody lost a house during a fire or some other atrocity in the community that the placer miners aren't the first ones to step up and give well past their means.

What is UNESCO? What we're talking about today is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Its stated goal is both lofty and laudable: to build peace in the minds of men and women. Part of its mandate is to recognize world heritage sites — places of physical or cultural significance in the world. The pyramids of Egypt are part of the UNESCO stable of sites. So are the Taj Mahal and the Persepolis in Iran. The Grand Canyon and Mount Canyon National Park are also on the list.

Canada has 17 world heritage sites, such as historic Old Quebec City, Kluane, Wrangle-St. Elias, Glacier Bay and Tatshenshini-Alsek parks, Nahanni National Park and Old Town Lunenburg.

Currently 177 nations of the 191 that belong to the UN have submitted potential additions to the world heritage site list. Nations must inventory their extraordinary cultural and natural properties to compile a tentative list. From this list, the country can nominate a place to add to the accepted list of heritage sites.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites and the World Conservation Union have forwarded applicable applications to the World Heritage Committee which evaluates that file. It meets once a year to review submissions and decide which will receive world heritage status.

Possible additions include the United States Petrified Forest National Park and Thomas Jefferson Building. The U.K. is promoting Darwin's Landscape Laboratory and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Russia wants the Kremlin recognized. There is a long list of places.

Canada started with a short list of 150 and carved it down to 11 of the most significant ones of the nation. Four of the sites have already received world heritage status and seven more remain. The Klondike is on this distinguished list. It has been on this list since 2004. Moreover, it deserves to be on this list.

The Yukon and Klondike rivers cut the Klondike. It features places like the Tro'chëk fishing camp, Moosehide, the early settlement of Forty Mile and unique Dawson City, and its surrounding tailing piles, ancient trails and the goldfields. These places and historic artifacts illustrate life before, during and after the Klondike Gold Rush of 1896 to 1898 — the last and most renowned of the world's greatest 19th century gold rushes. The region has inspired world-renowned literature and culture and was integral to the establishment of a unique Canada-First Nation self-governing model.

But the UNESCO designation is more than a brass plaque on a street corner. Throughout the world, world heritage status provides a focal point for travellers. It's a bucket list. The status brings international stature to the region. The world also benefits, learning about unusual places like the Klondike where aboriginal people and mining interests have worked together to build a diverse and unique community. This draws people to the place, boasting business opportunities through a whole range of sectors. This is particularly true of the Klondike, which would see a boost of traditional tourism businesses and non-traditional ones, such as the placer mining industry. It is not hard to imagine new cultural tourism opportunities mixing with historical tours of the dredge, followed by visits to mining operations — modern mining operations.

The package is already compelling, but the weight of the UNESCO designation would carry it to levels we currently can only dream of. The regional tourism industry identifies UNESCO designation as the prime opportunity for the sector going forward. UNESCO status relies on a keen understanding of a region's history and a willingness to protect it. Seemingly insignificant changes to a region can jeopardize the future status. Ongoing uncertainty about the Klondike's status could throttle economic development.

That is, it is better knowing that the Klondike status is a world heritage site, than not knowing, for everyone. If we obtain the status, it will then inform any regional plan. Further development will happen in harmony with the community's unique global reputation. However, in the absence of that status, uncertainty clouds the rules, inhibits decision-making and opens the community to unwanted conflict.

It is in the community's best interest — and the territory's best interest — to settle this issue. We have achieved world heritage site status; we can begin to develop a comprehensive regional plan that recognizes and takes advantage of its unique place in the world. In fact, developing a comprehensive plan in the long shadow of such significant international status, it could be argued, is a waste of time, effort and money because, if we toss away our claim to such status, development can proceed in a far different way than if we choose to accept it. Better to resolve the issue than to consider the indecision.

For my part, I have no doubt where my community stands on this issue. The Yukon is proud of its Klondike and First Nation heritage. It knows the value of the gold in the creeks and the culture that has flowed from and to the Klondike Valley for far too many reasons to state here.

It is unlikely that UNESCO status will bolster the pride and sense of place, but it will announce it to the rest of the world. That sense of community, which has been built on stoicism, independence, courage, toughness, generosity, acceptance and cooperation is as vibrant today as it was 100 years ago.

That spirit has captured the imagination of the world. The story of the Klondike and its gold rush has circled the globe inspiring art and commerce for generations. It is a story of mixed cultures, of widely different societies and how they learned to work together for the benefit of all. That story continues to unfold in this world heritage site designation. It is one that honours the territory and benefits the world. For those reasons alone, I hope this House stands united in supporting this motion.

World heritage sites are a tangible record of what's important to commit for all time to human memory. They are the world's legacy of important events, places and cultures. Anyone who spends a day or an entire lifetime in Dawson knows that there is something special about the Yukon and something special about the Klondike. The place feels authentic and still rings with the culture that arrived with the gold rush. The Yukon Order of Pioneers' one law — do as you would be done by — is still the number one rule in the town.

There is also an appreciation that the ethos brought to the area by the gold rush miners still exists today and is alive and well in the many family-run operations throughout the goldfields. As well, the First Nation people, while certainly impacted by the gold rush, are still flourishing — harvesting the same animals, living very much the same lives in the same place that they have lived for thousands and thousands and thousands of years. There are few cultures on this planet that can claim such an intense attachment to the land.

The impact of the Klondike Gold Rush still reverberates around the world and influences our music and popular culture. The nomination process will define why and what it is about this land and what happens — and continues to happen here — to be special. That is really the reward of this process — a better and well-defined understanding of what is important about the Klondike.

It is vital to recognize that world heritage status isn't about making a museum piece of your region. It is about recognizing that this is still a place that is very much alive with the First Nation heritage that spanned the millennia and the gold rush operations that are still taking place, which employ much of the same methods as employed during the gold rush.

Practically speaking, this opportunity comes at minimal cost, but guarantees years of free branding for the Klondike and for the Yukon. It will put us on the well-travelled trail of tourists seeking out places important to the world's history. The increased traffic will benefit not only the Klondike, but operators and businesses around the territory — including airlines, hotels, stores, transportation companies, car rental agencies — will all benefit from increased activity.

We know that there is still some convincing to do, Mr. Speaker. We also know that some miners are concerned about the impact that this might have on their operations. We know that we can work with them by including them in the process, which is absolutely happening. They are already playing an extremely important and large role in defining the buffer zone for this site. In fact, the only threat to our designation is if the miners actually stopped what they are doing.

What we also know is that, unless we're all on board, this designation will not happen. No group should be worried that this will be imposed upon them. If there are still grave concerns held by a group at the end of the process — and we don't think there will be, but if there is — then the designation will clearly not go ahead. UNESCO doesn't inflict world heritage status. It is either welcomed by all or it is not conferred.

Support from the Yukon government is extremely important and it's extremely timely. It is needed to further the process for defining what is special about the place, answering the questions that people have and building the necessary supports in Dawson.

Mr. Speaker, that being said, I look forward to hearing other members' thoughts on this issue and I look forward to the debate today.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for bringing this motion forward today. I look forward to listening to many discussions this afternoon.

In 2004, the Klondike, including the route from Skagway, was placed on Canada's tentative list of 11 potential world heritage sites. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in support the nomination and received CanNor funding for this initiative. An economic impact study and a cultural study have been completed. The cultural study identified themes, places and arguments that qualify under UNESCO criteria. Boundaries and management regimes are also being drafted.

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has submitted applications to CanNor for continued funding from 2014-15 through to 2016-17. An advisory committee has been formed with representatives from the Klondike Visitors Association, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Parks Canada, Yukon government and community members as well. The committee will oversee the process of pursuing the world heritage nomination for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.

The advisory committee wishes to ensure that stakeholders' concerns are known and are addressed. The advisory committee intends that the current land use regime within the site would be maintained, particularly the continued use of the area by the mining industry and by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in for traditional pursuits. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in website can be found at <http://tkwhstatus.ca> and that provides details about all aspects of the world heritage site nomination.

In preparing for today's debate, I reviewed a number of our platform commitments. We committed to marketing Destination: Yukon and I believe we have delivered. Part of that commitment is to work with industry, communities and

First Nations to promote the Yukon tourism brand that markets Yukon as an attractive year-round destination. We committed to enhanced marketing of Yukon as a quality travel destination through general awareness campaigns, especially in relation to Yukon's traditional markets in the U.S., Canada and Europe.

We also committed to continue to expand the Yukon economy by: promoting our economic mainstays such as mining — both hard rock and placer — tourism, oil and gas; promoting the diversification of Yukon's economy in other sectors, such as the arts and culture, film and sound, forestry, agriculture, wilderness tourism, outfitting, trapping, research and development, knowledge-based industries and value-added manufacturing; as well as maintaining Yukon's extremely favourable general tax environment that promotes investment in our territory.

That is what we committed to Yukoners to do, and we are working hard to fulfill those commitments. The UNESCO World Heritage Site designation is being advanced because the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the City of Dawson see this as an opportunity to make the Klondike a more attractive tourism destination.

In speaking to the UNESCO World Heritage Site designation, around the world there are 1,007 properties: 779 properties are on the list because of their cultural significance; 197 properties are on the list because of their natural significance; 31 properties have been designated because they are significant from both a cultural and a natural perspective.

In Canada, 17 properties have a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation. I won't list them all, but to give you a feel for the kind of places that are included, I would like to at least list a few of those properties. These include places of natural beauty like Nahanni National Park, Dinosaur Provincial Park, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, Wood Buffalo National Park, Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks, Gros Morne National Park, Joggins Fossil Cliffs, and Kluane, with associated sites in B.C. and in Alaska.

Others are places that reflect Canada's cultural development. Some examples of those would include L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site, Historic District of Old Québec, Old Town Lunenburg, Rideau Canal, and Red Bay Basque Whaling Station.

As noted, the one Yukon location that has UNESCO World Heritage Site designation is Kluane, with associated regions comprised of Wrangell-St. Elias, Glacier Bay and Tatshenshini-Alsek. These parks comprise an impressive complex of glaciers and high peaks on both sides of the border, between Yukon and British Columbia, on the Canadian side and the Alaska side of the United States. The spectacular natural landscapes are home to many grizzly bears, caribou and Dall sheep. The site contains the largest non-polar ice field in the world. I'm going to come back to the impact of that designation in a few minutes, Mr. Speaker.

Since then, Parks Canada has proposed a number of additional sites for inclusion on the tentative list. These proposed sites include locations in Alberta, Manitoba,

Ontario, the Manitoba-Ontario border, British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nunavut.

Yukon has two sites on the proposed list. One is in the very north, the Ivvavik/Vuntut/Herschel Island (Qikiqtaruk) location. Together Ivvavik National Park of Canada, Vuntut National Park of Canada and Herschel Island Territorial Park — Qikiqtaruk — comprise 15,500 square kilometres of wilderness on the Yukon coastal plain, Richardson Mountains, a portion of the Old Crow Flats wetlands, and an Arctic island in the Beaufort Sea.

Together these parks comprise a land rich in wildlife, in a variety of landscapes and in vegetation.

The remaining property is in the Klondike. In 2004 the Klondike, including the route from Skagway, was placed on Canada's tentative list of 11 potential world heritage sites. The property in question includes First Nation traditional territories, such as the Tro'chëk fishing camp, the Chilkoot Trail, the Klondike goldfields and the historic district of Dawson. It illustrates life before, during and after the Klondike Gold Rush of 1896 to 1898, the last and most renowned of the world's great nineteenth-century gold rushes. The impetus for this designation is to enhance the marketing potential for the Klondike.

I think it would be helpful for our deliberations to provide a bit of context around what we are doing to indeed market the Yukon.

In our platform, we committed to work with the Yukon Convention Bureau, industry and Yukon communities to further promote the Yukon as a choice destination for hosting meetings, conventions and sports event and we have delivered on that. We have also committed to utilize the tourism cooperative marketing fund to build partnerships with industry that improves marketing efforts for both government and industry, and we have delivered. Tourism Yukon has embarked on the largest tourism marketing initiative in Yukon's history. The Yukon government and CanNor will each invest \$1.8 million over two years for a total of \$3.6 million in an enhanced marketing program focusing primarily on the Canadian market. Clearly this initiative will benefit the Klondike.

The Yukon government supported *The Amazing Race Canada* with its 2014 episode in Yukon. The impact of this show was significant in raising the profile of Destination: Yukon. In fact our Twitter handle, @TravelYukon, received the most mention of any tourism organization and the Yukon episode was the second most tweeted in season 2.

2013 was a record-breaking year for border crossing statistics with an eight-percent increase in the number of private vehicles and motor coaches crossing the border into Yukon. The statistics show a seven-percent increase in the number of visitors from the U.S., a 17-percent increase in visitors from Canada and an eight-percent increase in visitors coming from overseas.

Year-to-date in 2014, this is January to August, Yukon's tourism industry continues to benefit from a five-percent increase in total arrivals and a 27-percent increase in international arrivals in the Erik Nielson Whitehorse

International Airport. We know many of these visitors made their way to the Klondike.

Dawson City has also benefited from a 21-percent increase in the number of combined travellers entering through the Little Gold border crossing and via international arrivals at the Dawson City airport, thanks to our partners Holland America and their 2014 tour programs in partnership with Air North, Yukon's airline.

Another successful tourism trade mission to Europe resulted in three new cooperative marketing agreements with German tourism operators and new ties with the Netherlands market that took place in September of this year.

Dawson City and the Klondike region, including the Dempster Highway, is really a key component in travel media and trade tours hosted by the Department of Tourism and Culture. Senior officials of the Department of Tourism and Culture regularly attend the Klondike Visitors Association board meetings. The marketing staff attend the KVA's marketing and events committee meetings whenever they possibly can. The department has a letter of agreement with KVA, committing to a number of joint marketing initiatives. The Dawson City visitor information centre is now open from May 1 until September 30, which supports six seasonal positions in that community. The department also hosted its first-ever tourism open house in Dawson City on May 9 and participated in the KVA's tourism roundup on October 23.

The Department of Tourism and Culture continues to promote Dawson and the Klondike as an iconic Yukon experience in its marketing materials, campaigns and in its media relations. Dawson City and the Klondike region is an important component to Yukon's marketing strategy. Over the past seven years, the Klondike region has received more than \$526,000 in support of marketing, trade and consumer show activities from the tourism cooperative marketing fund.

Yukon government uses two key surveys to assess the economic impact of tourism in Yukon that the Member for Klondike spoke about. We used the Yukon visitor tracking program that was conducted by the Department of Tourism and Culture and the Yukon business survey that was conducted by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics.

The Yukon visitor tracking program provides detailed information on visitors to Yukon including volume, trip characteristics, travel behaviours and expenditure information. The 2012 Yukon visitor tracking program estimates that annual expenditures by visitors to Yukon are \$180.5 million, and we know a fair amount of those dollars do get spent in the Klondike region.

The Yukon business survey provides information on Yukon businesses including revenue levels, employees, hiring, expected growth and so on. The 2013 Yukon business survey indicated that Yukon businesses attributed approximately \$250 million of their gross revenue in 2012 to tourism, and that tourism — gross domestic product accounted for 4.3 percent — Statistics Canada's estimated Yukon total GDP in 2012.

The Yukon visitor tracking program is one of five major visitor studies that the department has conducted over the past

27 years. Similar to past visitor-exit surveys, the department first began implementing major visitor studies in 1984 and then again in 1987, 1999, 2004 and 2012. These major visitor studies provide the base for demand-side estimates of visitor volume and spending in Yukon because they survey visitors directly.

Surveys, like the Yukon Bureau of Statistics' Yukon business survey, provide the base for supply-side estimates of revenue attributable to tourism, because they survey Yukon businesses that sell products and services to visitors. Combined, major visitor studies and Yukon business surveys provide a general understanding of the impact tourism has on Yukon's economy at a specific point in time.

In February, a Tourism Yukon delegation attended Canada Corroborée, Canada's premier travel trade event held in Australia each year. The delegation signed cooperative marketing agreements, discussed marketing opportunities with the Australia travel trade and met with Canada's Consul General. Australia is Yukon's second-largest overseas market. I know, in speaking with a number of the travel trade in Australia, they were very excited about the Yukon brand and they were very excited about opportunities up in the Klondike, in Dawson City.

During Winterlude in Ottawa in February, the department hosted and supported several events to promote Yukon as a travel destination and to introduce Air North, Yukon's Airline's new Ottawa service. The department also led a delegation of 15 tourism-related businesses to Vancouver to attend the first-ever Yukon-Japan tourism marketplace on January 28. Japan is Yukon's fastest-growing international market. I know a number of the people we met with in Vancouver came up to Yukon on a fam trip and travelled up to the member opposite's riding of Klondike.

We have been and we continue to move forward together to market Yukon and the Klondike.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that we hosted the Yukon tourism ministers meeting in September of 2013. That meeting was focused on Canada tourism competitiveness, competitiveness that the member opposite spoke about in his opening remarks. The ministers discussed improving visitor access, marketing and tourism attraction development. You will also recall in August 2013 that the Premier and I, and 16 Yukon tourism-industry representatives, travelled to Germany and England in the first-ever Premier-led tourism trade delegation from a Canadian province or territory.

There is an interesting contrast when you walk into the Hanover Zoo because you truly feel like you're in the Klondike region. You have probably seen pictures, but it is quite remarkable how they travelled from Germany to Yukon and then took a fam trip up to Dawson City to photograph and document some of the buildings in Dawson City so they could recreate them in the Hanover Zoo.

During that European trade mission, it resulted in an accord between Yukon government, Air North and Condor to bring more European travellers to Yukon. That accord supports an air-travel agreement that will allow seamless travel from Europe to Air North's entire flight network,

including Dawson City, providing increased travel options for European tourists and Yukoners.

The Premier and European partners signed several marketing agreements with German tour operators. The resulting marketing efforts targeted over three million people in German-speaking Europe.

The Government of Yukon and the State of Alaska renewed an agreement to market both regions as a tourism destination. The joint Yukon-Alaska cooperative marketing partnership began in 1989, delivering Canadian and American advertising campaigns to increase highway travel, including the Top of the World Highway from Alaska to Dawson City, and to promote summer adventure experiences in Alaska and Yukon.

The Member for Klondike will remember the designation by *Lonely Planet* as a top-10 must-visit travel destination for 2013. Subsequent global media coverage generated a tremendous amount of exposure for Yukon and the Klondike, and expanded awareness of our territory as a premier outdoor travel destination.

For reasons I have yet to understand, the Liberal leader thought it would be a good idea to fire off a letter to *Lonely Planet* to undermine that designation. We on this side of the House focused on moving forward. Together with our Member of Parliament, the Government of Canada, Parks Canada and industry, we found a solution that addressed everyone's needs.

Speaking of addressing needs, to further develop Yukon's shoulder tourism season and in response to requests from European tour operators, the season for visitor information centres and key campgrounds has been extended for the tourism shoulder seasons, including the visitor information centre in Dawson City.

Participating in tourism open houses in the Whitehorse, Kluane, Dawson and Watson Lake regions has helped to identify new opportunities for tourism growth and work together with communities to adapt to changes to our patterns across this territory.

Tourism Yukon's annual open house brings together businesses, tourism operators, cultural organizations and front-line staff every fall. The event includes information sessions on funding opportunities, new trends in marketing and one-on-one meetings with our Tourism branch staff, including the product development professionals.

Later this week, I'll be joining the MLA from Kluane to attend a tourism summit in Haines Junction.

Yukon government continued its support of museums and cultural and heritage centres in the summer of 2014 with \$1.5 million to the museum contribution program, as well as the special projects capital assistance program. The museum in Dawson City benefits from this great program.

I want to mention a related area that the member opposite spoke about. The palaeontology program continues to provide an enhanced presence in the Klondike goldfield. In cooperation with placer miners, seasonal staff, they acquired over 3,000 new fossils during the summer of 2014 for the Yukon palaeontology collection. Based on the abundance and

quality of fossils recovered, 2014 has been the most successful field season to date for the palaeontology program.

I mentioned the palaeontology program because I want to show that placer mining contributes not only to Yukon's economy but also to our scientific endeavours. Without a robust placer mining industry, many of these fossils would remain buried and undiscovered.

Because of the working partnership we have with the placer industry, Yukon is at the forefront of this area of palaeontology. It is truly a testament to the leadership of both the KPMA and our department officials.

Given the importance of the placer mining industry, not only to Yukon's economy but also to our scientific pursuits, I want to make sure that their concerns are acknowledged and that their concerns are addressed. Just a couple of months ago, I received a letter from the Klondike Placer Miners' Association. It reads: "The Klondike Placer Miners' Association is pleased to inform you that at the KPMA Annual General Meeting held in Dawson City, on Friday September 5, 2014 the following resolution was passed unanimously by the general membership.

"Be it resolved that:

"The KPMA supports the creation of a voluntary disclosure and reporting of mammoth ivory and the development of a certification program to assist miners and buyers in the legitimization of mammoth ivory ownership and the right to sell and export ivory. The KPMA would like to support and assist government in the development of this program and would like this program to be as efficient and easy to use as possible. The KPMA also thinks it is important that the government build and staff a paleontology museum and research centre in Dawson City to showcase ice age fossils and as an example of the cooperation between miners, researchers and the local community."

They conclude by saying that they look forward to working with the minister and staff to further this initiative.

That is a very interesting resolution, Mr. Speaker, and we look forward to continuing the relationship with the Klondike Placer Miners' Association.

The MLA for Kluane has shared with me some of his thoughts, and I think we would be well-served by perhaps his advice as we move forward. Talking to people who live in the Kluane area, I know many have expressed concern about how to realize the economic opportunities that one would expect from having a national park in the area. I think we would be well-served to learn from the Kluane experience.

At the end of the day we want a product — we want a product that works for everyone affected by the Klondike designation.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Leader of the Official Opposition will have her turn on her feet.

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in support the nomination and received CanNor funding for this initiative. Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has submitted applications to CanNor for continued funding from 2014-15 through to 2016-17. We know that there has been an economic impact study and a cultural study

that has been completed. The cultural study identified themes, places and arguments that qualify under the UNESCO criteria.

An advisory committee has been formed with representatives from the KVA, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Parks Canada, the Yukon government and community members. The committee will oversee this process of pursuing the world heritage nomination for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.

The advisory committee wishes to ensure that stakeholders' concerns are known and are addressed. The advisory committee intends that the current land use regime within the site would be maintained, particularly the continued use of the area by the mining industry and by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in for their traditional pursuits.

The Department of Tourism and Culture will continue to assist the community of Dawson and Parks Canada as they move toward the nomination of the Tr'ondëk Klondike for world heritage site designation. Officials from the department are currently working with their partners to determine the feasibility and the benefits of this particular nomination. As I said earlier, at the end of the day, we want a product that works for everyone affected by the Klondike designation. I thank the member opposite for bringing this motion forward today.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this motion forward. I know from the perspective of the Official Opposition, we appreciate the importance, not only of the motion urging the Government of Yukon to support the efforts to have the Klondike as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, but I think the words that the member spoke very ably captured a lot of the sentiment of the communities that make up the Klondike and the excitement and passion with which he expressed his views on the importance of this designation.

I think that we would echo that this is an historic opportunity for the Yukon. The whole discussion about how we would as a territory and as a country recognize this region of Canada in the context of world heritage sites has been going on for a very, very long time. I am mindful of some of that history, and I think that it is important, as the minister spoke earlier — that the list and the process of moving toward recognition by UNESCO and being able to be listed on a world heritage site list is an incredibly important one. I think that there are — although there was some reference made to the potential economic benefits, I think that they are — I'll come back to that in a bit because I think there is more than we have actually fathomed and have explored. I think there are some opportunities to look at the experiences elsewhere.

I wanted to point out that in preparing for this discussion this afternoon, I went and looked at conversations that have been going on for a very long time. Dawson City's very own Dan Davidson has been writing about this for a very long time.

I think it was the predecessor to what the current newspaper is there in Dawson — but in 1997 — the *Klondike Sun*? In that paper in July of 1997, he did a great article which proclaimed that, "Berton proposes Dawson for world heritage

site status." I think it is important, because you know Pierre Berton is often considered as a son of the Yukon, and is recognized around the world. People know his writing because it is accessible — it was basically a journalist writing novels and the fact that he wrote 60 books somewhat helps.

Davidson pointed out that although Berton's suggestion that the Klondike be recognized under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, it wasn't the first time that this has been discussed, but it was certainly the loudest and it came at a pretty significant time. It came, Mr. Speaker, the same time as the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in was concluding its final agreements. It came at a time when his body of work — over half of which was focused on the north — had received the Governor General's award for *Klondike: The Last Great Gold Rush, 1896-1899*.

The notion that there has been a high level of interest in the Klondike as a designated historic site is really important because it speaks to the living nature of the history of the Klondike. I think that is really important because when we look at the description of why the Klondike would be considered important for designation as a world heritage site — I believe previous speakers alluded to the fact that Parks Canada is the Canadian designated entity, or agency, to handle all the processes under the convention.

In that description, it says that the Klondike represents the most comprehensive and intact of all the cultural landscapes that illustrate life before, during and after the world's great 19th century gold rush.

That's really important because, if you think about it, many of the men and women — and particularly the men — who came up here during the Klondike Gold Rush had actually been in the Australian goldfields. If you were to go to Australia, go to Ballarat, you're not going to see the Ballarat designated — it's not designated as a world heritage site, for cultural reasons. There are reasons why, in terms of how it has changed and it's not a living, thriving activity with respect to the gold rush. It's a recreation; it's almost like Disneyland, in some ways. Maybe that's a bit too extreme, but it is not the original activity.

So when the description of the Klondike representing the most comprehensive and intact of all the cultural landscapes that illustrate life before, during and after the world's great 19th century gold rushes, and the history of the Klondike is written on the land, it said. First Nations' story cycles speak to thousands of years of surviving and thriving in a challenging environment and to a remarkable record of adaptation and innovation.

These stories also speak to a way of life that was radically and indelibly altered by a brief moment on the timeline of the region's human occupation — the Klondike Gold Rush and its aftermath. Early narratives are found throughout the traditional territories, including the Tro'chëk fishing camp and ancient trading routes such as the Chilkoot Trail. It's really interesting because we are talking about that connection. Later voices overlay the Chilkoot and the still-mined goldfields and the historic districts of Dawson and Skagway. Collectively, the places and the cultural accommodation that define the

Klondike cultural landscapes represent a story of extraordinary proportions and that is what you see echoed over and over again as you read through the work and the material that the community of Dawson has been developing over these last number of years — in particular, over the last half-dozen years, I would say — as more focused work has been done, acknowledging, of course, that some of the formative stuff goes back to 2004.

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in have been working on this designation and as the Member for Klondike said, this is truly a community-based initiative. There is no way of overstating the importance and the significance of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in taking a lead role in managing this project on behalf of a community-based committee. It's a reflection of the evolution and the maturity of the relationships among all citizens and governments in that community over the last 20 years in particular.

The community and the World Heritage Committee have set goals to research the cultural, social and economic impacts of the designation, and they want to bring the community together to share and to celebrate this shared story.

In a presentation that the Tr'ondëk Klondike committee gave to government members in the spring, they indicated the importance of recognizing that the UNESCO status brings international respect to places. They are considered so special that they transcend national boundaries to be appreciated by all humanity. There are so many of those that we can think of, and I know that people in this room have been to many of those around the world, whether it's the left bank of the Seine or the pyramids or Angkor Wat or Uluru. Those are all seen as significant beyond just that they happen to be nice places in those nice countries — or not necessarily nice countries, but they are significant historically and culturally. They transcend the national boundaries. There is something about each of these world sites that appeals and resonates within the human condition.

The fact of the matter is that to get on this list is no easy feat. There were more than 150 sites reviewed by experts, and 11 sites were shortlisted.

As that was happening, I used to chair the federal council of senior public servants. I can tell you we had regular updates from the Parks Canada people about the process — going to Paris and going to Geneva — to get the support for this designation. Now that it has been shortlisted, it is a really significant step. The importance now is what we do collectively to support it to get over the edge into that designation.

We are — and Klondike is — already poised for success. We are in an advantageous position to actually move forward. I think that that's incredibly important. The Tr'ondëk-Klondike future world heritage status has a really helpful and informative FAQ that I think all members of the House should refer to, because it does reiterate the importance of what a special place the Tr'ondëk-Klondike region is. It links it back to what I was saying earlier with respect to this new and changed relationship in the Klondike. It talks about how the notion of designation gained new momentum when it was

identified as a key priority in regional economic planning defined by the *Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement*.

According to the working committee, it is now the flagship of nine projects that are underway with the potential to benefit all of the community.

There are a number of questions that people ask, and we heard the minister opposite raise some questions. People worry about whether there are going to be new regulations and whether they are going to be restricted about doing this or that. The FAQ from the committee has responses to that and says: "World Heritage Site status is purely a commemorative recognition and does not bring any new legislation or regulations into effect. The community remains in control of any existing legislation such as the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act (YESAA) or future legislation relating to heritage management, land use or development."

It does mean some accountability to the World Heritage Committee to maintain the "outstanding universal value" and there have been some world heritage designated sites delisted. I noticed on the website this morning that Dresden, for example, was no longer on the list. I don't know what they did to get booted, but they obviously didn't maintain the key elements in terms of authenticity and integrity of the site.

The committee points out that proper protection and management actions, which are already specified in Dawson City's existing town bylaws and territorial legislation, are, they believe, adequate to address these.

In many ways, it's hard to limit the potential benefits that would come from designation as a world heritage site. It has been really interesting reading through the material that the committee has put forward and the community puts forward, because it is not — and I believe the Member for Klondike was pretty clear about this too — promising the world to anybody. It is being pretty realistic, and they are very clear that the benefits would depend on a variety of factors, namely one such as the efforts made by the community to take advantage of the status.

They do point out that one of the key benefits would be international recognition and, through that, an understanding of our shared history, our shared heritage, the story of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in way of life, the gold rush, Dawson, mining and how these living traditions contribute to world cultural heritage. It would also help fulfill the goals of the *Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement* and strengthen the entire community.

One of the benefits that is spoken to is the notion of a new kind of visitor who seeks out world heritage sites, with interest in indigenous, cultural and historic, as well as natural sites. I want to point out that these — on a world level, world heritage sites are niche. They attract a niche traveller. They are the real deal. They are not recreations; they're not the Hanover Zoo. This is Dawson, this is the real Klondike, and people will pay real money to come to them. People do pay real money to go to — whether it's Lamu on the east coast of Kenya, a Swahili town that's 12th century — or you can go to Machu Picchu. There are so many examples, and where we

seize the opportunity, we can seize more economic opportunities.

I wanted to just briefly point out that if you look at, over time, the differences and the economic benefits that have accrued to different parts of this country — and there have been economic analyses done on the world heritage designation. I will tell you that I first went to Gros Morne National Park and L'Anse aux Meadows in the 1970s, and when I compare that to going there in about 2010, significant economic opportunities have accrued to that region. When you look at Grande-Pré and look at the region around there — there is another economic study that has been done in terms of the economic benefits that have flowed to the Wolfville area, to Old Town Lunenburg, the south shore of Nova Scotia, the Historic District of Old Quebec and all of these.

Mr. Speaker, the first time I saw Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, I was doing my social work practicum on the Blood Reserve and one of the fellows I worked with said, “You know, there is an amazing buffalo jump here.” I went, “Right.” The first time I saw it, it was just a buffalo jump. It is an amazing international site where people come to spend money.

With opportunities come challenges, and the challenge that we have now is making sure that the Yukon government steps up to the plate and provides the necessary support. As the minister said, the federal government has indicated it will support this project over the next few years. What we need now and we need soon, in order to meet the timelines, is Yukon government to say that we too support this and we too want it to go ahead.

I'm looking very much forward to hearing from the government side that that's in fact what they're going to announce very shortly so that the work of this advisory committee can proceed and we can all enjoy and celebrate when it's actually designated, possibly as early as 2017 or 2018.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It's a pleasure to rise and speak to this motion today and I would like to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing it forward and thank the members who spoke before me. I appreciate the words from the Minister of Tourism and I appreciate the words from the Leader of the NDP about this and some of the overview she provided with regard to the information she put forward from the FAQs available from the UNESCO site and other information that she brought forward. The comments she made about other UNESCO World Heritage Sites were relevant and appreciated. I would like to thank her for that.

This particular project is certainly an important one, but it certainly isn't the only project we have underway in Dawson and in the Klondike region. Of course it is one piece of a myriad of activities and initiatives that are underway in the Klondike that is aimed at not only commemorating the heritage of the Klondike but improving the tourism outlook for the region and for the community. Also, there is a range of other initiatives in place to support community organizations that do the work that are necessary to promote the Dawson

City and Klondike region as a tourism location and to grow the economy in general in Dawson and the Klondike area.

The Department of Economic Development is certainly engaged in a number of ways and through a number of organizations to promote that kind of growth and those kinds of opportunities in Dawson and the Klondike. I wanted to mention a few of them just to provide some background to other initiatives that I think are able to synchronize with this particular one.

Through a range of funding opportunities in the Department of Economic Development, including the community development fund, the regional economic development fund, the strategic industries development fund and a number of other direct sponsorships or support mechanisms, the Department of Economic Development provides significant support to the community of Dawson.

One project that I did want to note is relevant to today's discussion because of the fact that it is a project that was done in collaboration with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, whose development corporation I believe is spearheading the work being done on the UNESCO site. Earlier this year I had a chance — on August 20 — to announce that the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation would receive \$57,173 to develop a network of single-track mountain bike trails on the Midnight Dome above Dawson City for use by local bike enthusiasts and to expand on adventure recreation and adventure tourism potential in the region. That funding was building on a previous funding opportunity provided in the 2013-14 year of \$74,310, which was provided for the first phase of that dome-divide trails project and the development of mountain bike trails in the Dawson area.

So that two-phase project is just one of a number of other initiatives that we have in place in Dawson with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in Dawson to support the development of the tourism potential and tourism projects available to the Dawson region. The reason I mention that is because I don't believe any of these projects that we do in any region in the Yukon should be viewed alone. I think we need to view them together and ensure that we have a coordinated approach to economic development in general but, more specifically, tourism promotion and encouragement in any given area.

To that extent, we've done a lot of work with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to ensure that we are coordinated in our approach to economic development in the region. Over the course of the last nine years, negotiations have been underway for the chapter 22 regional economic development plan for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. Those negotiations have come to a close and we are seeking an opportunity with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the federal minister of CanNor to identify the possibility of signing off on that plan in the near future.

Our partners in the plan, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, have indicated their satisfaction with the plan and are in the process of reviewing that plan through their formal processes.

The plan contains a number of initiatives — 30 initiatives — some of which are already underway and being funded by

the parties to the plan. There is a number of projects that have yet to begin, but will begin in the implementation of this plan.

I can't speak too much about the plan itself because it has not been signed off yet — I have to note that. It still has yet to be approved by the respective governments through their formal processes, but I would note that the Klondike UNESCO World Heritage Site is indeed one of the initiatives identified in that plan. The plan notes that the Klondike is on a shortlist of just nine Canadian sites being considered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, recognizing its outstanding universal value including an outstanding example of a landscape, which illustrates exceptional adaptation and innovation by First Nation people for thousands of years up to the present day in responding to a challenging environment.

The regional tourism industry identifies UNESCO designation as the primary opportunity for the sector going forward, but while the economic benefits may be significant, uncertainties remain a concern. The nomination has been discussed and studied locally for many years, but the Klondike has yet to be designated or considered for further planning. While resources from senior governments for the designation process are essential to pursue the strategy, it should be clearly led from the community level.

The community-based steering group, including Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the City of Dawson, that was established in 2009 should continue to carefully evaluate and consider the cultural, social and financial impacts that will be associated with pursuing and achieving UNESCO World Heritage Site status. This is a part of a larger economic vision for the region that is being worked on by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the Yukon government and the federal government through CanNor.

The Department of Economic Development has already provided support for this project in the first phase. The first phase was funded, I believe, last year with close to \$40,000 — I may be off on the exact number and I apologize if I am — but it was in the neighbourhood of \$35,000 or \$40,000 that was provided to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to advance phase 1 of this project. That first phase is now complete and the next phase is yet to come. The next phase is the development of an application dossier that would be submitted to UNESCO over the course of the next three or four years.

As I have indicated in the House previously in response to questions from the Member for Klondike, Economic Development has received an application for funding from the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Development Corporation for this second phase. I have to admit that until I had spoken with the Mayor of Dawson, I did not have a fulsome understanding of what that UNESCO development application dossier looked like. I really appreciated his informal yet comprehensive briefing on exactly what it entailed. That conversation and conversations that I have had since with a number of people, including the MLA for Klondike, have led me to believe that this is a very good project.

I think it is a very good concept for the area. There are some significant opportunities that could come from this, and I think that the concept is a good one. A lot of the information that the Leader of the Official Opposition brought forward

with regard to the potential economic benefits and the comparative analysis that she has done looking at a number of other sites throughout the world and throughout the country have brought her to believe that economic benefits are certainly there. From the work that the departments have done — both Tourism and Culture and Economic Development — it seems to be that there are certainly economic benefits that could be realized by that designation.

However, I did want to note — and the Member for Klondike did note this in his opening remarks to this motion — there is a lot more work to do. There are individuals and stakeholder groups that still need to be brought forward and provide their complete support. I think that's something that needs to be done and it needs to be done collaboratively, because if we want to be successful with this, we need to get all those stakeholder groups on board. The Member for Klondike was quite correct when he said that UNESCO certainly doesn't want to inflict heritage status on any region. They want to be welcomed and they want support from the region, not just one group, but all groups if possible. I think that there needs to be — obviously there needs to be some more work done to ensure that all those key stakeholder groups are brought on board.

I know that a lot of work has been done to date, through the working group or the steering committee — I may have the term wrong — to advance those discussions. That work has been, from what I can tell, quite excellent. It has involved the Klondike Visitors Association; it has involved the chambers of commerce, the Klondike Placer Miners' Association and many others. That, perhaps, is an excellent venue to articulate support.

In noting that, I did want to say that, for me personally, and as minister, I certainly support the concept of the designation and support moving forward with this project, but did want to note the caveat of my desire to see more explicit support from certain stakeholder groups throughout Dawson and from the Dawson people in general. I know that, from speaking to folks like the Member for Kluane and others in that area, there's always some reflection about heritage status in that area and whether or not it has been a net benefit or whether or not — if they could have gone back to the days when it was designated, if they would have done something different.

I took that sentiment very seriously. So I want to propose an amendment. It's one that I had discussed with the Member for Klondike. I know that he may not fully support the amendment in its entirety, but I think we've tried to come to some compromise on some of the language and I look forward to his comments on the actual amendment that's to come.

So I'll save my comments about the amendment itself, and I'll go ahead and make that amendment then, Mr. Speaker.

Amendment proposed

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I move:

THAT Motion No. 740 be amended by adding the following after the word "Site":

“once support from the City of Dawson and key stakeholders including the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce, the Klondike Visitors Association and the Klondike Placer Miners’ Association has been clearly demonstrated.”

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Economic Development:

THAT Motion No. 740 be amended by adding the following after the word “Site”:

“once support from the City of Dawson and key stakeholders including the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce, the Klondike Visitors Association and the Klondike Placer Miners’ Association has been clearly demonstrated.”

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I only have a few minutes left to speak to the amendment so I will be brief. I simply wanted to note that we do want to see these stakeholders listed here. I know there are more. This list is certainly not intended to be an exhaustive list, which is why the wording is such that “key stakeholders, including...” so it is not meant to exclude any one group or not recognize the exhaustive list of groups that should participate, but it is simply meant to recognize that in order for this project to be successful, it does need to have the support of at least these key stakeholder groups. We know that more work is needed to be done to achieve that.

From the sounds of what I have heard from the member, I think that the steering committee that is in place now could perhaps be the vehicle by which these stakeholder groups articulate their continued support. If that is indeed the case, I am sure that articulation of support would satisfy our concerns and satisfy the intent of this particular amendment.

It is fairly simple. We want to see support from stakeholder groups that will be affected by this designation. We don’t think that these groups have overarching concerns, but probably have specific concerns or questions that need to be answered still, and we want to make sure that all these groups and other groups that aren’t included are considered, and that the folks who have to deal with this designation on the ground in Dawson are supportive of it, and we look forward to seeing that articulation of support and moving forward.

I’ve indicated previously that I’m optimistic that the Department of Economic Development will be able to find a way to support this project financially. We’ve had some informal conversations with CanNor already, and I’m optimistic about this project going forward and I look forward to hearing the support from these stakeholder groups and moving forward with this project.

Mr. Silver: Just to rise for a bit here, to mention just a couple of things on the amendment — I wasn’t sure if the minister had mentioned this or not, but the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in is not listed on the amendment. We had a conversation earlier and I don’t think that the omission is on purpose with the minister. I think, with the stakeholder group being chaired and led by the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in, I believe he

is sincere in believing that, of course, they would be involved as the key stakeholders and they’re omission from this amendment is purely an oversight or based upon the fact that they are obviously in and they are obviously supportive. I’m sure that that’s exactly what he means.

We did have the conversation this morning and I do appreciate him coming over and talking, and I don’t see the need to have any of these listed. I don’t see the need for the amendment. I think that the original act itself stands for itself.

As I mentioned in my opening notes, if any one of these key stakeholders did not want this designation, I wouldn’t be standing here right now. I wouldn’t be on this floor. I know for a fact that if, in the future, anyone — if Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in, if the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce, if the Klondike Visitors Association or the Klondike Placer Miners’ Association — doesn’t want this to go forward, it’s not going to go forward.

Whereas I believe that the amendment should say whether or not they’re committing to the money and maybe a timeline on that money — that would be great to see. Right now, that last round of funding that the minister mentioned — it’s done, and right now the particular hire that Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in has done has finished. The money has finished up, so they are now taking money from other pockets to actually pay for this person’s salary moving forward.

With that being said, on the amendment — none of this stuff needs to be said other than whether or not the government is going to put the money forward or not. That is the most important thing for us, and I will be supporting the amendment because — I’m not going to mince words over this — the economy is suffering in the Yukon right now. Take a look at the new GDP numbers. This is good for the economy. The Minister of Economic Development should recognize that, and hopefully, once we get past this day, we’ll see money being injected to a guaranteed success story for not just the Klondike, but for the whole Yukon.

So with that being said, I will support this motion, and I hope to see the money coming soon, and that would be great. Then we could all stand up here in the Legislative Assembly and, in a united pursuit, say what a wonderful job this current government has done to make sure that the economy of the Yukon and the economy of the Klondike doesn’t suffer through these trying times.

I am in agreement with the amendment, because hopefully that means we will see some money flowing from the territorial government to the key stakeholders that are clearly wanting this to move forward and wanting to have that conversation move forward because, as I mentioned before, this is the time. There has never been a time like right now. Since 2004 we have been on this list, and it’s getting to a point where, if we don’t act, it’s just not going to happen. Wouldn’t it be horrible if the reason why we don’t act on this is a funding reason — because one of the groups that should be partnering with this doesn’t put forward money at a certain critical time, as opposed to — and the conversation moving into other issues that are unresolved, and letting the community of Dawson decide yes or no. That’s where the

decision should be made, not necessarily on amendments or not necessarily in this Chamber.

We would love to see the money flowing forth. I think I've said my piece. I'm supporting this amendment because I'm supporting the community of Klondike.

Ms. Hanson: I guess I'm very curious as to why this amendment is necessary at all. The amendment says that once support from the City of Dawson Chamber of Commerce, Klondike Visitors Association and Klondike Placer Miners' Association has been clearly demonstrated — what does the minister need in terms of clear support? If the minister would listen, I would read to him a letter dated September 15, 2014, from the Klondike Placer Miners' Association: "Re World Heritage Initiative. KPMA will participate with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in the process to develop the nomination package. We recognize that this could be a multi-year project and that the product must be endorsed by all stakeholders in the community at various stages as the work progresses.

"We appreciate the World Heritage Advisory Committee identifying 'placer mining' (historic and present) as a value which is an important part of the site designation and will work with the committee to try to realize the ideal of no new regulations resulting from the WHS designation for the placer industry.

"As KPMA would like to see this designation completed with the greatest efficiency of process, our preference..." — and they talk about having the KPMA and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in agree on a consultant with placer expertise to deal with the buffer zone working group that has already been identified and was established, I believe, in May — "...to participate and represent placer interests on the World Heritage Advisory Committee. The consultant would be responsible for representing Klondike Placer Miners' Association/industry concerns and reporting to board after meetings. This would ensure that the committee has someone dedicated to find viable solutions to issues that arise in the process of identifying sites and defining buffer zones and to set up the ultimate product as something that Klondike Placer Miners' Association would be willing to endorse.

"We look forward to working with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in on this initiative." It is signed by Stuart Schmidt, the president of the Klondike Placer Miners' Association.

What more does the minister want? What is necessary? What is necessary and what is missing is a commitment from the government.

What was the other group that we needed to have? We have Parks Canada. We have TIAY.

Klondike Visitors Association — "Re: UNESCO World Heritage Nomination. Please accept this letter as confirmation of Klondike Visitors Association's (KVA) continuing involvement in and enthusiastic support for the UNESCO World Heritage nomination project.

"World heritage designation of the Tr'ondëk-Klondike Region — based on recognition of our unique heritage, including the shared story of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Dawson and the Klondike Gold Rush, will have many benefits for

Dawson City and Yukon. Designation will strengthen and focus community pride and it will sustain and validate stakeholder investment to safeguard this special place in the world.

"The globally recognized UNESCO 'brand' will also expand national and international visitor awareness and interest and add to the local and regional tourism economy, providing jobs and business opportunities. This will contribute to the well-being of Dawson and have positive social, cultural and economic impacts for the whole of Yukon."

The Dawson City Chamber of Commerce — the Minister of Economic Development is clearly interested in this one, I know, because it is on his list.

To the person in charge of the work for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in — I don't want to name their names because I don't think it's appropriate in the Legislative Assembly: "Re: World heritage Nomination. On behalf of the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, please accept this letter as an indication of our support for the world heritage nomination project. A world heritage designation for the Tr'ondëk Klondike region would have many benefits for community. One of those benefits is the international recognition and understanding of our heritage — the shared story of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Dawson, gold rush and mining.

"A UNESCO designation would unify community pride in hosting and safeguarding one of the world's special places. It would also attract a new kind of visitor, help sustain the local tourism economy and provide jobs and business opportunities. This would contribute to the well-being of Dawson and have positive social, cultural and economic impacts for the whole Yukon. Kind regards," from the manager of the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce."

City of Dawson — I think that was the other one that the minister was looking for letters of support from. "Re: World heritage nomination project Strategic Industries development fund application" — this is their support letter. "Please accept this letter as confirmation of the City of Dawson's continued support for the UNESCO World Heritage nomination project. As part of Dawson's official community plan, council established long-term goals that we feel will ensure the future well-being of our community. Designation will contribute greatly to our community achieving these goals, as listed below: enhance the financial sustainability of the municipality over the long term; celebrate, support and promote Dawson as the cultural capital of the Yukon; protect and celebrate Dawson's heritage as a 'living historical community' while at the same time allowing the community to evolve and prosper into the future.

"In addition to contributing to the well-being of our community, designation will also have many positive social, cultural and economic impacts for the whole Yukon. We are extremely delighted to support this project and invite your organization to do the same. Please feel free to contact me if you need any more information."

Mr. Speaker, I think the minister would be well-advised to either withdraw that amendment or to apologize to the

committee that has been working so diligently for the last 10 years.

The minister responsible for heritage and Tourism and Culture is well aware of this work that has been done. On April 24, the minister responsible had a presentation given to him indicating that a request for funding would be coming for support. On May 9, the minister and the Premier met with the mayor and the Chief of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, so now they're asking the mayor to say that he supports it? The mayor wrote that he supports it. The Klondike Placer Miners' Association wrote that they support it.

I don't understand why this government doesn't trust the community that has been working together — the First Nation community and all of the community stakeholders. They have said so; they have demonstrated such. Canada has been prepared to work with them and has indicated they are waiting for the Yukon government to get on board. I think it's quite shameful and more shameful that when they talk about the support, they don't recognize that this whole proposal is coming and repeatedly being stated that this is a shared initiative with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the people of the Klondike — all people of the Klondike.

The city has been an integral partner — all of these community organizations. If the minister actually read any of those advisory committee minutes, he would see how integrated this initiative is. I find it really hard to fathom what the intent of this amendment is and what effect it has, other than to insult the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in because of their refusal to put them as parties to this — because they would be talking about support from the City of Dawson or where is the support from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in? You have evidence of this in written correspondence — the most recent is September — going back to May. If the government was serious about this, they would have been aware of that support.

What I'm hearing from them is that they don't trust the community actually knows how to work together. This is not something that is being driven from the outside, Mr. Speaker. This is something that comes from this community. That's the whole notion of the unique culture. This is the living culture of this community. They are demonstrating how they are working together and we should be celebrating that and supporting it, not second-guessing them. This is a second-guessing gesture of the worst kind.

Mr. Elias: I stand in support of the motion as amended.

Speaker: Would you like to speak to the amendment?

Mr. Elias: Yes. This UNESCO World Heritage Site recognition is also near and dear to my constituents. We have worked in Old Crow to get the Vuntut Gwitchin national park, and we have worked with the Inuvialuit to get Ivvavik National Park. We have worked with the territorial government to get on the shortlist to become a UNESCO site. In those discussions — of which I was a part of before my time as an MLA, so it has been some time — it wasn't from an economic standpoint. It was from an environmental standpoint in terms of how can we convince the most

powerful government in the world — the United States — to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain from industrial intrusion, which is the calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd. That is where we are coming from.

Another level of designation that supports Yukon — I'm all in. I want to thank the Member for Klondike for representing his community and doing his due diligence.

This is the kind of thing that affects the day-to-day lives of the restaurant owners, the airlines, the bed and breakfasts and the people of —

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order please. I would ask the member to tie his comments to the amendment. Members will have an opportunity to speak to the motion, or the motion as amended, after we vote on the amendment. It's the inclusion of the amendment, of these extra words.

Mr. Elias: I'm getting to that, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Okay. I ask you to tie it together for me please.

Mr. Elias: As far as the amendment from the Minister of Environment and Economic Development, what's wrong with ensuring on the Assembly floor that all of the organizations mentioned are in consensus here? That's what the amendment is talking about. So, going back to schedule A under chapter 10 of the *Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement* — and I don't know about the member's Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation final agreements; if they have a special schedule, I'm not aware of it. But under schedule A, our UNESCO site has been talked about and has been agreed upon by all our citizens, and that's what we're trying to accomplish here with the amendment with the Member for Copperbelt North.

I think we are getting to some common ground here, and I think that it would send a really good message because we have, I think, two UNESCO sites in the Yukon that are designated to become world-recognized heritage sites. I think that our words here today would support that recognition.

The economic development in Dawson is absolutely on the first order of business for the Member for Klondike and the government as well. I think that if we collectively come to an agreement on this issue, it would be great for not just Dawson, but Yukoners alike. I want to quote from Schedule A from the Vuntut National Park objectives, because I think it bodes well for the battle of the Member for Klondike, the citizens of Dawson, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and all the organizations in his riding. Under chapter 10, Schedule A, 1.3, it says: "To protect for all time a representative natural area of national significance in the Northern Yukon Natural Region, including representative portions of the Old Crow Flats wetlands and the surrounding foothills which contain important waterfowl habitat, critical parts of the Porcupine Caribou range, and archaeological and palaeontological resources of international significance". That's protected under the Constitution of Canada.

So, as a member from Vuntut Gwitchin, when we talk about a UNESCO site — I know full well what's being debated here today and I support the Member for Copperbelt North that we need assurances on the floor of the House that we have confidence moving forward. I stand here today in support of the amendment.

Ms. McLeod: I want to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing the motion forward for discussion today. It's —

Speaker: We're talking about the amendment.

Ms. McLeod: I know.

Speaker: Okay.

Ms. McLeod: I heard the Leader of the Official Opposition talk about lack of Yukon government support for this initiative. I've heard all manner of indicators that the Yukon government is supporting this process, so it's a bit of a — I don't quite understand where that is all coming from because clearly there's a lot of money changing hands.

I can certainly see why the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in are pushing forward this motion, but it's not clear to me that all stakeholders are on board. I know that the Leader of the Official Opposition would like to assure us that indeed they are, but I personally don't know that.

I must support this amendment so that we can ensure all residents and business owners can make an informed decision that will affect the region for the future. When we look at the list of sites, many of these are, straight up, called parks. I don't know if this will be called a park, but I think that, at the end of the day, that's what it represents. I don't know personally what the area involved is. I have seen a reference to this meeting up with an area in Alaska. However, the Alaskans have not moved their application forward at this time.

That's it, Mr. Speaker. I support this amendment.

Ms. Stick: It is on the amendment. I have for tabling a letter of support from the Klondike Placer Miners' Association, dated September 15, 2014, to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. I also have for tabling a letter from the Klondike Visitors Association of support on the UNESCO World Heritage nomination that is dated May 2, 2014. I also have a letter from the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce, dated May 3, 2014, in support of the world heritage nomination. It seems the letter I don't have is the one from the City of Dawson — someone will table that.

These are three letters that support — and are key stakeholders who are mentioned in this.

I also have a letter dated May 5, 2014, from the Dawson City Museum and Historical Society supporting this UNESCO World Heritage nomination, and one from the City of Dawson, dated May 15, 2014, supporting the UNESCO nomination. Every entity that has been named in this amendment to the motion has already indicated their full support in writing on the world heritage nomination project. It makes this amendment kind of null and void because it has already happened. The support has been offered; it's there in

writing; it's there for everyone to see. I don't believe this amendment to the motion is actually necessary when the evidence already exists.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In rising in support of the amendment to the motion tabled by my colleague, the Minister of Environment and Economic Development, I'm somewhat puzzled at why the Leader of the NDP was professing either outrage or feigned outrage at this amendment being brought forward. Let me read the motion as it will read if the amendment passes. The motion after amendment: "...this House urges the Government of Yukon to support efforts to have the Klondike designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site once support from the City of Dawson and key stakeholders, including the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce, the Klondike Visitors Association and the Klondike Placer Miners' Association has been clearly demonstrated."

Mr. Speaker, what is their problem with that? If they are arguing that support has already been clearly demonstrated in their view, then what is the problem with this specific mention?

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, we hear the perpetual heckling from the Leader of the Official Opposition, NDP. I would point out here that the amendment brought forward by my colleague is simply about specifically reiterating the importance of ensuring that support is there from the City of Dawson and key stakeholders.

As has been mentioned earlier, the reason that I did not mention Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation is that our understanding is they were taking the lead on this project, but if a member wishes to make an amendment to include a specific reference to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, we would certainly have no trouble supporting that. We believe that for UNESCO World Heritage Site status to be sought, it is important to have that clear support. We want to ensure that —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, again we hear the lack of respect that the Leader of the NDP has for the importance of these stakeholders by her off-mic comments. I would remind the member that the Klondike Placer Miners' Association — the Yukon placer mining sector — has been an important part of the Yukon economy since before the Yukon was a territory. Were it not for the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898, we would probably never have become our own distinct territory and certainly not become a territory when we did.

Again, the motion — if the amendment passes, would reiterate the importance of all the stakeholders that have been specifically mentioned, and it does mention "including." It is not intended to ignore the importance of public support for this, but on this side of the House, we believe that having the Klondike designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site definitely has potential benefits for the territory and for the Klondike region, and that the only question mark in that is ensuring that everyone understands the details of what that designation would mean, that there is a clear understanding of

whether there would be any unforeseen impacts or restrictions on the ability to make local decisions, both within the City of Dawson and within the territorial government.

At this point in time, to the best of my knowledge, there do not appear to be those restrictions from that designation that would affect local decision-making. But again, I wish more Yukoners were here in the gallery to see the display of lack of respect from the NDP for the stakeholders that we're proposing, adding to this motion. This government is again recognizing and acknowledging the work that has gone on, and the motion, if the amendment passes, would simply read that this House urges the Government of Yukon to support efforts to have the Klondike designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site once support from the City of Dawson and key stakeholders, including the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce, the Klondike Visitors Association and the Klondike Placer Miners' Association, has been clearly demonstrated.

So what is the NDP's problem?

I appreciate the amendment that has been brought forward. I think it strengthens the motion and I commend my colleague for bringing this amendment forward to ensure that this motion is strengthened and broadened by specifically mentioning some of the key groups that need to be on board for this project to be successful, for the Klondike to actually get the world heritage site designation from UNESCO approved — because, as the tabler of the motion noted, his understanding — and mine — is that UNESCO is not interested in giving out these world heritage designations if there is not clear local support. If a major group or major segment of the economy was not on board with it then that would likely result in being unsuccessful.

This amendment to the motion is simply about acknowledging that, and specifically recognizing and affirming the importance of the City of Dawson and every one of the stakeholder groups mentioned. I know that I myself have had conversations with the Mayor of Dawson regarding this and I appreciate the explanation that he has provided. We do very much appreciate the work that has been done through all who have been involved in working on this project.

At this point in time, I'm not aware of any issues that would appear to be unresolvable while moving forward to seek the UNESCO World Heritage Site status but we in the Yukon government feel that it is important to specifically reference and affirm the importance of the City of Dawson, the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce, the Klondike Visitors Association and the Klondike Placer Miners' Association in this motion.

As I mentioned, because we understood Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to be the lead, they were not specifically mentioned in the amendment, but should any member feel that the motion should be specifically amended or subamended to reference them, I'm sure that we would support any reasonable, subsequent amendment that gave specific reference to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, who is a very key part of this entire process and project.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I commend this amendment and thank the minister for bringing it forward and look forward to seeing this project proceed and seeing continued work by all involved, including Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, City of Dawson and key stakeholders, including the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce, the Klondike Visitors Association and the Klondike Placer Miners' Association.

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

Amendment to Motion No. 740 agreed to

Speaker: The Minister of Highways and Public Works, on the main motion as amended.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I do thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this motion forward. Whenever we talk about UNESCO, Parks Canada or anything to do with tourism or heritage — local cultural heritage — it's near and dear to my heart. I was in the tourism industry for many years.

I just want to read you a short note from the editors of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* — Kluane National Park and Reserve of Canada: Vast mountain wilderness with extensive ice fields in southwestern Yukon, northwestern Canada. The park is located about 100 miles west of Whitehorse. It borders Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve in Alaska, U.S., to the west and southwest and Tatshenshini-Alsek Wilderness Provincial Park in British Columbia to the southeast.

Established as a game reserve in 1942, the area became a national park and reserve in 1972 and was designated part of a regional UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979. The park has an area of 8,487 square miles, which is dominated by two northwest-southeast-trending parallel mountain systems. The St. Elias Mountains, in the southwest, reach an elevation of over 19,000 feet at Mount Logan, the highest point in Canada and the second-highest peak in North America, in the southwestern corner of the park. Those mountains accommodate one of the largest nonpolar ice field systems in the world to include the Steele, Kaskawulsh and Lowell glaciers. The St. Elias Mountains are separated from the Kluane range of mountains to the northeast by the valleys and plateaus of the Duke Depression. The Kluane range, with peaks averaging more than 6,600 feet in height, is more densely vegetated and is inhabited by more wildlife than much of the rest of the park and is accessible on its eastern slopes from the Alaska Highway.

So there's a little history of how we got our UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979. We started off with a game reserve in 1942 and then we became a national park and reserve in 1972. I just wanted to speak a little bit to how we got started and how UNESCO plays into this.

I do have a caution. I'm glad the member put the motion forward, but I'm sure glad for the amendment too because I think it's key to moving forward. Especially because — I was looking through an article on Wednesday, August 7, 2013 in the *Yukon News* where the Member for Klondike had stated,

“However, the community has been divided on whether or not they welcome world heritage designation ...” the member said. “The plan would help educate ...” — and this is when he’s talking about moving forward — “... the public on the benefits of being a world heritage site...” which is awesome, but including all the key stakeholders and making sure is very key.

I was going to start off talking a little bit about my grandfather, who sat with Parks Canada in 1969, 1970 and 1971, when they were going to bring in a national park. We weren’t a municipality; we were a local improvement district in the day. A little later in the future of MLAs, Mr. Bill Brewster — my grandmother was also an MLA — but Mr. Bill Brewster had some great reservations a few years later about the promises made but the debt unpaid. My grandfather always told me — a few years before he passed away, he said to me, you know, in hindsight, when we looked at it, they promised a Banff and a Jasper and told us about economic diversity and everything else. I should have told them when they asked me where I wanted the border — because they asked him — I should have said, the peaks of all those mountains, so we can still have access to them out front.

Why do I bring this up? I bring it up because our tourism industry in Kluane is — the majority of the tourism people who come there — the greater majority are senior citizens, retired people and those people travelling back and forth — some of them are military folks — but access into the national park has always been an issue. There’s a tourism summit coming up this Friday — I’ll be going to it — and I know there are a couple of businesses — the ones that aren’t in Vegas playing hockey, which disappoints me — there are a few businesses that would like to see a little bit more access into the national park and they’re a little bit disappointed with it.

We throw in UNESCO World Heritage Site, which came in 1979, tack something else on to there — so I decided: Are we to blame UNESCO? Are we to blame the national park? Are we to blame anybody for not having a store right now? No, it is just the way the times are. I am happy to see — after I got elected — I am pushing for tourism summits, I am pushing for economic development, and I am happy to see there is a store about to open. I am talking to all the right people and I am in the government trying to help.

I have picked up something this morning when we were going to talk about it, and there is a news story from July 4, 2008 and this is something that — the title of it says — “Put national world heritage sites off limits for mining and oil exploration.” This is from the International Union for Conservation of Nature. It says in there that more than one-quarter of national world heritage sites are under pressure by existing or future mineral extraction. For this reason, this organization is calling on the private sector, state-run companies and governments themselves to adopt and enforce a “no-go” principle, meaning that no mining and/or mineral, oil exploration and production can be carried out in a world heritage site.

Saying that, Mr. Speaker — I am not saying that there is a big push anywhere for this — I am just cautioning the member opposite who brought the motion forward and all those people up there to think 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 years down the road — or 100 years down the road.

There is another spot not far from here and February 2013 — this is a UNESCO report card for recommendations on the Flathead River Valley that is in British Columbia. This is back in 2013. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee recommended establishing a single conservation wildlife management plan for the Transboundary Flathead. The Flathead has a great concentration of grizzly bears and I can understand why they are pushing for this, but some of the people who are signed on — who did the UNESCO report card — are the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Headwaters Montana, National Parks Conservation Association, Sierra Club BC, Wildsight, Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative — and it says taking steps to minimize barriers to wildlife connectivity, including the long-term moratorium on further mining.

I don’t want to sound like a downer on this by any means, but all those stakeholders — and I did write this down — all those stakeholders that are playing key to this — just to make sure when we’re all together on something — and I know the Member for Klondike has worked really hard on this file and I commend him for this — that everybody understands what you sign off on, you get. Make sure you set that up so you have a long-term diverse economy when it comes to culture, when it comes to mining, when it comes to Gerties — which is a great place, and I see we have not much longer and my card expires and I’ll have to get a new one for next year. I’ll be back.

I just caution them on that. It’s a lot easier up front to set yourself up and make sure that things are right for the future generations, not to try and recover from things that were imposed upon you.

In that I do commend this motion. I thank the Member for Klondike for bringing it forward. I support it as amended, of course. Anything to do with tourism I do support. I believe in a diverse economy. I believe that Yukoners need jobs — and not just in the mining industry, but they need jobs in the tourism industry. I commend this motion to the House.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you to the Member for Klondike for the original motion as well as the Minister of Environment and Economic Development for the proposed amendment that was put forward.

I’m not going to speak for too long about this, other than to again try to — I guess the important thing for me is, although this is a file that has the potential to affect placer and quartz mining activities in the Klondike region — perhaps there may be downstream effects, and I think that is something that we certainly have to be mindful of. Not only does — as others have mentioned — the placer industry have a long and storied history in the Klondike region but it is an active and important contributor, today and going forward, for the economy of the Klondike region.

I think, with that, it is important for me to gain a better understanding of what exactly this designation is and what it is looking for. I know that the mayor of Dawson City and the MLA for Klondike have spoken with a number of my colleagues about this, including the Minister of Economic Development, and I certainly want to be active and reach out to the mayor and the MLA and perhaps gain a better understanding myself of exactly what the implications of this may be.

I believe that the amendment that was moved certainly strengthens the motion in that it identifies those key stakeholders as well as the municipal government — as the Minister of Community Services mentioned — the proponent being the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in — they were not omitted, I believe, from the amendment that was put forward by the minister, but I guess it was implied, given the fact that they are the proponent for this project moving forward. Again, these other key stakeholders that are identified: the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce, KVA, KPMA, and others — I think it shows them that we certainly want to make sure that we are interested in their input.

I know a number of letters were tabled from the Member for Riverdale South with respect to support for this project, moving forward, from those organizations. Again, as a motion goes forward, especially if this amended motion is agreed to unanimously, which I expect — I'm hopeful — that it is, once it comes to vote later on this afternoon, that we send that strong message to the community of Dawson that their involvement, the involvement of these organizations, is critical to the success of this project.

I know the original work goes back, I believe, to 2004, and then from what I understand, there was a bit of a hiatus in the process going forward. Obviously it has been picked up again by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and is gaining the support of these community organizations.

I think, as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, ensuring that not only the active placer fields that are in that area can continue to operate under this designation — I think the Leader of the Official Opposition mentioned one designated in her remarks where it was removed. I don't think it's in anybody's interest to get in some sort of a squabble with this. If at some point in the future — and again, this is hypothetical — if at some point in the future, some project or projects were not allowed to proceed, or were threatened with the designation being lifted or removed, such as what — I think it was Dresden; I think that's what the Leader of the Official Opposition referenced as the one that had the designation removed.

I think we certainly want to look beyond the end of our noses on this and ensure that the long-term viability of those resource extraction industries that exist in the Klondike region is maintained and that the important tourism opportunities that come with this type of a designation are also maintained.

I know other members have mentioned some of the projects around the world that currently hold this designation. Of course Kluane/Wrangell-St. Elias parks as well as Nahanni National Park are two that are quite familiar to Yukoners. I

think it's an extremely exciting opportunity and again, as I mentioned, I feel it is incumbent upon me to engage with the MLA, the new Chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Mayor of Dawson City to gain a better understanding of exactly what they are looking for. I understand funding proposals are currently being reviewed by the Department of Economic Development and the Yukon government. I wish the community well with this project going forward. It certainly is an exciting opportunity. There has been a lot of focus in recent years on the Klondike, given the mini-series that aired on the Discovery Channel earlier this year and the success of the reality TV shows, both *Yukon Gold* and *Gold Rush*. It is exciting for me to see those two reality TV shows start to highlight some of the beauty and the culture and the other aspects of the Klondike, rather than just the activity on the particular placer mines in question.

I certainly commend those production companies for recognizing the beauty of the Klondike and the surrounding area, and the long-term contributions of the First Nation in that area certainly can't be understated. I have a great deal of respect for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and all the people who have lived in that area for millennia, what they endured and how they survived during the coming of the Klondike Gold Rush, and how they not only survived, but thrived and protected their stories and their dances and their culture during that time.

I know when I was Minister of Education, I had the opportunity to give out the Council of the Federation Literacy Award to a TH elder who was repatriating the songs and the dances that Chief Isaac sent into the interior of Alaska during the gold rush, so they could be maintained. Again, that was an exciting opportunity for me to be in the City of Dawson and present that award on behalf of the Premier to the TH elder. I do apologize — her name escapes me now. Perhaps the Member for Klondike will remember and can mention it in his closing remarks. It was a few years ago.

Again, I do support this project going forward, just as the KPMA supports the project going forward, and the other organizations identified in the motion, as amended.

I look forward to entering into a dialogue with community members, including the MLA, to get a better sense of exactly what they are looking for, what stage they are at and what additional resources will be required as this moves forward and essentially, to talk about some of the other exciting opportunities that would come with this type of designation to the Klondike region as a whole.

With that, I will conclude my remarks and perhaps others would like to speak. I look forward to supporting this motion as amended and hope that all members of the Legislature will do so.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It's a pleasure today to rise to the motion as amended. As I noted in speaking to the amendment, I think the amendment really does strengthen the motion. I think there has been a substantial amount of work as my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, noted. It is also very important that we ensure that we get this

right and understand all of the implications. Placer mining is an integral part of the fabric of Yukon society. It has been referred to as “the Yukon’s version of the family farm” although as the MLA with most of Yukon’s farms in my riding, I would also note that there are also conventional family farms here in the territory. Placer mining is something that has been a long-standing fundamental contributor to the Yukon’s economy.

Those of us who were in this Legislative Assembly back when the then federal Liberal government cancelled the placer authorization and put the entire placer mining industry in the territory in fear that they would not be able to operate again, we certainly remember the strong show of public support and community outcry, not just within Dawson, but across the entire territory of citizens and businesses who were showing their support for Yukon placer mining. They had bumper stickers, signs, t-shirts and other paraphernalia made up that said slogans like, “This business supports placer mining; placer mining supports this business.” People indicated their support for the Klondike Placer Miners’ Association through other venues, whether through letters to the editor, people showing up in protest in support of the placer mining industry — and also through the tremendous attendance at public meetings talking about this, not just placer miners, but other people who recognized the tremendous importance of placer mining to the Yukon’s economy.

In noting that, I want to emphasize that I’m not saying that the issues affecting the placer mining sector can’t be addressed through this designation, but, based on the information that I have seen and the explanations that have been provided to me by people more familiar with some of the specific details of this process, it appears that in fact those issues can partly be addressed and in fact that in all likelihood the continuation of placer mining within the Klondike would be a part of keeping that UNESCO status.

Again, I think the motion that has been improved by the amendment passed earlier and brought forward by my colleague is one that specifically speaks to, includes, recognizes and affirms the importance of the tourism sector, the placer mining sector and the chamber of commerce for the Dawson area, and the fact that all of them are integral parts of their community. They all are important and valuable stakeholders.

I should also note, in terms of supporting parts of Dawson, that there have been significant investments in tourism made by this government. That includes support for the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture. I was pleased earlier this year to be able to announce an investment in ensuring that Diamond Tooth Gerties continues to be a major contributor to the Klondike Visitors Association and to the economy of Dawson City through the Yukon government’s support for them modernizing their slot machine equipment. In some cases, the earlier machines are outdated to the point where they are not able to even get parts from the original manufacturer. By providing that support to the Klondike Visitors Association, we’ve ensured that they continue to be the heart of Dawson City tourism, a contributor to Dawson

City’s cultural life and character as Canada’s longest legal gambling casino.

If you look at the Klondike Visitors Association’s financial statements, many of their activities, including tourism promotion depend on the revenue they receive from Diamond Tooth Gerties. The Yukon government, through our share of the slot machine revenues, reinvests those funds in the Crime Prevention Victim Services Trust Fund, which pays for many valuable programs and services to groups and individuals funded out of the Crime Prevention Victim Services Trust Fund.

In concluding my remarks, I would look forward to the continued progress of the efforts of all involved to have a collaborative process moving forward to seek UNESCO World Heritage Site designation for the Klondike region. Again, I reiterate what I have said and several of my colleagues have said about the importance of ensuring that the implications of that are fully understood by all involved and that the key stakeholders mentioned in this strengthened motion understand and are comfortable with the implications of moving forward to UNESCO status for two reasons: (1) to ensure that there is not some unanticipated problem that hadn’t been considered, and (2) because, as noted by people, including the mover of the motion, UNESCO is not going to want to provide world heritage site status to a region that has major elements of its society or key stakeholder groups saying something negative about the application.

In fact, comments in the final stages of seeking UNESCO status from any of these key stakeholders that are not supportive of that designation — pardon me, I should phrase that sentence in a little more grammatically correct order. What I meant was that, when UNESCO was giving final review to this application, if there were any negative comments from any of the key stakeholders, that could throw a wrench in the works and that could occur entirely unnecessarily if the implications are fully understood by all involved and if all that are key stakeholders are fully supportive of this application.

I will conclude my remarks. I congratulate all who have contributed their efforts to this project, including the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in First Nation; the City of Dawson and stakeholders, including the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce, Klondike Visitors Association, the Klondike Placer Miners’ Association; and the many members of the community of Dawson City who have been involved throughout the years in moving forward with seeking the designation of the Klondike as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Congratulations to all for their good work and I look forward to seeing this proceed forward.

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

Mr. Silver: Thanks to the members of the Legislative Assembly for their comments today. I’m going to be very brief. I do want to get on to the next motion, but I did want to say a few things in summation.

First of all, we've heard from a few members here today — park. This is not a park. This isn't a designation where Dawson becomes snowglobed into a protected area. This is showcasing the wonderful community that we have to the rest of the world. The reasons why this community is wonderful is because of the partnership that was forged many, many years ago — decades and decades ago — and that partnership of working together is still alive and well in Dawson. It absolutely is, Mr. Speaker. It's why we live there. It's why people stay there. It's why people dream of living in Dawson City. It's because of these connections and it's because of the wonderful people, both in the placer mining industry and also in the First Nation.

There are no lines drawn in Dawson, for the most part. It's a community — it really is. There is not one restaurant for a certain group of people and another restaurant for another certain people. It's one of the most beautiful communities of mosaics that you will ever see. It's artistic, it's modern — not to say that the other communities in the Yukon aren't great as well, but today we're talking Klondike.

The bottom line is, the Member for Kluane talked about a certain type of tourists coming to his area — this will ensure a whole broader range of types of tourists who are going to love to come and check out the beautiful, scenic community of Haines Junction, and they also — if you're checking off on your bucket list UNESCO World Heritage Sites, you have two for one here. There are a couple of them there. There is another added reason for coming to the Klondike and to Kluane.

The executive director of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has been very vocal for a while now — over a year now — that the funding from the original was going to run out. We really need to reiterate the importance of why we are bringing this up now. There is a position being held, and it is being funded currently with monies from other departments in Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in — not the CanNor money that was originally funded for this project. That has run out. Now is the time — without this lead, without somebody keeping this momentum going forward, then those conversations with the Klondike Placer Miners' Association, with the Klondike Visitors Association and with the town are not going to happen.

Should we as legislators here be the ones who stop this process in its tracks because the territorial government won't put some money forward? No, and I don't think that anyone in this House thinks that we should be the ones to decide whether or not this conversation continues. But the fact remains that, if there is not help from the territorial government right now to fund that position, this project won't move forward into those key conversations that have to be had in the community. Let the community figure out whether or not UNESCO is right for us, not the Legislative Assembly.

We are going to pass this motion — hopefully — unanimously. That would be great, and what a successful day that will be for us. However, if the money doesn't flow, and if this becomes for some reason caught up in the bureaucratic trap, well then that will truly be a missed opportunity for a district that truly needs help with its GDP.

Thank you to my colleagues for all of their comments today. I really appreciate it; I honestly do, and I look forward to getting on with the vote here.

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

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

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

Motion No. 740, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 741

Clerk: Motion No. 741, standing in the name of Mr. Silver.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explain how it intends to meet its goal of zero waste with a target of 50-percent waste diversion by 2015 with Raven Recycling shut down due to a lack of funding.

Mr. Silver: Solid waste management and recycling have been a major focus of conversation in and out of this House this fall. We have seen a major recycling facility close and we have heard from a variety of municipal-level governments discussing new solutions to meet their diversion goals. One of the platform commitments in the Yukon Party's platform was to enhance — and I quote: “our efforts for recycling, waste reduction, and diversion”. The second commitment was — and I quote: “develop a goal of zero waste with a target of 50% waste diversion by 2015.” This can be found on page 15 of the Yukon Party's platform.

As I had mentioned in Question Period last week, it is clear that the minister responsible does not truly support that goal as he told Yukoners on October 1 that recycling was a personal responsibility and really had nothing to do with his government. I will leave the explanation of that quote up to him.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The member is contravening Standing Order 19(g), imputing false or unavowed motives to another member, in claiming that I said that government has no responsibility for this — that it is entirely personal. That is absolutely incorrect and I think the member should be asked to retract that and apologize.

Speaker: The leader of the Third Party, on the point of order.

Mr. Silver: The minister can have his chance to explain what he meant by the quote, but that is his quote: “recycling is a personal responsibility”.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: There is no point of order. It's a dispute between members.

Leader of the Third Party, you have the floor.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Leadership on these issues needs to come from a senior level of government, and it is very clear that this government is not going to meet the commitment of 50 percent waste diversion by 2015 with community partners such as Raven Recycling. It seems that, with the government's slow approach to Raven, there has been a complete 180-degree turn in policy here that begs the question: Does the Yukon Party no longer support the platform promise of 2011?

If the government no longer supports a 50-percent target, or Raven, then what is the new diversion target that is being sought? You can't take away an integral service or public good without an alternative plan or objective. So what are these? That is the question that we're going to talk about today.

I'm hoping that today we can walk away with either some answer as to how the 50 percent diversion will be met or, if it won't, what target is the government now aiming for?

For over 20 years, Raven Recycling has provided a service important to Yukoners and essential to the environment. On October 15, the drop-off bins at Raven were closed up and they have been reduced to taking only refundable items. This has put a strain on the other operations in town, which are now receiving all the additional non-refundables. The unfortunate reality is that the refundable items only account for 10 percent of the total volume of what comes into the facility.

The current diversion credit does not cover the operation costs of the recycling centre and shipment to processing plants

in the south. Without short-term funding, they can't fund the work we need them to do to keep our recyclables out of the landfill.

Last week I tabled a motion calling on the Yukon government to restore this important community service. The bigger issue at play here is that, ultimately, the Yukon government has been sitting on the sidelines with Raven, letting Raven stay closed to all but refundables, so that it's clear that a cash injection is needed for this reopening immediately while some long-term funding issues get resolved. A major recycling partner being closed is likely deterring many from returning their recycling and likely leading to recyclables being stockpiled or heading to the landfill.

Strong congratulations should go to the City of Whitehorse. On Monday night, the Whitehorse City Council took a proactive approach by approving spending to begin the planning of a curbside recycling program. I was fortunate enough to have been on hand for that deliberation and to talk to some of the councillors afterward about this excellent decision.

The biggest problem that we are seeing from our recycling services is the expense of non-refundable items. A cost recovery needs to be there to make the diversion model successful. The Yukon Blue Bin Recycling Society has done a great job exploring the viability of a curbside recycling program and has shown that Yukoners are willing to pay a little extra to have their recycling picked up. We're looking to see them expand that program to condos very soon.

The proposal as set out by the city would see the per usage cost of programming going down as it is amortized across multiple households. The proposal would also give the private sector a chance to bid on the proposal and allow businesses like Yukon Blue Bin Recycling Society to continue their work on a larger scale.

The government has set a goal in their 2011 platform that diversion would be targeted at 50 percent. With their current hands-off approach to Raven, it's hard to think that they will be meeting this target. I am definitely looking forward to listening to the rebuttal from the minister responsible for Environment here. The question on many Yukoners' minds still is: How does this government intend to meet its own goal of zero waste with a target of 50-percent waste diversion by 2015 with Raven Recycling shut down because of lack of funding?

I will open this up to further comments from my colleagues and look forward to maybe getting to a vote today on this.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It is a pleasure to rise and speak to this motion and to correct the record on a number of fronts with regard to the issue, the motion itself and some of the comments made by the Member for Klondike.

The first issue I want to address head-on was his claim that there has been — and his words were a “180-degree turn” in policy on this. What has happened in the past few months has been absolutely no change in policy at all. The funding

that we provided to recycling processors in the territory hasn't changed. The support we provide through our regulatory processes hasn't changed. The eligibility for recycling processors to access other funding hasn't changed. What has changed was the decision by Raven Recycling to close their doors to non-refundable recyclables. That doesn't mean that they have shut down. They have not shut down as the motion suggests, but they are no longer collecting non-refundable items.

As all members — and I hope all residents of Whitehorse — are aware, they do still have options for the recycling of their products, so we don't expect there to be any sort of stockpiling or mass deposit of recyclables into the landfills because there are a number of other options that still exist. There is another processor, P&M Recycling, which provides those services. There are the bins at the city's landfill, which are available to the public to deposit their recycling.

Of course, there is the Yukon Blue Bin Recycling Society's program, which the Member for Klondike referenced. It is available in a number of neighbourhoods throughout Whitehorse. I know that it's available in my riding in Copper Ridge. I subscribe to it. It's a wonderful service, and I really appreciate the business people who run that program. They do a great job and it makes the collection of recyclables and the responsible disposal of recyclables from a household like mine possible and easy, and I appreciate it.

I need to also refute the claim that we haven't provided adequate funding to Raven Recycling. That is simply not true. In fact, Raven Recycling has been the beneficiary of significant funding over the years. Just the past few years alone have seen Raven receive hundreds of thousands of dollars for capital, for programming, for renovations to their yard — the kinds of investments that they were eligible for through the community development fund in years past. To date, over the past — call it six or seven years — they have received close to \$500,000 in CDF funding alone. That is not including the funding that comes directly from Community Services through diversion credits and through other mechanisms as well.

I also need to note that the funding mechanism — probably the most important one currently for Raven Recycling and for both processors — is the diversion credit. It needs to be recognized that the diversion credit is relatively new. It came in last year. It came in at a level of \$75 from the Yukon government, matched against \$75 from the City of Whitehorse, which was an increase from a previous diversion credit, to a total of \$150 that is available per tonne for recycling processors. That amount was specifically requested by the processors — by P&M and Raven — just last year. They came to government and said, "We need this much money per tonne as a diversion credit." That amount was \$150 per tonne. That is exactly what was provided to them.

So less than a year later, when we received a request for more than double that amount — \$330 per tonne — as well as a cash injection, obviously the Yukon government needs to take that into consideration and needs to consider what we are spending taxpayers' dollars on when we get a request of that

magnitude in such a short period of time — and when we receive a request from only one of the processors in town. It's important to note that we have provided significant funding for waste diversion and recycling in the territory to date. We continue to do that, but I can return to some of those specifics in a few minutes.

Now, I think I want to turn, if I could, to one of the more systemic changes that we are considering presently, and that is the modernization and proposed changes we have for our recycling regime in the territory. In September this year, I announced that we would be seeking public comment on our plans to modernize the recycling regulations in order to meet current and future needs of Yukon communities. At the time, I indicated that updating the recycling regime will allow consumers to recycle more beverage containers, as well as key products, such as electronic waste and tires, out of our landfills.

The proposed changes affect the beverage container regulation and the designated materials regulation. A discussion document is available on-line, at territorial agent offices or Department of Environment district offices. Comments can be provided by mail, on-line, by fax or e-mail from September 18 to November 21. My colleague, the Minister of Community Services, at the time we announced that, indicated that those proposed changes reflect the government's continued commitment to promote recycling and responsible waste management throughout the territory.

The Yukon government began the current recycling system in 1992 in order to reduce the number of beverage containers going to the landfills and later added specific tires. The proposed changes will ensure that recycling fees will better cover the costs of diverting and processing recyclable materials by making all beverage containers subject to a recycling surcharge, requiring a recycling fee for all sizes of tires sold in the Yukon and requiring a recycling fee for many electronic and electrical products sold in the Yukon.

As I indicated, we are currently consulting on these and we hope to receive input from the public about these proposed changes, but I need to note that while these proposed changes are our vision going forward — and we think that it's a good one — we are open to other input from other levels of government or the public about these. For instance, we are interested in whether or not the new categorization of tires is an appropriate one. We have divided the tires into three categories: small, medium and large. I don't have the exact sizes with me currently, but we want to hear from Yukon businesses, Yukon people and other stakeholders about whether or not that categorization is appropriate.

We also want to hear about the plans for e-waste and whether or not the current categories and associated surcharges and fees are appropriate — if they are at the right level; if they are too high, too low; if they will cause some sort of undue impact on businesses that aren't prepared for that.

I met with the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses representative here in Whitehorse not too long ago who wanted to make Yukon government aware of some of the experience of other jurisdictions like British Columbia,

Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta, which have all had various experiences with this type of issue. That organization wanted to share some of the positive aspects and some of the challenges and negative aspects that were experienced in those areas.

The changes we're proposing are significant. They are important and I think they will go a long way in the long term to making the recycling regime in the Yukon more sustainable from a financial perspective, not only for processors, but for community depots and for the recycling fund itself.

As I've indicated before, we haven't publicly, through our consultation documents, said what the breakdown would be of the increased surcharge on beverage containers. Obviously we said there would be a five-cent increase per beverage container and that is what we're consulting on. What is important I think is what we do with that additional five cents. To date, in meetings, I've indicated to stakeholders that at this point our vision is to divide that money based on the current breakdown that we use, which includes of the five cents that is available, 2.5 cents goes to the community depot that receives the beverage container, 2.25 cents goes to the processor, and a quarter of a penny remains in the recycling fund for other initiatives, including educational campaigns and initiatives to encourage young people and Yukoners in general to recycle.

That's not something we are set in stone on. We are willing to look at other breakdowns for that additional money, if it's necessary, but I think that any community depot in any community throughout the Yukon would be encouraged to know that the per container fee they'll take in could be as much as doubled. That's very positive. The processors as well — the two processors are Raven Recycling and P&M Recycling, at this point. They would also be receiving a doubling of the amount of money they receive per beverage container, if that's the model we go with. That's an encouraging step. It's something that I believe processors, depots and those concerned about recycling in the territory should be aware of.

Our goal is to create a simple, consistent recycling regime that meets the current and future needs of Yukon communities. The proposed changes, if approved, will establish a financially sustainable system for recycling materials, encourage consumers to recycle more containers, as well as help keep harmful products, such as e-waste and tires, out of Yukon's landfills.

I also wanted to note why we chose e-waste as one of the new materials to include under a designated material regulation. The reason for that is they are one of the most expensive things to deal with in the waste stream. When you have e-products — whether it's a big-screen television, a computer or other electronic or electrical products — when you get those products into the waste stream through a landfill, other community dump or other facility, they can cause significant deleterious impacts on the site. So we want to try to reduce the amount of e-waste that is going into our landfills.

As I said, some of that e-waste ends up in our landfills and it falls to the Yukon government, to the taxpayer, to pay for the cleanup of those products. The intent of having a surcharge charged at the till for these products is to shift that burden from the taxpayers to the individual who buys and uses the product. I think that's a fair allocation of cost. The individual or person or business that purchases the product and will use and enjoy the product should also pay for the disposal cost of the product. Taxpayers — all Yukoners — shouldn't necessarily be left with that burden.

That's the intent of these changes. That's the mindset we've taken with proposing the changes. Obviously there will be some who aren't as keen about changes. I have heard from some that they think this will drive people to purchase some of their e-goods in other jurisdictions, provinces or territories.

I'm not convinced at this point that that is a significant concern. I think that most other jurisdictions already have these kinds of fees on electrical products elsewhere, so I don't think that it will necessarily cause a competitive disadvantage to Yukon by imposing that disposal fee at the front end. But I am interested to hear what Yukoners and Yukon businesses and the various stakeholders have to say about that. That is an issue that I hope we get good feedback on in the public consultation.

Likewise with tires, a similar argument could be made that if you impose a fee on tires purchased in the territory, it may encourage tire purchasers to go elsewhere to make their purchases. I appreciate the logic of the argument; I'm not convinced that is necessarily going to be the case. I think that people right now who purchase very large tires — for instance, large truck tires, tires that go on equipment — highway equipment, industrial equipment — don't pay any fee right now. They instead pay a tipping fee at the dump when they take those tires in. That is sort of a system change we want to see — is that the people who are using the product, the people who are purchasing the product, pay for that disposal fee upfront and then the tipping fee at the back end — at the disposal point — is removed.

We know that there would be some transition time with this. We know that that won't solve the problem immediately and we know that there will be some difficult transitional times because however many tires there are out there right now that are stockpiled in someone's back yard or someone's industrial lot, or wherever, that haven't had a surcharge applied to them at the point of purchase, should these regulation changes go forward, they wouldn't be subject to a tipping fee at the dump or at the landfill.

We understand that. There will be a transition period of a few years where we are taking in more tires than we have had paid for through the fund. That is something we hope to deal with and it will be a challenge we have to deal with in the transitional period. That is why I say that these changes are intended to be long term in nature; they are intended to be systemic; they are intended to change the general outlook and philosophy when it comes to waste disposal in the territory. That is profound, I think. I think that is important to make that shift.

I should note that these changes are not an extended producer responsibility model. That is something that we have had discussions about in this House previously. Obviously, as Yukon is a member of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, I have signed on to national agreements that we will continue to advance the interests of extended producer responsibility throughout the country. We decided that, at this point, it was more appropriate and that it was a better decision for us to move forward by expanding our stewardship model recycling system that we have in place now. That is what we have done. We have broadened the existing stewardship model, rather than go down the road to an EPR system at this point.

As we in this House all know, the changes that we made to the *Environment Act* not too long ago removed that legislative restriction on an EPR system. Future governments may want to consider an EPR system but the decision we took at this point, in 2014, given the state of our recycling system currently and the state of our economy — the state of our society — we chose to go with the expansion of the stewardship model instead.

That's something I'm obviously prepared to answer for and I know there will be questions about that going forward. I think that to switch wholesale to a new system at this point would be problematic. I think that these changes are going to be challenging enough without switching models completed.

That being said, I wouldn't rule out in future considering an EPR model, but I would note that there have been challenges in other jurisdictions that have gone the EPR route. Those challenges tend to fall on small businesses. They tend to fall on the businesses that aren't represented in bigger organizations. For instance, in British Columbia — Walmart, Coca Cola — big companies that have a lot of capacity to deal with issues of a systemic nature are able to engage and get their way a little bit easier, whereas small businesses — mom-and-pop shops or even companies with a few dozen people — don't necessarily have that in-house capacity to have an employee or a contractor on their behalf engage with the government or with a third party manager of their system the way that those bigger companies do. What we've heard is that the small businesses tend to feel the brunt of those systems a little bit more than bigger companies.

The details of that depend on the system you go with. I'm not saying that everything is terrible in British Columbia when it comes to recycling or that their model is not good. I'm simply acknowledging that there are challenges and those challenges are something we'd have to consider before we go down a path of that nature.

So I would also note that the changes to the *Environment Act* we made earlier removed the legislative restriction to extended producer responsibility but don't necessarily suggest that we are going down that road. That remains for future governments to determine whether or not they go down the EPR road or whether they choose some other option. Those options would, I'm sure, include the possibility of setting up a Yukon-specific system or borrowing a system from a neighbouring jurisdiction and working together to implement

it. For instance, someone suggested we simply just join with B.C. and their system, but whether or not that's a good decision or not, I won't comment on at this point.

Earlier I mentioned the significant funding that Yukon government has provided to Raven Recycling over the years. I wanted to note some of those projects because they are significant. When you look at Raven Recycling's yard and operations right now, there's almost nothing in their yard or in their operations that hasn't been somehow funded by Yukon government. Whether that's right or wrong, that is the case.

Whether it is the baler, for which they received \$75,000 through the community development fund, whether it's any of their two forklifts for which they received money from this community development fund, whether it's any of their feasibility studies or planning documents that they've completed over the last 10 years or so — those typically tend to have been funded by government in some way, shape or form. The community development fund has funded a considerable amount of their recycling education campaigns. They have received tens of thousands of dollars over the past few years for these kinds of campaigns to encourage the zero-waste philosophy and promote to Yukoners recycling and waste diversion in general. All of this has been done with the support of the Yukon government.

I should also note that it is not just Raven Recycling that has received these supports. Depots and recycling groups throughout the territory have received this kind of funding. Whether it's in Watson Lake or in Dawson, a number of the societies and depots throughout the territory have received — whether it's the Mount Lorne facility — all of these centres have at some point received funding from the Yukon government for their operations. That will continue.

I know that the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes likes to hold up Mount Lorne as an example, and he is right. Comparatively, it's an excellent facility. I'm quite sure they couldn't have done it without the support from the Yukon government, and I'm sure that other depots throughout Yukon's communities will look to Mount Lorne and seek government funding to emulate them. I'm sure that, when those applications come in, they will be supported, as they have been throughout the years.

I wanted to provide a little bit more background as well about the recycling system in Yukon; in particular, I wanted to note some of the work that we've done. Obviously, the work done by the City of Whitehorse has been considerable. The Member for Klondike noted that the City of Whitehorse has made some decisions based on some reports that they've done recently. I would note that the Department of Community Services funded their most recent report. I can't remember the exact amount or the percentage of it, but what the important thing is, is that we are partners in that. We will continue to be partners with the City of Whitehorse, moving forward, in addressing their needs as a municipality. They are a significant player in this and we can't possibly proceed unilaterally in this without crossing over into the City of Whitehorse's jurisdiction.

We know that we need to work with them. We know that they have a significant role to play, and we know that we have a significant role to play, and we fully intend to do that. We have already had discussions about moving forward with the possibility of funding some infrastructure with the City of Whitehorse. We don't know exactly what that will look like yet, because the city doesn't know exactly what that will look like yet either. We have indicated to them that there is money available through the Building Canada fund that has been earmarked specifically for recycling initiatives. There is significant funding that the Yukon government has available. Whether and exactly how we deliver that funding remains to be seen, but we are confident we will be able to find a path forward.

Again, I have to note that no one group, no one government, is solely responsible here. We need to work together. We have to be partners and we have to find a path forward that is going to work. Obviously the majority of recycling occurs in Whitehorse. The majority of the material comes from Whitehorse and the source of much of Yukon's waste, whether or not it's recyclable, comes from Whitehorse.

Three-quarters of the population of the Yukon resides in the City of Whitehorse, and as such, three-quarters of the waste and recyclables are also generated in this area. It is generally more economical to collect and process recyclables at the location where most of it is generated because of the inherent lower transfer and transportation costs. That is why a regional approach is important and why the relationship with municipalities is so important — whether it's Dawson City, Haines Junction or Whitehorse.

As I've mentioned, there are the two facilities in Whitehorse where recycling materials can be dropped off. These two facilities operate using different business models and service levels. Raven Recycling, of course, is a not-for-profit organization that operates a source-separated drop-off depot where customers separate their recyclables into their respective bins. P&M Recycling is a business that provides a full-service drop-off system, whereby residents drop off recyclables, which are then sorted by staff into respective bins. Curbside collection recyclables is available through a private sector contractor, and materials are collected throughout the city. The City of Whitehorse provides curbside collection for garbage and organic waste, food and yard waste to approximately 5500 single-family homes.

I think I'll just go ahead and move adjournment at this point, because I could —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Motion to adjourn debate

Mr. Dixon: I move that debate be now adjourned.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Environment that debate be now adjourned.

Motion to adjourn debate on Motion No. 741 agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Seeing the time, I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

The following Sessional Papers were tabled November 5, 2014

33-1-129

Yukon Energy Corporation Annual Report 2013 (Kent)

33-1-130

Yukon Development Corporation 2013 Annual Report (and Consolidated Financial Statements) (December 31, 2013) (Kent)

The following Written Question was tabled November 5, 2014

33-1-7

Re: Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges (Stick)

Written notice was given of the following motion on November 5, 2014:

Motion No: 760

Re: the role of small business owners in sustaining and developing Yukon's economy (McLeod)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 168

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, November 6, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

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NAME CONSTITUENCY PORTFOLIO

Hon. Darrell Pasloski	Mountainview	Premier Minister responsible for Finance; Executive Council Office
Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Community Services; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation; Yukon Lottery Commission Government House Leader
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Yukon Energy Corporation; Yukon Development Corporation
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Environment; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Highways and Public Works
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Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, November 6, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Remembrance Day

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I rise today to recognize the significance of Remembrance Day. I am sad to acknowledge that much has been said in this House of late with regard to remembering the contributions of our military and our law enforcement personnel. Observing Remembrance Day has renewed reverence for those of us here and all Canadians, it seems, with Canadian men and women in uniform once again answering the call of duty and participating in a combat role on an international stage as well as the recent tragic and senseless losses of Canadian soldiers on our own soil.

Remembrance Day was first observed in 1919, on the first anniversary of the end of the so-called “war to end all wars” on November 11, 1918, at 11:00 a.m. — the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month — World War I, the Great War, finally ended. Thirty million military personnel were killed or injured in that war; a combined 117,000 Canadians were killed in World War I, World War II, the Korean War and other conflicts.

These casualties are nearly impossible for us to imagine today here in Canada, where we enjoy so many freedoms — freedoms we would not enjoy without such sacrifice. We wear our poppies at this time of the year to remember those who suffered and made the ultimate sacrifice; these women and men who gave their lives in the name of freedom for Canadians and for citizens all over the world. This Tuesday we will mark Remembrance Day.

I encourage all Yukoners to attend ceremonies in their communities or observe a moment of silence in their homes or workplaces. I would also encourage all Yukoners to support the Royal Canadian Legion by donating to the poppy campaign and by wearing one proudly on their left lapel, as close as possible to their heart.

Let us think of all the families who continue to be affected by the loss of a loved one and whose family members continue to serve. Let us think of what we can do to contribute to peace in our own communities and our country.

Ms. White: It is a great honour to rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to commemorate Remembrance Day. It is a day that I worry. I worry that in this day and age we get caught up in the nuances of our own lives and we forget the importance of the day. I worry that when Hollywood

glamorizes war and video games have desensitized us to the realities of conflict, war becomes a distant, disconnected idea. It becomes almost unbelievable, because in the movies, the good guys always win and no one really dies.

Images on screen blur the line between make believe and reality. We can easily make the mistake that conflict doesn't affect us because it only happens in faraway places. From a distance, we can easily forget that right now in Canada armed conflict is affecting our friends and our neighbours. Families have been separated as men and women have been sent off to distant places. Today, right now, Canadians are living with the very real consequences of war.

Mr. Speaker, until last week, I used to think that everyone understood the importance of the poppy. I used to think that people generally understood that the red flower worn close to the heart was a symbol of remembrance, that they understood the poppy was a visual pledge to never forget those who made the ultimate sacrifice for what we have today.

I should probably explain why I am not so sure that people fully grasp the meaning behind the poppy any more. Last year, after a lot of thought, the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes and I became members of the Legion. To be clear, I am not in the habit of collecting memberships. I take seriously the groups and organizations I choose to support. I wanted to be sure I had something to offer back to the Legion.

I haven't been able to offer much, but last week I was finally able to help. My friend Max and I signed up to man a poppy table at the liquor store and, to be perfectly frank, I was a little nervous. What if I was the worst poppy purveyor of all time? What if I somehow did a disservice to the Legion?

I learned a few things leading up to my 4:00 p.m. shift. First, poppies are not for sale. You don't need money to get a poppy. You just have to have the will to wear one. Donations are graciously accepted, but not expected. Secondly, poppies not only acknowledge the sacrifice of those who lost their lives, but they acknowledge the sacrifice of those who answer the call of duty and walk among us today. Finally, you can disagree with war. You don't have to like it, you don't have to support it, and you don't even have to want to talk about it. The poppy isn't a symbol that supports war. It doesn't symbolize the politicians who make the decision to engage in armed conflict. It symbolizes the men and the women who have borne the cost of those decisions.

Max and I set up our table just past the end of the checkout lines, against the back wall next to the tower of boxes. I was surprised by the amount of people who would not make eye contact. Based on their reactions, I know what it must feel like to sell raffle tickets. I was surprised by the amount of people who, when even asked, said, “No, I don't want a poppy.” Even after we explained that they didn't need to leave money behind — “You can just have one. Just let me pin it on.”

For the first half hour, only a few people stopped at our table. Has society really forgotten the symbolism behind the red flower? I asked Max if he thought it was possible that, collectively, society has forgotten why we wear poppies. He told me that he didn't think so, but I still wasn't so sure about

that. Then a young man came up to the table, he reached into his pocket and pulled out his wallet. He smiled and said that he used to be a cadet. He was taught the importance of the poppy and he put \$20 in the box. I almost cried. It was like an invisible barrier had been broken.

Max and I continued to explain to people that they didn't need to pay to take a poppy. They just needed to want to wear one, and if they felt like it later on, they could leave money behind at the next poppy table they saw.

We pinned poppies on the lapels of a great many people last Friday, but it saddens me to say that twice that many people passed us by without even looking up. That young man changed everything for me on Friday. He gave me the hope that the sacrifices made by Canada's veterans, by our military and by our RCMP — both past and present — will not be forgotten.

Poppies take up such a small amount of real estate over your heart, but they represent so much more. One year I promise I will get through this. They honour the veterans of the past; they show respect for those serving in the present and they foster hope for the future. Lest we forget.

Mr. Silver: I rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to Remembrance Day. It is on Remembrance Day that we recognize the sacrifices of the men and women who Canada sent to lay down their lives in foreign lands. This day marks the day and time where soldiers laid down their arms and stopped fighting in World War I on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

We have had a few opportunities to commemorate our military personnel and our veterans since this session began. Unfortunately, it is because of tragic events that have taken place in the last month. These events serve to remind us that our values, our way of life and our democracy do not come easy. Canada's men and women have defended our freedoms in conflict zones since World War I, and the sad reality is the battle rages on.

On Tuesday we will come together as Canadians along with others in the Commonwealth nations for a moment of silence. We will recognize the more than 1,500,000 Canadians who have served throughout our nation's great history and the more than 118,000 who made the ultimate sacrifice. This Remembrance Day, as we do every year, we will add a few new names of Canadians that we will remember.

We wear the poppy before and on Remembrance Day in memory of those men and women to show our respect and our support for Canadian troops and veterans and commemorate their sacrifices. Remembrance Day services will be held all across Canada and I will once again be attending at the ones in Dawson City. Lest we forget.

In recognition of Holocaust Education Week

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I rise on behalf of all members of the Legislative Assembly here today to recognize Holocaust Education Week. This marks the 34th year of Holocaust Education Week here in this country. The Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre has chosen the theme

for Holocaust Education Week as, "collaboration", wherein students are encouraged to explore the dual nature of collaboration by considering those who worked together to resist the Nazis as well as those who collaborated with the enemy. Understanding the atrocities of this dark chapter of human history reinforces that we must do everything we can to ensure that never again can this history be repeated.

Holocaust Education Week is an opportunity to highlight the power of human perseverance by showing the strength and resilience of holocaust victims and survivors. It's an opportunity to celebrate the strength of human compassion and dedication and it's a time to share stories of the heroes of the holocaust.

One of those heroes is that of holocaust survivor Robbie Waisman, who has joined us here in the gallery in this afternoon's Assembly. Mr. Waisman spoke last night to the Whitehorse community at F.H. Collins Secondary School. This morning, I had the honour of introducing Mr. Waisman at a presentation he gave to students of F.H. Collins Secondary School, Porter Creek Secondary School, as well as Vanier Catholic Secondary School. I can say first-hand that the presentation was moving, it was real, it was heartfelt, it was captivating and it was certainly an inspiration of hope.

I would like to recognize and honour Mr. Waisman for coming to the Yukon — his second time, as I understand — to share his experiences of the Nazi occupation of Poland, living in the Jewish ghetto and later working in a German factory as well as his time at the Buchenwald concentration camp and his eventual immigration to Canada.

Hearing his stories first-hand creates and illustrates the imperative and the very importance of teaching our younger generations about the dangers of prejudice, racism and intolerance. I commend, like all of us in this Assembly, Mr. Waisman on his commitment to sharing these powerful stories over the many years and thank him for the wisdom he has shared with our community.

I wish to also recognize and commend the students of the History 12 class at F.H. Collins Secondary School and their teacher, Mr. Toews, who has also joined us here today, for taking the initiative to organize the public presentation that was held last night and for their work to partner with many, including the Human Rights Commission, Yukon College and others to bring this important initiative to fruition.

I wish to also recognize the "Anne Frank — A History for Today" international travelling exhibit which is also on display at F.H. Collins Secondary School. It was on display at Vanier Catholic Secondary School just recently and will be travelling over to Porter Creek Secondary School later this month. It's very timely that this exhibit is displayed, and it's interpreted by a number of student peer guides, who have also joined us here in the gallery today. They have been trained to tell the story of teenager Anne Frank's two years in hiding in Amsterdam during the holocaust.

Seeing this part of the history of the Holocaust through the eyes of fellow younger generations makes a strong impact on all of us. It makes a strong connection with the students who both attend and guide the exhibit. Observing Holocaust

Education Week with events like Mr. Waisman's presentation and the Anne Frank exhibit helps our students to engage with some very difficult chapters of our history and to confront the legacy of war and genocide.

This occasion of teaching and learning with young people of Yukon helps us all to fulfill the promise to never forget and guard against the danger in the future. As has been said, those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. May the lessons we learn about discrimination, hatred, hope and social conscience stay with us beyond this one week of remembrance.

I wish to extend, on behalf of all members of the Assembly, a warm welcome to Robbie Waisman, who has joined us in the gallery here this afternoon.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Also joining him, I want to make mention, as earlier today in the Tribute — we also have Mr. Toews, who is the teacher responsible and oversees the History 12 class at F.H. Collins Secondary School. We have a number of students here from his History 12 class and I would just like to list off some of their names: Devon Widrig, Ryann Anderson, Liam MacInnis, Jarvis Scheffen, Patrick Yalloway, Alex Gobeil and Samantha Steele.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize in the Assembly a number of members from the Jewish Historical Society of Yukon starting with the president himself, Mr. Rick Karp and also Dr. Sharon Katz, who is a director with the society.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon's Farmers of the Year

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It is a pleasure to rise here in the Assembly today on behalf of the government caucus to pay tribute to Yukon's Farmers of the Year for 2014. I would also like to begin by thanking the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for allowing me to deliver the tribute, since two of my constituents were the successful recipient — Rolland and Mary Girouard — who run Rivendell Farm north of Whitehorse on the Takhini River. They have been farming in the Yukon for many years now and the two traits that stand out in them and their farming operations are tenacity and adaptability. It is fitting that Rolland and Mary have been chosen this year by their peers as Yukon farmers of the year.

They have successfully rebranded their operation as Yukon's organic experience catering to locals and visitors as an experience not to be missed in Yukon agriculture.

The Tourism Industry Association is one of the organizations that nominated Rolland and Mary Girouard for Farmers of the Year. TIA's nomination reflects the role that Mary and Rolland's Rivendell Farm played in the first Yukon culinary festival this past year. That festival was a great success in promoting Yukon-grown food.

Rolland and Mary opened their farm to the culinary festival's successful Feast of Farms event, which drew national acclaim for visiting chefs and a full house for an evening meal of locally grown goods. The Feast of Farms

provides a connection to local food, giving diners the opportunity to meet the farmers who have grown the food and an opportunity to showcase local products.

Mary and Rolland are leaders in Yukon's farm community and, as part of that, have also sat on and contributed to numerous boards and committees, including the Yukon Agricultural Association and Growers of Organic Food Yukon. Rolland served for a number of years as president of the Yukon Agricultural Association.

They have successfully pursued organic certification for Rivendell Farm and are helping to educate the next generation of Yukoners participating in the school program From the Ground Up, which gives kids the opportunity to visit Yukon farms and learn more about where our food comes from and the potential for agriculture here in the Yukon.

The leadership role that Mary and Rolland fulfill in the community benefits all Yukoners and puts food on the tables of many Yukon families. Their collaboration with people in agri-tourism and education is a concrete example of their innovative approach to farming in the Yukon and demonstrates their awareness of the connections between agriculture and other sectors of the Yukon economy.

Innovation in sales, marketing and promoting Yukon-grown food is something that Rolland and Mary have done an excellent job of throughout the years.

For all of their work, it is a pleasure to honour Mary and Rolland as Yukon's Farmers of the Year. I would like to ask the Assembly to join me in welcoming Mary and Rolland, as well as the executive director of the Yukon Agricultural Association, Bev Buckway.

Mr. Tredger: It is with pleasure that I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to Yukon's Farmers of the Year. I would begin by recognizing the Yukon agricultural community as a whole. I commend them for working together to establish a vibrant, innovative, entrepreneurial and supportive industry. I have been fortunate to attend many agricultural speaking events and conferences over the last few years. Last weekend, I was able to attend an excellent introduction to holistic farming at the North of 60 Agriculture Conference.

The agricultural community is, if I can borrow from Rivendell's webpage, "harvesting excitement". Yukon is fortunate to have a growing community of producers and consumers working together to produce local, sustainable and healthy products. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the Yukon Agriculture branch of Energy, Mines and Resources, Growers of Organic Foods Yukon, and the Yukon Agricultural Association, as well as farmers markets throughout Yukon, the Potluck Food Co-Op and especially all those farmers and gardeners who are producing quality Yukon food. Through their efforts, "grown in the Yukon" has become synonymous with excellence, healthy, sustainable and affordable.

Prime movers in all this excitement are this year's farmers of the year, Rolland and Mary Girouard, proud owners of Rivendell Farm. Rolland and Mary acquired the

land for Rivendell Farm in 1983, and since then, they have carefully and sustainably cultivated the land into the farm that it is today.

What is evident to me is their belief underlying all they do, that if you put the health of the land first, the land will look after you. Throughout Rivendell's history, Rolland and Mary have cultivated oats, hay, elk, poultry, swine, commercial vegetables, bedding plants, herbs, vegetables and berries. Throughout their history, they have been innovating.

In 2006, they set about to get Rivendell Farms an organic certification for the farm itself and all its products. This was not a difficult transition as Rolland and Mary had been using sustainable and organic practices for years at their farm. In 2009 Rivendell was certified organic.

Mary and Rolland have made Rivendell Farms a warm, open place to visit, to share stories, to pick your own fruits and your own vegetables. Rolland and Mary are passionate farmers. When they set out to cultivate their farm they wanted to prove gardening and farming can be done organically in the north. Through their tireless efforts and devotion to their work, they have certainly proved it can be done.

I was fortunate to witness a prime example of their hospitality and their "harvest of excitement" at this year's annual agricultural banquet, which by the way, is a fine banquet of locally grown foods, but most importantly, it is a gathering of the agricultural community. At my table were two young farmers from Mayo as well as Ralph Mease, a long-time organic farmer from Mayo, a young WWOOFer, Mary and Rolland and Bev Buckway, the executive director of the Yukon Agricultural Association. It didn't take long for the sharing, for the stories, for the ideas, the learning, the exploration of possibilities to begin to ferment. We were joined with visits and interactions from tables around. It was a melting pot of ideas, suggestions and potential. I looked at my wife and I said, "This is like sitting with an encyclopedia." It was amazing.

I thank Mary and Rolland for freely offering their thoughts, their encouragement and especially their willingness to share their harvest of excitement.

Other people have told me that the kitchen table at Rivendell is always full of such conversation, with a wide variety of people coming and going — conversation that instills, pardon my pun, growing excitement. Mary and Rolland are constantly innovating and educating. The Feast of Farms this summer was a prime example of that — a partnership with Air North and the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon — and led to a wildly successful event. Through years of hard work and thoughtfulness, Mary and Rolland have created a sustainable and vibrant farm.

Mary and Rolland Girouard, stewards of Rivendell Farm, you are truly deserving of Yukon's Farmers of the Year award. On behalf of all Yukon people, thank you Mary and Rolland for your efforts, your innovations, the years of hard work, the sharing of the fruits of your labour, your willingness to help others do the same and your many contributions to community and life in the Yukon — and especially your great food.

I will finish with your words and advice upon accepting the Farmers of the Year award: "Buy local, stay warm".

Applause

In recognition of Teen Parent Centre 25th anniversary

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I also rise today in recognition of the 25th anniversary of the Teen Parent Access to Education Society. As a mother, as a Minister of Education and minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, I know firsthand the pressure of juggling the demands of education, demands of a career and the demands of being a parent.

The proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child", comes to mind. This saying reminds us all that parents can't do it all. We as a community all have different things to offer. The four corner partnership that backs the Teen Parent Centre reflects a community of support. Because of this partnership, the Teen Parent Centre offers a holistic network of care that supports teen parents and their kids.

When the program first welcomed the teen parents and their children back in 1990, it was housed in a few portable units beside Selkirk Street Elementary School. It relocated to its present location next to F.H. Collins Secondary School in 1995.

Through this enduring partnership, the centre continues to provide a full suite of programs and services to help young parents to complete their high school. It provides academic support and childcare, supports cultural and healthy family development, and also offers scholarships.

There have been a lot of people who have contributed to the centre over the past 25 years. In particular, it's the partners — the staff and the volunteers — who make the Teen Parent Centre the caring and welcoming place it is today. It's not just what they do, but how they do it.

Having visited the centre on a number of occasions over the years, I can say first-hand that they are, in fact, doing a fabulous job. Their work helps ensure a positive future for young families and our partners are giving teen parents access to the knowledge and skills they need to succeed at home, at work and in the community.

Our partners are shaping the lives of new babies' first role models. I would like to extend my thanks on behalf of all members of the Legislative Assembly to all those involved in the four corner partnership, in particular the Teen Parent Access to Education Society, the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Education and F.H. Collins Secondary School. I would also like to extend a big shout-out to the volunteers and to the teachers who have worked really hard over the past 25 years to ensure students got the support they needed to do the final heavy lifting on the way to their diplomas.

Above all, I wish to recognize the many young Yukon parents who have subscribed to the Teen Parent Centre over the years. As I said, being a young parent is no easy task. Being a young parent who is also a student is a juggling act. It takes a lot of courage to walk through the doors of the Teen Parent Centre — and even more courage to keep coming back.

The reward is the diploma they receive, which is the key to a better future, both for them and their families.

Again, our congratulations to all of those students.

Tomorrow evening the Teen Parent Centre is hosting a celebration dinner right at the Teen Parent Centre and I understand that is a work in progress as we speak. I would hope that all of us will join them in congratulating and commending all those involved in this very important work at this society.

Mr. Speaker, before I conclude, I would like to just also ask all members of the Assembly in helping us welcome to the gallery a number of representatives from the society: starting with the president of the society, herself, Colleen Wirth; we also have in the gallery Helena Shewan, who is the former president of the society — who I understand completed her time with the society in the fall back in 1998, if I am not mistaken, Nils Clarke, vice-president; we also have David Knight, long-time board member and current society member; Ron Pearson, also a board member and current society member, and we also have with us Mae Gudmundson, who was the first teacher director at the Teen Parent Centre in 1990.

Also, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the hard work and the inspiration that continues to breathe life into the Teen Parent Centre over these recent years: Kathy Heinbigner, who is a teacher director at the Teen Parent Centre.

Also joining us in the gallery today is Kerri Scholz, who is a former graduate from the Teen Parent Centre and a very successful contributor to our society here today.

Welcome and thank you to all of you. Congratulations.

In recognition of National Community Safety and Crime Prevention Month

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise today on behalf of this House to recognize National Community Safety and Crime Prevention Month. Every November, the Canada Safety Council, one of Canada's voices and resources for safety, brings awareness to the importance of building community safety and reducing crime.

This year's campaign encourages Canadians to reach out to their neighbours. A connected, united and caring community is one of the best defences against crime. In light of this theme, I would like to recognize and thank the individuals and groups that are actively working to improve community safety in Yukon.

Recently, I had the privilege of presenting eight Yukoners with community safety awards in acknowledgement of their important role in building and promoting community safety. These eight individuals and 21 other nominees were commended for their collaborative community-building work. From innovative crime prevention and community policing initiatives, to providing support services for victims of crime and volunteering with at-risk youth, the work being done within this community is impressive, to say the least.

Congratulations to this year's award recipients. These include the late Dr. Anne Williams, Chief Superintendent Peter Clark, Tamara Horsey, Constable Ben Kingdon,

Sergeant Cam Lockwood, Ann Maje Raider, Constable Craig Thur, and Morgan Yuill. I would also like to recognize the latest crime prevention and victim services trust fund recipients. These organizations have received financial support for a wide range of grassroots projects that are aimed to reduce crime, prevent violence against women and children, address the root causes of crime, provide services and information to victims of crime, or to provide information about crime prevention and victimization.

Funding has been provided to the Town of Faro, Bringing Youth Toward Equality — better known as BYTE — Ynklude Art Society, Yukon Public Legal Education Association, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon, Kona's Coalition, Yukon Circle of Change, Yukon Association for Community Living, Yukon Women's Transition Home Society, Nakai Theatre, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations' Anda Ta Youth Centre, Northern Cultural Expressions Society, Boys and Girls Club of Yukon and the Carcross-Tagish First Nation.

The Department of Justice looks forward to sharing more information on these projects and providing updates on their progress through the Department of Justice website soon. If illegal activity is happening in your community on property, I would like to remind Yukoners that they can contact the safer communities and neighbourhoods — the SCAN unit — to make a confidential complaint. SCAN helps keep communities safe by investigating and, if necessary, shutting down properties that are being used for illegal activities such as drug trafficking or bootlegging.

Finally, I want to highlight a recent meeting hosted by the Yukon Police Council, which itself is a group of citizens working hard to reach out and hear from their neighbours. It focused on the development of recommendations for policing priorities. Stakeholders from over 30 organizations attended the meeting to help identify important community safety issues.

The efforts of these stakeholders and continued willingness to work together in the spirit of partnership are a key ingredient in fostering safe Yukon communities.

In closing, in recognition of National Community Safety and Crime Prevention Month thank you to all of the volunteers and organizations that play such an important part in building safe communities. I encourage Yukoners to become involved with community groups — such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Neighbourhood Watch, Block Parents, Citizens on Patrol, among many others — where they can help make contributions to crime prevention. Keeping our communities safe and crime-free is all of our responsibility. Each of us can integrate crime prevention activities in our daily lives and National Community Safety and Crime Prevention Month reminds us that it can start with getting to know our neighbours.

I would also like members of this Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming a few guests to the gallery. We have with us from M Division of the RCMP Whitehorse detachment, Corporal Jeffrey Myke and operational communication centre manager, Gaylen Shoemaker. We also

have Annette King, chair of Crime Prevention and Victim Services, and from SCAN public safety investigations, Kurt Bringsli and Navhreet Nijhar. Welcome.

Applause

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Hanson: I invite members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming Pat Mooney to the Legislature. I have known Pat for a long time. You know, Mr. Speaker, people often wonder what happens to young activists and Pat was one of those. He was one of the founders of the Miles for Millions in the 1960s, which mobilized hundreds of thousands of people across this country.

He is now a renowned advocate on the issues of biotechnology and food. He has also received the Right Livelihood Award, the “Alternative Nobel Peace Prize” in the Swedish Parliament, and the Governor-General Pearson peace prize and the American Giraffe Award, given to people who stick their neck out. Pat’s going to be speaking tonight at the Beringia Centre as part of the communicating climate change adaptation lecture series, and also at the Alpine Bakery on Friday about the global food industry. That’s sponsored by YDEC and the organic food growers association.

I would also like to ask members to welcome to the Legislative Assembly Stu Clark. Stu is a former senior policy advisor at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank in Winnipeg, who is now living in Whitehorse and writing on international food policy. So welcome, Pat and welcome, Stu.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Ms. Hanson: I have for tabling today a document, entitled *Changes to YESAA Threaten our Land, our Economy, our Yukon: How Bill S-6 affects Yukon: Background & Fact Sheet*.

I also have for tabling a supplement to the four letters of support provided yesterday with respect to the Tr’ondëk-Klondike UNESCO world heritage nomination project — letters of support from the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, the Yukon Historical and Museum Society, the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon, Parks Canada, Dawson City Museum and the Yukon Chamber of Mines.

Mr. Silver: I have for tabling the Statistics Canada provincial and territorial economic accounts for 2013.

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

(1) acknowledge that the majority of the territory’s greenhouse gas emissions are caused by transportation;

(2) agree that affordable, accessible and comfortable public transportation reduces greenhouse gas emissions as well as transportation costs for individual Yukoners;

(3) reduce Yukon’s greenhouse gas emissions by developing an affordable inter-community public transit service in collaboration with First Nation governments, municipalities and relevant businesses;

(4) work with the City of Whitehorse to improve and expand the services offered through Whitehorse Transit; and

(5) call on the federal government to support the work of Canada’s provinces, territories and municipalities in expanding their services through the creation and implementation of a national transit strategy.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide a full public accounting for the \$51 million F.H. Collins school replacement project, including how many jobs have been actually filled by Yukoners and how much money has gone to companies from outside the Yukon.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

(1) invest in improving secondary school trades training, such as welding; and

(2) address the lack of facilities available in some of our secondary schools for trades training.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: YESAA process

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, for the past several months, the Premier has been living in a bubble. This morning, the Council of Yukon First Nations burst that bubble. The Premier has continued to claim that his government has a great relationship with First Nation governments, and it has been clear to everyone except the Premier that these are just empty words. The Council of Yukon First Nations has removed all doubt with their clear statement of opposition to Bill S-6, with its proposed amendments to YESAA. Yukon First Nations are clear that, by unilaterally changing YESAA, a made-in-Yukon law designed to meet the needs of Yukon First Nations and Yukoners, the Yukon Party invites serious consequences to Yukon.

In light of today’s clear statement by Yukon First Nation governments, does the Premier still support the federal government’s unilateral changes to YESAA?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Prior to the tabling of Bill S-6 in the Senate of Canada, there were approximately seven years of consultation that occurred — literally thousands of hours of consultation. From that consultation, there was agreement by all parties on 73 of 76 recommendations, which is an outstanding effort.

Yukon First Nations have guaranteed participation in the environmental assessment process. They recommend three out of seven representatives on the YESA Board. This legislation will ensure consistency with our neighbouring territories — Nunavut and Northwest Territories — and consistent assessment legislation with the provinces, Mr. Speaker.

That allows Yukoners to be competitive and that is a priority for this government — the creation of jobs and the creation of prosperity for Yukon families.

Ms. Hanson: It doesn't matter how many changes are agreed to, when after-the-fact unilateral changes which undermine the spirit and intent of YESAA are made. It is clear that the Premier does not understand the fundamental nature of the relationships created in the First Nation final agreements and, through them, YESAA. This Premier has turned his back on the opportunities realized through partnership and has chosen confrontation over collaboration.

Yukon First Nations acted in good faith. They have tried to have their voices heard, but they have been ignored. The Premier needs to understand that Yukon First Nations do not stand alone. Yukon citizens stand with them against the federal government and their Yukon Party cheerleaders to protect the essential pillars of our final agreements.

How can the Premier support the amendments to YESAA that go against the spirit and intent of final agreements — agreements that represent all Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, amendments to the YESAA legislation cannot be in conflict with the final agreements. It is clearly articulated in section 4 of YESAA that if there is a conflict between YESAA and the final agreements, the final agreements will always prevail. It is very clear. Bill S-6 received unanimous support in Canada's Senate, including all the Senate Liberals, without amendment.

Consultation occurred for almost seven years between Yukon government, Canada, CYFN, all Yukon First Nations and YESAB as well. Yukon government, through this entire process, shared all of our comments with all of the parties that were at the table. We are supportive of an assessment process that is consistent with all jurisdictions across this country, ensuring the opportunity for this government and this territory to create jobs for Yukon families.

Ms. Hanson: You know, unanimous support from an unelected Senate — uh-huh.

Yukon First Nations have been really clear, and they have stated clearly the serious consequences to Yukon if the YESAA amendments are passed. These amendments will bring uncertainty, harm Yukon's economy, scare off investment, put Yukoners' jobs at risk and delay resource development. I'm quoting here, Mr. Speaker, from the release this morning that I tabled in this House.

First Nations have indicated that Canada's decision to impose amendments like this will likely end up in court. The Premier has a choice to make. He can side with the Harper government or he can stand with Yukon First Nations and for the Yukon.

Can the Premier explain why he has chosen to side with the federal government and abandon Yukon First Nation governments and his responsibilities as Premier of Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I stand on the side of ensuring that we have legislation that is consistent with Nunavut, Northwest Territories and the other provinces in this country. I stand for the seven years of consultation that has occurred with engagement of all Yukon First Nations, YESA Board, CYFN, Canada and Yukon government.

The Yukon government shared all of its comments through that time with all parties at the table. There were 76 recommendations with the support of all parties on 73 of them. We are committed and supportive of an opportunity to continue to attract investment and create good job and business opportunities for Yukoners and create prosperity for all people in this territory.

Question re: Dawson City waste-water facility

Mr. Barr: The Dawson City waste-water treatment plant has been plagued with problems since it was built. Originally, this government had committed to hand over the facility to the City of Dawson well over a year ago and yet the facility is still in government hands. Before the hand-over is to take place, the waste-water treatment plant must pass a series of tests that it has failed on numerous occasions in the past.

Is the plant complying with the water licence and have the conditions to hand over the Dawson City waste-water treatment plant to the City of Dawson been met?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The Government of Yukon and the City of Dawson are working together to ensure that the Dawson waste-water treatment plant meets the contract terms and conditions. We remain committed to ensuring the operation and maintenance costs are manageable for this plant as well. In fact, government — both the Department of Community Services and the Department of Highways and Public Works have worked closely, and will continue to do so, with the City of Dawson, both at the elected level and at the administrative level, to ensure that together, we are holding Corix to the terms of the contract and are doing everything within our power to ensure that the plant performs as it is supposed to by holding the contractor to the terms of the contract.

Mr. Barr: As the timeline for the hand-over of the Dawson City waste-water facility grows ever longer, Yukoners are seeing another proof of this government's inability to manage capital projects.

A waste-water treatment plant that cannot comply with the water licence is not a very attractive problem to have on your hands and the City of Dawson knows this. The repeated failures of the treatment facility to comply with the water licence test begs the question: Does the minister believe that in its present state the Dawson City waste-water treatment

facility can pass the test that must be satisfied before it can be handed over to the City of Dawson? If it can't, what steps need to be taken?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As I indicated in my first response, what we're doing is working closely with the City of Dawson and we will continue to do so to ensure that we are holding the contractor strictly to the terms of their contract and requiring them to do what they committed to do when they took on that contract.

I would also note, as I have before to members, that in fact choosing a mechanical treatment plant was a choice made, resulting from citizens of the City of Dawson objecting to lagoon options, and as the result of the outcome of a referendum that occurred.

I hear the Leader of the NDP blames the citizens for this. I am hearing her comments off-mic, but in fact, we respect the decision that was made by the people of Dawson City. The choice was made for a mechanical plant. Those are more challenging to operate than a lagoon system, but what we're doing is working very closely with the City of Dawson to ensure that we are united in holding the contractor strictly to the terms of their contract.

Mr. Barr: There is no blame to the citizens. It is this government's inaction.

This government has previously indicated that the Dawson City waste-water treatment facility would only cost \$340,000 a year to operate. However, the City of Dawson expressed concerns that costs could be much higher. The facility has yet to operate properly, and Yukoners are concerned that they will be on the hook for another poorly managed Yukon government project. As it stands, the Government of Yukon is still in control of the facility and still covering much of the cost of running a plant.

What is the total cost to date to operate the Dawson City waste-water treatment plant?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I can see that the member is reading his script. It's unfortunate that he does not seem to understand this issue — and I hear, once again, the Leader of the NDP's absolute disrespect for the citizens of Dawson City off-mic.

I would again point out to the members that what we are doing at this plant was chosen as a result of a binding plebiscite done by the citizens of Dawson City, where they clearly indicated that they were not satisfied with the lagoon options because of the effect on the community. Mechanical waste-water treatment plants are more challenging to run, commission and get working effectively. That has been the case with other plants of this type that are now running successfully.

We do believe that this can be made to run successfully, and what we are doing is working very closely with the City of Dawson and doing our utmost to ensure that the contractor strictly fulfills the terms of the contract and does what they committed to do when they took on that contract and signed it.

Again, we will continue to work very closely with the City of Dawson throughout this process, including working with them on ensuring that they are satisfied, that it has met

the conditions of the contract before handing over ownership of the facility.

Question re: Economic growth

Mr. Silver: I have a question for the Minister of Economic Development. Just over a year ago, the minister issued a news release, patting the government on the back for its role in seeing the Yukon through yet another year of economic growth. There's only one problem with the minister's self-congratulations — he was incorrect and the final numbers weren't yet in.

Yesterday, Stats Canada released their final GDP numbers for 2013 and Yukon's economy actually shrank in 2013. In fact, we had the worst economic growth of any jurisdiction in Canada in 2013. Our economy shrank by almost a full percentage point.

The Yukon Party likes to take credit when things are going good, Mr. Speaker. We'll see if they can accept the responsibility when they are not. Will the minister confirm for the public that the Yukon had the lowest economic growth of any jurisdiction in Canada in 2013?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you to the member for bringing this question forward. Of course the Stats Canada data has come out recently. It's important to recognize what that data says. What it says is what many Yukoners already knew: 2013 was a difficult year for Yukon's economy. We recognize that. As the stats indicate, it was particularly challenging for the construction industry, both in residential and non-residential construction, as well as challenges faced by the mining industry.

That's why, in response to that challenging year, Yukon government brought forward the largest capital budget in Yukon's history. That's why we see now, throughout the Yukon, including in Whitehorse and other communities, construction projects underway. We have F.H. Collins underway, which I know the member doesn't support; we have construction at the Whitehorse Rapids facility on backup power generators, which I know the opposition parties don't support; we have construction going on for seniors facilities down on the Whitehorse waterfront, which I know the members opposite have all voted against.

It's important to recognize that yes, 2013 was a challenging year, but that's why this government brought forward the largest capital budget in Yukon's history to ensure that our construction industry continues to grow and continues to benefit from government expenditures.

What I anticipate is that 2014 will be a stronger year. We know that the construction that is going on today is much better than it was last year. We know that the residential construction has improved greatly by this government making land available and we know that the mining industry seems to be improving based on exploration numbers to date.

Mr. Silver: It's nice to know that the minister says, "We recognize this", because a year ago he said in 2013 Yukoners continued to enjoy a growing economy. He also said we were expecting to experience a tenth consecutive year

of GDP growth. The problem is the minister spoke before all the numbers came in.

We had the lowest economic growth in the country and our economy actually shrunk in 2013. Yukon is one of only two jurisdictions in Canada in 2013 where the economy actually contracted and we are in last place in terms of growth in Canada. This is despite a billion dollar budget, mostly from the feds, which this government likes to boast about.

The government has downgraded its economic forecast several times already for 2014. After claiming it would see growth of 8.8 percent, the government has been backpedaling furiously and now we're as low as 1.7 percent.

Would the minister confirm what the latest GDP numbers are for 2014?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It's been clear throughout the years that we have been debating these types of issues that the opposition parties really don't like the economists in my department. They don't like the work that they do and they don't appreciate the opinions that they have.

The economic forecasts that are conducted by the Department of Economic Development are not influenced by me, they're not done by me and they're not a result of any sort of political direction. They are done by the economists in the department who work as best they can with the data that they have available.

Now we make that data available twice a year and the GDP forecasts will be again available at the end of this of calendar year as it always is and as it will always continue to be from hereon in.

When we see the criticisms of government's economic forecasts — we know that that is not a direction given by me or done by anybody on this side of the House. It is done by the forecasters in the Department of Economic Development who are doing the best they can with the data they have available to them. If the members want to criticize them, then that's too bad. I will continue to support those officials in the department who do the best they can with the data they have available to make Yukoners aware of what is going on in the economy at time.

Mr. Silver: All I asked was what the latest number is.

Yukon has the worst economic growth in Canada for 2013. Our economy actually shrunk under this government's leadership. We will have one the lowest growth rates in Canada for 2014.

This government talks a good game about the private sector growth and employment, but let's look at some stats from here. From September 2012 to September 2014, the number of government public sector jobs increased by 1,200 jobs. At the same time, the private sector dropped by 300 jobs. So the government's own numbers do not back up the rosy picture that the Premier and the minister try to paint. We are seeing growth in the public sector and losses of jobs in the private sector.

When is the government going to admit that their own numbers do not back up their claims of growth in the private sector economy?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Well, the member, in the numbers he just cited, confirmed the fact that the private sector did grow. I know he doesn't like the fact that the public sector has grown as well. He doesn't like the fact that the federal government, the First Nation governments, municipal governments have grown as well. That is in part, of course, because First Nation governments are growing and becoming more mature. The federal government is increasing. The territorial government, yes, is increasing as well and so are municipal governments.

The public sector is not just the Yukon government; it is all public sector governments in the territory. The member opposite quotes numbers indicating that the private sector grew and that employment increased and then wonders why it has decreased. Well, he is simply wrong, Mr. Speaker. The private sector has grown. The numbers he has just cited —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Leader of the Third Party, on a point of order.

Mr. Silver: This will be on Standing Order 19(h): issues that another member is "...uttering a deliberate falsehood." The numbers speak for themselves.

Speaker: Government House Leader, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: On the point of order, I believe it is simply a dispute among members. The minister did not accuse the Leader of the Liberal Party of deliberately misleading this House. He said that the leader was saying two mutually contradictory things, which is absolutely correct.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: It makes it interesting when you don't have the instant replay right in front of you. The wording is interesting but I do not believe there is a point of order at this time. It is a dispute between members. All members are free to present and interpret the facts as they choose.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Speaker: Excuse me? Did you want to add to the point of order?

Please carry on.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: If the Leader of the Liberal Party is concerned with some of the public sector jobs, perhaps he can indicate to us which public sector jobs he would like to see cut. If he's concerned with the growth of the public sector, perhaps he can give us a list of the jobs that he would like to see cut, and we can let those employees know that the Liberal Party doesn't value their contributions to our economy.

Question re: A Safe Place program

Ms. White: A Safe Place is offered jointly by the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre and the Yukon Status of Women Council. This program offers after-hours and weekend drop-in programming and nutritious meals to women and their children, targeting those experiencing precarious housing and food insecurity in Whitehorse. A Safe Place is an

incredible community response to support women who have fallen through the cracks. Citizens are asking: Why is it falling to community organizations to fill the gaps left by government policies?

Women in all situations are more likely than men to have difficulty finding affordable housing and to experience psychological and physical health issues related to precarious housing. Will the minister responsible for housing explain why so many Whitehorse and Yukon women are precariously housed?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would like to thank the member opposite for raising this important matter. I would concur wholeheartedly that A Safe Place is providing a valued and needed service for vulnerable women and children who are experiencing housing and mental health challenges, food insecurity and the like.

Recently I actually had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, as well as the Status of Women Council to discuss first-hand the program's development and its success. Since that meeting, we have been working collectively with those particular organizations on some short-, medium- and long-term options. Indeed we are working with them and we do value this very important service being offered.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for the answer. I still wonder why women in the Yukon face such precarious housing.

According to Yukon Women's Directorate data, women earn less money than men in Canada, and single-parent families headed by women have, by far, the lowest incomes of all family types. The situation for aboriginal women is even worse. Perhaps relatedly, the majority of women accessing a safe place are aboriginal.

This economic insecurity forces women to make difficult choices like those between adequate housing and nutritious food. As the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition reports, the Yukon is the third most food-insecure jurisdiction in Canada. Females, single parents, women and children, and aboriginal women are those most at risk of food insecurity.

Will the minister responsible for Economic Development explain why so many Whitehorse and Yukon women are at risk of food insecurity?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Again, Mr. Speaker, that's in fact why this government has invested in housing initiatives such as the family-focused housing initiative in Riverdale. That creates and has very much resulted in well over 30 units of some two to four different bedroom units available for single-parent families for that very reason. We have worked collectively with women's organizations over the years. We continue to help build capacity within those organizations through funding mechanisms and through specific initiatives. As I mentioned, a safe place is but one of the many initiatives that we continue to work with collectively with women's organizations and the community at large to advance women's equality in this territory.

Question re: School structural safety

Ms. Moorcroft: More than a year ago, a report prepared for the departments of Education and Highways and Public Works identified three schools at high risk of failure during an earthquake and another five at medium risk.

Some short-term fixes were made to reduce some of the hazards, but the serious structural issues won't be fixed until a long-term strategy is developed.

Apparently, assessments are underway to figure out how to best address the seismic risks; then more planning must be done before a 10-year financial plan is prepared for consideration by decision-makers. The time lag is a concern, especially for families with children attending the high-risk schools.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Highways and Public Works assure parents of the 1,300 students in the eight at-risk schools that their children's safety is important and structural upgrades will be undertaken as a high priority?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Highways and Public Works works hard of course to make sure that our buildings are clean, warm and safe — and I say this all the time — for our Yukon students, especially our Yukon schools.

In November 2013, the Yukon government announced that it was working on a seismic mitigation program to minimize the potential impacts of our seismic activities at our schools. This program assessed non-structural risks such as windows, pipes, bookcases, lockers and school equipment in the Yukon schools and defined the work required to improve the safety of the eight schools that the member opposite mentioned that are at medium to high risk for seismic.

To date, we have completed detailed structural and non-structural assessments of the eight schools at medium-to-high risk in an extreme seismic event. This summer — 2014 — we completed a series of non-structural mitigations in these schools, things like replacing or fastening light fixtures or ceilings or walls, equipment lights that may fall or sway, arrest cables, bookcases — lots of stuff that we did there. We have also worked with the students and staff in our Yukon schools to ensure that they know how to respond in a seismic emergency.

Ms. Moorcroft: Given this government's track record when it comes to building schools, let's hope there isn't a serious earthquake in the next decade. It seems Yukon schools are on shaky ground.

Schools are often the backbone of our small communities, a comforting place where families gather for events such as Christmas concerts, sports activities and community festivities. It's all too easy to say words meant to convey confidence; it takes more than words to address parents' concern about their children's well-being while in the government's care at school.

The Haines Junction, Destruction Bay and Beaver Creek schools are at high risk in the case of an earthquake. When will the minister take action and make public his plan to address seismicity risks in our schools?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well we take this matter seriously. That is why, in fact, we are taking immediate and longer term

actions. A key mandate of our government is to ensure our kids are safe, they're protected and they're welcome in every school — all 28 of our schools.

As the Minister of Highways and Public Works just outlined, seismic screening on each of our 28 schools has been completed. Subsequent to that, full seismic evaluations were completed on eight specific schools deemed to be at medium to high risk. With that information, we're proceeding with a number of initiatives, as outlined by the member, including public education and discussions with our communities, including school councils, staff and administration about safety at our school facilities.

We're working on the delivery of enhanced training and materials for distribution in the schools and we're proceeding with non-structural and mitigation work. At the same time, we have engaged the same structural engineering firm that completed the initial screening and assessments to itemize and prioritize that work required to bring our schools up to a life safety standard.

That work will help inform the longer term plans for those facilities and their replacement within their life cycle. This is a subject of importance to the Government of Yukon and we are taking steps.

Ms. Moorcroft: We've now heard two ministers stand and speak about the work that has been done on assessment and on non-structural mitigation. I want to get back to the pressing issue regarding the structural integrity of these schools, some of which need a significant amount of repair or perhaps the school needs to be replaced. But this government does not have a good track record when it comes to planning for and constructing new schools or hospitals. For instance, the replacement of just one school in Whitehorse — F.H. Collins — took almost a decade of planning before construction started about six months ago.

What steps will this government take to get the school upgrades completed as quickly as possible and without lengthy delays?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: It is unfortunate the member opposite wouldn't get off the script and actually listen to the answers being provided by this side of the Legislature.

As I just outlined, there are a number of actions being undertaken for short-, medium- and longer-term actions. I am not going to reiterate all the work that has been underway and is currently underway by the government, but as I just mentioned, we have engaged the engineering firm that completed that initial screening — those assessments — to itemize and prioritize that work required to bring our schools up to a life safety standard. That work is currently underway. That work will in fact be completed and wound up by the end of the year. That work will also help inform the longer-term plans for these facilities — all of our schools — and their replacement within their particular lifecycle. We are acting on those recommendations made by the Auditor General of Canada back in 2009 which spoke to the longer-term assessment of all of our schools.

We take this matter very seriously and we are taking steps to adhere to each of those recommendations.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order please. For the last few days, I have seen the temperature in this House starting to rise. The heckling and comments on both sides are starting to get quite loud and I ask members to bring it down a notch. I need to be able to hear what the members are saying in order to rule. If I cannot hear them, I cannot rule on them.

In giving those rulings, I'm going to remind members of a couple of the Standing Orders.

Standing Order 6(4) states, "When the Speaker speaks at any time, any member speaking shall sit down and the Speaker shall be heard without interruption." That includes heckling and comments, whether they're trying to be under your breath or not. I don't take this job lightly and I don't appreciate members' comments.

I would also like members to have another read of Standing Order 6(1) on your own.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Commissioner: Please be seated.

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

Clerk: *Pioneer Utility Grant Act; Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act.*

Commissioner: I assent to the bills an enumerated by the Clerk.

Before I leave today I just want to say a few words about Remembrance Day that is coming on Tuesday, November 11 and encourage and all Yukoners to take the time in your respective communities to attend the Remembrance Day ceremonies. This year is even a little more important because of the recent events in Ottawa and in Quebec. It is important to pay our respects and honour those who have served our country so well and provide us with the freedoms that we share in this Legislature and in this country.

I encourage all of you on Remembrance Day to try to attend your ceremonies in your very communities.

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order. Please be seated.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 751

Clerk: Motion No. 751, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Speaker: It is moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT this House shall stand adjourned from its rising on Thursday, November 6, 2014, until 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 12, 2014, and from its rising on Wednesday, November 19, 2014 until 1:00 p.m. on Monday, November 24, 2014.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I will be brief in speaking to this. I would just note that while this is not an annual occurrence, it has been done several times in the past when there is one sitting day between the weekend and Remembrance Day. The House has chosen on several occasions to provide the opportunity for rural members to spend more time in their ridings rather than having to burn more fuel and spend more time commuting from their ridings. That is the intention behind the proposed change which would have us see Monday, November 10 not be a sitting day.

The other change would also allow another longer weekend for rural members as well as accommodating the ability for two ministers to attend FPT meetings without having to arrange for a pair being absent from debate, including Question Period.

Motion No. 751 agreed to

Speaker's statement

Speaker: As the House has adopted Motion No. 751, the Chair shall inform the House of consequential changes to the House's schedule for the 2014 Fall Sitting: (1) the Executive Council's response to Petition No. 18, pursuant to Standing Order 67, shall be given on or before Monday, November 24, 2014; and (2) the final sitting day for the 2014 Fall Sitting shall be Thursday, December 18, 2014.

The adoption of Motion No. 751 also means that today is the final sitting day before Wednesday, November 12, 2014, when government private members' business shall have precedence during Orders of the Day. Therefore, I ask the Government House Leader to identify the government private members' business for November 12.

Notice of government private members' business

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The items standing in the name of the government private members to be called for debate on Wednesday, November 12, 2014, are Motion No. 756, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake, and Motion No. 723, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake.

Speaker: Government House Leader, please.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote No. 15, Department of Health and Social Services, in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2014-15*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 15: *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 15, Department of Health and Social Services, in Bill No. 15, *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Department of Health and Social Services

Hon. Mr. Graham: First of all, I would like to introduce you to the two folks who will be assisting me. As everyone knows, I need a lot of that. On my right is Paddy Meade, who is the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services. On my left is Peter Hayes, who is a director in Finance in the Department of Health and Social Services as well.

I am pleased to be able to introduce the Department of Health and Social Services supplementary budget for this year. The department is requesting an overall net increase of just under \$5.4 million in operation and maintenance funding and \$150,000 net in capital for a total of around \$5.6 million, which is less than a two-percent increase from the \$338 million budgeted in the mains budget.

The \$5.4-million increase mainly originates from Health Services, primarily for the territorial health system sustainability initiative and for increased physician claims. This is partly offset by a reduction of \$1.4 million for the Yukon Hospital Services.

The slight \$150,000 net increase in the capital budget is attributed to over \$1 million increases in most divisions and branches and this is offset by a large reduction of \$4.4 million in Continuing Care, largely related to the reprofiling of funds for the McDonald Lodge replacement in Dawson City.

I will talk about the operation and maintenance supplementary first. Corporate Services required an increase of \$105,000 for work on the fetal alcohol spectrum disorder prevalence and case management in the adult corrections

population initiative. One hundred percent of that total is recoverable from Health Canada.

The \$57,000 net increase for Family and Children's Services is mainly for a transfer from the Adult Services branch to fund the Kwanlin Dun First Nation family supports transfer payment and internal transfers to expand the healthy families program to two additional communities.

The \$75,000 decrease under Adult Services reflects this transfer to Family and Children's Services to fund the Kwanlin Dun First Nation family supports transfer payment. The increase of \$75,000 is to reflect the higher number of families involved with child welfare in Whitehorse. Health Services requires an increase in the department's O&M supplementary budget. The primary drivers for this increase are the territorial health access fund and increased physician claims. Over \$4 million is required under the territorial health access fund, including a one-time \$1.6 million increase under medical travel. An increase of almost \$2 million is required for physician claims to reflect the increasing number of physicians now practising and anticipated to practice in Yukon, as well as for recruitment and retention activities.

Other reasons for this increase include: additional requirements for a revote for the collaborative care initiative for the Yukon Medical Association, and that amounts to \$145,000; hearing aid purchases, \$250,000; system support for the claims processing system and mandatory reporting requirements of \$200,000.

I should add that two physicians in the territory total approximately \$35 million in this budget. In response to challenges in recruiting and retaining physicians to work in Yukon, the government is collaborating with the Yukon Medical Association to recruit additional physicians to the Yukon. The recent establishment of the Watson Lake physician recruitment and retention committee with key stakeholders is an innovative approach for community involvement in the attraction, recruitment and retention of qualified, suitable physicians to the community on a permanent basis. Finally a decrease of \$1.4 million under the Yukon Hospital Corporation is to reflect the actual pension solvency repayment required, based on an actuarial assessment.

In capital, I'll just run through essentially what changes are required for the department's capital budget. First of all, a \$1.4-million total increase for Corporate Services systems development and information technology; a \$1.8-million increase for the Adult Services Unit various initiatives, which we can get into; a \$4.4-million decrease for Continuing Care; a \$27-million increase for Health Services, Community Nursing; and a \$1.4-million increase for Yukon hospital services.

Under Corporate Services, a number of initiatives require increases, including the Canada Health Infoway for e-health \$836,000, most of which is recoverable from Canada under an agreement. The hospital information system and electronic medical recording connect, which is the HIS-EMR connect system is \$194,000 — 100 percent of which is recoverable from Canada.

Completion of the public health information system, Panorama, which is in cooperation with the Province of British Columbia is \$122,000 — also under the Canada Health Infoway — and various other system development projects totalling \$121,000; incident management and reporting, alcohol and drug service indicators, vital statistics and a case management system.

Canada Health Infoway is an independent, not-for-profit corporation created by Canada's first ministers in 2001 and funded by the federal government. Canada Health Infoway collaborates with the provinces and territories to facilitate and invest in a network of electronic health record systems across Canada.

Under Adult Services, several initiatives require increases in funding, including the purchase of land and project management and planning in support of the Salvation Army redevelopment project; which is \$412,000.

The Adult Services renovation project to complete security renovations and upgrades to the social assistance building will be \$125,000, and for general office equipment, another \$15,000 in total; for the Sarah Steele Building replacement, \$906,000 is to match the construction schedule; and \$360,000, including a revote of \$265,000, is required to complete the schematic design phase of the project.

Construction of the Sarah Steele Building replacement is expected to begin in March of 2015, and we hope that it will be completed by July of 2016. The new building will be purpose-built to include medically supported detoxification, a separate youth detox unit, youth and family treatment programs and it will have continuous intake for treatment and expanded treatment capacity.

Under Continuing Care, the initiatives that require increases include: continuing the development of a 15-bed care facility to replace the existing McDonald Lodge, \$423,000 including a revote of \$204,000; and supporting the completion of a business case and risk assessment for the planning of a new continuing care facility in Whitehorse and that is \$113,000, including a revote of \$51,000.

Also under Continuing Care, a \$5-million decrease is to reflect reprofiling to match the McDonald Lodge replacement construction schedule in 2015-16.

Replacement of the existing Alexander McDonald lodge in Dawson City is a priority project for Health and Social Services and, in fact, for the whole government. We anticipate completion of this facility in late 2015 with occupancy early in the year of 2016.

Under Health Services, a \$10,000 revote is required to complete the Faro Health Centre fire panel replacement, and a \$17,000 revote is required for the Broselow pediatric emergency system. This is a system designed to facilitate rapid access to pediatric emergency equipment and supplies needed to perform common pediatric emergency procedures.

Finally, under the Yukon hospital services, supporting the implementation of the Whitehorse General Hospital emergency department MRI expansion program will require an additional \$1.4 million, and the opening of the new MRI

wing at the Whitehorse General Hospital is on schedule and is expected to be operational by the end of January 2015.

Those are just some of the highlights of the 2014-15 supplementary budget for Health and Social Services. I look forward to answering any questions that members opposite have.

I thank you very much for the time, Madam Chair.

Ms. Stick: I would like to thank the officials here today for their assistance with the briefing this morning. Unfortunately, I only had it this morning, so if I ask questions that the minister has already spoken to in his introduction here, I apologize ahead of time. There was a lot of information given and I hope I haven't missed any of it. I certainly do appreciate the work that was done by the officials. It's always very clear and understandable when they give us the information. I like to tell them they have the best cheat sheets in the budget. Thank you.

I just want to take a minute to thank the people of Riverdale South, whom I represent. It's quite a diverse community. I was just writing down a few things here. Within my area, I have five schools, I have businesses, I have sports and recreation facilities, I have the tourism with the fish ladder, I have the Millennium Trail, I have daycares, churches, neighbourhood pubs, and a dance school. We have the wonderful addition of the Heart of Riverdale which is seeing more and more community activity. I would like to thank the people who work hard and volunteer. I will also thank the minister for funding for that also.

We have seniors housing, we have social housing, family homes, apartments, families with single-parent housing and suites in places. It's quite a diverse population. Many of the people I meet at the doorstep are living in homes they built back in the 1960s and 1970s and are still there. I've also noticed there has been a real influx of families with young children to the neighbourhood, and I see them. I see them walking by my house, I see them on the trails, I see them running with their families or on the Millennium Trail, and it's really good to see a new influx of young families because, for awhile there, it felt like there were not a lot of children around, but there are certainly more now.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the influx of deer into our neighbourhood. A friend of mine had seven in her front yard the other day in Riverdale working off the mountain ash trees and helping themselves to the berries. That is new and unusual but they're welcome to the neighbourhood also. I just want to thank the constituents for the welcome I have had at the doorsteps this summer and fall and I hope to carry on throughout the winter and see the people on whose doors I haven't had a chance to knock on yet.

I'm going to ask questions and I will be following the sheets that were given to me. I do have a number of questions on different areas and it is not so much about the number necessarily — although it could be — but it is also about the program areas.

I will start with the very first which is the revote of \$105,000 for fetal alcohol spectrum disorder prevalence and case management in adult corrections population. I understand

this is done with the Department of Justice. I will ask a couple of questions and give the minister a chance to answer those.

When we look at this \$105,000 and the fact that it is a revote, I'm wondering if the minister can tell us what has not happened at this point that we have brought this forward for a revote. I'm curious as to whether this prevalence in case management is strictly looking at individuals who are in Corrections or in Whitehorse Correctional Centre? Then, along this line — because we are talking about FASD — what about those adults who aren't captured within the Justice system? Certainly, there are lots of people without FASD who are living in the community of Whitehorse as well as the communities outside of Whitehorse who aren't captured by the Justice system. I know that there are groups looking and hoping that there can be some more concrete assessments done and a better case-management system for those. That would be so important in keeping them out of the Justice system and keeping them in our communities participating, working and raising their families with the supports they need. In particular, I'm concerned that much of this has been focused on Whitehorse and not a lot of attention has been paid to the communities on this.

I will start there. I'll let the minister answer and then we'll move on.

Hon. Mr. Graham: This money represents a specific program grant from Health Canada and it had very tight parameters. The Minister of Justice and I had a great deal of conversations about this specific project. It was intended only for residents of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. The scope did not include any others in the territory.

They were not included in the scope of this project. We're very clear that that is what it is for — WCC and people who have moved out of WCC who perhaps are on probation, but they began the project as part of the inmate population. The revote is simply because some of the policy work for the study was not completed. Other expenses surrounding the policy work and the people who were brought in to this prevalence study would account for the other \$62,000, I believe. There was \$43,000 specifically for the policy work. It had very tight parameters. The agreement with the federal government between Justice and Health and Social Services included only those people in WCC or those who had subsequently been released and are on probation.

Ms. Stick: The first question would be: How many assessments have been completed at WCC for FASD? The second part would be: Is there a case-management model for individuals who are leaving WCC and going to the communities and are coming under case management? It might be probations, it might be the social worker or the First Nation. Is there a case-management tool that is going with that individual back to their home community?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Once these folks are out of WCC, they are followed. If they return to their home community, they are followed by their caseworker or the community health people. If they remain in Whitehorse, then it's much easier to follow their progress. The intent of the program was

to follow up on those individuals even after they left. That's the intent of the program.

I know the member opposite asked me: What about people outside of the WCC? This is part of what I talked about the other day when I said we were trying to develop our own capacity. That was why the contract that we previously had with FASSY — the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon — we cancelled that contract for \$75,000, I believe it was — \$75,800 — and we are using that money this year to create analyses or teams in the territory that will be able to conduct future FASD studies or diagnoses here in the territory.

I probably didn't answer the member's question adequately in Question Period the other day, when she asked how many diagnoses were done in the last few months, since April. None. We have been busy developing these teams. We hope to have the teams in place early in 2015 so we should be able to start doing diagnoses early in the new year.

We expect to be doing a minimum of 10 per year with the team that will be in place. Because of the fact that we will have this local expertise, we hope that in the future we will be able to increase that somewhat.

The pilot project at the jail — the FASD prevalence study — did involve quite a small number of adult offenders at the Correctional Centre. One thing I must point out is that the program was entirely voluntary, so only those people who volunteered at WCC to be in the program actually were diagnosed. The process required a team of clinical professionals to administer the interviews, the medical exams and the neuro-physiological tests. Some of these tests just took extra time. One of the good things was that each participant will receive a personalized report that explains their cognitive strengths and challenges regardless of whether or not they were diagnosed formally with FASD. The reports that these participants will receive will also provide recommendations to assist each of the participants in the future.

If you want a little background information, perhaps I can take a couple minutes to give it to you.

It is recognized, I think, now across Canada, not only because of the work being done by Yukon government, but also by non-profits such as FASSY and OFI — that the Yukon has assumed a leadership role in FASD work across the country. It started in September 2008 with a report, entitled *The Path to Justice: Access to Justice for Individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder*. Since that time, the Department of Justice has continued to work on how to address FASD and the challenges it presents at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. It became a priority item for the federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for justice, and it gave us an opportunity to work with our counterparts across the country to develop the most effective responses. Health and Social Services became involved with the prevalence study because of our desire to build diagnostic teams here in the territory, so we have done a lot of that work as well.

We also should tell you that members — and I have to thank the Minister of Justice. One of the other things that we have to talk about is community wellness courts and their involvement in the process.

I will leave it at that. If the member opposite wishes, I can provide you with a lot more information.

Ms. Stick: I thank the minister for that information. Just a couple of comments — it was suggested that they are looking at 10 assessments and diagnoses, hopefully, for individuals with fetal alcohol syndrome disorder or spectrum and 10 doesn't seem like many when I know the numbers that organizations like OFI or FASSY are working with. I think the last time FASSY did the same work, they were able to complete seven with a small budget of approximately \$78,000.

I am hoping that can be an increased number because I'm certain that they have a long list of people who would be waiting to have assessments and possibly a diagnosis. I'm going to move on — and this is one of those areas that I am going to apologize right now. It has to do with THSSI and THIF and THAF and all these territorial health funding agreements that have started, morphed into something else and are proceeding into something else. I confess I do not understand them completely, and I wish I had somebody sitting next to me giving me the information on these, because I do find it confusing.

I understand that it is funding. It comes from the Government of Canada and we are part of pan-territorial in some of these cases. So I'm going to look at the \$2.408 million for program management. The explanation that I understood was that this is one-time and it's a — I believe it's old funding and current funding as we move into negotiations for the new one, which will be the territorial health incentive fund.

I might be right on that, I might be wrong. Anyway, I'm just wondering if I could get a bit more of an explanation — I understand it's in negotiations and that it has not been finalized — on the impact of maybe the changes on this. We have \$2.4 million to carry us over while these negotiations are going on. Are we going to be looking for funding in other areas? Will the new THIF meet the same needs that we have now?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'll just make one small comment about the inmates when they're prepared to be released back to their community. Integrated offender management is part of the Justice department and places a great deal of focus on the transition period, particularly at the beginning, because that's when clients are particularly at risk to offend. The integrated offender management places a great deal of focus on that time frame, and they're the ones that will assist the inmates in transition back into society, once they've left.

When we get to THSSI, which was the territorial health system sustainability initiative, it expired on March 31, 2014. We had been in conversations with the federal government for some time, up until April 1, 2014.

The message that came across loud and clear was that we were not going to receive as much money going forward as we had received in the past. In the past, the territorial health system sustainability initiative funded things such as palliative care. It funded things such as the mental health practitioners and mental health workers that worked in communities. I

know I have had this conversation a number of times with the Member for Kluane, because they found that the worker stationed in Haines Junction — the mental health worker — was a tremendous asset to their community and to others, because she travels around the territory.

There were a number of initiatives and travel was always one — travel for health reasons. That was a large part of the territorial health system sustainability initiative. When we did not have an agreement signed by April 1 of this year, we had two choices. We could either have laid off all those people and ended the programs that we thought were extremely good for the territory, or we could come back with a request for additional funding to continue those positions until such a time as we had funding to cover at least some of them. We are still in negotiations with the federal government — although it is much more difficult this time around than with THSSI, in that they are not funding any positions because of the fact that what happened with the last program is that there was a huge number of positions funded and then we either have to continue them or lay all of these people off.

This is my government's response to not having that agreement in place. We will continue to fund the vast majority of programs funded under THSSI — not all of them. Some didn't survive the cut, but the vast majority of the programs and things such as palliative care, Mental Health Services, Chronic Disease, medical travel — can you think of anything else?

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Graham: The rest has been absorbed in other program areas where THSSI funding has always funded the program. We're working with the federal government now on where this new fund can be utilized in providing services or changes because that is one of the things the federal government was very clear about: the new THIF funding, which is the territorial health innovation fund. They would like to see us fund new and innovative programs and practices, but not to use the money to actually fund positions that would fill those innovative practices that we are going to come up with.

The one thing that came across again loud and clear when Leona Aglukkaq was the minister was that they don't want to fund medical health travel any more in any of the territories. In the Yukon, I think we're getting \$1.2 million this year for medical travel from the THIF fund. It was over \$2 million, I believe, last year, so we have taken a substantial hit in that area. It will reduce in the next two years to \$800,000 and will eventually, after three years, disappear altogether. We either have to remodel our medical travel system and work to reduce costs or else we're going to have to add a lot of money to that file.

If you need any more information about THIF, THAF and THSSI, I'll be happy to help.

Ms. Stick: I just wondered if there is going to be a report that talks about the funding that we did receive through THSSI and THAF that kind of talks about the outcomes of those programs — and the minister mentioned a number of them: the palliative, the community mental health and an array

of others — and whether there is a summation of what has happened and what the outcomes of those programs are and perhaps even what this government will no longer be able to carry on with.

Hon. Mr. Graham: There was no requirement under THSSI to evaluate and report on programs other than we did do a report, called the pan-territorial — we did report to the federal government, or the federal minister, on the progress of the THSSI fund. It was very high-level. We did that report. Did we table that one?

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Graham: What this report really did was justification for the federal government to continue funding THSSI at the time. It was an evaluation. We gave a number of reasons for continuing the funding.

One perfect example to me was palliative care, as well as the mental health workers in the communities. Those two items alone have made a phenomenal difference in life in the territory for people. Those are two of the really high-priority items. There were a number of other ones, but there wasn't a huge amount of evaluation done, and one of the real problems was that positions were filled because this program had gone on for six years from 2008 to 2014. There had been positions filled that had proven to be very valuable to the government. They filled an important need in the community, so it has been determined that we are going to continue funding them. I guess that is an evaluation in one way, but a formal evaluation was severely lacking over the years.

I don't know what changes we will make until we have completed the negotiations. Anything is possible. There have been a couple of programs that we haven't chosen to continue. That is part of our strategic plan. They just simply didn't fit in.

Ms. Stick: I appreciate the difficulty of not knowing how we are going to be moving forward when those negotiations haven't been completed.

I don't think there is any more on that, without confusing me more, so I will leave that one.

The next one — and I am sure the minister spoke to me about this, probably in the budget speech in the spring, but I haven't had a chance to go back and look. This is a revote of \$145,000, and it is required for the collaborative care initiative for the Yukon Medical Association. I am wondering if the minister could please remind us what this initiative actually is and perhaps why the revote — why this money was not spent prior.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Under the agreement we negotiated with the Yukon Medical Association, collaborative care was an issue. So we agreed, as a government, to fund the collaborative care portion, or at least a collaborative care initiative, in several clinics around the territory. This \$145,000 represents our part of the collaborative care initiative to hire and integrate nurse practitioners into clinics in the territory in a variety of areas.

You know that we have just recently added a nurse practitioner in the women's sexual health clinic and there has been one for a time in the referred care clinic — that was, I believe, our first or second nurse practitioner hired to work in

the referred care clinic. We hope to continue working with the physicians to implement more collaborative care clinics.

Ms. Stick: I would agree with the minister that it would be great to see more nurse practitioners. We have had the one at Copper Ridge, the one at the women's sexual health clinic — and that is actually shared between two clinics — and the one at the referred care clinic, but that that's only really two positions.

Does the minister have any idea of why there hasn't been a take-up on this? It's a revote, so it didn't get spent. We're bringing it forward, and are there different ways that the Medical Association might be suggesting — or what more can we do to increase access to efficient primary health care needs, instead of the use again of the emergency department or people calling their doctor because they're sick and being told they have to wait a week before they can get in, when really, you wanted to see them yesterday?

Are we looking at different ways of doing this? Is there a better way to move this ahead? I do hear about the nurse practitioners who can't practice here, or don't have a job to practice here, and therefore they're leaving the territory again. I know the minister agrees that this a good use of our health care dollars, and a more financially efficient way of spending dollars and meeting more people's needs for the health needs that we have that aren't critical, when you do have — I don't know — a sinus infection or something that you need to see a doctor for, you can't wait 10 days, you don't want to go to emergency, and even the walk-in clinics are not a place to go, because we only have one and it's busy.

Hon. Mr. Graham: As everyone is aware, nurse practitioner implementation in the territory was a high priority for our government. That's why we passed legislation as quickly as we could after we took office.

I guess the most difficult thing for many of us to do is change, and this is a massive change in the way things are done in the medical community in this territory. Nurse practitioners will continue — their role will continue to expand in the Yukon — I have absolutely no doubt. We have one position, as you are probably aware, in Copper Ridge as well. We are recruiting them as often as we can into positions.

Change takes time. We are having some interesting discussions with the Yukon Medical Association right now with respect to how things are going to change over time. As you know, we recently put out the clinical services plan and — again — that one wasn't really well accepted by many members in the medical community because it recommends a great deal of change. What we hasten to tell people is that the clinical services plan is just one of a number of tools that we in the government will use to effect change in the medical system throughout the territory. The clinical services plan may not be the be-all and end-all, and we fully understand that and we agree, but it at least gives us a road map. With that road map, it's easy to change too as systems change and as times change. That, along with some of the other things that we have done in the territory, indicate to me that change is coming. It's now more of an accepted practice than it was two years ago.

We will continue to not only look at how nurse practitioners but other medical practitioners — expanded-scope nurses — we would like to see more mental health and addictions people brought into collaborative-care-type clinics. We know there has been a real willingness by the YMA and by the medical community as a whole in the Yukon to really discuss together how we improve the health outcomes for all Yukoners because they realize too there are difficulties, especially when we start talking about small communities around the territory. There are difficulties servicing those communities so we need a different model. I have been really encouraged by recent negotiations and recent discussions that we have had with YMA and I am sure they will continue. In the last six months, we had nurse practitioners approved to have tests handled by the Whitehorse General Hospital. That is something that is very good. We are going to keep moving in that direction as much as we possibly can.

Ms. Stick: One last question on nurse practitioners, as the minister just reminded me. Do we have those regulations in place for the nurse practitioners that we had talked about in cooperation with YRNA? When we passed that legislation, I thought there were going to be nurse practitioner regulations. I'm wondering if those are in place now.

Hon. Mr. Graham: What we needed to bring nurse practitioners into the territory is in place. There is always going to be some negotiation with respect to how they're used in the territory, where we will use them and what the scope of practice is for nurse practitioners, but we will continue those negotiations not only with YRNA but with the Yukon Medical Association and other associated medical health professionals to ensure that nurse practitioners can work to the full scope of their practice.

We look at expanded-scope nurses too and we haven't lost sight of those people because our expanded scope nurses are still really required in the territory and play an important role in many of our small communities. Collaborative care doesn't only mean nurse practitioners; it means all those other medical health professionals that we have as well.

Ms. Stick: I was going to ask about the one-time increase of \$1.6 million for medical travel, but I think the minister explained that this is one time, it will continue to drop and that we're going to have to find funding for that to replace it. I just wondered if the minister had anything else to add there.

Hon. Mr. Graham: This is the money that will replace what we spent last year. We had to carry forward some funding because we didn't know how much we were getting from THIF, the newest fund. We now know that \$1.2 million is the maximum we're going to get, but this money had to be brought forward in this supplementary budget. What it will mean is that there will be \$400,000 that the Government of Yukon will be on the hook for that won't be covered by THIF this year.

Ms. Stick: The next question I've already spoken to the minister a bit about and that would be with regard to hearing services. I think I understand it, but I just wanted clarification. This is for hearing aids that the department

purchases and then, in turn, recovers the money from clients or people who come in requiring the hearing aids. I have two questions. One would be: Does the department sell them to individuals at the same cost that they purchase them for? Then something that was of concern a year ago was the wait times for hearing testing and audiology tests and that type of thing — if the minister could comment on that please.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Thank you very much for the question. The current number of people on the wait-list is still higher than we would like to see at 450, but it's down considerably from the 700 it was at this time last year. What we also do is make sure that, if people have an urgent need or if they're acute or if they're referred by a physician, they're seen within a very short period of time. If it isn't urgent or if they haven't been referred by a physician for a specific need, then they may wait a little longer. Children are also seen as a priority, and they are seen as quickly as possible.

In many instances, when the audiologist is in town, people are asked if they can come on very short notice because somebody has not shown up or something has happened. We call people on the list. We try to keep as busy as possible. Audiologists are in short supply across the country — there is no doubt. As the population ages, there is an increased need for audiologists.

We are working very hard to attract professionals here, but we are in competition with all of Canada because it doesn't appear that there is any one jurisdiction that has a surplus. We have one audiologist resident in the Yukon. We have a number of others who travel to the territory throughout the year, and we are attempting to find more. We would love to have another permanent full-time audiologist here. We simply haven't had the opportunity yet.

Madam Chair, I don't know what more I can tell you. It is a long wait for some people. I have heard of people who have waited as long as a year, and that's really unfortunate. Those would be people who weren't a high priority but, to me, all of our patients are a high priority, so the more we can do to reduce that wait-list, the better off we will be.

Ms. Stick: I just want to remind the minister of the question I started this with, which was with regard to the purchase and selling back to individuals of hearing aids.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Yes, Madam Chair, we provide them at the exact same price that we pay. We don't try to make a profit on any of it.

Ms. Stick: The next amount was a \$1.7 million-increase for physician claims, and here it has \$700,000 for Watson Lake and \$1 million for the increasing number of physicians now practising in, and anticipated to practise in, Whitehorse. I am wondering if that is not rather low, because I did review some of the contracts for doctors and, for the Town of Watson Lake to date, it is over \$800,000, and Watson Lake also has a similar amount. I am just wanting clarification. Are these physician services that are going into the hospitals? I understand that finding permanent doctors is still a priority, so you are having to contract with a number of different doctors to go into communities.

So, if I could just get some information with regard to Watson Lake and the number I have, but also, what are we looking at for Dawson City, with the new hospital opening there too?

Hon. Mr. Graham: First of all, the Watson Lake expense is an additional \$700,000 over what we had already budgeted. We are talking about an additional \$700,000 for Watson Lake and an additional \$1 million for the rest of the territory, so we are talking an overall increase.

The bad news is that it's costing us an extra \$1.7 million; the good news is this encompasses all doctors' salaries. It includes specialists as well as doctors working in the ER, in addition to the doctors working in their clinics around the territory. We don't differentiate; we don't try to separate that funding out.

Ms. Stick: I wanted to go back for a quick minute to the audiologist one again. I understand there is a lack of audiologists across the country, but I'm wondering if there are any people with their own businesses or private audiologists that we might be contracting with in Whitehorse or in the communities to do assessments as well.

Hon. Mr. Graham: We do bring people up, and I can assure the member opposite right now that, if there was a private business in Whitehorse that an audiologist wished to establish, we would contract with them immediately in hopes of reducing our wait-list even further, but to the best of our knowledge, there are no private businesses in Whitehorse with audiologists. If there are, we would love to hear from them because we will provide clients.

Ms. Stick: Thank you. Moving on, there is an amount here for \$46,000 required for risk assessments around pre-diabetes and the diabetes programs. I understand that this is 100-percent recoverable, but I have a couple of questions about the program itself.

Is this a program that is offered in Whitehorse and the communities? How many individuals are we hoping or anticipating will participate in it? A key question is: Does it have to be physician-referred for a person to get into these programs?

Hon. Mr. Graham: This is a risk assessment project. In other words, it can be used by physicians, it could be used by our community nurses — which we anticipate will be the biggest single use of the project. It is a screening tool to identify an individual's risk of pre-diabetes and diabetes. It is part of the CANRISK program that is being developed in conjunction with the Government of Canada. This is to actually develop the tool that we will be using to screen people who may be at risk of diabetes.

Ms. Stick: Just to be clear then — this is a tool used by community nurses or doctors themselves. It's not necessarily a program, so much as an assessment tool for use by them.

Hon. Mr. Graham: That is correct. We see that any qualified medical health practitioner should be able to use this tool to diagnose people who may be at risk of diabetes.

Ms. Stick: I think I will move on to some of the capital costs, and I have a number of questions there.

I'm going to start with the announcement. The Salvation Army and the transitional shelter expansion that was announced on October 29 of this year — part of the money that we've heard — I'm just trying to — so one of the things that we see here is there is that there is \$350,000 toward the purchase of land and we understand that the Salvation Army doesn't plan to build on the same piece of property they own now. I was curious, if this \$350,000 is money to purchase land from the government — like, given to the Salvation Army to purchase land back from the government or is this a private sale of property?

Hon. Mr. Graham: It's really unfortunate that this — because of the fact that the Minister of Community Services made a presentation about where this funding was going, this had to be included — the money that was being available to the Salvation Army redevelopment project, but I think it's really important to understand that we have not yet concluded our negotiations with the Salvation Army. We have an agreement in principle, but we haven't concluded the actual negotiations at this time and we don't have a signed agreement.

I really hesitate to provide a huge amount of detail in a public forum until we have a signed agreement and I can say, "This is exactly what everyone has agreed to." I would be happy to brief the member opposite after the session or after the agreement has been signed because we anticipate that it should be in the very near future. These discussions have gone on for, as you know, a long time. Unfortunately, the Salvation Army has a process that they must go through, the same as we do in government. When you consider the size of the organization — they have billions of dollars of assets such as these across the country, and they are very careful. Again, we simply have not yet signed the agreement. We hope to do so in the very near future and I will be very happy when that happens.

Ms. Stick: I understand and I would appreciate a briefing on that, but the bottom line is that we have already voted, to date, just about \$3.5 million. We are being asked for another \$412 million in capital costs, but we are not getting a lot of information on that. Is it anticipated that this project is going to start? Because these are capital costs and it is a lot of money with not a lot of information. I would just ask the minister to comment on that please.

Hon. Mr. Graham: In conjunction with the Salvation Army, there has been a great deal of planning undertaken up until now. As you know, that is an expensive process in its own right.

What we have also done, in conjunction with the Salvation Army, is identified a number of things that we would like to see as part of this project. I guess we have also negotiated on the cost-sharing of this project as well, as you can see from some of the funding that has already taken place. We are providing the up front funding for all of the planning, the land acquisition and other related items, shall we say, but we haven't completed the agreement and I really hesitate to say anything until we complete that agreement.

Ms. Stick: I find that difficult that we are being asked — I understand negotiations; I understand it is ongoing — but we are already being asked to agree to an increase when we don't know the details. Some of the concerns I have are that this is a lot of money. This isn't a project that went out to tender and there wasn't a request for proposals on this. Certainly it was part of the government's platform — they have talked about it and their partnerships with Salvation Army. I am not dismissing anything that the Salvation Army currently does, but we also are aware that certain restrictions that come with working with the Salvation Army on these kinds of housing models and it is of concern for a lot of people in the Yukon.

I guess one of my questions would be — there were other projects that have been proposed out there. Certainly with the northern housing trust fund, many of the projects did go out for requests for proposals and many did go out to tender.

Why, in particular, have we just narrowly focused on this organization and not expanded it to other groups that might not be offering the service right now, but certainly have the background, information and support of other community organizations to provide the same kind of service?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The Salvation Army was already providing — or is already providing — a number of the services that we requested in the new facility. So that gave us a base. We decided to partner with the Salvation Army because they bring a great deal of expertise and funding to the table, something that no other NGO could do.

The government could possibly construct this facility on its own and then go to tender for a local NGO to run that facility, and that's still an option. We feel that the Salvation Army brings a great deal of expertise and a great deal of commitment to a project like this, and that's why we are negotiating with them and that's why we started with the process with them. Things like the construction project will be tendered. That's not something that we are going to rush off and give a sole-source a contract to do.

The normal procurement procedures will be followed, but we have to make sure that we have all of our ducks in order so that when we sign an agreement with the Salvation Army — and we anticipate doing that fairly quickly — all of the funding has been approved that is necessary to commence construction, shall we say, or commence the purchase of land and construction and everything immediately.

Ms. Stick: So when we're looking at program management of this project and, as you mentioned, putting this out to tender, then I'm assuming that the government will be the project manager on this capital project, if that's the way it's going through. I'm looking for confirmation of that. Is the government going to be the project manager on this? I know the staffing situation now at the Salvation Army here in Whitehorse, and they're a busy lot. I don't imagine they would be able to do that or have the expertise that is required.

My other question would be: When that is completed, what kind of agreements are we looking at, in terms of O&M of such a big project when we don't really understand how big or what's included yet?

Hon. Mr. Graham: What we're talking about now is the construction. That's all that's in this budget. As part of any construction project undertaken by the government, we also provide estimates of future O&M costs. That happens as part of the capital project.

With this project, part of the project will be the project management. The departments of Health and Social Services and Highways and Public Works will be working very closely on a project like this, but the Salvation Army is a massive organization. Across this country, they have — as I said before — billions of dollars in assets. They have a great deal of experience in constructing these facilities and in managing these facilities.

We fully anticipate that when the agreement is reached with the Salvation Army they will co-manage construction of this building. This is going to be a cooperative construction project. There is no doubt about it. They have tremendous expertise that we will be calling on and we have a lot of expertise available in Highways and Public Works and in Health and Social Services that will guide the project from a Yukon context.

Again, once the final agreement is signed, we will have all of this information available for you. Unfortunately, like I said, it has not been signed. We are dealing with a bureaucracy similar to our own or even larger when we deal with the Salvation Army.

Ms. Stick: The minister mentioned earlier in his introduction to this debate a start date and an end date, I believe, for this project. I didn't write them down. I'm wondering if he could repeat those for me please.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I am just looking for my notes and I will give you exactly what I said. I know that we will be starting this project or we definitely feel that we will start this project in the spring and it will be completed — we expect that occupancy will be in 2016. In my opening remarks, I didn't give exact dates.

I said that it will begin the spring of 2015 and we anticipate occupancy in 2016. Those are the anticipated dates. Again, we have to get the agreements signed, and part of the agreement will be construction dates.

Ms. Stick: I think there are a lot of questions around this that we're not able to get because, as you say, you're still within negotiations, but they are concerning to me — that we can already project when we're going to start and when occupancy is, but there is not a lot of detail in-between there, and I plan to come back to this in the House, but I would like to move on with some of the other things still in the supplementary budget here today.

One of them that I was interested in that was mentioned under capital projects was about capital work to be done at the Kluhini Building renovation project to complete security renovation and upgrades to the social assistance building. I understand there are a few programs housed in that building. I'm just curious about what new security systems are going to be needed in that building, where you already have security guards sitting there. I remember when they put up the glass between front-line workers, such as the receptionist or

financial workers, and clients coming into the building. I'm curious about what further security items we are looking at for Adult Services.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I will just go back one step, because what I can tell you for sure about what will be happening with the Salvation Army redevelopment project is that we will have an expanded shelter — as I have said, I think, once before. We will have an expanded shelter in order to separate men and women. We will have transitional housing. We will have a larger kitchen. There are a number of things that we have agreed on. What we haven't agreed on are a number of other issues that we are busy negotiating, as we speak. We hope that it will be done in the very near future.

The Kluhini Building renovation project was really — I did change my opening remarks to "Adult Services building," because it doesn't include only the social assistance area. This is for the whole Adult Services building and addictions, so we are including Alcohol and Drug Services, as well as Adult Services and social assistance. It includes the whole building project.

I can get you some additional information, if you would like.

Ms. Stick: So I am taking it that these are rolled in, because we clarified this at the briefing today, that Alcohol and Drug Services is not in the same building as social assistance and the Adult Services. But you did say in your introduction — you specifically talked about security. That is why I was curious about that.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I think that during the briefing this morning — they admit that did say the wrong thing. I said the right thing in my opening remarks. It is Adult Services. A few of the things that are being done — new private offices so interviews with clients can be held in a private setting instead of an open-office setting. Those are the kinds of things that they are doing. It does include all three areas — the ADS Unit, Adult Services and, to some extent, the Kluhini Building as well.

Ms. Stick: I wanted to talk a bit about the Sarah Steele Building. We are seeing just about a doubling in capital — an additional \$1.266 million — and part of this, I understand, is a revote and we're still in the schematic-design phase of this. I have a number of questions about this whole program because we have been talking about it for quite awhile now.

One of the first ones is: What are the timelines in terms of beginning construction of this? I will ask a couple of them right now and then let the minister answer them. Where will this new building be located? I would like some information on the range of programming that is going to be provided, and what is going to happen with the current Sarah Steele Building that is on Sixth Avenue?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The timeline that has been proposed — and so far it's on schedule. In September the design development detail was well underway. It will be used to develop the tender package. The draft was ready. I know that the kitchen design was slowing the project down, but I understand that it is now fixed. We expect that construction documents will be completed in January 2015. The

construction documents will be put out for tender in February 2015, and we expect that the contract will be awarded in March 2015 and that construction will begin in the spring of 2015. We have targeted July 2016 for the construction to be substantially completed. It will be placed on the lots immediately behind the current Sarah Steele Building, and the current Sarah Steel Building, once this building is completed, will be torn down — not immediately, but very shortly thereafter.

There are other things that are underway at the same time. The kitchen contractor is waiting for final approval. The kitchen hasn't been finalized yet, but it is in process. There will be some discussions with Kwanlin Dun with respect to the YACA agreement. That kind of stuff has to be done as well.

Chair: Would members like to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. We're continuing general debate in Vote 15 in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Ms. Stick: I have a few more questions with regard to the new Sarah Steele Building and some of the programming that will be offered there. The minister did speak briefly to it in his introductions. Some of the concerns we've heard over the last while have been the wait time for some individuals to get into the program. The minister said there would be a continual intake of people.

My question with regard to that is: Right now, you have programs for males and programs for females. The minister also mentioned a youth program. How does a continuous intake with three different streams work, or will there possibly be three 28-day programs running at the same time in the same building? I'm just curious as to how that might work.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Before I answer that question, I will just answer one other one. There is a part-time audiologist in Whitehorse who is in private practice, and we are utilizing those services. Through the magic of electronic communication, I was corrected. Not that I was wrong — it was just that I was corrected.

The member opposite is quite right that we will — the replacement building for Sarah Steele has been designed so that we can actually handle those separate programs for men, women and youth at the same time. What the member has to understand is that they aren't necessarily all 28-day programs. We will have a detox section for youth as well. That is one of the reasons that the building is substantially larger and more expensive. We have decided to go with the ability to do all of those things in the same building.

Ms. Stick: Will there be opportunities in the programming with the new buildings for families to also be accommodated? As I think everybody here knows, a person going through treatment also needs the support, hopefully, of

their family and friends — being able to have family there — and also for them to receive some of the support and treatment that they might need with regard to dealing with the individual when they come home, with changed behaviours, and how families also need treatment and support skills to be able to continue to help their family member.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The building has been planned in such a manner that family involvement will be easy to accommodate in this new building — not necessarily accommodation for the family at the same time the youth is in the facility. Again, it will depend on the usage, but we're not saying that family accommodation will always be available when a youth is in the facility.

One of the other things that we're really concentrating on is the pre- and post-supports that must be available in order for these people to succeed. I think in the past we have talked about how many times a normal person who has addiction difficulties goes through the 28-day program before it finally takes. The relapse rate is very high. We know that one of the reasons for that is because of the supports that are available to the person before and after they complete the program. That's one of the things that we're really concentrating on, and it's one of the reasons that we will have spaces available for accommodation post-program.

Ms. Stick: I apologize for not being clear with regard to the family support also. I was also talking not necessarily just youth, but about if it's a spouse who would come and accompany her or his partner to the treatment program and whether that was available.

So I will ask that one again, but I also wanted to move on and ask another question. The minister remarked on different lengths of time for some programs and he has partially answered it with a post program where, I presume, a person could stay there and in effect extend the 28 days so they might be able to stay. Is there a time limit of how long they could stay?

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Graham: I can say that if I want to. I am sorry, Madam Chair.

To answer the first part of the question; the family involvement will still be there for spouses and family supports, but we simply won't have enough room in the building to provide accommodation for all of those family members as well. It is one of the things that is going to come out in the new policies or the new program plan that we will be doing for not only addictions but mental health as well. We anticipate that it will be part of the planning process. It is something that I know First Nations are really concerned about too, which is the post program. The member opposite is correct when she said that some of these things may be shorter.

The program might be shorter than 28 days, but you're right, some of them might go longer and we will be able to accommodate those folks who have addiction difficulties longer than 28 days if that is what is necessary. But it is also one of those things that we hope that we will be able to work together with the Salvation Army in the new building with

post-program care as well. We hope to have transition beds in the Salvation Army that will be available to people leaving the Sarah Steele Building. As members opposite know, we recently contributed \$1 million to the on-the-land program with Kwanlin Dun and we see that program as being another post-drying-out phase — I guess you would call it — in Sarah Steele. On all of those things we will work together. We will work with the Salvation Army. We will work with Kwanlin Dun on the on-the-land program and we will be working with people in the communities as well because I know some of these people will go back to their communities and that post-program care will have to be available there as well.

Ms. Stick: I think I'm going to move on to McDonald Lodge in the Klondike. I'm sorry I don't have my note from this morning. We have revotes and many of these are. But then this was a reprofile and it is minus \$5 million. I'm just looking for an explanation of that.

Does this mean that what's happening right now with McDonald Lodge is that it's behind schedule or will this \$5 million be in 2015-16? Is this behind schedule now?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The reprofile of the money is just to accommodate the construction schedule. We were behind schedule slightly, but we think we are now on schedule once again. We've also identified at least one area where we may have some difficulties in the new year — like in January or February — and if those difficulties do arise we may be delayed slightly, but we don't think that it will be a huge delay. We are working hard right now to accommodate those difficulties. As the member opposite from the Klondike is aware, the liens process with the facility that was constructed there will end at the end of November. Until that time, we have some difficulty proceeding with the connection of mechanical services between the existing facility and the new McDonald Lodge. Until that lien period has elapsed, we know that we're not going to be able to correct any problems. That's why I say that we may run into a slight delay in the new year, but we hope not.

Ms. Stick: I think I will leave that and move on. The Member for Klondike might have more questions on that.

Whitehorse continuing care facility — we haven't heard a lot about that since it was first announced. I still have many, many concerns. We're up to \$7 million now on the capital costs of this. What I haven't seen is any progress — what are the plans? I've heard from many people with regard to consultation. I've heard from First Nations and communities who are concerned about losing those resources in their communities, like elders and seniors, who are such a strength and resource for people and for the community.

I just think of my own experience with whenever there is a death within our First Nation and how the elders are pulled in — they are the ones who guide the process in making decisions about workers and cooks and who will be involved and when it is going to be. It doesn't matter how old they are or even how great their health is, they are a part of the decision-making of the community. I have heard the concern of the loss of that and how they are the history that goes with each community.

What we haven't heard since this announcement is anything about timelines, about costs and any alternatives that might have been discussed.

We did see the report that came out in June 2013 and it talked about a lot of things, such as the closing of Macaulay and the Thomson Centre. If we close the Thomson Centre and if we close Macaulay Lodge and we move palliative — if we take those people in the hospital — not just the Whitehorse Hospital, but Dawson Hospital and people who have been transferred to the Watson Lake Hospital — and bring them into this initial 150-bed facility, it is already just about full and there is still a wait-list out there.

I am really concerned about whether this is still the best model. I am not convinced it is — to house 300 individuals within one location and for everyone from the communities — not every community, but most communities — to have to come to this central location, separating them from families, friends, and familiarity.

I have got a lot of thoughts on this and I am really concerned. One of the biggest disappointments to me is that I remember when the Thomson Centre was opened and the number of beds in there and how it was designed at that time in particular for people with Alzheimer's or with dementia. We recognize that some people did have to come in from the communities, but it was very purposefully and thoughtfully built at the side of the Yukon River. The reason for that was because every community has a river that runs through it — most communities. You think of Dawson, Mayo, Pelly, Carmacks, Whitehorse — Watson Lake has a lake — Old Crow, Teslin has a river —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Ms. Stick: Yes, it does have a river. There is a lake and a river that comes out at the bridge.

It was purposely built to give those individuals coming to the Thomson Centre a sense of place. It was familiar; it might not be the same river — it probably isn't — but it was purposely built around that whole design of — this gave them a sense of home, a sense of place — and we're losing that.

We need more offices at the hospital; we're expanding the ER and all of that. I think it's a real shame to take something that was so purposely built for seniors and elders in all our communities, and to not utilize it any more. The design of it: the circular paths; the common kitchen area where people could share cooking — all of those and with the river. That river was the real central focus, because that's what so many seniors and elders, who have grown up and lived all their lives in the communities, are familiar with.

I didn't mean to go on about that, but I just have to get that out because I can't do it in a minute when we have Question Period. It's important, and I think the loss of that facility and that busy place, where people can see what's going on across the river and they can see downtown — I love it when there's the Yukon River Quest. You can actually see them — they're out on the balcony, and some of them have signs urging people on. It's activity and it's based.

We don't see that same thing up at Copper Ridge, where there's not that same sense of community and activity and

things going on around you. There are homes and there is traffic, but there is not necessarily the same thing — even at Macaulay Lodge. You have kids walking by to school. You have the grocery store there. There is that sense of community and that you belong somewhere. There's a neighbourhood pub across the street where you can go, you know, and some do — all of those things. I'm concerned about that. We're up to \$7 million and we don't know where this place is going to be yet. I don't know if the minister does. I'll ask that question. Have we got a location for this?

I guess the big thing is the consultation. When is that going to happen — not just with seniors groups, but with every community in the Yukon because presumably that's where people will be coming from? There needs to be information given, but also an opportunity for people to express their concerns. I understand the statistics and about the growing needs of seniors. I understand all of that. I don't need the statistics; I understand that. But what I am concerned about is the way we're going about this and the consultation that needs to take place. I'll sit down, Madam Chair.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I will try to answer. If I miss a few, I'm certain you will fill me in.

The one thing that we have to realize is that — and the member opposite saw that from the study that was done — the number of seniors who are going to require these facilities in the next 20 years is phenomenal. We believe there will be as many as 450 additional beds needed to accommodate seniors over the next 20 to 25 years.

We are planning for the long-term. It's a real dilemma, because we don't really want to take anybody out of their home and put them in a long-term care facility, but the acuity levels that we are seeing — especially in our frail seniors — they're living longer and there aren't enough resources to accommodate each of them in their home communities. It's a phenomenal cost to staff these buildings on a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week basis. One of the reasons that we've increased home care so much is because we feel that home care is a reasonable alternative. Home care will allow us to keep seniors in their homes long after they normally would have gone.

I speak with some experience because my father-in-law spent quite a bit of time at the Thomson Centre when he was no longer able to exist on his own, and my mother has lived with me for 18 years. During 16 of those 18 years, she has been blind. She is not exactly a young lady any more, so I know what it's like to have those folks with you in your home. I know how difficult it is. It would be even more difficult if home care wasn't there to help. It's one of the reasons that I'm a real advocate of home care. I see what it does; what those services do, especially for my mom, although she only lets them come once a week because my wife is her favourite nurse and that's the way it is.

The other thing with Thomson Centre is that it was built quite awhile ago. It has only been recently that it has been rebuilt, but it's really not up to current standards or best practices for dementia and Alzheimer's. The new facility will be built to accommodate dementia and Alzheimer's patients.

As we have said before, what we also plan to do is to provide some palliative care. Mental health is something else that we will probably provide, although we haven't done those kinds of community consultations to determine exactly, but those are the kinds of things that we will be suggesting that we go ahead with.

I think that we have identified a few locations. There are very few locations within the city that can handle a facility of this size. As the Deputy Minister of Public Works said, this is going to be the largest single construction project so far in the territory. It has to be well-done; it has to be well-planned. That is one of the reasons there is \$6.9 million in this budget just for site planning and the preliminary things that have to be done. The next step, once this preliminary plan has been okayed by Management Board, is to go out and consult with the community. Again, I understand what it is like to move seniors out of their homes, especially in communities when that has to happen, but at this time I really don't see any alternative until some of these communities get a lot bigger. It is extremely expensive.

Even with the current facilities we have, it costs us in the neighbourhood of \$400 or \$420 a day to keep a patient or a senior in one of these facilities. That cost per person will probably decrease — well, it won't decrease because by the time this facility is constructed, inflation will take care of any savings we make, but a facility of this size will definitely limit the increases that we experience in years to come.

I hope that I answered most of the questions. If not, then we'll continue.

Ms. Stick: I'll agree with a few of the comments the minister spoke about. One of them is home care and how important it is. In fact, I know and I've heard that there is a wait-list right now for home care and, in particular, that it is not fully staffed. I think until we see something like this, those home care numbers should increase and we should be able to look at evenings or we should be able to look at weekend home care for individuals instead of just Monday to Friday. It is the best option for many of the seniors and for some of those seniors waiting in hospital right now. Some could return home if there was increased access to home care, but unfortunately that's not happening.

The minister spoke about yes, it's not good to be taking people away from their communities and I agree. The minister said something there that just made me even more worried — well, maybe we'll include mental health too. How big is this place going to be, how many people are we going to accommodate and how are you going to pay for that? Like the resources, the O&M, the staffing — I can't even begin to think where we are going to find all of those people. Now we're talking palliative, Alzheimer's, people who are currently at Thomson, Macaulay, day programs and mental health.

I worked in an institution that we closed down. It housed 1,200 individuals; it had staffing of over 1,200 and that wasn't a great institution. We're talking wards of 20 to 30 people and it still took us a staff of 1,200. I worked in one of those. We closed those. We said that wasn't the way to go.

Again, I worry about the consultation. We heard that from the Auditor General: “You’re doing all of this work ahead of time. You haven’t done the community consultation.” That was pointed out in the Auditor General’s report on the hospital projects. We shouldn’t be making that same mistake again of saying, “We’re going to build this; now what do we need and what do people want?”

It’s backwards. What do the communities want? I think every community realizes they each can’t have their own place. They know that. But there are also groupings of communities. We have the north Klondike. We have the north Alaska Highway. Even in the clinical studies, it divided out different portions of the territory into groupings. Those are there, but to suggest that everything should be here and something of that size and that broad a scope — that’s huge, it really is.

I think if you talk to people in palliative care who are right now providing that service in hospital or in homes — some people are fortunate enough to be able to stay at home through their palliative care, and that’s great — I’m concerned. Yes, we are living longer, but I also might suggest that a lot of us are living healthier. We are living healthier; we’re living longer, but we are a lot more active. I would look to the minister and to most people — or all people in this House — we are active and we are getting older. I think we are more active than what we saw with previous generations and, I’m thinking, healthier. I know the stats are telling us otherwise with regard to Alzheimer’s and yes, we will become fragile at an older age. I’m not going to argue statistics — they’re there — but I really do think there has to be a different or a better consultation going on sooner rather than later asking citizens, who are paying for this, “What do you want? What do you think is going to be best for your community, for your family members, for probably yourself at some point in your life — what is going to be best?”

I just know that there are too many people who will be taken from their community and will not have contact with their family again. I’ve seen it in my own family where a family member was here at Thomson Centre and those of us who lived here in Whitehorse could go visit them, but the family members who lived out in Haines Junction didn’t have vehicles and didn’t have transportation.

They came in to see him — the family member — if they could get a ride or if they hitchhiked, but it wasn’t very often and they lost that contact. The person who felt it the most was the person in Thomson. They were happy to see us, but I wasn’t the son; I wasn’t the stepson that they had spent all of their time with — it wasn’t me they wanted to see. They appreciated it, but that is not who they wanted.

We’re up to \$7 million after this and we haven’t talked to the communities and we have not said: “What do you want?” I just think that is so wrong — we’ve done this before and why are we doing this again?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I have to correct one thing first. The member opposite said that the Auditor General said we had to consult with the community in their report. The Auditor General talked about needs assessments, not community

consultation — so that is the first thing. A needs assessment — two separate needs assessments were done. One was done as a result of there being a certain amount of controversy over whether or not the numbers were accurate. Another independent needs assessment was done that actually said that based on current statistics, we will need more than 300 beds by 2035.

There is no doubt that the need is out there. You know, you talk about home care and we doubled home care. We doubled home care in the last year. We have some difficulty — there is no doubt — keeping all of those positions staffed and there is a constant turnover, but we are keeping the vast majority of those positions staffed. But when you talk about taking seniors out of the hospital and moving them back to their homes, in many cases you are talking about seniors who would need daily home care and who would need probably some kind of contact with a nurse — an expanded scope nurse or nurse practitioner. All of those things for the higher acuity patients whom we’re talking about would be required, and the possibility of getting that many new positions in home care and staffing them and keeping them staffed is pretty slim. Not only that, the cost would then rapidly approach what it is going to cost us to keep somebody in a long-term care facility.

When we talk about the other facilities, there are a number of ideas floating around out there, but we know that Macaulay Lodge is way past its best-before date. Macaulay can’t take the level of need that we’re finding in our current citizens. There are stairs that they have to be able to get up. It was built to standards in the 1950s and that is great, but it just no longer fits the need that we have.

The other thing was that, when we came up with the concept in order to — we’re trying to make sure our planning is done properly on this.

We took this concept out to long-term-care experts or long-term-care groups in both B.C. and Saskatchewan to say, “This is what we’re considering. This is the concept. What do you think?” Some of the things they told us were amazing. We’re on the right track. They don’t build facilities any more in either of those provinces that are for less than 300 people, because the economies of scale simply are not there and it is costing a great deal of money to staff these facilities. We will have to get back and see exactly what they said. I just was informed that it could have been as low as 200.

But small facilities just were not economically feasible. We know that’s exactly what everybody would want. That is what I would want. If I was living in Pelly or Destruction Bay, I would want to be able to keep my senior with me there in the community. We know that. It’s one of the reasons we are building a new facility in Dawson City. We realize that Dawson City has had this facility in the past. We’re expanding the size. We understand that Dawson residents themselves may not be able to fill it completely, and it would be great if it was available for Mayo, Pelly Crossing or other communities in the north. In a sense, we have constructed a regional facility.

When the member opposite talked about mental health, it’s interesting that you would be concerned about this

because what we're talking about here are the unmet mental health requirements of our senior citizens.

We know that there are a number of people in our facilities who have unmet mental health needs, and we want to be able to fulfill that need, so we will have that available for them in the new facility.

We are also looking at best practices with this facility. We want to build it in a neighbourhood. We want to build it with smaller units. It's a neighbourhood concept — I'm sorry — so that there will be smaller pods that will be all interconnected with a larger facility where we will have the main laundry, kitchen and those kinds of things. That is the concept that we are going to build it in, so you won't have corridors of nothing but doors where these folks will be living. It will be a neighbourhood concept. It will also be constructed in a neighbourhood where there are other people around. You talk about Macaulay Lodge, where you see the kids going to school and that. That is what we intend to do with this.

We are not 100-percent certain yet of where it's going to be constructed. We have a number of areas, but we have to talk with the city, we have to consult with all the users of this facility in order to determine exactly where we are going to build it. It's one of the reasons that we develop concepts. That's the reason it costs so much money up front. We have to develop these concepts to be able to say to people, "This is what we propose" or "These are some of the ideas that we have. Which one would you prefer?" or "Do you have some ideas?" But to just go out there and say to people, "We are going to build a long-term care facility and we think we are going to need 300 beds — what do you think?" Without something to look at, people aren't going to respond to that kind of stuff. They just won't be able to.

The concept of a 300-room facility — is almost mind-boggling to me and I've been working with it for a year. We will have some concepts available for people. We are making sure that the planning is done. We are going to attempt to make it the best possible thing, but we also have to keep in mind our fiscal responsibility. Simply to build a bunch of smaller units around the territory isn't going to work. Not only will we not be able to hire the people — you know, we have trouble right now getting social workers and nurses to live in some of these communities. What are the chances that we're going to be able to put in a long-term care facility too?

One other thing that the member opposite talked about was the wait-list for home care. As far as I'm aware, there is no wait-list at the present time for home care. We have some people with higher acuity needs that perhaps aren't getting all of the services they would like to have, but we are providing whatever service we can to folks. We're also working with the hospital because we know there are a number of beds at the hospital that are currently housing people who should be in long-term care. We know the difference in price between a bed in long-term care and a bed in the hospital, so we would like to move them out as quickly as possible. We're looking at alternatives as we speak to be able to do that quickly.

We know this 300-bed facility won't be ready — even if we build it in phases. The first 150 won't be ready for a while

so we're trying to identify some short-term solutions. But we're also working with the Hospital Corporation to identify needs earlier in the process so that when a person requiring some home care is discharged from the hospital, we're able to identify that. Our staff can sit with the hospital staff and do a plan of care. If there are needs that can be met by home care, that's what we do. It's a much better process than just saying at the hospital door, "Okay, you're healed now. Goodbye." and that's it and you stand there and wait for a taxi to come and take you someplace because you are not even sure what you can do.

We're working really closely with the hospital on those kinds of things. I can't see any other notes that I made here that I haven't talked about so I will sit down and wait for more questions.

Ms. Stick: There was a lot said there and a lot of it we're going to disagree about. The minister spoke about the cost of a bed in continuing care being \$450. I would suggest that home care — a bed continuing care is \$450 a day is what I understood —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Ms. Stick: Yes, \$420 a day. I would suggest still that home care is cheaper even if we could provide more. The minister talked about being able to staff it. We talk about the trades and skilled training and the college we have and there is the LPN program. Let's expand those programs and offer it to Yukoners and give them incentives and say to them, "Look, do this program and we will give you jobs. We will give you home care jobs where you are working independently and able to go into peoples' homes and provide the support for them to stay in their homes."

I know it can't happen today. I understand that, but there are a lot of people looking for work. There are people in the communities — we know what the unemployment rates are in the communities. There are some solutions because if this goes ahead, we are still looking I don't know how many years down the road. It is not going to be one year and it won't be two, because you are still going to have to staff that. So let's start now; let's start giving people skills and let's put them in home care and take care of some of those numbers. There are people in the hospital who, with appropriate support, could be aging in place — not all of them — I understand that. I realize some people really do need to be in those long-term beds. I am not arguing that and I know we don't have any. I know that to them — to take up those hospital beds — never mind \$420, or even \$450, it is way more and the result of those beds being taken up is knee surgeons coming up and not being able to do one.

I spoke with the surgeon myself about people not being able to receive the surgery they are scheduled for. I am not going to argue with a surgeon who calls me and tells me about this. I am going on what a surgeon has told me.

We're looking long down the road, but in the meantime, we have these other concerns and we have people taking up bed space that is not meant for that and it is certainly the most expensive form of care. I worry that people are being shipped away from Whitehorse, never mind bringing them to

Whitehorse. Individuals are being shipped away from Whitehorse to the Watson Lake hospital. I'm not sure about the Dawson hospital. I don't know. It's true. A friend of mine has called me and has spoken at length with me about — I'm not saying it's bad to go to the Watson Lake hospital, but this person is from here and they were told because they don't have family here, it's okay for them to go there — never mind that they still have a social support program or people here that now they are cut off from. They're not from Watson Lake.

We're bringing people in, we're shipping people out and it's costing a lot of money. I'm going to stop right now and give the Member for Klondike an opportunity because I know he has questions too. I really think that, before this goes much further, there has to be a lot more consultation and talk with the communities, care providers, families, seniors and palliative care professionals about how to do this best and whether really this is.

It might be great for Saskatchewan that they don't build anything smaller than 200 beds. You could build a 200-bed facility in Saskatoon and fill it with people from Saskatoon. I mean, we're talking about a completely different population and set. With that, Madam Chair, I will let the Member for Klondike go ahead.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I didn't hear a question there, but I'm just going to reiterate what I've already said. We look at it from a number of viewpoints. When the member opposite talks about home care being a panacea for the people living in the hospital — sorry, it isn't. We look at every person who is in that hospital and we try to determine the best alternative. We know that we don't want them in the hospital, not only because of the cost, but because of other things as well. If there is a flu epidemic, there won't be enough beds.

For the member opposite to say that surgeries were cancelled because there were too many long-term care patients in that hospital, you had better be very careful with that because every time there is a bed situation at the hospital, my department sits down with the Hospital Corporation people and we attempt to resolve the situation to ensure that no surgeries are cancelled because there are people in that hospital.

There are a number of other reasons that surgeries may have been cancelled, but the bed shortage should not be impacting on surgeries. We have made it very clear to the hospital that we will do everything we can to move people out, and that's one of the reasons that we have to move them to Watson Lake. It's interesting that the member opposite has a difficulty with this but we're making the best use of the facilities we have in the territory. We've increased home care. We're in the planning process for this new facility. We're attempting everything we can. We'll also consult with the community but we know that there are some things we simply won't be able to accomplish, and setting up a long-term care facility in every community in the territory isn't going to happen.

Mr. Silver: I want to begin by thanking the minister for that conversation, for all these conversations. His conduct in

Committee of the Whole in general — I don't think I ever heard him spend his complete 20 minutes just talking about a briefing note and I love the fact that he has no problem engaging in the debate. Thank you for that. We're not going to always agree, that's for sure, but at least he welcomes the debate.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Mr. Silver: Thank you for that.

With that said, I will give him a lob ball to start with. I just wanted to know if the minister can give me an update on his communications with Little Blue Daycare in Dawson City.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Early last month, I believe, the director of the Dawson daycare came to Child Care Services with a copy of a report — I think it was a situational report and recommendations for the Little Blue Early Care and Learning Centre. The report was completed for the Dawson City children's society by Learning Edge Corporation of Dawson.

The report examined the current situation in Dawson. They included physical, environmental, vocational, financial, and community factors and they came up with a report that said there are four options: maintain the current facility, expand the current facility, lease new facility or build new facilities.

I think the report said we would like to see a new facility — a new expanded, dedicated building constructed at a cost of almost \$1 million. The report also stated that it would increase capacity for 24 to 32 children and we are only too happy to discuss the report with the folks from Dawson. I think a meeting has now been scheduled with the Dawson City folks. We are talking with them. I think the folks in Dawson are also taking a look at some other funding options and we really encourage them to do that because the chances that I am going to get another million dollars for a daycare in Dawson City in the next little while are fairly slim.

We think it is an excellent report. We don't agree with everything in the report, but we think it is an excellent report and we look forward to proceeding with it as quickly as possible.

Mr. Silver: I do appreciate that update and I do appreciate the minister and his team spending the time to talk with the daycare folks and their board.

One of the largest problems that the daycare has — first of all, it is really hard to get training to begin with, and then once they get people trained, it is such a transient population that it is really hard to keep those individuals. It is hard for people running a not-for-profit daycare to compete with the types of salaries that can be offered in different places just in Dawson, let alone in Whitehorse and that type of thing.

We had a conversation this summer with the Little Blue Daycare board members and we were talking about the affordable housing money. Wouldn't it be great if, as we plan for a new facility, one of the things that could actually get as supplementation to the income of these individuals is — we're going to build a new daycare; in this new daycare, we're going to have apartments above it and those apartments would basically be affordable housing. The daycare could provide

for the employees they are having a hard time keeping by saying, “We can’t pay you as much on the grid as, let’s say, the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in can at their daycare, but we can offer you affordable housing.”

The minister is looking for some extra money. Maybe there’s an opportunity for him to sit down with his colleagues along the way in Community Services and discuss the fact that there are millions of dollars waiting around in affordable housing money. The minister can respond to that if he likes, but I’m just putting that out there as a suggestion. I know that the people at the Little Blue Daycare thought that would be an excellent idea — of course they would.

I’m going to move on to the Salvation Army. It’s a clarification. I know there was a discussion earlier about this. I just didn’t get out of that conversation whether or not there actually has been land chosen. I know there are ongoing agreements, but it just comes down to: Has there already been a place chosen for the new building?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I will speak about the daycare proposal first. I have already told my department the same thing — that anything is up for discussion. You know, we’re willing to listen to any ideas. This one I had not heard, but again, it’s an idea that we would be happy to discuss.

With the Salvation Army, because of the fact that we haven’t signed that agreement yet, I think it became apparent the other day when I heard the folks from the Salvation Army responding to a radio interview that they said much the same thing: no, nothing has been decided. We hope that if the agreement can be signed in the next little while, we’ll be only too happy to share all of that information with everybody but, until that agreement is signed, we won’t.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate the answer from the minister.

I’m going to go to the pensions at the Yukon Hospital Corporation. I know it’s the corporation, but the minister did speak a bit about the shortfall in the pensions earlier on in this fall session.

How is that shortfall being addressed? I understand that the corporation takes out a line of credit — or lines of credit — for the shortfall. I am just wondering — and once again, if this is a conversation for the Yukon Hospital Corporation, we will wait for them to appear as witnesses — but I am wondering how much interest is being paid on that line of credit? How much has been paid out over the last number of years?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Last year — or at the beginning of this year — we budgeted \$5 million to top up the Yukon Hospital Corporation’s pension fund to meet the minimum standard required by the Office of the OSFI. Luckily, the return on investments was very good in the last year, or the last three years — since the last actuarial evaluation, the pension returns — the investment returns — were very good.

Consequently, when it came time for the actuarial evaluation, they found that they did not need the full \$5 million that we had budgeted to top up the pension fund. They don’t get a line of credit; what they do is get a letter of credit from a bank, and with that letter they can do up to 50 percent of the deficit. We have to be careful to understand that

the deficit we are talking about is a mythical deficit. It is a windup deficit. In other words, what we are funding is the actuarial cost of winding up that pension fund today. The reason I call it a “mythical cost” is because the college was in the exact same position. They have to fund this windup calculation, even though the only entity that can wind up the college and the hospital is the Yukon government, and the Yukon government should be able to guarantee those things, but it can’t.

I have a number of suggestions that I know, with the Minister of Finance, I am discussing, because I think this is an untenable situation. It’s Canadian law. It’s under the *Pension Benefits Standards Act* that we must do this. On an ongoing basis, both of those funds are in a surplus position. In other words, they can meet their current expenses and all of the pensions that they are paying out at the present time, based on the returns they are making. I know the Hospital Corporation, in conjunction with the union, has also made a recommendation to increase the percentage that employees pay.

That is helping offset the deficit as well but, on an ongoing basis, it’s not a problem. It’s this wind-up calculation that’s the problem and it’s a massive problem. It’s several million dollars. It’s not like it’s \$2 million or \$3 million; it’s more like \$8 million to \$12 million — in that range.

Mr. Silver: I’m going to move on a little bit more about the continuing care, the 300-bed facility. We know that there is \$7 million in the budget for this project this year. We’re wondering how much will be spent this year. Has a total budget for the project been set already? The minister already talked about whether or not there will be a location selected and he did not have one set so far. I have more questions on that, but I will start with that.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, we have identified a number of potential locations for this facility. The final decision has not yet been made. It will be made when we complete consultations. This \$7 million will get us through this phase of the project — the planning and the development of concepts. It will get us through that phase. We expect that this money will be spent this year, but I’m not going to get trapped in that whole thing about — “How much is it going to cost?” and then I’ll say, “\$300 million,” and then I’ll be held to that five or 10 years down the road. No. At this point, we don’t have any solid costs. We do have some class D estimates that are plus or minus 40 percent.

We have a concept in mind. We have a concept price in mind, but until we spend some of this \$7 million to narrow our focus down, we won’t be able to come up with a closer price.

Mr. Silver: I definitely appreciate that answer.

I do have a question about the McDonald Lodge in conjunction with this 300-bed facility. A lot of this question is probably going to be best answered by the Minister of Highways and Public Works.

We were contacted by the contractor who is doing the engineered fill for the expansion. They had a concern because the original contract was for two stages of this McDonald

Lodge. The first stage would have been a certain amount of area in front of the hospital and then there was also supposed to be the expansion afterward, as far as they understood it. When they did the contract, it was shrunk to just one part of that plan. The contractors were wondering if that means that later on when we expand the original number of beds for the McDonald Lodge facility — the replacement — would they then, if they wanted to expand, have to come back in and do more engineered fill beside a now existing building? It started the conversation going on how many beds are going to be in the McDonald Lodge in this first round — if there is a first round — as compared to a second round. Does this mean that the second round maybe isn't even being considered?

So it got the conversation going. Was there a larger facility that was going to be constructed in two phases? Is that now off the table or is this something where, just to save some money right now, we're just going to do the engineered fill for one part of this expansion and then later we're going to go back? I know that as far as the actual physical asset, those are questions for another minister.

I guess the question is: Is this a two-phase project and is there a certain amount of beds to this project in total? Are we getting some now and some later?

Hon. Mr. Graham: No, it is not a two-phase project. We understand that there may have been plans made at some point in the past but we planned 15 beds for that hospital. In discussions, we have also said that there is a possibility that we could add another five sometime in the future if they are needed. As part of this construction project, no, 15 beds are what we planned, 15 beds are what we got funding for, and 15 beds we will build.

We know in the back of our minds at Health and Social Services that if we need another five beds at some point in the future, a lot of the planning has already happened for that, but it is not a two-phase project right now. Fifteen beds is what we planned and 15 beds is what we will build.

Mr. Silver: So the minister did speak earlier with the Member for Riverdale South about this facility being kind of more of a hub, I guess, for some of the more northern communities. So we're not talking about just Dawson City; we are talking about Old Crow; we're talking about Ross River; we're talking about Mayo — 15 beds. I urge the minister to talk with Marion Roberts up in Dawson. She gave me a list of 20 names just from Dawson alone. They want to retire. They are going to be looking for space in the McDonald Lodge — and that is just Dawson.

So maybe when we're talking about how hopefully there's another stage to this, and bringing the question forth to the minister about five more beds — it's needed. It is a needed thing. I know the minister has had a conversation with the Member for Riverdale South about expenses and these types of things, but he did also mention the fact that this particular facility is best served by being a northern hub. In that, I am cautioning that 15 beds does seem small, especially when with some of the elders in Dawson City alone we have lists of 20 names of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens alone. This isn't just

Dawson citizens — this is specifically Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens.

It might not be enough for the community; it might not be enough for the northern hub. I don't want to go on about Mrs. Roberts' opinions about coming to Whitehorse to retire. I'm just going to leave that there and ask a question. Well, I'll give the minister a chance to respond.

Hon. Mr. Graham: As part of the needs assessment, Dawson City was looked at. In fact, every community in the Yukon was looked at. I don't have the needs assessment here in front of me, but they actually gave us numbers based on each community. The first one and then the second one looked at the data and did their own extrapolations, and the numbers actually were slightly higher in the second one. That's why we realized that, at some point, we may have to expand the Dawson City nursing home.

What we also have to look at is that many of these people may be better served by home care. It's exactly like the Member for Riverdale South said — that home care is something that we are expanding continually. We really think it can serve as a hub.

I think the current McDonald Lodge is almost never full, and it only has 11 beds. We think that the 15 beds will get us over quite a long time. In fact, we look forward to being able to perhaps enhance home care in the City of Dawson because, as you know, it is kind of a part-time thing for people. The good thing is that it's collaborative, because it includes a large number of people who are only doing part-time. It is something that we can look at in the future.

Once again, I kind of have to say that a smaller facility is really difficult, but in this case we are just replacing it so it was an obvious thing to do.

My deputy just said that we did involve the surrounding community in the needs assessment of McDonald Lodge. That is quite interesting to me — that they were involved in the needs assessment and we looked at the numbers, which is probably where the additional five beds came from.

Mr. Silver: I am going to give Marion Roberts' phone number to the minister. They can talk about that later.

The Sarah Steele Building was discussed earlier as well. I'm just picking through my notes. That was a long debate with my colleague from Riverdale South. When the new and larger Sarah Steele is completed, what is the expected increase in operation and maintenance? Also, how many additional staff will be required to work in the building and to service it?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The approval — well, you know what the total was there. For capital — and I didn't write down what we expected. I'm sorry — I'll have to get back to you with that number. The anticipated additional cost wasn't that big because we've already instituted some of the — like the medical detox has already been implemented, but we will definitely have more beds. We will be providing uninterrupted detox programs. Because of that, the staff required will be greater than what we have right now. There was some additional money needed but we will get back to you with the exact numbers.

Mr. Silver: I think I can sneak one more question in here before our time elapses for the day.

I am going to move to the Canadian Foundation for Health care Improvement. This summer it was announced that the Yukon government's Continuing Care branch would be one of the 15 Canadian health care organizations selected to participate in a project aimed at improving care for dementia patients.

The questions would be: How will this money be used? How much money and over how many years will this funding be transferred to the Yukon government?

Hon. Mr. Graham: This is part of a study being done in cooperation with some other jurisdictions. Not only is it a study, it is an implementation using better management of dementia patients, looking at the misuse of drugs in dementia patients and what impact that has. We'll be working only with dementia patients in Copper Ridge but we'll be assisted by other jurisdictions and staff will receive direction. It's better ways of managing dementia than through the use of drugs. That's what it's all about.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Seeing the time, I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 12, 2014.

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 169

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, November 12, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

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Hon. Darrell Pasloski	Mountainview	Premier Minister responsible for Finance; Executive Council Office
Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Community Services; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation; Yukon Lottery Commission Government House Leader
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Yukon Energy Corporation; Yukon Development Corporation
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Environment; Public Service Commission
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Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Justice; Tourism and Culture

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Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
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Kate White	Takhini-Kopper King

Liberal Party

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon**

Wednesday, November 12, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Tim Twardochleb

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise today to pay tribute to Tim Twardochleb, one of our community's contributors to community safety and crime prevention. Tim was the executive director of Crime Prevention Yukon from 1999 to 2004. He took on this role after a long and distinguished career in recreation in both Yukon and Saskatchewan.

He had a passion for developing skills in young people and knew that helping youth find belonging in society would create healthier and safer communities. Tim led the administration and delivery of a number of projects that had an immense impact on youth, such as the Youth Leadership project, the Skills Link youth project, and the Under 12 project.

Skills Link project specifically provided unemployed youth with life and job skills through training, education, culture, recreation and volunteerism. Tim oversaw six Skills Link projects, which impacted at least 70 youth and project reports indicate that over 50 percent of the participants who completed the project subsequently enrolled in school or found work. Tim also organized annual community events for Crime Prevention Week. One of those events was the promotion of neighbourhood barbecues, which supported the concept that strong and connected neighbourhoods created safe communities.

Tim was also instrumental in the establishment of Yukon's chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, or MADD, in 2003. As a founding member, Tim believed strongly in MADD's message and was a long-standing volunteer well into his retirement. Tim's work in both the crime prevention and recreational fields here in Yukon have and will continue to have a long-lasting impact. On behalf of the government and people of the Yukon, I wish to pay tribute to Tim Twardochleb.

At this time, I would also like to introduce a few family members who have joined us. We have in the gallery Audrey Twardochleb, Trevor Twardochleb, Lareina Twardochleb, Tracy Bilsky and Jason Bilsky. From the Department of Justice, joining the family, is the Deputy Minister Tom Ullyett. Welcome.

Applause

In recognition of Dawson City arts community and filmmaker Suzanne Crocker

Mr. Silver: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Liberal Party and all of my colleagues to acknowledge the Dawson Film Community. Dawson has become world-renowned with its thriving arts community, due to the support of the community as a whole, but also as the whole of Yukon arts community. We owe very, very much to many artists, both past and present, whose vision and passion for their craft has left a resounding impact on the Klondike.

Dawson has produced accomplished filmmakers. Two in particular I would like to mention are Lulu Keating and Dan Sokolowski, who are often cited by young filmmakers in the community as very strong mentors.

They say that it takes a community to raise a child, but in some cases, it also takes a community to raise a filmmaker. Dawson offers some incredible opportunities for young artists with its vibrant art community — KIAC, DCAS, the Dawson City Short Film Festival — that really help foster creativity. Even yours truly, Mr. Speaker, has produced a film at Dawson's 24-hour film festival. I would understand why you didn't hear about it.

Yukon as a whole creates an environment for filmmakers to learn from each other — within the Yukon and those from Outside who come up to the Dawson City film festival and to the Yukon Film Society and YFSC. Let's be honest, there is no shortage of breathtaking inspiration in the Yukon.

One project in particular that I would like to acknowledge is *All the Time in the World* by Dr. Suzanne Crocker. At its first ever public screening — the Vancouver International Film Festival — this film won the audience award for most popular Canadian documentary. This is no small feat, as the Vancouver International Film Festival is among the five largest film festivals in North America and one of the world's largest public exhibitions of new Canadian films. *All the Time in the World* was created with the support from Telefilm Canada, the Yukon Film Society and the Yukon Film and Sound Commission.

Suzanne Crocker is not new to success. In 2010, her animated short film, *Time Lines*, won the MITY Award for the best Yukon-made professional short film at the 2010 Dawson City International Short Film Festival and then went on from there to screen other film festivals in North America and in Europe.

All the Time in the World highlights some of the reasons that we choose to make Yukon our home, our ability to get out on the land and our desire to find an alternative to the hectic pace of life in southern Canada. Thank you very much to the film community and thank you very much to Suzanne Crocker for her beautiful documentary.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Barr: I would ask the House to welcome a constituent of mine, Mr. Peter Percival, chair of the hamlet council and a great volunteer in the community out there.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

- (1) acknowledge that without regulations in place, the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* that was assented to in 2012 cannot come into force;
- (2) recognize that without the act or its regulations in place, landlords and tenants lack formal terms of reference on which to base their relationship, including the dispute resolution processes; and
- (3) table the regulations and minimal rental standards that are required for the new act to come into force before the end of the current legislative session.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to acknowledge that there are no Liberal senators in the Canadian Senate, and that there have not been since January 29, 2014.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Hospital bed shortage

Ms. Stick: Last week, I asked the Minister of Health and Social Services about cancelled surgeries at Whitehorse General Hospital due to lack of beds. He replied — and I quote: “There are a number of other reasons that surgeries may have been cancelled, but the bed shortage should not be impacting on surgeries.” Mr. Speaker, I agree. The bed shortage should not be impacting on surgeries, but it is.

This morning, Dr. Storey, a long-time Yukon surgeon, said there have been numerous occasions where surgeries have had to be cancelled at the last minute due to lack of bed space.

Will the minister now correct the record and tell Yukoners how many surgeries have been cancelled due to a lack of available beds at the Whitehorse General Hospital?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I appreciate the question. Over the past year, only four surgeries were cancelled at Whitehorse General Hospital. Three of those four cancellations were for patient-related reasons and not because a bed was not available. So I believe that the response I made last time this question was asked was quite accurate. There are virtually none; in fact, there was one. So I apologize if I misdirected anybody. There was one cancellation that we’re aware of.

Ms. Stick: That’s certainly not the information that Dr. Storey gave to the news this morning. Dr. Storey, renowned surgeon at Whitehorse General, said that out of the 16 beds set aside for surgery and recovery, only about two are regularly available to over 35,000 people in the Yukon. He says the other 14 beds are usually filled with chronic illness patients or those waiting for long-term care.

The Thomson Centre opened in 1991 with 46 beds. It reopened after repairs in 2011. Currently there are 23 patient beds there — half the original number. The other half of the centre has been converted to office space. Why has the minister allowed long-term care beds in the Thomson Centre to be converted into office space while surgeries are being cancelled — according to the surgeon — due to a lack of surgical recovery beds?

Speaker: Order please. The member’s time has elapsed.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I guess what the member doesn’t seem to understand is that the bed shortage at Whitehorse General Hospital is something that is in constant flux. One day there might be only two beds available in the surgical recovery room and the next day, there might be seven or eight.

We have taken a number of steps in cooperation with the Whitehorse General Hospital to monitor bed availability. We have taken steps to improve discharge planning to ensure that supports are in place. We have also just begun now to look at temporary facilities that may be available throughout the city in which we can house long-term care patients without disrupting the hospital. But I have to reiterate that, in the last year, four surgeries were cancelled. Only one of those surgeries was due to a bed shortage at the Whitehorse General Hospital.

Ms. Stick: Last week, the minister responsible said — and I quote: “...we’re making the best use of the facilities we have in the territory.” I wonder if the minister has a different definition of “best use.” Dr. Storey recommended that the Thomson Centre be mobilized now to free up more beds at the hospital, adding that more care should be provided for Yukoners with chronic and long-term care elsewhere, not in the hospital. The consequence of this inaction is that surgeries are being cancelled. I don’t doubt this surgeon’s word. If the minister will not consider reconfiguring the Thomson Centre to its original purpose, can he tell this House what immediate action he will take to resolve the lack of surgical patient recovery beds at Whitehorse General Hospital?

Hon. Mr. Graham: One of the very first things this government did when we took office was expand the number of beds that were available in the Thomson Centre for long-term care. Unfortunately, it is a very costly undertaking and we have to consider that in relation to the long-term care needs and the long-term care plans of this government.

That’s one of the reasons we began immediately planning for additional long-term care in the Yukon. We are working together with a private operator. We are working together with a number of people in the non-profit sector, all of whom have different ideas that can be used for long-term care in the Yukon.

So we haven't been standing still. We've been doing this planning and it's one of the things that we will continue to do. We know it's not cost-effective to leave people with long-term care in the hospital and we're doing everything we possibly can to make sure that the situation is resolved as quickly as possible. As I've said, we are looking at a couple of other options within the City of Whitehorse and as soon as those options are more carefully planned out, we will be happy to make that announcement.

Question re: Emergency 911 coverage

Mr. Barr: Access to emergency services by dialling 911 is a vital component of public safety and emergency preparedness. All Yukoners must be able to quickly reach emergency services regardless of where they live or the technology used to place their 911 call.

We know there is an application before the CRTC to create a temporary solution to Yukon's 911 services, but until then, the safety of many Yukoners continues to be at risk. History repeated itself last weekend when the Dawson City fire chief had to take an emergency call on his personal phone because the emergency dispatch service wasn't working.

When will the government hear back from the CRTC and what has been done to remedy the problem with the emergency dispatch service experienced in Dawson last weekend?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I thank the member for the question. As I've noted in the House before, in fact the interim system that we are currently seeking CRTC approval to use was tested in March of this year, and were it not for the fact that we were unequivocally informed by CRTC that we and Northwestel needed their permission before we could operate the system that would currently be in place. The member's question just underlines the importance of it.

I hope the CRTC recognizes the fact that approving this interim solution, which would allow people to press 1, 2 or 3 for police, fire or ambulance in Yukon communities, would significantly improve the status quo while we are doing the work with all of our partners to the full expansion of 911 services.

As far as when the CRTC will render their decision, I don't have a clear indication of that. I am hoping it will be very soon.

Mr. Barr: Has the dispatch service problem we experienced last weekend been remedied?

The CRTC application seeks approval for a 911 auto-select solution, which means that callers in communities can first dial 911, then press 1 for police, 2 for an ambulance, and then 3 for a fire department. When someone is in a stressful situation, they are not expecting to get a phone tree to get the emergency services they need.

Children doing their best to help an adult might be confused by the set-up. We know that 911 saves lives, but 911, listen to a message, then press 2 and then wait might not be enough to save a life. Why isn't the government simply doing what needs to be done to implement a fully functional territory-wide, basic 911 system that will serve all Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: We are doing just that, but the work that is required to upgrade the system — not to mention the community consultations, which the member apparently does not realize are an important part of the work toward implementing a basic 911 with a centralized dispatch. I would remind the member that we've heard specific concerns from Yukon municipalities that moving to a centralized dispatch might lose local knowledge and might result in fact in delays in service. While I firmly believe that all of those matters are resolvable, we have to respect what we've heard from municipalities and what we've heard directly from the Association of Yukon Communities on behalf of their members. We've committed to working with them. Again, implementation of full basic 911 services is estimated at 16 to 24 months as of July, when we made the application to the CRTC. That is why we're moving toward asking CRTC's permission for the interim system, which could have been operational in March were it not for the fact that we had to get CRTC approval.

Question re: Economic outlook

Mr. Silver: I have a question for the Minister of Economic Development. Last Wednesday Statistics Canada confirmed that Yukon has the worst economic growth of any jurisdiction in Canada for 2013. Our economy shrunk by almost one percent. The report also gave some insight as to why this government's forecast on GDP numbers for 2014 have been drastically rolled back. After initially saying that our economy would grow by 8.8 percent in 2014, the latest forecast is only 1.7 percent — again one of the lowest in the country.

One of the reasons our economy slowed for 2013 was that a number of mining projects delayed decisions on construction and production. One of the projects the government was relying on in their forecast was the reprocessing of old tailings at the former Whitehorse Copper Mine site. However, on September 22, the company behind the project said that the project was not looking good. Does the minister expect this project to proceed for 2015?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what that company plans to do with that particular project. My understanding is that with the downturn in magnetite prices, the project was looking less optimistic than it may have previously. What I do know is that the company has remained engaged with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources on the regulatory side and with the Department of Economic Development on providing data, but I have no idea what that company plans to do with that particular project.

Mr. Silver: The Yukon Party believes that it is growing the private sector; however, from September of 2012 to September of 2014 the number of private sector jobs in the Yukon dropped by 300.

The minister mentioned Keynesian economics in last week's response where government spending is used to stimulate the economy, yet we had the lowest growth in Canada for 2013. We are near the bottom again for 2014. However, the government's projecting 4.5-percent growth in

2015. Now that projection is based on, in part, the government's belief that there will be a resumption of production at another mining project, the Keno Hill district. I hope that this does happen, yet with silver prices where they are, it is less likely.

How much of the minister's forecast is based on this project proceeding in 2015?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, one of the things I should note is that what Stats Canada told us in their recent set of data was that the decline that we faced in 2013 was driven primarily by the decline and decrease in the construction industry. That industry fell by a considerable margin, especially compared to the mining industry. While the mining industry is important and it is important that we continue to take measures to improve the viability of the mining industry in Yukon, it's also important that we recognize the value of the construction industry. That is why, earlier this year, we brought forward the largest capital budget in the history of Yukon. We have increased our overall spending considerably and the evidence is all around us when you look around Whitehorse.

You see the construction going on at F.H. Collins; you see the construction going on at the Whitehorse Rapids dam facility for the backup generators; and you see all the construction going up at the Whitehorse waterfront with regard to seniors housing being constructed there. These are all projects that provide considerable economic benefits to Yukoners and they also are all projects that the member opposite voted against.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, it is the forecasts that are troubling for Yukoners. A year ago, the minister said that, in 2013, Yukoners continue to enjoy a growing economy. The minister, as we now know, was wrong. The economy shrunk in 2013. Growth is mostly flat for 2014 and the government is projecting growth of 4.5 percent for 2015. The problem is that many of the projects that the government relied on for those projections are sadly falling off the table.

The minister's last forecast quoted an expectation of activity within the Eagle Gold mine as a key driver of their growth forecast for 2015. For the record, I am extremely hopeful for all of these projects and, despite the Yukon Party's best efforts to try to convince Yukoners otherwise, I am absolutely in favour of responsible mining in the Yukon.

I have a very simple question for the minister: Does the minister see this project beginning construction in 2015?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Whether or not a project goes forward is a business decision that the company that owns the project has to take. I can't make those kinds of predictions. What the Department of Economic Development does though is make forecasts for the coming years based on the best available data that the department has at a given time. We are not qualifying whether or not we think these projects go forward — we are not betting on them. We are simply saying that, based on the data available to us from these publicly traded companies, this is what the forecast looks like. It is not the Yukon government looking into a crystal ball. It is not us

picking winners and losers. It is us making a forecast based on the best available data at the time of presentation.

I know that both parties have criticized the department for making these forecasts. They don't seem to like the fact that the economists do this and try to make this data available to Yukoners, and have criticized those economists in the Department of Economic Development numerous times. But what I will continue to do is to stand up for those folks in the Department of Economic Development who do this work on behalf of Yukoners and continue to turn the criticisms of the department from the opposition back toward the opposition parties.

Question re: Economic outlook

Ms. Hanson: It is unfortunate when a minister doesn't understand ministerial responsibility and accountability. It's not the officials; it's the minister.

Small businesses are the key —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I believe it is out of order for a member to comment on a previous question, as the Leader of the NDP just did.

Speaker: Sure, I'll listen — Member for Riverdale South, on the point of order.

Ms. Stick: This is actually related to the member's next question, and she was just doing her opening for it.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I don't believe there is a point of order at this time, because I don't know what the Leader of the Official Opposition's question is going to be. Until she finishes the entire question, I would not be able to rule.

Leader of the Official Opposition, please.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, small businesses are the backbone of and the key to a strong Yukon economy. The Official Opposition knows this. That is why an NDP government established Yukon's small business investment tax credit. We have heard from this government telling us that this government supports private business and industry, but the performance suggests otherwise. The City of Whitehorse annual report reveals the number of business licences dropped from 2,864 in 2012 to 2,080 in 2013. That's a drop of nearly 800. Can the Premier explain to Yukoners what the loss of nearly 800 business licences last year in Whitehorse alone means for Yukon's economy?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'm not familiar with the statistics the member is referencing today, but what I said earlier was that we do know that 2013 was a difficult year for Yukon's economy. We saw a decrease in our real GDP to the tune of between 0.7 and 0.9 percent. That occurred for a number of reasons including those I have mentioned today — meaning,

challenges to the mining industry and challenges to the construction industry. That is why we brought forward the largest capital budget in Yukon's history and increased capital spending considerably on a number of projects throughout the City of Whitehorse and throughout the entire territory. That is why we are optimistic that, going forward, our economy will be stronger and that what we saw in 2013 won't be replicated in 2014 or 2015. We're optimistic that the increases that we have made in capital spending and economic activity in the territory will result in increased activity this year and going forward.

As I said earlier, the evidence of that, both anecdotally and statistically, is all around us. When you look outside throughout the capital city, you see a number of large construction projects that are providing economic benefits for Yukon businesses. Whether or not those businesses are directly related to the construction industry isn't as relevant because of the size of our economy. It's important that these large construction projects benefit a number of companies that aren't just receiving direct benefits but indirect benefits as well.

Ms. Hanson: You know, Mr. Speaker, the facts contradict what I'm hearing about all of this evidence. This government's statistics also reveal that retail and wholesale sales actually decreased in 2013 by 2.6 percent and 3.8 percent respectively, so where is all of this trickling down to? Is it in the territory?

Small businesses play an important role in our local economy and they depend largely on retail or wholesale sales to survive and thrive. When sales fall, small Yukon businesses suffer. Our economy suffers along with them. What action is this government taking to support small businesses during this time of negative economic growth?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: When the member opposite asks for statistics or for evidence, I suggest she go walk around her community. Look at the large construction projects that are going on in the territory and that are going on in the community of Whitehorse and she can see for herself that what is happening this year is much different from what happened last year.

It's not just me saying that based on the anecdotal evidence. The statistics available through Stats Canada bear that out as well. What we see is that the building permit distribution — the number of building permits pulled for this year — is up over 100 percent for non-residential construction in the territory from 2013. In residential construction, the level is up by over 120 percent.

What we see is yes, 2013 was a difficult year and that 2013 was a challenging time for Yukon's economy, but what we see now is a turnaround in that as a result in part of Yukon government's considerable capital spending and considerable activity in the economy. We see residential and non-residential construction up considerably, both in terms of the anecdotal evidence all around us and the statistical evidence of course.

Building permit values don't necessarily mean that the expenditure will occur, but it is simply an indication — it's a

very positive indication. When held alongside the anecdotal evidence we see all around us, we're confident that 2014 will be much stronger than 2013 and that our economy will continue to grow in the years to come.

Ms. Hanson: Both the evidence and the lived experience of small business owners in this territory contradict what the minister said.

Building a strong, sustainable and inclusive economy means making sure that people have the right tools for the job. We know that investing in leadership and management training helps support productive, competitive and resilient businesses during these challenging economic times. Small businesses in particular have fewer resources available to invest in training and skills development, yet as of July 1 this year, this government cancelled the business training fund, offered locally through the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, in favour of the Canada job grant that cost employers three times as much.

So what action is this government taking to support leadership and management training for local Yukon businesses, including employee skills development and training?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, I hate to say it, but the member opposite is wrong again. This government did not cancel the business training fund. That in fact was a program that was being delivered by CanNor funding. That came to an end at the end of June, as I seem to recall.

What this government has done though, like every other province and every other territory in this country, is we have come together and we worked out to have the best deal possible for all Canadians with the rollout of the Canada job fund. In fact, by banding together with the two other territories, we were able to negotiate an additional \$500,000 for a total of \$1 million in funding.

In addition to that, we also deliver student financial assistance, of course, to the tune of almost \$5.5 million. We also deliver \$3.5 million in program support under the labour market development agreement; an additional \$1.25 million for labour market agreements for persons with disabilities; and employment support services, to the tune of almost \$1 million this year alone to assist those who are actually seeking work in this territory.

In addition to that, we are also rolling out \$1.4 million in community training funds. That does not even include the over \$26 million in support of the Yukon College.

Question re: F.H. Collins Secondary School reconstruction

Ms. White: This government has tried to cover up their continued mismanagement of the F.H. Collins replacement project by telling Yukoners that the construction company they hired from Outside would create many Yukon jobs and boost the local economy. Yukoners know full well that this government's decision to award the project to an outside company greatly lessened the local economic benefits of this project.

Apprenticeships and the training of local Yukoners could be a positive outcome of any large-scale capital spending that governments undertake. The skills learned by apprentices on these projects have a lasting impact in the community.

Can the minister tell this House how many Yukon apprentices are working on the new F.H. Collins construction project?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: This government of course is committed to providing jobs and opportunities for Yukoners and Yukon families. We work to ensure that Yukoners have every opportunity to benefit from our infrastructure projects. Just this one alone is one of the reasons that this year's capital budget is the largest in Yukon history. My fellow colleagues spoke about this earlier.

Regarding F.H. Collins, things are coming along great. I don't know if the members opposite have gone over there and seen the Yukoners who are working there, but it is an affordable design for a modern facility that meets our LEED silver standard and our efficiency standards. Construction started earlier this year and is well-underway. The project is on budget and on track for completion of the fall 2015.

The member opposite asked about jobs. We know that over 80 percent of the workers currently on that site are Yukoners. A high portion of the subcontracts are also based locally in the Yukon. The member talked about apprenticeships. Many of the subcontractors here have apprentices and do apprenticeships through different programs. I am not sure what the number is on F.H. Collins, but I know a young fellow from my community just finished his trades training and he did it through a local company here.

Ms. White: I look forward to the minister having an answer about how many apprentices are working on that project.

This government has demonstrated time and again that it lacks foresight. Large-scale capital projects have the potential to leave a very strong legacy, not only in the final product but also in the experience gained by local apprentices and professionals. A partnership between the Carcross-Tagish First Nation and the carpenters union managed to give training opportunities to 14 apprentices while building three tiny houses, yet this government can't find a way to support Yukon apprentices when building the territory's largest school.

Can the minister explain to this House how the largest current capital project in the Yukon is not employing a single Yukon carpentry apprentice?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It is disappointing to hear the numbers from the member opposite. I have said before that the majority of people on the project are Yukoners. There are Yukoners working there. Our focus is to manage our capital projects responsibly, plan government space efficiently and maintain our buildings adequately. Managing and maintaining our buildings and budgets are priorities for this government. It is a balancing act, and we are responsible for making sure that we use available funds in the most effective way and responsible way as possible. Sometimes this means making difficult decisions.

I know the members opposite aren't happy with the direction this government is going. We have over 12 capital projects underway in various stages of completion here in the Yukon. Right now we have successfully promoted economic activity here, we have kept our local suppliers and our contractor is busy and has created local jobs.

We have much to be proud of for our capital project tendering. This government continues to make the Yukon, through creating jobs, the best place in Canada to live, work, play and raise a family. I am pretty proud of that, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. White: Without apprenticeship hours, apprentices are unable to gain the hours required for the journeymen tickets. The Official Opposition has asked this government about their commitment to apprenticeships before. They were however unable to provide an answer. The Yukon government has positions within their ranks that require journeyman certifications, which in turn require apprenticeship hours. This puts the government in an excellent position to support Yukon apprentices.

How many apprentices is this government currently employing throughout their own public service?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I'm going to share a list of the companies that have been retained to act as subcontractors on this project: Arcrite Northern Ltd., J&L Concrete, Castle Rock Enterprises, Tetra Tech EBA, Underhill Geomatics Ltd., Northwestel, Super Save Propane and Summit Waterproofing Ltd. These companies represent multiple local Yukon employees providing for their families.

This project is providing direct benefits to the Yukon companies and their workers. It will provide long-term benefits to all Yukoners. This government knows that this project will provide an affordable modern facility for Yukon.

We're proud of this project. The government is proud of the work we do — the work that our departments do — and the benefits for all Yukoners.

Question re: Ross River waste management

Mr. Barr: The news that open pit burning has been taking place at the Ross River waste management facility is another sad chapter in the territory's waste diversion saga. First, we heard that dozens of trucks were diverted to Ross River from Carmacks. Then we found out there is a pile of chemically hazardous soil sitting in the facility loosely covered in plastic sheeting. Yukoners heard more about this disgrace in today's morning news when a local resident called it a free-for-all. Can the minister tell this House what steps his department is taking to put out the open pit fire at the Ross River waste management facility and make sure this doesn't happen again?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It's unfortunate to hear the continuing reflections from the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. His script, of course, takes a tone that does not reflect the facts. As I have reminded the member, in fact, it is this government that took action to make it illegal to do open burning at solid-waste facilities.

I remind the members that under the NDP watch, including three terms in recent history, they did nothing to end

the open burning of solid waste at Yukon landfills. We took action. We ended that and it is no longer legal to do that. Again, any burning taking place at Ross River is unauthorized and is out of compliance with the permit. It is not being initiated by government staff because that would not be in compliance with the permit.

As far as the specific steps to handle the waste now that it is burning, I don't have information on that at this point in time, but I do have confidence that our staff and the Ross River volunteer fire department will make an appropriate determination and take any action that is necessary.

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, if the minister is disappointed in the long saga, it is his inaction that is causing this, or we wouldn't have to keep bringing it up.

The last thing Yukoners need is a repeat of a month-long Iqaluit dump fire in Ross River. The Minister of Community Services has known about the open-pit burning in Ross River long enough to have a clear plan of action. Instead, he refuses to give Yukoners a concrete plan to douse the flames. Meanwhile, a mound of contaminated soil has been sitting alongside the pit since late July. Contrary to the minister's reports, it is barely covered in a sheet of plastic.

Last week, the minister said there was a plan in place to remove that waste. What assurances can the minister give this House that no chemicals from this contaminated waste have leached into the soil?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I am sure that the House will understand that I have more confidence in the staff of Community Services and our contractors than I do in the assertions of the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. I would point out and remind the member that, in fact, it is this government that ended using burning landfills as a tool for reducing the garbage challenge. That's what the NDP did; that's what the Liberals did. We ended the open burning of solid waste by Yukon government staff and contractors.

We are taking steps across the territory to determine what next actions are necessary in terms of solid-waste management. We've already significantly increased the budget over the past number of years as a result of ending open-pit burning. In fact, we are looking at options, including the possibility of converting additional facilities to transfer stations and improving the management of facilities through gating them and adding attendants. Of course, that does come at a cost and that has to be assessed and considered.

But I would remind the member and reiterate that, in fact, contrary to his assertions, staff assure me that the contaminated soil is properly contained and is going to be dealt with appropriately and shipped to a facility that can handle it and treat it. I would remind the member again that he should check his facts before bringing forward his assertions to this House.

Mr. Barr: How can the minister say they've ending burning when it's been burning for two months? It doesn't compute. We shouldn't even be storing mounds of contaminated waste or burning garbage in open air in the first place.

Ross River has spoken out loud and clear. They want these chronic problems at the waste facility solved. It's unfortunate to hear the minister ignoring the concerns of the residents of Ross River.

Over the course of the summer, the government tried and failed to hire a manager to staff the Ross River waste-management facility. The site is unstaffed. Having a manager on-site would go a long way to preventing the ongoing free-for-all. This is the only one that's unstaffed in the territory. When can we expect the government to finally hire someone to put the house in order at the Ross River solid-waste management facility?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, unfortunately, we see when the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes comes into this House and reads from the script someone has prepared for him that he's neither as reasonable nor as accurate as he is when he talks off-the-cuff. I would remind the member that —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Member for Takhini- Kopper King, on a point of order.

Ms. White: Standing Order 19(i): uses abusive, insulting language in this House.

Speaker: Government House Leader, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: On the point of order, I was criticizing the member's facts and I don't believe it's a point of order.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: Insulting language comes from both sides from time to time. You're taking shots at each other, which is quite normal. It's hard to determine at what level somebody is going to consider it to be insulting and what level they're not going to consider it to be insulting. I would caution all members to watch what they say because what they say will — as we've experienced — come back to them. So I'm going to caution the minister and ask him to refrain from that kind of language and caution everybody else in the House at the same time.

Minister, please finish.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, what I would simply note in conclusion is I remind the member, as I said to him in the letter dated September 29, that in fact staff did put out a contract this summer for operation of the facility. No qualified bids were received. As a result, staff have continued to work to manage it and the options open include transferring management of the facility to the Ross River Dena Council, as has been offered and suggested — similar to what we did with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation recently in transferring to them site management of the facility in their community. The other option, of course, is coming up and attempting to get a qualified contractor to manage the facility. Contrary to the member's assertion, there are in fact many facilities throughout the territory that do not have an

attendant at the gate. That is one of the things we are considering as potential next step in improving management of solid waste, but that does come at a cost.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Clerk: Motion No. 756, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Watson Lake:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that Yukon's regulatory regimes are clear, consistent and competitive with other jurisdictions, while also providing for sustainable and environmentally responsible development of Yukon's resources.

Ms. McLeod: I am honoured to rise today in support of Motion No. 756.

In the Yukon, we have an inclusive assessment process that allows all Yukoners and business to have access to a thorough analysis and provide input into what is unfolding in our territory. We must be clear that there is a variety of processes in Yukon's regulatory regime. We must ensure that we maintain a consistent process, both within our own territory and when it comes to the way other jurisdictions proceed.

Private investment in our territory is a key pillar to maintaining and growing a strong economy. In order to attract private investment, our assessment regime must be consistent with other jurisdictions. This ensures that we remain competitive in the marketplace and continue to have jobs for Yukoners.

Yukoners, industry and developers don't just require consistency across jurisdictions. They require it within a jurisdiction. Region by region, we must ensure that assessments and regulatory work is handled and managed the same across the Yukon. Failing to provide this consistency will lead to uncertainty in a private sector. It is very important in Yukon that we provide certainty for everyone regarding our assessment regimes.

Mr. Speaker, I spent some years as a regulator of Yukon resources and I know from first-hand experience how important it is to have consistent regulatory practices across the jurisdiction. From Yukoners clearing lots to build new houses, to a prospector exploring for new minerals, to an environmental clean-up crew wanting to drill, or to a new mine looking to go into development, everyone benefits from having consistency from office to office and from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, everyone should remember that most boards in Yukon have representatives appointed by Yukon government and Yukon First Nations. These individuals are

regular Yukoners and they are entrusted to make judgements to the very best of their abilities. Yukoners will continue to have an opportunity to be heard and to be involved in our regulatory processes in the territory.

I have heard discussions among Yukoners and businesses here in the territory and a common theme is that we have a good regime, but it can and needs to be better. Better does not mean harder, it does not mean stricter, it does not mean increasing complexity and it certainly doesn't mean additional laws. The uncertainty some of our processes cause are making it difficult for some of our traditional private sector industries to operate. Just the other day, I had a prospector tell me that the difficulties around assessment regimes are driving the traditional Yukon prospector out of business. The process takes too long and costs too much for that group to operate. These small family businesses are one of the oldest industries in the Yukon and have minimal impact on the environment. But the current regime is stifling their ability to do business and we just can't let that happen.

We can't move forward as a jurisdiction and choose to cut businesses that have helped to build this territory. I believe we can modernize our regimes and maintain that traditional industry and business. They're willing to change to meet our needs, but they need us to allow them to operate, to profit and to make jobs for Yukoners. It is part of our work as legislators to provide that leadership and stand up for our traditional industries.

The second part of the motion refers to sustainable and responsible development in the territory. I think we all want to see that happen in the Yukon. We can all be proud that devolution and having Yukoners making decisions on Yukon projects has helped enormously. No one in the Yukon wants to lose that close connection to the land, but we have to remember that the historic projects that we all look back on as examples of irresponsible mining in the territory were permitted and given the go-ahead by federal bureaucrats making decisions for the Yukon. As the former regional director, the Leader of the NDP will be quite familiar with the fact that federal government was making all those decisions.

We have the authority and the power to say no to another Faro. No one wants another Faro. It's important to note that whatever changes are contemplated on any of the assessment regimes in the Yukon, the decision body and the regulator will remain as they currently are.

Yukon government will continue to consult with First Nations and will continue to determine which projects may or may not be permitted. Our regime is good, but it must get better. I thank you all for the opportunity to speak to this issue today. I hope to hear from all members and I hope perhaps we have some good discussions on this. We need to ensure that Yukoners can continue to work in the Yukon and have jobs to provide for their families.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward this motion for debate this afternoon. I do believe that it will in fact generate a robust debate. I would like to speak this afternoon, at this moment, to the general

elements outlined in the motion and to the more specific matters that are included implicitly, but are not specifically referenced in the motion put forward by the Member for Watson Lake.

I just want to comment on the comment made by the Member for Watson Lake, that in fact — and I love it when the government members like to try to diminish the opinions of the Leader of the Official Opposition because she had a senior position within the federal government. I would point out that in fact when I retired, I was the director general of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. I was in that role post-devolution, so I can speak very clearly to the work that was done with respect to creating a post-devolution, post-land claims federal entity in the Yukon.

Prior to that, Mr. Speaker — and I know the Member for Watson Lake isn't really interested in listening to this — I was director of land claims and self-government negotiations for many years. In fact, the land claims and negotiations function for the Government of Canada was housed within Indian and Northern Affairs and I know that the member opposite will be pleased to know that, in fact, those people who were involved in the negotiations of land claims on behalf of Canada were seen by those people who worked for Northern Affairs — as well as Indian Affairs, Department of Justice and Department of Heritage — as some other entity, even though we were housed there. Our job was to negotiate on behalf of Canada — to ensure that Canada represented most effectively what the interests were as we moved the agreements forward.

She is absolutely right. As the director general of Indian and Northern Affairs for those last four years, I had an overview of the whole of the issues that were facing both Yukon government and Canada, as we moved forward in those early days of devolution.

I don't shrink from that, Mr. Speaker, because as I have said before, I have a high respect for public servants and the roles and the responsibilities. I understand, as I said earlier to the Minister of Economic Development today, that the political direction comes from the politicians and it is the public servants' job to deliver on that policy and that direction, and I did so with pride.

It is with pride that I speak to the achievements that we as Yukoners have achieved in terms of working out the foundations of a new relationship that speaks to what I believe is implicit — although perhaps awkwardly phrased in the motion that is before us today because what we were talking about — and we go back to the very fundamentals of this new relationship. There's a throwing around of references about things and then people don't look at what the implications are. We're talking about economic certainty at the base of this motion, I believe.

If we go right back to *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* that was tabled in Ottawa by the Council of Yukon Indians — when they talked about economic development, you know, their language was a bit rough in those days — in 1973 — but it was very clear. First of all, when the First Nations spoke, they had a way of phrasing it. I thought it was kind of interesting and I think it sets the context for how

things have changed and how we, as non-First Nation Yukoners, are challenged to get out of the old way of thinking because what we're seeing in some of the attitudes and some of the language that we have heard expressed in this Legislative Assembly and in support by the Member for Watson Lake — the support of the amendments to YESAA that are implicit in her motion — is a reversion to, I think, what was being challenged by the Council for Yukon Indians.

When they introduced the notion of settlement — a settlement with, at that time, the federal government — the Yukon wasn't considered to be part of this. It was between them and the federal government. I thought it was kind of telling. One has often heard of the old Chinese custom of binding a baby's feet so they would not grow so big. We wonder if this is exactly what has happened to us, with the government refusing to give the Indian people enough freedom to grow and develop. We now demand the right to plan our future. This is the same right that the white people in the Yukon have had for the last 100 years.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: Honourable Premier, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I would just like to inform the House and acknowledge that the Grand Chief Ruth Massie has joined us in the gallery. I invite all members of the Legislature to welcome her today.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: As I was saying, in the language that was used to introduce the settlement of First Nation land claims, they said outright: "We have been accused of opposing the development of the north. If you are able to understand us, you will learn that we are strong supporters of development." I think this is really imperative, Mr. Speaker.

They also said under economic development in *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* that the Yukon Indian people must play an important part in the development of the Yukon. If we are to take a part in the social, economic and political life of this country, we must build a solid economic base. We must have a chance to help plan the future of this land if we're going to benefit from development.

What I want to speak about today is the importance of understanding the context within which we talk about economic certainty in this territory, because the old game and the old rules no longer apply. Actually, we have entered into a new arrangement — a new covenant — that dates back to 1993. That's so imperative that we understand that. It's not the old rules of the game.

So as I've mentioned, when I was referencing *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* — I mean, initially these negotiations were feds only and First Nations only. Gradually we saw this recognition and the inclusion of the Yukon government over time.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: The Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, on a point of order.

Mr. Hassard: If I could ask everyone to join me in welcoming a constituent of mine, Mr. Tom Cove. Thank you.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: Okay, so as I was saying, we have gradually recognized that we are all in this together — it's all of us together for our children and our children's children. That's what I see as the basic imperative.

The signing of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, which then led to the negotiation and final conclusion of at least 11 agreements of the potential 14 in the Yukon, was instrumental. I will speak a little bit about some of the key elements that address the issues that are at play in the motion that was put forward by the Member for Watson Lake.

Leading up to devolution, as I was saying earlier, there was — and I don't think any member of this Legislative Assembly should be under any illusion that First Nation governments were wholeheartedly in support of devolution. I can tell you that during the course of negotiations, time and time again First Nation governments resisted the notion of devolution of provincial-like responsibilities to this territorial government or any territorial government because they saw what was going on in provinces across this country. Provincial governments have never fully endorsed or worked in an effective way with First Nation governments.

I can remember being in meetings where this was referred to, whatever the territorial government was going to be. Without having ensured that the basics of the land claims agreements — the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and ideally Yukon First Nation final agreements in whole — were completed, we would be dealing with a hostile government. It saddens me at times that I feel that that was prescient — that those words were prescient. It didn't have to be that way.

You know, it's not just me saying this. I went back and I looked at the testimony of the Council of Yukon First Nations on September 25 to the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources. In the course of that, there were comments made with respect to the issue of devolution in this territory. The Council of Yukon First Nations' legal counsel was at pains to try to get across to the Senate committee that this whole issue with respect to where First Nations come from was not about politics.

It wasn't about whether or not they agreed, and I'm quoting here "...this is not about whether we agree or disagree with the current government of the Yukon or any other government. This is an important point for us on process. Council of Yukon First Nations supported devolution in 2003. There was a long period of negotiations. At the beginning of that period of negotiations in 1996, the Yukon government and the federal government maintained it was a bilateral process and First Nations were not involved except to be provided notice and to be consulted. We were not full parties. During the discussions of that process, eventually we became

parties and eventually signed on to that agreement, and the same thing with the YESAA process."

So the speaker, on behalf of the CYFN, said, "I don't think in any way First Nations are opposed to the concept of devolution and local decision making, local accountability. The point we are trying to raise very clearly is that if those decisions are going to be made, we need to be part of that decision."

It is exactly what the Council of Yukon Indians said in 1973 — 40 years earlier. "It cannot be a bilateral decision between the federal government and the territorial government. Those politics and processes are decades gone. We have a new relationship with governments, both in Ottawa and Whitehorse, based on our land claim agreements, evolving from those land claim agreements, and we need to be part of those discussions."

This is the key point, as I said earlier. "That's the nature of governance now in 2014 in Yukon. That's why", CYFN said, "we are here today..." — they were in Ottawa talking about the process around Bill S-6 and I will come to that in a while.

First Nations have been very clear about the importance of living up to commitments made by governments — with other levels of government. The devolution transfer agreement is a very good example of that. The member opposite talked about some of the regulatory regimes that exist throughout this territory. I point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that in the devolution transfer agreement — which I noted that First Nations had felt strong concerns about what would happen and what voice they would have if this remained solely a bilateral process between Canada and the federal government to the point that the Yukon government, in signing the devolution transfer agreement agreed in section 2.27 that they would — it identified an appendix to this agreement that "...contains an agreement between the YTG and First Nations...which sets out cooperative working arrangements in respect of the development of a workplan and preparation of successor territorial legislation pertaining to the administration and control of Public Land and the administration and control of rights in respect of waters." That is an incredibly important undertaking between the Yukon government and Yukon First Nations. Unfortunately, 11 years after devolution, it is largely unfulfilled.

There is only one piece of successor resource legislation that has come into effect pursuant to that provision — the forest resource management act. We have had little nibbles at the edges around quartz mining and placer, but nothing to talk about in terms of the real issue of revisiting and doing successor mining legislation that is cognizant of the provisions and the intent of First Nation final agreements and the devolution transfer agreement.

I don't want to belabour the point about the DTA, but I do want to remind members of this Legislative Assembly that this was an undertaking, that we do know that First Nation governments have made it clear over the last few years that they are not just waiting for — they have been enjoining the government. They have been asking the government clearly

through all sorts of means at the officials levels and at the ministerial level to fulfill the commitments set out in that agreement.

It is really important, I think, to recognize — as the leaders indicated when they put together *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, as it was alluded to there — that Yukon First Nations took a leap of faith in signing the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and in agreeing to the devolution transfer agreement — the transfer of provincial-like responsibilities from the federal government to the territory. That leap of faith is really fundamental to understand that, with the settlement of all Yukon First Nation land claims, Yukon First Nations, under the agreements, would retain less than 10 percent of the total land mass in the Yukon.

When you do that in exchange for this difficult surrender, Yukon First Nations believed that the *Umbrella Final Agreement* would provide opportunities for involvement in decision-making. One of the key areas that First Nations believed, and I believe — and I believe that it's reflected in the agreements — was in that *Umbrella Final Agreement* that was signed 21 years ago, where the provisions in chapter 12 spoke about the creation of a development assessment process that we've come to call YESAA — *Yukon Environmental Socio-economic Assessment Act* process. It was a process that was put together with input from all parties, all stakeholders in the Yukon.

I think it's important to revisit what the objectives of that chapter were because we tend to lose sight of it. We have these glib throwaways about regulatory regimes needing to be this and needing to be that. We need to think about and we need to recall what it was we intended to have in place here — this made in Yukon process — and why it's so imperative that we not lose sight of that and that we hold true to what we negotiated.

What has to be understood is that we call them First Nation final agreements — we call it the *Umbrella Final Agreement* but it's not an agreement of First Nations with First Nations. It's the First Nations with Yukon government and with Canada. These are Yukoners' agreements. At the core of this, all of us have a stake in this. All of us have a stake in ensuring that the spirit and intent of these agreements is lived up to.

The objective of chapter 12 was to provide for a development assessment process. I'm just going to reiterate what those objectives were because I sometimes think that either we haven't read it or we have forgotten it.

So it was a development assessment process that would recognize and enhance, to the extent practicable — and that was an interesting word in those days — the traditional economy of Yukon Indian people and their special relationship to the wilderness environment; that provides for guaranteed participation by Yukon Indian people and utilizes the knowledge and experience of the Yukon Indian people in the development assessment process; that protects and promotes the well-being of Yukon Indian people, their communities and other Yukon residents, and the interest of other Canadian; that protects and maintains environmental

quality and that ensures that projects are undertaken consistent with the principle of sustainable development.

We've talked about the importance of sustainable development in other contexts with respect to the long-term vision that the First Nations and government negotiators had when they were talking about the future of this territory. Sustainable development, Mr. Speaker, as you'll recall, also underlies the whole important principle of land use planning in this territory — another sad piece that we have to, at some point, come back to.

The development assessment process is intended to protect and maintain heritage resources, to provide for a comprehensive and timely review of the environmental and socio-economic effects of any project before the approval of the project. They were thinking ahead, because another objective was to avoid duplication in the review process for projects and, to the greatest extent practicable, provide certainty to all affected parties and the project proponents with respect to procedures, information requirements, time requirements and costs.

The key that led to the language describing the legislation that eventually arose out of chapter 12, the development assessment process, was the objective requiring project proponents to consider the environmental and socio-economic effects of projects of projects and project alternatives and to incorporate appropriate mitigating measures in the design of projects.

The objectives of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* envisioned made-in-Yukon legislation that was created by Yukoners for Yukoners. This was not socio-economic assessment legislation that would be applicable in Manitoba, B.C. or Alberta. This was about the Yukon because it arose from the Yukon. It speaks to the Yukon. It speaks to the kind of certainty that we require in this territory for investment. I'll come back to that in a moment, Mr. Speaker.

So the *Umbrella Final Agreement* was signed in 1993. It took 10 years of collaboration between the parties to finally see the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* finally passed into law in 2003. It was and is a benchmark piece of environmental legislation throughout Canada. This legislation has the support of Yukoners and it reflects Yukoners' values. Because YESAA was so advanced and it provided Yukoners with a say in how their own affairs would be assessed and regulated, it anticipated — because it was new legislation — a requirement to conduct a review after five years of operation.

That five-year review was more than five years in length.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: Well, it was at least that. I think the importance of the five-year review really does go at the base of the fact that this legislation was so different. It was so different from anything that Canada had done before. The notion of a socio-economic element to environmental assessment was unique.

I was looking at comments that were made in the written submission from the Teslin Tlingit Council to the Senate Committee. I will just quote a paragraph here because I think

it really does help to set the context for us. They said — and I quote: “There is little doubt that it was a bold decision to abandon established environmental and socio-economic assessment processes and legislation in favour of new assessment processes and a new law customized to be consistent with Yukon Final Agreements, Yukon Self Government Agreements, and First Nation laws. For that reason, the Parties to the Final Agreements wisely agreed that there would be a comprehensive review of the YESAA after five years of implementation. The purpose of the review was for the Parties to the Final Agreements to determine, in collaboration, whether the first iteration of this legislation fulfilled the promises set out in Chapter 12, and the Final Agreements generally. If appropriate, remediating legislative change would result.”

In Canada’s proposed amendments — and I’ll come to this in more detail, but to give you a sense of the concerns that are being raised, this logical and prudent purpose has been swept aside in favour of legislative change naively intended to facilitate industrial development across the Canadian north, as expressed in the action plan to improve northern regulatory regimes.

I go back again to the experience of us as Yukoners, and in particular to the experience of Yukon First Nations, as Yukoners, as northerners. The Teslin Tlingit Council, in their submission, has made the statement that echoes so clearly the language of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*. Northerners have lots of experience with having our lives, businesses, natural resource development and economies manipulated from afar by past colonial governments in Ottawa.

The action plan to improve northern regulatory regimes is just the latest expression of Canada’s public policy intentions to stimulate economic development and growth across the north. It was exactly this kind of unilateral policy initiative that the parties to the final agreements intended to avoid when they agreed to create an arm’s-length, made-in-Yukon environment and socio-economic assessment process.

The five-year review was a collaborative process; it was a lengthy process. I can remember when it started. I thought, my goodness, this is incredibly detailed. It was. In the midst of that five-year review, the federal government commissioned a review of regulatory regimes across the north. Mr. McCrank put that report together at the behest of the federal government. It is interesting because it is supposed to be a review of the regulatory regimes of the north but there is one scant reference to the Yukon and it is essentially to say that in the Yukon they have the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*. This legislation is working well. If you look at any of the submissions that Mr. McCrank did, they are all focused on Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

He acknowledged that the environmental assessment regime was sound. This was also recognized by the Yukon government as late as December 2012 in an article that was penned in *CGE Magazine*, volume 18, issue 9 — Devolution in Yukon, Pioneering Territorial Resource Management. This was an article that was published under the authorship of the

former Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In it, the Government of Yukon basically asserts — in acknowledging that the Yukon has settled 11 of 14 agreements — that this governance environment with Yukon First Nations fits well with the devolved regulatory regime.

“The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act stems, he said, from the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and establishes an assessment board that invites input from First Nation governments, local residents and interested parties prior to the commencement of any project. In an era with increased expectations for public input on development projects, desire for certainty from proponents on regulatory procedures and demands for public access to information, YESAA serves as an excellent tool to manage development in Yukon. A single assessment process with set timelines provides certainty to proponents, a public registry provides transparency of all projects under assessment, and the open submission portion of the review provides all parties an opportunity for input into the process.

“Industry and proponents know that decisions are being made locally and this provides the basis for a maturing and sustainable economy in Yukon. The government has been able to work with industries and projects to explain our processes and assist them to navigate Yukon’s regulatory regime. This certainty and local access have created a successful environment for investment.”

Mr. Speaker, the senior official for the Yukon government in December of 2012 concluded by saying, “As devolution evolves in Canada’s North, Yukon will continue to be an example of the success that can be achieved when local governments are empowered to make decisions over their own resources.”

Mr. Speaker, what changed? When did the Yukon government change its mind about local control over local resources? When did the Yukon government decide that it wanted to take direction from the federal government and reverse devolution — reverse the spirit and intent of the agreements that we have all negotiated and that we all are party to as members of the Yukon community?

That five-year review process was an exhaustive one — and I’m sure for the participants it was exhausting — in which all of the parties collaborated to review YESAA and discuss how YESAA was achieving the objectives set out in the UFA.

I have heard reference by the members opposite and in other contexts — YESAA this, YESAA that, it works, it doesn’t work. It is interesting that if we were to actually look at some of the statistics and what YESAA does do, we might have a different perspective and move away from the rhetoric toward the actual reality that is reflected here.

Just as background for members of the Legislative Assembly, I have for tabling project statistics. Basically it is part of YESAA’s ongoing public and transparent information sharing about the number of projects and the areas, and how long it takes for recommendations to be made by YESAA by the various bodies. I thought that it would be helpful to be shared. I will table that, as well as the provisions in the YESAA about — I’ll come to that part in a second.

I would like to quote from the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board's written submission to the Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources with respect to Bill S-6.

You may not be aware, Mr. Speaker, but YESAB was uninvited to attend the Senate committee hearings. Unfortunate — it seems passing strange that the Senate committee wanted to hear from people who had very minimal knowledge — if you read the transcripts — of what the YESAA process was about, and declined to hear from the people who have actually worked it through and understand the implications and intent of the legislation from the operational point of view.

The YESA board said the assessment process created in the Yukon environmental assessment, socio-economic assessment process, is one of a kind in Canada. It establishes a single assessment process for Yukon, functionally replacing previous assessment regimes and effectively supplanting CEAA, *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*.

One of the reasons why industry and other proponents have liked this legislation is because it ensures a neutral process conducted at arm's length from governments, which applies to all projects throughout Yukon and to territorial, federal and First Nation governments. It guarantees, as the objectives set out, opportunities for participation by First Nations and ensures that their knowledge and experience is used in the assessment process. Finally, it ensures not only environmental, but social and economic, effects are considered in assessments. This is a really challenging aspect, and I know there are many from across the Yukon who realize that there is still work to be done on that aspect.

That's the beauty of having a five-year review, because when you look at what the multi-party group did in looking at those elements, they recognized there is still work to be done. But this is something that we are working on together as Yukoners. It is not a defeat that we haven't got that part completely worked out. It is part of the ongoing challenge of making this new relationship work.

It was established as an independent, neutral, arm's length body — this is what the YESA board is — and it is responsible for the administration of the assessment responsibilities under YESAA. It is charged with making rules with respect to the conduct of assessments. One set of rules relates to the timelines for each stage of the assessment process, whether it gets evaluated at the designated office level — and the designated offices are in Watson Lake, Teslin, Whitehorse, Haines Junction, Mayo and Dawson. Those office locations were established through the federal legislation. In some cases, there is an executive committee screening. The YESA board is comprised of a three-person executive committee. Unfortunately, the federal government has not seen fit to appoint a chair since the vacancy last spring, so that puts additional onus on the interim chair.

The designated offices — and I think it's important for us to understand how this works and why it is important — are responsible for conducting the majority of the assessments under YESAA. The executive committee to date conducts

fewer assessments, and that is mainly because the executive committee assessments are the big ones, so it's more of a rare activity.

The activities that are subject to assessment are set out in the regulations. They don't just make this up on a whim. There is no difference throughout the territory in terms of what regulations apply in the designated offices in Mayo or Watson Lake or Dawson. The regulations are the regulations. They have been worked out in collaboration over the years because the regulations were published at the same time as the legislation came into effect, after 10 years of working together.

This assessment process that is established under the legislation is an integral part of decision-making in the Yukon. Since this legislation came into force — it was passed in 2003 and came into force in 2005 — the YESA board has conducted approximately 1,840 assessments. Of those 1,840 assessments, approximately 1,650, or 90 percent of them, have been conducted by designated offices. These assessments have been completed on average within 80 days. That is the average. There are many less than that.

During the course of the 10 years that YESAB has been operating, there has been a collaborate process established — it's called the YESAA forum, which was created as a direct result of the five-year review. That has been to look at how you make changes that all parties — as you work it through, you realize there are changes that are necessary.

The submission to the Senate committee by YESAB said that the YESAA forum exemplifies the collaborative spirit that exists between the parties and YESAB to explore options for implementing recommendations flowing from the review and other opportunities for improving the assessment process. The importance of maintaining and strengthening these relationships and institutional arrangements is so vital to the performance of YESAA it's something that must be carefully considered when contemplating legislative change.

Yukon First Nations' governments delegated responsibility to a series of technical groups and teams to participate in the review process. As we've heard many times in this Legislative Assembly, there was agreement on many of the recommendations. However, there were several issues contained in the draft report that were important to First Nations that were not addressed or resolved. I would venture that, at the time this was done — March 2012 — they were important to the Yukon government before it had a change of heart, or whatever it was that changed.

First Nation governments, Mr. Speaker, were — although there were a number of matters that hadn't been agreed to — three of the 76 recommendations were not in that first go-around — the five- or seven-year process that sort of conveniently gets called "the five-year review".

It is my understanding that the federal government then prepared a reviewed draft report without the consent of the Yukon government and Yukon First Nation governments. Yukon First Nations made it clear that the revised draft report did not reflect the understanding that they had come to during the five year review process. The federal government ignored

the concerns of First Nations and tabled Bill S-6 in an unelected Senate — an unusual move in the first place. Bill S-6 contains amendments that were not discussed — essentially not agreed upon, is the key part — by Yukon First Nations.

We have seen in the past what happens when governments take — and this government takes — a “my way or the highway” approach to negotiating with partners. Ultimately, a unilateral approach has a serious negative effect on the whole of the Yukon. The federal government has obligations under the *Umbrella Final Agreement* to consult with their partners before making changes that were created as a result of them, and YESAA is no exception.

I heard across the floor today and I’ve heard it in numerous other discussions in this Legislative Assembly this fall — this notion that these changes that are proposed by the federal government through Bill S-6 will create certainty in Yukon’s investment climate when they will in fact do the opposite. At that Senate committee hearing, the senators were interested in what’s going on economically in the Yukon and one of the — Senator Lang, Yukon’s senator — unfortunately the senator who chose to introduce this bill — made some comments that I would like to — and the comment that was made in response — because it really goes at the heart of — it’s not economic uncertainty that is going to be created here it’s economic uncertainty.

His lead-in to his comments was — he was talking to the legal counsel for the CYFN — he said, “I refer to your comments about certainty” — and the senator said, the reality of it is that investors who are looking to come to the Yukon are viewing our permitting process in a very jaundiced way now in view of some of the experiences that they had. Perhaps you could comment on that.

The lawyer went on to say, well, I guess to be frank — I’m quoting, Mr. Speaker — we have had lots of discussion with lots of different companies — very high-level discussions. None of them expressed a frustration with the assessment process. They have expressed a frustration with the relationships between the First Nations and government, and the uncertainty that creates through, I guess, the litigation environment that seems to be percolating in the Yukon.

That’s the uncertainty that creates the issue. For us and for the companies that we have talked with, and other development corporations, it is the issue that’s at the back end of the process that seems to be of greater concern for the companies that we have experienced. To your point though, YESAA works well.

This is a person who is chair of the Yukon First Nations Chamber of Commerce, also with the Champagne and Aishihik Development Corporation.

I think that, for the suite of amendments that went through the seven-year review, on the face of them, there seems to be significant value. The issue that is before the committee — and before this Legislative Assembly in turn — that has been raised by the CYFN and First Nations, is primarily focused on what we believe are the unilateral

amendments that kind of went in parallel with our process, the process that First Nations were participating in.

He went on to say that the amendments that were presented are the ones — are what is creating the uncertainty. When pressed about sort of the economic contribution and the economic drivers in the territory, the legal counsel for Champagne and Aishihik said that he also participates in “one of the economic engines of our community, which is a development corporation.”

If I could — as an aside here — we have given scant thought and recognition in the legislative chamber to the significance of the economic impact that First Nations development corporations play, and can play, in the territory. They are incredibly strong economic engines for this territory. We are, by the actions of this government — by the actions of this federal government — thwarting that.

The legal counsel went on to say that we have observed — that they have spoken about stimulating the economy and he said — and I quote: “...I believe that the YESAA process is very much an economic engine for the Yukon. It’s functioning effectively and ensuring that the relationships between First Nations and the various other governments work effectively, and that is critical, in our view as a company, to the success of Yukon’s economy. We need to have that certainty as a company to protect the shareholder interests in the various investments that we have.”

He went on to give an example — and if you multiply this times the eleven First Nation development corporations — he said, “Our investment portfolio has grown to almost \$30 million in actual value. We have revenues of over \$65 million in everything from manufacturing, construction and paving, and very recently we have acquired a resource sector innovative technology company... We employ approximately 170 northerners as well...”

That is just one — just one — of Yukon First Nations’ development corporations, Mr. Speaker. So when we talk about certainty, I think we need to get a handle — to get a grasp on — what certainty is. It’s knowing what the rules are.

We know what the rules are. Yukon First Nations have made it clear that they believe that the amendments proposed to Bill S-6 will be inconsistent with the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and they have suggested that they may look toward legal action to protect their rights.

In fact, this government has encouraged First Nations to sue them if they believe that the legislation is inconsistent with the UFA. Imagine that: a government suggesting that, well, if you don’t like it and if you don’t think it is really what is consistent with the agreements that you and I entered into with open eyes and, we thought, open hearts — if you don’t think that that’s what it’s all about, then sue us. How does that translate in terms of reaching out and working in partnership? How does that reflect on a new relationship that was at the base of the cornerstone of the negotiated agreements with Yukon First Nations?

It’s true that the provisions of the amended YESAA legislation through Bill S-6 may be challenged directly once proclaimed. The greater likelihood is that decisions made by

this government, authorizing specific projects, will be targeted. They will be assessed individually by First Nation governments because they don't have the certainty that is created under this independent, neutral, arm's-length body.

This means that this government is inviting the possibility of litigation hanging over every single major project. It doesn't sound that responsible to me. Which project will be the first to draw the short straw? Which project will be the first to attract litigation?

I heard the Member for Watson Lake talk about the need for certainty. The Government of Yukon's blind support of Bill S-6 creates the uncertainty that no company — the only certainty will be that no company will know in advance if a Crown decision — a government decision — about their project is likely to be challenged or on what basis.

The ability to raise capital, to plan their work or to predict a return on investors' money will become completely unpredictable. The hard part of that — at the very core of that — is completely unnecessary. Yukon government, Yukon First Nation governments and Canada — up to a certain point — actually worked together. I have read the draft review report — the interim report of the five-year review. It is not a consensus report. I have read in detail all of the amendments proposed and all of the action plans that the people who were charged by our respective governments were asked to do over that period of time. The good will was there. Even when they agreed to disagree, they did it openly. Somewhere along the line in this last year, that was subverted — and for what end? To what end?

We've already seen that Yukon's reputation as a place to do business is already suffering due to this government's combative approach to First Nation relations. We have seen this government choose to use courts, rather than engage in a respectful government-to-government relationship. If we know anything — and we have heard it time and again in small settings with investors, in small settings with junior mining companies, with larger companies — investors are looking for a stable investment climate. When this government chooses to engage in a bulldozer approach to politics, it has led and is leading to large areas of the Yukon being tied up in court cases because the Premier actually invited — if you don't think it's there, then sue us. If that's the approach that's being taken, then we can be sure, as we've already seen, that investors will take one look and decide to invest their money elsewhere.

I have spoken to people who are involved with trying to seek investment in this territory. It's a hard reality that it's not about whether or not the Yukon government is correct about an issue; it's about the fact that the Yukon government has created this uncertainty, that there's an atmosphere of litigation. Where are you going to take your money? You're not going where the courts are. You're not going to go where you could potentially be sued or where the government's in litigation. Take your money elsewhere, where it's safer.

That is the opposite of the opportunity that was created through the land claims agreement and through the commitments made in the devolution transfer agreement.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments that were not spoken to directly by the Member for Watson Lake, but are implicit in the motion that she has put forward, will invite more litigation over a period of many years. That will continue until the harm that is done by these amendments — if they are passed by the federal government — until those amendments are reversed by changing the YESAA to what the parties jointly agree — until they reflect the intention — the spirit and the intent — of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*.

It is Yukon's economy; it is Yukoners who will suffer until we get this right. This government has somehow adopted the mantra — and I don't know where it is from — because it is not grounded in the facts or the reality in terms of the data about how YESAA operates or the timelines.

This government somehow has this other-world view and is suggesting that YESAA in its current legislative format is contrary to certainty. Well, in fact, the reality is that YESAA does provide certainty. I read into the record statements made by Government of Yukon senior officials — the most senior official you can get in EMR.

We know it creates certainty. With the huge boom that occurred over the last several years, up until the last two, in industrial activity in this territory, YESAA worked just fine during that boom. There were not major projects scrapped due to YESAA.

This government likes to suggest the opposite of what the facts are, and somehow the amendments that are being put forward — that there is somehow this huge problem with YESAA timelines. The irony is that the amendments that are being proposed in Bill S-6 achieve exactly the opposite of what the government wants to do. This government supports putting a 16-month timeline restriction for total YESAA assessment processes.

I just want to point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that the YESA board, when they were not allowed to present to the committee, pointed out — and this is in quotes: "YESAB does operate within set time limits now." The time limits that they adhere to are set out in rules made by the board, as opposed to ones set out in legislation. They have time limits for each stage of the assessment process, whether it is a designated office or an executive committee, and these time limits have seldom been exceeded.

The potential operational challenges imposed by the time limit amendments do not stem from the inclusion of time limits in the act. The challenges stem from the fact that the time limits do not take into account what YESAB faces on the ground day-to-day. In one case, the time limits in the amendments are much longer than any YESAB works underway at the present. In the other, the time limits are too short to conclude robust well-informed assessments on complex projects.

It is concerning that the government supports putting a 16-month-in-total timeline restriction. A major project comes forward and from the moment that project is suggested to the moment that project is supposed to be approved is 16 months. I think Yukoners would want to know how this government could be certain that these assessments would be adequate in

the event of a large project being considered. We are all familiar with what happened this summer at Mount Polley. It has certainly dominated the regulatory regime discussion in British Columbia. There are proposals for major development in the Yukon. In fact, there is a proposal that is currently before YESAB to build a mine with tailing ponds that is 10 times the size — 10 times the height — of the wall at the Mount Polley mine — the pond that broke and devastated the surrounding ecosystem. The Yukon government and the federal government are potentially asking Yukoners to be comfortable with limiting a project assessment of that scope to only 16 months for total review. It doesn't give me a lot of certainty.

The First Nations have been very clear in pointing out to us — and thank goodness that the First Nation governments took it upon themselves, because our government didn't — and speak to the issue of binding policy direction. I can't understand, as I've said before, why the territorial government would, after having achieved the devolution of provincial-like responsibilities from the federal government for the administration and management of our land and resources, invite a federal minister to override us and give binding policy direction to an independent, arm's-length body that's responsible for environmental and socio-economic assessments. It runs so contrary, not just to the notion of the Yukon and the potential of the Yukon, but for a government that actually understands its responsibility as government and not managing programs for another level of government.

This binding policy direction — again, not negotiated and foisted upon the parties at the last by the federal government, with the concurrence of the territorial government — undermines so significantly the gains made for Yukon to be recognized as a government, and not simply a manager of somebody else's resources.

The delegation of the authority to a territorial minister really flies in the face of the whole of the notion of the relationship — the tri-partite relationship that was created. The *Umbrella Final Agreement* is not a bilateral arrangement — the devolution transfer agreement. For the territorial government to say that, suddenly Yukon First Nations that are integral to the creation of the YESAA process are no longer part of it, essentially. You can have a board member, you can have members on the board, but we'll tell you what you're going to do on that board. If we decide — or the federal government decides — that we don't think that an environmental assessment is required for certain kinds of activities in this territory, well that's our binding policy direction. Go for it.

YESAA is our law. It was custom-made for the Yukon by Yukoners. It was designed on behalf of us all. The treaties — modern treaties, the land claims agreements — belong to all of us and give us all certainty about how we work together. Violating these land claims agreements and these treaties is a violation of all Yukoners and it undermines the positive relationships all of us are working so hard to advance. We don't need a step backwards.

Yukon and Canada have gone behind closed doors and behind the backs of Yukoners and have secretly conspired to change this law without our knowledge. They didn't ask Yukon citizens. They didn't say, "You know what, we think it's a good idea to have Canada tell us now how to run our affairs" — so much for the robust notion of "this is how we do it in the Yukon" that I heard from the Member for Watson Lake.

To add insult to injury, the Senate committee not only refused to come to the Yukon to hear from Yukoners, they gave scant time to the governments — the 11 Yukon self-governing First Nations and the CYFN. Their time for those governments combined was less than all the other interests for which time was made available. That's kind of sad.

It's a sad reflection that we see this continued opposition to the positive change brought about by the final agreements. I believe that the structure of the motion of the Member for Watson Lake would be good to reflect how much and how important this Legislative Assembly believes the YESAA to be. I would suggest that it's time for us to expand our understanding of the framework within which we operate and to reflect more accurately, as I said at the outset, that the ground upon which we stand is fundamentally Yukon ground, and we share that ground.

Amendment proposed

Ms. Hanson: With that, I move:

THAT Motion No. 756 be amended by adding the following after "consistent":

"with the spirit and intent of Yukon land claims agreements"; and

THAT Motion No. 756 be amended further by adding the following after "Yukon's resources":

"by urging the federal government to:

(1) reject the unilateral changes to YESAA contained in Bill S-6; and

(2) direct the federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to collaborate with Yukon First Nations and Yukon government to revise YESAA in accordance with the mutually agreed upon provisions in the five-year review."

Speaker: Order please. The amendment is in order.

It is moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition:

THAT Motion No. 756 be amended by adding the following after "consistent":

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accordance with the mutually agreed upon provisions in the five-year review.”

Leader of the Official Opposition, you have 20 minutes on the amendment, if you would like.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, I think rather than me sort of expounding on this, I will simply put on the record — because Yukon First Nation voices were not heard — nor was the public’s — but I think the chiefs of the various First Nations who did have an opportunity to appear before the Senate committee and the Council of Yukon First Nations really captured the importance.

I have spoken at length to the importance of starting with *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* and how that has evolved over those 41 years — the importance of not losing sight that everything we do in this Legislative Assembly and everything that we do in this territory is infused with the spirit and intent of Yukon land claim agreements.

So it’s important, I think, to be clear about the unilateral changes contained in Bill S-6. The best way to address that would be to read into the record the four specific amendments that Yukon First Nations have raised concerns about. There are three other ones that I can speak to briefly that deal with the matters that the federal government was not prepared to deal with as a result of the five-year review.

As I said earlier, on September 25, 2014 Chief Eric Fairclough of the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation said — and I quote: “...we want to draw your attention to four specific amendments that are deeply concerning. The CYFN and Yukon First Nations maintain that the proposed amendments would undermine the independence and autonomy of the YESAA and adversely impact its effectiveness.”

The first was policy direction to the board. First Nations oppose “any amendments that provide authority to the federal minister to issue binding policy directions to the board with respect to any of the board’s powers, duties and functions.

“Under this proposed amendment, there is no requirement for the federal minister to obtain the consent of First Nations before issuing policy direction to the board. Providing the federal minister with the authority to unilaterally issue policy direction undermines the independence of the board and designated offices when conducting assessments.

“Independence is a fundamental element of the YESAA that was discussed at length by the CYFN, Canada and Yukon during the development of the YESAA. Providing a single party with authority to direct the board is contrary to the spirit and intent of the YESAA and the provisions of the final agreements.

“Delegation of federal powers: The CYFN opposes any amendment that would allow the federal minister to delegate any or all of his or her powers, duties and functions under the YESAA to the territorial minister.

“The CYFN has several concerns relating to this proposed amendment. There is no requirement for the federal minister to obtain consent of Yukon First Nations before delegating any powers, duties and functions...

“The YESAA implements treaty rights. The provision would exclude Yukon First Nations from discussions and decisions about future redistribution of power, duties and functions under the YESAA.”

The proposed amendment “... would create a bilateral federal-territorial process that would be inconsistent with the intent of the final agreements.”

The third one is: “Exemption for renewals and amendments: The CYFN opposes any amendment that creates a broad exemption from the YESAA for renewals and amendments of permits or authorizations.

“This proposed amendment is unacceptable since it would directly contravene the agreements reached by the CYFN, Canada and Yukon about this issue as part of the five-year review. It is unnecessary because previously existing concerns about assessments of renewals and amendments have already been addressed by changes in board policies...” — in parentheses, Mr. Speaker, those changes in board policies were made in 2010 — “...as agreed during the five-year review. The proposed amendments will interfere with a process that is working effectively. During the development of the YESAA, the CYFN, Canada and Yukon agreed that the regulations would define which projects are subject to assessments. The proposed amendments would interfere with this approach.

“Time lines of the YESAA assessments: The CYFN opposes the proposed amendments that establish overall time lines for completion of assessments under the YESAA since time lines are already in place.

“The proposed time lines for screening by the executive committee and panel reviews do not provide adequate time to complete assessments of complex projects that will be subject to these assessments. This will affect the thoroughness of assessments and the opportunities for Yukon First Nations to complete comprehensive reviews of projects and to provide input.

“The proposed time lines for screening by the executive committee and panel reviews do not provide adequate time to complete assessments of complex projects that will be subject to these assessments. This will affect the thoroughness of assessments and the opportunities for Yukon First Nations to complete comprehensive reviews of projects and to provide input.

“While no panel reviews have been completed under the YESAA, the proposed time lines are not consistent with the duration required to complete panel assessments in other jurisdictions. Canada failed to raise these proposed amendments during the five-year review process, where they would have received detailed discussions and considerations.”

He went on to conclude by saying that these matters were never discussed during the five-year review.

Mr. Speaker, I think these changes coming as a result of a unilateral imposition by the federal government really do require us to go back and, as government and as legislators, live up to the challenge that we have, as representatives of Yukon citizens in this territory and Yukon citizens who expect

us to honour the agreements that we negotiated and that we signed, as Government of Yukon, with Yukon First Nations.

I have heard again and again that certainty is a key issue, but this issue affects all Yukoners. It's important to avoid suggesting that we want a disintegration of the relationship between the Yukon government and First Nation governments to the point where we are urging another level of government to take us to court. That is really what Canada is inviting and what the Yukon government is supporting — sue us if you think that we act improperly.

It is difficult to really convey how important this matter is — and the consequence it has for all Yukoners — and that it is not simply a First Nation issue. The issue is uncertainty; the amendments, as proposed, to the YESAA legislation represent a really, really incompetent economic policy. Incompetence invites litigation at a time when we need in this territory the certainty and stability of relationship that will invite investment — not fleeing. We don't need the flight of capital from this territory. We already have it. We have to find a way of creating an environment where people want to come back.

Fundamentally, as I said in my closing comments before I introduced the motion, this law — the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, belongs to all Yukoners and it is about our Yukon. It is not about the federal government's view of the Yukon, as seen from some photo op about the north. As legislators, we have a heck of a lot more — we should have a whole bunch more — invested in this territory and the uniqueness of it and the importance of us working on behalf of all Yukon citizens with other Yukon governments.

If we want to create an environment of certainty, then we work together — we honour the commitments we made; we honour the legislation that we developed together. We don't try to undermine it — and we stand up together, as Legislative Assembly members, together united, and say to the federal government that this is wrong, you're simply wrong. Don't assume that what's going on in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut applies here. The experience is not the same; don't try to paint us with the same brush. Nunavut does not have devolution; the Northwest Territories just got it. They have lots of issues to sort out. That's not the same situation here.

I challenge the government members to represent Yukoners, to stand up to the federal government and say, you know what, good try but it's wrong and we want and we are demanding that you withdraw Bill S-6, and we demand the federal minister responsible work effectively in collaboration with Yukon First Nation governments and the Yukon government. Go back to the table and do it right. Work on the mutually agreed-upon recommendations in the five-year review, try to sort out those remaining three — and I'll just quickly say what those remaining three were. They are important and I don't want to undermine them.

One of the things that the Yukon First Nations reiterated was that, first of all, the five-year review hasn't been completed because those three issues, as the Premier has repeatedly told me — there was not agreement on three issues. One was a future review. We know as responsible legislators

that a process like YESAA does need review, and so there may be adjustments over time. First Nations — and I would agree, I think all Yukoners would agree, it would be prudent for the parties to commit to undertaking a future review of the YESAA process sometime in the future. It doesn't have to be five years, but that commitment needs to be there. It's not there. That has been one of the missing pieces — one of the three of the 76.

A decision engagement with affected First Nations — CYFN proposed that a territorial or a federal decision body must engage with First Nations when considering recommendations from the executive committee or a designated office with respect to projects that affect aboriginal rights, titles and interests. Mr. Speaker, that is a significant issue when we have areas in the Yukon where we do not have settled land claim agreements.

The third one was the assurance of adequate funding for this process — 1,840 YESAA submissions over a period of five years. The pressures that are placed on local communities and local designated offices and First Nations to respond are huge. If the YESAA process is to operate effectively and efficiently, there must be the resources to fulfill their duties and obligations in the assessment of those projects in various traditional territories.

I believe that it is incumbent upon us as members of this Legislative Assembly to carry out what we were elected for — to do the responsible thing. The responsible thing in this case is — if we are serious about wanting to see responsible development in this territory, if we do want to create the certainty that the Member for Watson Lake spoke to in her motion — then we do that in the context of the world that we live in — which we're privileged to live in.

Think about it, Mr. Speaker. We have said — and I have heard it bandied about by the members opposite so many times — that the Yukon is unique, and we are. We are unique because we all took the risk of entering into a new relationship, and that means we have to sort it out as we go, but we have to do it based on respect. That respect comes from honouring the spirit and intent of the agreements that we negotiated. It comes from being willing to say, from time to time, that the more powerful government, the federal government, is wrong — simply wrong — and, when they are wrong, to stand up to them and say that we reject the notion that you can make unilateral changes that will fundamentally undermine something that we, as Yukoners, hold dear and something that we, as Yukoners, created together to provide that independent assessment, to provide the certainty that is necessary, and that what we are going forward on in terms of project developments not only meets the test of being sound economic investment, but also has sound environmental underpinning.

I urge the members of the Legislative Assembly to support this amendment. I think it makes the motion more robust and more adequate. Perhaps there are elements that could have been more strongly worded, but we felt that this would go some way toward reflecting the fact that we have a lot of work to do.

Mr. Silver: I would like to thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for bringing forth this amendment. I would like to have an opportunity to speak to it before it most likely gets voted down by the majority Yukon Party government. I can't imagine them ever supporting this, seeing as it would be directly contravening their partners in Ottawa with their Bill S-6.

I could absolutely support this amendment, because what it does is actually give teeth to an otherwise — let's just say it gives teeth to the motion on the floor today. I'm very grateful for the Leader of the Official Opposition reading into the record former Liberal MLA and current Chief Fairclough, chief of the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Mr. Silver: Absolutely. You can say those comments into the record, because they're very important. I do encourage members to comment on those particular words. I would encourage the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, who was a former colleague of the chief, to weigh in on the chief's comments.

Basically, I think what this amendment to the motion does is it fills the void that could have been addressed through the Yukon Forum — a collaboration with First Nation governments. We could have presented a united front, a Yukon united front, to Ottawa, as opposed to hearing comments from the Premier on local media saying he's not sure about the negotiations between Ottawa and the First Nations and that you'll have to ask them.

Once again, the excellent opportunity was the Yukon Forum to address these issues before Ottawa was engaged in this conversation, and I think this amendment does a beautiful job of filling that void.

I will leave it to the rest of my colleagues, but I could definitely support this amendment.

Hon. Mr. Kent: We on the government side will not be supporting the amendment to the motion as presented by the Member for Watson Lake. Unlike the Leader of the Liberal Party, I believe the motion put forward by the MLA for Watson Lake does have some teeth. It does identify something that has been identified by a number of individuals and companies that I have spoken with over my time as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and prior to that in my other time in Cabinet and during my private life prior to the 2011 election in that, overall, the regulatory regime here in the territory needs to be clear, consistent and competitive with other jurisdictions, while also providing for sustainable and environmentally responsible development of Yukon resources.

Mr. Speaker, of course the Yukon government is committed to providing an attractive investment climate. We achieve this through that strong regulatory system, consistent and comprehensive mining regulatory framework and good access to markets.

When I was going to speak to the motion prior to the amendment put forward by the Leader of the Official Opposition, I was going to focus of course on the regulatory

regimes that we control here in the Yukon — the quartz mining licensing, the *Waters Act* — those types of things, but of course there was an awful lot of comment with respect to Bill S-6.

I would like to just spend a little bit of time speaking to Bill S-6, which is the *Yukon and Nunavut Regulatory Improvement Act*. Of course there are improvements to Nunavut's regulatory system that are also included in this bill, but for purposes here I'll speak specifically to the YESAA amendments.

When visiting the federal AANDC websites, you can see there what the proposed amendments to YESAA include. They have been discussed on the floor, but I will repeat them and read into the record what the proposed amendments according to the federal government are.

The first one is making time limits for environmental assessments by the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Board consistent with other jurisdictions in the north. We recognize that there are differences between the Yukon, N.W.T., and Nunavut and where we are with respect to devolution, but we're still all looking for the same capital dollars that exist throughout the world for investment. If one of those jurisdictions has more responsive timelines than the Yukon, we're at a competitive disadvantage when it comes to attracting those investment dollars.

Obviously the Leader of the Official Opposition talked about the timelines, but I think it's important for Yukoners to understand as well that when the YESA board puts out an information request to a company those timelines stop. It's not going to be 14 months regardless of the quality of the application. The onus is still on the proponent to put forward an application that is of quality to be properly assessed.

When it comes to, as I've mentioned — at any stage, whether it's during the adequacy or the actual assessment phase, when an information request goes to the proponent, those timelines will stop. Essentially there is a pause. Again, this will ensure that the quality of the application is still strong.

Enabling the Government of Canada to develop regulations to recover from proponents' costs to undertake assessments — this is something that is in other jurisdictions and is consistent with what other Canadian jurisdictions do. Having companies pay for the assessments is something that exists elsewhere. At the opportunities north conference that was just held here in Whitehorse, I know the —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Ms. Stick: I would point to Standing Order 35(b) and ask that the member confine debate to the amendment as proposed as opposed to the motion.

Speaker: Minister for Energy, Mines and Resources, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I am speaking to the proposed YESAA amendments that are referenced specifically in the Leader of the Official Opposition's amendment, so I believe there is no point of order.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: The amendments do directly address Bill S-6 and YESAA. The purpose of speaking to the amendment is generally to speak about how the amendment will influence, strengthen or detract from the main motion. If adopted, the member would have the opportunity to speak to the motion as amended. I would have to say right now that until the minister says what he is going to say I have no clear way of knowing what is going to be said and how it is going to be tied together.

I was pondering this when he said he wanted to speak to YESAA and felt at that time that he was in fact going to be speaking to the amendment, so I would ask the minister to tie in his comments to whether or not this strengthens or takes away from the main motion please.

Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, please continue.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, walking through the proposed YESAA amendments, we have touched on two of them. The third is making YESAA the definitive environmental and socio-economic assessment process in the Yukon, meaning that CEAA would no longer apply in the Yukon. For the most part, YESAA is the definitive environmental assessment act that applies to most Yukon projects, but there are some exceptions and this removes those exceptions so that YESAA truly is the one-window approach to assessments here in the territory.

Of course, one amendment that has garnered a lot of attention is providing the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development with the authority to provide binding policy direction to the YESA board. I think it has been somewhat mischaracterized, particularly by the Leader of the Official Opposition, in that we have heard the Premier on a number of occasions say that this policy direction cannot contravene the *Umbrella Final Agreement* or any of the final agreements that First Nations have signed, contrary to what the Leader of the Official Opposition has asserted, both inside this House and outside of these legislative chambers.

I think that this is something that the Premier has articulated exists in other pieces of legislation. It is not something that is groundbreaking for the country or groundbreaking for the territory. He has referenced the Yukon *Waters Act* and the fact that the ability to provide policy direction exists in the Yukon *Waters Act* as well.

One of the other amendments is allowing for a board member's term to be extended for the purpose of completing a screening or review. I'm sure we can all agree that that's something that is a positive amendment, particularly when those appointments expire. I know from my time on the YESA board from 2004 to 2007, we were all pretty much appointed at the same time and all of the appointments needed

to be renewed at the same time, so that was a bit of a challenge for any projects that were underway.

Since then, I believe, they've staggered some of the appointments to ensure that there is some overlap between the various members, but that's something I believe all members can agree on, with respect to a positive amendment.

The final one is eliminating the requirement that a project undergo another assessment when a project authorization is to be renewed or amended unless, in the opinion of the decision body or decision bodies, there is a significant change to the project. I think the important part about this aspect is that we're not just talking about resource projects. There are a number of activities that are assessed by YESAA — everything from shore stabilization, if you have waterfront property, to docks and power poles and culverts. Obviously there are some resource projects that have undergone multiple assessments. One of the local mines, I believe — for every three months of production, they've been in permitting or assessment at some point for a month over the life of their mine. They've been through YESAA, I believe, eight or nine times.

Obviously, if there is significant change, that's something that needs to be reassessed, but I think allowing the decision body, or bodies, to make that determination — it's important to note, Mr. Speaker, that the decision body isn't just the Yukon government. Often First Nation governments are also decision bodies when it comes to projects that are occurring on any of their settlement land.

I know the Premier has spoken in the Legislature as well about the guaranteed participation of First Nations through YESAA, and has spoken specifically during Question Period to the number of appointments that the Council of Yukon First Nations makes — recommendations to sit on the board. Three of seven are based on CYFN recommendations, two Yukon government and two federal government appointments. That said, First Nation participation is much beyond that.

There is the inclusion of traditional and local knowledge in the assessment process, something that, when I was on the board, was very important to inform the recommendations that YESAB put forward. Of course, I did speak about the fact that First Nations are often decision bodies in these projects when they occur on their category A or category B settlement lands. There is guaranteed public participation. There is guaranteed notification for First Nations when a project occurs in their traditional territory. On higher level projects, before an application is deemed adequate, the proponent must demonstrate that they've consulted with the local First Nation whose traditional territory the project is on.

As you can see, there are a number of ways — and I've just touched on a few — that First Nations are involved in the assessment process.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I can speak a little bit more as to what I envision as far as bringing certainty and competitiveness to the assessment process when I have my opportunity to speak to the main motion. Again, I believe that the amendment proposed by the MLA for Whitehorse Centre — although you ruled that it is in order — takes away from

the spirit and intent of the motion put forward by the MLA for Watson Lake when she talks about ensuring that Yukon's regulatory regimes are clear, consistent and competitive with other jurisdictions.

I thank the Member for Watson Lake for putting forward the original motion and I am standing here to inform the House that the government will not be supporting the amendment that was proposed by the MLA for Whitehorse Centre.

Mr. Tredger: I hope that my words will express some of the frustration and the concerns with Bill S-6 and with the move away from the spirit and intent of land claims and the damage that Bill S-6 will cause in the Yukon — a frustration of my constituents, First Nation governments, businesses, industry and citizens. I hope I can reflect some of that.

I am concerned that Bill S-6 undermines what is unique and wonderful about the Yukon. It was conceived in secret and is obviously out of touch with Yukon treaties, intergovernmental relationships and is disrespectful of Yukon history, culture and values.

This is not a First Nation issue. Yukon has a unique and wonderful place in the world. It is an issue that affects all Yukoners.

The first Europeans were welcomed by First Nation hospitality, by their sharing of themselves, their resources and their land. I and my family have been beneficiaries of that. We found Pelly Crossing a great place to live, very hospitable, and a place to contribute and to grow a family. Yukon is built on our relationships, one to another in respect.

Over 40 years ago, First Nation leadership travelled to Ottawa and presented *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*. Just last year, all parties in this House spoke of the importance of this document. All Yukoners have been the beneficiaries of First Nation leadership reaching out through this document, for this document kick-started a process to determine how Yukon would move forward. Leaders of all our governments — Yukon, First Nations and Ottawa — recognized the value of that document built on respect and trust and a belief in one another. They were inspired and saw it as a new way forward.

Together and in cooperation they worked toward the UFA and self-government agreements. All along, Yukon people were included in the process. Together we worked in our governments, on the land, in our communities, in our offices, in our schools. We built relationships — relationships built on trust, caring and respect — and began to implement a brave new way of working together for the good of the Yukon.

This document and the subsequent implementation and documents recognized the value of our land. We discussed shared experiences and lived to understand what the First Nation elders were telling us when they said we are part of the land and part of the water — a world view that recognized the connectedness and the integral relationship of the land to those of us fortunate enough to live in Yukon and becoming stewards of our land.

The UFA recognized a need to carefully develop the land to sustain a living and to share our resources. Leaders and citizens came together for us today and for our children tomorrow. The spirit of that document was recognized by the people of the Yukon and by Canada, and the governments worked together to point to a way forward.

Two cultures learning and working together to develop a brave new way forward, sharing the stewardship of the land, hand-in-hand — a new and dynamic — and I will repeat that — a dynamic system developed. The UFA was signed, implementation was begun, a framework that would look after our environment, share our resources in a sustainable way that allowed for all Yukon people the opportunity to make a living and contribute to the good of us all. This relationship was built on trust and understanding, on the belief that all voices counted, that the well-being of our air, land and water was paramount and that, in this spirit, we would go forward together for the benefit of all Yukon people.

It was a marriage contract, not a divorce settlement. It was to recognize all voices, a template for building the future. To callously imply “let the courts decide”, to suggest that “if you don't like it, take us to court” is a rejection of the land claims process, a rejection of the promise of the UFA and a step backward, giving confrontation and unilateral ultimatums, with legal wrangling and federal politics controlling the Yukon.

“If you don't like it, sue.” This is of consequence to all Yukon people. It is not simply a First Nation issue. We will all feel the pain and the uncertainty, should Yukon become mired in confrontation and legal wrangling. The UFA was a way forward, a way to work together to create a robust economy. The beauty of an arm's-length, independent body allows us to get on with the business of the day without political ideologies interfering.

The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board is established under YESAA and is consistent with the UFA as an independent, neutral, arm's-length body responsible for the administration of assessment responsibilities under YESAA. The YESAA process is trusted by Yukon people, many of whom devote time and effort and resources, contributing to the process, having their say in projects that have a direct impact on them and their environs. We may not always be in agreement, but each of us was respected and had the right to have our say in the assessment process.

Since the legislation came into effect in 2005, YESAB has conducted approximately 1,840 assessments. Designated offices conducted 90 percent of these assessments under YESAA, and these assessments have been completed, on average, within 80 days. The facts speak for themselves: YESAA is working in an effective and timely manner. YESAA is by Yukoners, for Yukoners and reflects our values. All Yukoners can be proud of the work being done on our behalf.

Bill S-6 is a unilateral act developed in secret, brought forward by an unelected Conservative senator, supported by our Conservative MP and supported by the Yukon Party

Premier. The bill includes several proposed changes to YESAA that extend beyond the scope of the five-year review and were not part of the discussions during that five-year review.

We're on the verge of having to make decisions to develop some larger projects in scope and footprint. We cannot afford another Faro or another Keno. There is a potential for massive development, and we need to consider possible consequences that may have a major effect on our environment and must be considered carefully. Casino is talking about a 30-year mine life and a project that will be maintained forever.

Now is not the time to unilaterally undermine YESAA and all it has accomplished. YESAA, as designed, has timelines already and they are working within those timelines. There are some requests and some raised concerns about YESAA, hence the five-year review, hence the need for the three governments to work together.

The process is in place for working together; the basic premise is that YESAA is a dynamic document, signed by three governments, involving and for all Yukon. Bill S-6 is not about development. Yukon people want development; First Nations want development.

In my area, the Na Cho Nyäk Dun, Selkirk First Nation and Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation have worked closely with industry to develop projects. They have been involved, working directly with industry and other levels of government, involving their elders, their communities and their citizens. They want development, but not at any price — not at the risk of leaving an awful legacy for our children and grandchildren.

As I mentioned, Bill S-6 is not about development. Bill S-6 is a blatant power grab. It is an undermining of our constitutionally enshrined treaties. This is about our treaties and our assessment process under the guise of development. First Nations and the Yukon public want to be involved and trust the system — industry as well wants the certainty that an independent, arm's length YESAA brings — free from the vagaries of political influence and short-term thinking. Bill S-6 is not the way to move forward.

The Harper Conservatives, echoed by the Yukon Party, say changes to Bill S-6 — or to YESAA — are necessary to remain competitive. These changes will have just the opposite effect. Bill S-6 may be challenged directly, tying up our assessment processes in protracted litigation. Individual projects may also be challenged, raising the spectre of potential litigation hanging over all major projects. Proponents will not know whether their project will be subject to litigation, affecting their ability to raise capital or even to predict a return on their investors' money. All will become unpredictable and beyond their control. That is the greater uncertainty.

Yukon's reputation as a good place to do business and invest capital is already going downhill as a result of current court cases. This bill, amendments to YESAA, will invite litigation over a period of many years. It will be Yukon's economy and Yukon people that will suffer.

It doesn't have to be that way. First Nation leadership, previous governments and the UFA pointed to a better alternative. YESAA was made by Yukoners for Yukoners and designated on behalf of all of us in the UFA and final agreements. These treaties belong to all of us and give certainty about how we will all work together. Violation of our treaties is a violation of all Yukoners and undermines the positive relationship all of us are working hard to advance.

The Yukon Party government and the Harper Conservatives have gone behind closed doors, behind the backs of Yukoners, and secretly conspired to change this law without our knowledge. Unelected senators have refused to come to Yukon to hear the views of Yukoners about Canada's changes to YESAA. Our unelected senator has refused to invite the committee to Yukon to hear from us. Our Member of Parliament, Conservative Ryan Leef, has refused to advocate for Yukoners and has refused to insist Bill S-6 be discussed in Yukon. Instead, he parrots the Harper Conservative line. Our Yukon Party Premier has not stood up for Yukon, is undermining the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and risking our environment, our economy and our relationships at the behest of the Harper Conservatives.

Bill S-6 compromises a made-for-Yukon act, YESAA, and our UFA. It is not too late. Now is the time to listen to our partners. Don't throw away 40 years of progress. Stand up for Yukon people. Repair our relationships and build on our treaties for the good of all and, most importantly, for our children tomorrow.

We will not be bullied by the Harper Conservatives and their narrow ideologies. Stand up for Yukon people, stand up for responsible resource development and our environment, stand up for our treaties and our new way forward. I implore you, stand up for this wonderful and diverse land.

I support the amendment from the Member for Whitehorse Centre and I urge all legislators to vote in favour of this amendment.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order please. Before the member takes his seat, I would like to ask him to tie his comments to the amendment and whether the amendment strengthens or takes away from the original motion. You were speaking to the amendment and I gave you a lot of latitude, but I would like you, in the end time, to bring it all together and indicate that you were speaking to the amendment and how it strengthens it please.

Mr. Tredger: As I mentioned, I urge all legislators to vote in favour of the amendment. The intention of the negotiators at the time the UFA was negotiated was to have the three parties cooperate on a comprehensive review of the first iteration of YESAA in order to see if the law needed to be improved in its ability to fulfill the promises set out in the UFA and final agreements. The amendment speaks to that and thereby strengthens the original motion from the Member for Watson Lake, and indeed reiterates the need to work with the

spirit and intent of the Yukon land claims agreement when considering our assessment processes.

Speaker: Does any other member wish to speak to the amendment?

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Disagree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Mr. Elias: Disagree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

Speaker: The nays have it and I declare the amendment defeated.

Amendment to Motion No. 756 negatived

Speaker: Does any other member wish to speak to the main motion?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I would like to start by thanking the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward this motion. While it was quite an open-based motion, speaking to regulatory processes, I will limit my comments mostly to what has been the discussion to this point and the point of the amendment by the New Democratic Party, and that was to talk a bit about YESAA.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the government supports, really, the comprehensive and objective assessment processes and amendments that have been put forward by the Government of Canada.

We have spoken about this a few times, certainly both in this House and outside this House and we do believe that these proposed act changes align with Yukon's focus on cost-effectiveness, value and timeliness of processes and ensuring that our assessment regime is competitive and responsive.

I think that as we go through, what we need to really look at are the benefits that exist or that will come into play as a result of these potential amendments to benefit all people. As I

stand here today as a Premier and leader of the government, it is in fact our responsibility to represent all people of Yukon and we believe these changes — these proposed amendments — will be good for all Yukon people. It's very important, as I have mentioned on other occasions, to make sure that people realize that the YESAA process in itself is a Yukon process for assessing all development.

This isn't just about mining or oil and gas or other resource industries. This is about all aspects of development, whether it's a recreational centre, whether it's a water-treatment plant, a waste-water treatment plant, roads or new bridges. All of these things go through this assessment process where we look at the environment as well as the social and economic aspects of these projects. I would like to talk, as we go forward here, a little bit about the economic aspects of these assessments as well.

Bill S-6 contains over 30 proposed amendments to YESAA. Many of those are minor and housekeeping in nature. Canada has indicated that the proposed changes reflect many of the agreed-upon findings of the YESAA five-year review and are consistent with Canada's action plan to improve northern regulatory regimes and the northern strategy. I would also suggest that it is also consistent with the three northern territories' northern vision document as well that was just recently renewed in late summer of this year.

Canada provided opportunities for the Yukon government, for CYFN, for individual Yukon First Nations and of course, YESAB as well, to provide input and review draft legislation during the development of the proposed amendments. As we have spoken and we have heard, this process of coming forward with proposed amendments as described in Bill S-6 has been a process that started back in 2008. There has been nearly seven years of consultation that has gone on.

The Senate Standing Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources gathered information and views on Bill S-6 from various parties and studied the bill clause by clause. I know that, during September and October, the committee heard from various parties, including people at Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. They heard from the Government of Yukon. I had the honour to go to Ottawa to speak to the standing committee, but they also heard from Yukon Energy Corporation. They heard from the Council of Yukon First Nations. They heard from Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. They heard from Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation. They heard from the Klondike Placer Miners' Association — KPMA. They heard from Yukon Chamber of Mines, they heard from Alexco Resource Corporation and they also heard from the YESA board as well. They did provide a written submission that was reviewed by the committee.

The Senate committee studying the bill reported back to the Senate and on October 21, 2014, the Senate passed the bill unanimously with no amendments. I know that the Member for Klondike was putting forward a motion today describing there were in fact no Liberals in the Senate, but I noticed even during my meeting with the committee — I clearly saw names

and the name Liberal behind their names as well, and I would like to say that certainly upon the review of all members of the Senate — the house of sober second thought — they have passed Bill S-6 unanimously by all members of the Senate and without amendment.

There are some key proposed act amendments that are occurring in this legislation. As I articulated, this has been a process that's been ongoing for almost seven years. Through the five-year review, there were 76 recommendations, 73 of which were unanimously supported by all parties. Literally thousands of hours of consultation occurred.

Just looking and commenting a bit on some of the key act amendments, the first one is on policy direction. As I have said in this House, policy direction ensures that there is a common understanding between the government and the board and this is to help reduce uncertainty and delays. Any policy direction provided to YESAB must be consistent with YESAA, with the UFA, with individual land claims and with other Yukon legislation.

I have also stated that policy direction is common in other jurisdictions as well. I have used the example that here within Yukon Territory, Yukon government has the ability to provide policy direction to the Water Board through the Yukon *Waters Act*. It is very important for people to realize that what kind of policy direction can and cannot happen from the minister. Any policy direction has to pertain to the exercise or performance of the board powers, duties and/or functions.

What policy direction cannot do is it can't change the assessment process itself. Policy direction cannot expand or restrict the powers of the board and policy direction cannot interfere with active or completed reviews.

I can tell you for example — I believe that in Northwest Territories, since 2003, this policy direction has only been used three times in the NWT where this ability to provide policy direction has existed.

The next key area of amendments is in the delegation of authority. This is really a permissive amendment. As we have stated, there is no delegation contemplated at this time. That was articulated by me to the committee. That was also articulated by the federal minister as well during his hearing with the standing committee. But really, the delegation of authority allows for administrative efficiencies. Those authorities are very limited. For example, YESAA regulations cannot be delegated. They cannot be delegated from the federal government to the territorial government. What that means is that YESAA will remain a co-managed process.

As I have spoken in this House, there are seven members of the board. Three of them are our executive committee, one is appointed by CYFN, one is appointed by the Yukon government and one is appointed by the federal government. Of the remaining four board positions, two of them are on the recommendation of Yukon First Nations, one by the Yukon government and one by Canada. Of the board of seven, three of the seven are representatives appointed by Council of Yukon First Nations, which really ensures the guaranteed participation in this process by First Nations and that it will remain a co-managed process.

I would like to mention that delegation and devolution are really both supported by our Northern Vision document and by the northern strategy and I believe that any time that you can bring decisions closer to home, the results will be better. I believe that evidence is there for reviewing — the evidence is there for all to view. Look at 10 years of economic growth and 10 years of population growth — they have all existed in part because of the ability to ensure that decisions are made here, as opposed to Ottawa, and that's why, in the Northwest Territories, they were so excited for the opportunity to continue down the path, as they did at the beginning of April, and sign their devolution — or as I like to coin it, from a territorial perspective, it's more of an evolutionary change than a devolutionary change.

Indeed this has worked for Yukon, and we feel strongly that going forward with these amendments will continue to allow us to create those opportunities for jobs, for families and, really, that's a pretty important thing. I think it doesn't matter who you talk to in this territory, the ability to feel confident that your job is secure, to know or be excited about the opportunity that there will be chances for our children to be able to get jobs here, is something that unites all Yukoners.

The next area that I would like to comment briefly on is on the renewal or amendment clause, with clarification that an amendment or renewal to an authorization does not in itself require an assessment. I think that is very important. The act amendment clarifies that the decision body determines if the project requires a new assessment after having considered whether there is significant change to the project and whether that change triggers an assessment under YESAA. Really, this is a clarification clause, and what it is just saying is that simply a renewal or an amendment in itself should not trigger another assessment.

When you're doing a project, whatever it may be, and you come to the end of the timeline, but things haven't changed, why should we go through an assessment again? That takes up a lot of time and a huge amount of money, not just for the government but, more importantly, for the proponent as well. That just does not make sense. Making this change allows us to ensure that people at the YESA board and their officials can focus their time in areas where there is a priority and it is to be able to deal with new projects or projects that have been determined by the decision body to have significant change.

Again, this is another amendment that is consistent with other jurisdictions. I also want to point out that the decision body determining if a project requires assessment was a recommendation from First Nations. That was one of their recommendations.

This is really allowing the elimination of this redundancy and what it really does is to create more certainty, because people are going forward and then they know all of a sudden that they have to go through this assessment process again — there is less certainty when that happens. Certainty is very important for projects, for suppliers, for indirect businesses that benefit from industry and the creation of wealth within a territory. It is important for investors as well, when they are

looking at projects and seeing what all the risks and the benefits are of investing in this project. Most importantly, it is important for families and employers to ensure that we have that certainty. Simply doing another assessment just because the time has run out doesn't make sense.

Another area where we have just heard some conversation is around timelines. The legislated time limits that include the adequacy stage are for designated office evaluations of nine months, executive committee screening of 16 months, and panel reviews of three months to develop terms of reference, plus the 15 months. What this does is provide certainty and, as we have heard from members opposite, YESAB has lived within those timelines to this point, and we all acknowledge that.

We find those timelines listed in the board's rules. Establishing them in the legislation provides more certainty for everybody, including investors and industry, to know upfront, in the legislation, that these are the timelines. As we've heard, YESAA has been able to live up to the timelines as described. This is simply instilling them in the legislation, which provides more certainty.

Of course, timelines don't include the proponents' time to answer information requests, so I think there is some confusion there as well. When there is a request by YESAB, the clock stops while the information is gathered. Once that information is provided to YESAB, the clock begins again. What I'm saying is, essentially, to see successful completion of assessments, it requires timely action not only by the assessors, but also by the proponents, to ensure they are as ready as possible, that their application is as complete as it can be going into that process and that, if there are additional requests for information, they are ready and prepared to provide that information on a timely basis.

There was the issue of CEAA and the removal of the application of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* in Yukon. Really, this is a clarification and a housekeeping item. I also want to note that this is also requested by Yukon First Nations.

I cannot comment on the consultation that occurred between Canada and Yukon First Nations but I can say that consultation does not mean consent. It doesn't mean that you continue to say that the consultation is inadequate until you get your way. Certainly, Yukon government did not get everything that they asked for within our requests in terms of amendments to YESAA and I anticipate it was the same for Yukon First Nations.

Mr. Speaker, because you are saying I am out of time, I again want to thank the Member for Watson Lake and I want to again reiterate our support for jobs, our support for families and that the legislative amendments proposed are good for the territory.

Mr. Silver: Thanks to the Member for Watson Lake for her motion today and thanks to everybody else who spoke so far today. I will be as brief as possible. I won't take up my complete 20 minutes, but I do want to get on the record on this important issue.

The Yukon Liberal Party is in favour of a clear and consistent regulatory regime. It was stated in our 2011 platform — and I quote: “Clarifying the roles and jurisdictions of the Yukon Water Board and YESAB, while working with these organizations to harmonize their processes and investigate the concept of a process charter.” It was a clear and key part of our platform.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there are issues in terms of mining regulations here in the territory. Mining companies are experiencing extended timelines, the duplication of data collection and analysis, and a company has even had its permit rescinded because the Yukon Party government couldn't manage and maintain respectful functional working relationships with the First Nations. Many of these delays and added expenses have slowed, halted and, in one case, scared away responsible resource development.

In 2011, the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board highlighted regulatory uncertainty as their number one issue in the mining sector. The report stated — and I quote: “Failure to ensure regulatory certainty will rapidly erode confidence and subsequently investment in the Yukon's mining and exploration industry as the investment community is highly sensitive to project delays and other permitting difficulties.”

Our economy has already seen the fallout of this with huge declines in exploration spending in the last few seasons and the announcement as well, of course, last week that our GDP is the worst in Canada. In March, we saw Yukon drop from the top-10 ranking in the Fraser Institute's worldwide mining jurisdictions. Yukon is now ranked 18th, after having been ranked eighth in previous years. As well, in Question Period today, I highlighted a number of projects that were supposed to be operational but now have had their status moved to being questionable.

There is no doubt that the mining industry in the Yukon is not necessarily booming currently. The Yukon regulatory regime does need to be streamlined to ensure that industry can thrive — absolutely — and that our economy can benefit from the resources that we are so fortunate to have.

The Yukon Party made promises in 2011 to continue to — and I'm quoting from the Premier's forum: “Work with the Government of Canada to resolve the issues pertaining to the problems with the Yukon Environmental and *Socio-Economic Assessment Act* and the *Yukon Waters Act*.”

I can agree with that statement. However, the way that this government has approached making changes to YESAA is not going to work. We know that — and the minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources will have a chance to rebut my comments when he has a chance to be on the floor — the changes to YESAA are at the federal level, but we have heard from Yukon First Nations that they will take the government to court over it. These are the things that we know, Mr. Speaker.

In speaking to several chiefs about changes, I know that they are not opposed to mining in the territory, but they are opposed to this government making changes that so blatantly fly in the face of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. The same YMAB report I quoted earlier from 2011 stated — and I

quote: “YMAB recognizes that there is significant pressure on Yukon governments regarding their participation in the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act (YESAA) ... First Nations in their requests for financial support from the federal government so that they may effectively participate in YESAA reviews.”

The Yukon Minerals Advisory Board recognizes that Yukon First Nations are an integral component of that process and that proper funding is required to ensure proper participation. The Yukon Party spent seven years consulting with Yukoners, but ultimately ignored their own process. Yukon’s mining industry will never succeed in an environment where we pit it against First Nation interests and their legal rights under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*.

In closing, I would just like to emphasize that I do think that regulatory regimes in Yukon do need to be streamlined so as to keep our territory competitive.

Often this government tries to paint all other parties as anti-mining and that is strictly not true. I am in favour of mining in the community — responsible mining in these communities. What I’m not in favour of is a unilateral approach that turns such an important economic driver of our territory into another economy-killing legal case. Changes to YESAA can only come with consultation and consensus.

Hon. Mr. Kent: It’s my pleasure to speak to the main motion that was put forward by the MLA for Watson Lake today with respect to the competitiveness and ensuring that we improve our regulatory framework here in the territory. I’ll respond to what the Leader of the Liberal Party had to say in his brief remarks a little bit later on, but there are a few things I want to touch on during my response to the amendment that was put forward by the MLA for Whitehorse Centre in stating that the government — that we wouldn’t support it. I was able to speak an awful lot to Bill S-6 and the changes that are being proposed to the Yukon and Nunavut regulatory acts, and the YESAA in particular as it affects the Yukon.

I want to speak a little bit about the Yukon *Quartz Mining Act* and the Yukon *Waters Act* and looking for ways to improve how those operate together and highlight some of the work that we’ve undertaken and accomplished in the past number of years with respect to enhancing the regulatory environment here in the territory.

Again, the Leader of the Third Party highlighted it. I believe he highlighted the 2011 YMAB report — again restated in the 2012 YMAB report that I have — that when it comes to certainty under the subcategory of harmonization, as was recommended — and again, this would add to what the member mentioned — in the YMAB in the 2010 annual report, the board is encouraged by the work of the major mine coordinating committee to provide strategic direction to the management and administration of active mine licences. In addition, the formation of a working group to better coordinate the YESAB and the Yukon Water Board — which was comprised of Energy, Mines and Resources, Environment, Water Board and Executive Council Office, the development assessment process branch — was positive, but

more processes were required with these organizations, however, to harmonize their activities and meet the increasing demand for project assessment and licensing.

Again, their recommendation at the time was that the Yukon government remain diligent in its work to address regulatory uncertainty by clarifying the roles and jurisdictions of YESAB, the Yukon Water Board and Energy, Mines and Resources through what is the quartz mine licensing portion.

Obviously this is something that is front and centre with industry, and it has been for a number of years. I don’t think anybody in this Legislature or in Ottawa is suggesting that the YESAA process or the act or the board is broken, but when it did come into effect — and again, as I mentioned earlier in my other response, I was one of the original board members along with some former members of this Legislature and others. We had the unique opportunity to set the policies and procedures and procurement and hiring and pretty much build that organization from the ground up.

At the time, of course, it was recognized as a leader in the country, so much so that many of the other jurisdictions in Canada copied things such as timelines with respect to assessments and included that in their environmental assessment processes. On some occasions, they have exceeded what YESAA is able to deliver. So what the federal government has put before the Parliament of Canada for consideration, I believe, is an opportunity to enhance the YESAA process here in the territory, bring it in line, and ensure it is consistent and competitive.

When we heard some of the testimony that was provided before the Senate of Canada in September and October of this year, one of the proponents spoke about the timelines and the need for consistency among the designated offices. One of the true and important aspects of YESAA is that many of those projects are assessed at the designated office level and there are six of those spread throughout the Yukon. Whitehorse, of course has a designated office — Haines Junction, Mayo, Dawson City, Watson Lake and Teslin. Truly those decisions are made at the local level and opportunity for local input to be given when it comes to those types of assessments.

One of the issues raised in Question Period on November 4, 2014, by the Leader of the Official Opposition during her question regarding the YESAA process to the Premier — she suggested that the Yukon government not be able to reject or vary YESAB recommendations, which is something that I am sure the First Nations in this territory would be very interested in reading — that new policy of the New Democratic Party — because essentially that would give the power for environmental assessments to the designated offices in many cases or to an unelected board when it comes to executive committee screenings. That’s a very large and significant departure from the spirit and intent of the YESAA legislation, so I’m surprised that the Leader of the Official Opposition has taken that tack and I’m sure First Nations will be concerned that the New Democratic Party is suggesting that, as decision bodies, they no longer have the ability to vary or reject recommendations.

There is a recent case with respect to a placer mine in one of the traditional territories — in fact on category B land, I believe — and the YESA board recommended that the project would be able to proceed and the First Nation rejected that. If this is the policy of the NDP, I'm sure First Nations will be quite concerned about that. With all things in this question that was asked on November 4, 2014, this appears to be what the Leader of the Official Opposition is going toward with respect to the policy of the New Democratic Party. I'm sure many who are involved in the environmental assessment process here in the territory will be quite interested to see that.

When it comes to the Yukon *Quartz Mining Act* and the Yukon *Waters Act* and how they authorize specific activities related to hard rock mining in general, the *Quartz Mining Act* authorizes terrestrial activities whereas the *Waters Act* authorizes water use and the deposit of waste. Licences under both acts have terms and conditions aimed to prevent adverse environmental effects and recently we ran into a situation where the Government of Yukon felt that one of the mining projects would have been able to carry out their stripping and waste rock removal under the existing water licence, subject to strict terms and conditions, and the Water Board was not of the same view.

The company decided that it would go through the process to get their water licence. The Water Board being a quasi-judicial body certainly have that ability to make that determination, but I think the people who were really affected by that inconsistency and interpretation by the two regulatory bodies are the 100 people who are no longer employed at that mine while they wait for this licensing issue to resolve itself. That company entered the YESAA process prior to the Cabinet shuffle that saw me come in as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. They were in it for approximately nine months and then went into the Water Board process. Obviously, this is something that is of great concern to members on this side of the House in that it is affecting Yukoners and their ability to feed their families. These are the types of issues that I think we need to look at to improve the efficiencies and streamline the regulatory system to assist companies in advancing their projects.

We certainly don't want to compromise the environment in any way. The environment, obviously, has to be of central focus. I know that members opposite said today that we can't afford another Faro and of course, I certainly concur with that. I believe the Member for Watson Lake mentioned in her opening remarks that that was done at a time when the federal officials were in charge of mine licensing and permitting here in the territory and that is not the case anymore.

From devolution through to YESAA, Yukoners are able to make their own determinations on environmental assessment, and we are certainly in a different regulatory time frame now, where that type of situation cannot and will not occur again. It's important that Yukoners understand that we have come a long way since those projects that are legacy projects and the responsibility of the federal as far as their remediation. We are authorized here in the territory. We are in a much more advanced and sophisticated regulatory regime

that certainly protects the environment and ensures that we can continue to have a strong and robust economy here in the territory.

I mentioned during my earlier response that the changes to Bill S-6, I believe, are consistent and will help us to ensure that there is consistency of environmental assessment, no matter what designated office you find yourself in or no matter what area of the Yukon you find your project in. That is something we need to strive for — for procedural fairness, in that you get the same terms and conditions applied to similar projects no matter where you are in the Yukon. Perhaps that is simplifying things a little bit, but I think that, for the most part, Yukoners would understand that similar projects, no matter where they are, should have the same terms and conditions assigned to them.

I think that is something we need to strive for, and we need to ensure that there is no duplication of what we are trying to achieve between the different regulatory bodies and the assessor, so that proponents are only required to provide information with respect to certain aspects of their project once and that they are not asked multiple times by different organizations or agencies to provide the same information when that has already been provided through an earlier process.

I reference one of the individuals that provided testimony in front of this Senate committee and he referenced the consistency of the process being very important. In his experience of going through the YESAA process, he witnessed some mandate creep, which perhaps is the best way to describe it, in that YESAB requested something that was the responsibility of another board that we have here in the territory. These are important things that need to be done, so we have to distinguish and ensure that the boards and committees are committed to what their mandate is and that they take care of what they need to ensure the environmental and socio-economic integrity of the system here in the territory.

When it comes to some of the improvements that we made, one most recently was the amended water regulations, which prescribed timelines for water use licence applications. These changes to the regulations came into effect October 1 for Type A quartz water licences and they are aimed at providing greater certainty for project applications.

As noted, the YESAA process has timelines and the Water Board process did not, so these are important aspects to introduce when it comes to ensuring that companies have some certainty of process. There are a number of initiatives that we still need to look at when it comes to mine licence improvements. As minister, it's extremely important to me to ensure that we have that clear and consistent regulatory regime when it comes to the territory because of attracting those investment dollars. I know the Leader of the Third Party perhaps tried to simplify it, in that it's just one aspect, but it's a very complicated industry when it comes to the decrease in exploration spending.

It's not just about the licensing issue. There are capital decisions, there are commodity prices and there are a number

of things that I'm sure the Minister of Economic Development can highlight, as it is his responsibility to do that mineral investment promotion work. It's a very complex industry and we're competing against jurisdictions like the Northwest Territories and Nunavut for these capital dollars. Ensuring that we are as good as or better than them is something I think that is incredibly important when it comes to our licensing and permitting processes here in the Yukon.

We're in a down-cycle right now when it comes to the mining industry. I think as a government, we need to be diligent in ensuring that we emerge from this downward trend, when the markets come back and when the commodity prices come back, in better shape than we were going in.

Making investments in infrastructure is important, and we continue to do that. We need to continue to train our local workforce. That's something that the Minister of Education is doing through solid investments in the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining and the mobile trades training that we've introduced to ensure that Yukoners have the opportunities when this industry rebounds to take advantage of those jobs. The regulatory and permitting environment — as part of that, it's something that Energy, Mines and Resources is responsible for — we need to ensure that we come out of this down cycle on top of the heap like we were when YESAA was first introduced and was seen as a cutting-edge piece of legislation — ground-breaking and able to respond to the needs to industry while protecting our environment and the socio-economic aspects of the territory.

The things that we don't control, we're in pretty good shape on. When it comes to the mineral endowment and the precious and base metals and other natural resources that we have here in the territory, I think we consistently rank very high in the Fraser Institute report, as far as that geological aspect. The work of the Yukon Geological Survey continues to be world renowned and I think we are in great shape when it comes to those types of aspects. Again, we need to emerge on licencing and permitting in particular but the infrastructure and training aspects in better shape out of this down cycle than we were going in.

I think we're on track to do just that thanks very much to the work of not only my colleagues on this side of the House but the officials in the Executive Council Office, Energy, Mines and Resources, Environment, Highways and Public Works and Education. It's something that transcends all departments in the Yukon government to ensure that, again, we can attract those investment dollars and bring those jobs and opportunities associated with mining to the territory, not at the expense of other industries and the continued investment that we make to diversify the economy, but recognizing the important role that mining and natural resource development has played, plays now and will play in the Yukon economy.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise to speak to the motion put forward by the Member for Watson Lake. I want to start by saying that the Official Opposition supports a clear and consistent regulatory regime. Regulatory assessments are

critically important and they must be thorough and robust. They must respect the values of Yukon people, including Yukon First Nations, and our interests in ensuring that the air and the land and the water are clean for generations to come.

I think the language in the motion that speaks to that — there's a reference to providing for sustainable and environmentally responsible development of Yukon's resources.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'm very concerned by the fact that the government has rejected the amendment that was put forward by my colleague, the Member for Whitehorse Centre, that would add the words "with the spirit and intent of Yukon land claims agreements" to the motion. We believe that regulatory regimes should be consistent with the spirit and intent of Yukon land claims agreements.

Certainty is a key issue. Economic certainty will only be available here in the Yukon if we respect land claim agreements. Yukon First Nations, in 1973, took a delegation of chiefs with a claim called *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* to Ottawa. If we want to stand up for future industries, we have to avoid the trap of removing certainty from our regulatory regime by inviting legal challenges. *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* asserted that the Yukon Indian people play an important part in economic development.

What certainty means for members of the Official Opposition caucus is respect for Yukon First Nation land claims agreements, which is a better way of doing public business. What certainty means is respect for the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* and its provisions. Certainty also means respect for the land and the water and respect for the rights of future generations to be able to drink water from our rivers, streams and lakes, knowing it's clean water today and that it will continue to be clean water for seven generations into the future.

The United Nations adopted the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in 2007. Canada was finally convinced to sign on to that in 2010. I want to refer to some of the values of that declaration because it's relevant to our debate today.

The declaration affirmed the fundamental importance of the right to self-determination of all peoples, that they should be able to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development and freely determine their political status. The declaration was created in order to enhance harmonious and cooperative relations between the state and indigenous peoples based on principles of justice, democracy, respect for human rights, non-discrimination and good faith. The declaration provides, in section 2, that states shall provide effective mechanisms for the prevention of and redress for any action that has the aim or effect of dispossessing indigenous peoples of their lands, territories or resources.

Article 19 and article 10 both speak to not forcibly removing people from their land and territories, to consulting and cooperating in good faith, and ensuring there is free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislation or administrative measures that may affect them.

These values and principles that are found in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* are shared by human rights defenders. I would like to speak about respecting these human rights and those specific rights of indigenous peoples' provisions when it comes to the motion debate today on Yukon's regulatory regimes.

The Premier stood and he spoke in defence of Senate Bill S-6 and the federal government process, which would amend the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*. The Premier spoke about all of the parties that had been there and he mentioned that YESAB had put in a written submission, but he didn't mention that the Senate refused the request from YESAB that their interim chair make a personal appearance and speak to the written submission.

The Premier didn't mention that the Senate only gave one hour for Yukon First Nations to make a presentation when there were 11 First Nations interested, including the Council of Yukon First Nations, and they refused to hold hearings here in the Yukon. This has resulted in First Nations putting out a news release about holding a public forum to invite Yukoners to hear what the Government of Canada did not allow Yukon people to hear or to comment on. It was a very unusual precedent for the Senate bill to be tabled in that unelected Senate to amend YESAA. Yukon First Nations' position is that certain amendments proposed by Bill S-6 undermine the spirit and intent of the act. Some amendments were never discussed during the five-year review and in some cases amendments go against agreements that were reached by CYFN, Canada and Yukon during that review.

Yukon First Nations oppose several amendments because they undermine the rights of their agreements, undermine the YESAA process and could permit political interference.

I want to start with the amendments that would give Canada binding policy direction powers, which it can then delegate to the Yukon government without the consent of Yukon First Nations. This undermines the independence of YESAA and the board and the designated offices. The Premier stood up and said, "Well, don't worry, we don't plan to do it," and that the delegation of power would only be used if it was needed for administrative efficiencies. He asserted that it would remain a co-managed process.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that defies the facts — that the delegation of authority from the federal to the territorial minister can be done without the consent of Yukon First Nations, which are a party to YESAA. This could change the distribution of powers and responsibilities in the Yukon and it has never been agreed to by the First Nations. It is completely inconsistent with the values of self-determination for Yukon governments and for Yukon First Nation governments. Frankly, I am completely taken aback and puzzled that the Yukon government would support moving backwards in time to having less responsibility for its affairs.

Another issue that has been of concern is the maximum timelines for assessments. These amendments impose timelines. Rushing complex assessments could put the environment, our land, our water, and our communities at

unnecessary risk and the timelines can be manipulated and abused.

There is certainly a possibility — we know some companies and developers have refused to provide information that has been requested by regulators. There was a story in the national news about that on Friday. It raises the question of whether an imposed timeline would mean the decisions would have to be made before receiving information that is essential to making an informed decision. The Premier says no, it wouldn't, but I don't have confidence in that. We know there are several cases before the courts now where Yukon First Nations have had to resort to the courts because the government won't work cooperatively with them to try to make agreements.

I want to refer to this submission that YESA board made to the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources about the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*. Specifically on timelines, they said that the challenges stem from the fact that the time limit amendments do not take into account what YESA board faces on the ground day to day. In one case the time limits in the amendments are much longer than we work under at present and in the other the time limits are too short to conduct robust, well-informed assessments of complex projects.

To illustrate, at the executive committee level, the proposed 16-month timeline is unlikely to provide the executive committee with the ability to effectively and efficiently assess more complex or controversial projects. The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board also raises the concern that the proposed time limit will include the period of time referred to as the adequacy review.

The adequacy review is the period of time where the executive committee determines whether or not the proposal submitted contains enough detail and information to begin the screening process. The time limits were initially based on an understanding that they would begin after the adequacy review period was completed. If a proponent is unable or unwilling to bring forward the information needed in the screening process, the clock keeps on ticking and the decision could be forced before the relevant information is in. That is simply not acceptable.

Timelines can be manipulated and abused. The Premier has said that results are better if decision-making is brought closer to home. That is inconsistent with the position he has taken to support allowing the federal government to make binding policy direction. The federal government is in Ottawa — that is not local.

The next subject I want to turn to is the amendments that provide for no assessments being required for renewal of projects. That allows governments to approve renewals and/or amendments of permits and licences for projects without further information.

This can make the project assessments challenging because renewals would not likely have to go through an assessment. Renewals and amendments could have serious impacts on local communities, on regional economies and on

the environment. Reviews are part of a good assessment practice. At the initial application phase, you can't necessarily foresee all of the effects that will result from a project at the time of that initial review. This amendment fails to recognize the importance of changes that occur over time — changes such as climate change and wildlife populations. We know climate change is happening. We know too that we see climate change is happening in our northern environment particularly quickly and they're often particularly extreme.

Before I conclude, I want to just make another reference to the news release from the Council of Yukon First Nations and 10 other First Nations who are holding a public forum because they believe Yukoners have a right to voice their concerns on the proposed changes to YESAA. They make the point that the changes will affect all Yukoners and they express their concern that it could put the Yukon environment and economy at risk. We don't want to see uncertainty and that's why we have a concern that the government was unwilling to adopt the amendment that would have strengthened the motion that is before us.

The government has taken a combative approach to its relations with First Nations. We have seen that repeatedly. Investors want a stable investment climate and this government is not governing in a manner that provides certainty to all parties interested in sustainable and environmentally responsible development of Yukon's resources.

While court cases ultimately do provide certainty, they do not create an environment for investors that encourages them to look at investing in the Yukon. The government's approach of supporting unilateral changes to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, which are opposed by Yukon First Nations, adds to the uncertainty for potential investors and developers.

YESAA was designed by the Government of Canada, the Yukon government and Yukon First Nation governments to work together and it is irresponsible for the Yukon Party government to move backward on Yukon governments' self-determination. It is irresponsible for this Yukon Party government to move backward on economic and regulatory certainty by supporting the unilateral federal Bill S-6, which is flawed.

It is irresponsible — in a climate where the Yukon public is standing up for the future, for the land and for the water — for the government to refuse to accept the amendments put forward by the Leader of the Official Opposition.

I want to urge this Yukon Party government to change its approach in its relations with Yukon First Nation governments and with the Yukon public at large. I want to encourage the Yukon government to consider a different approach — to be lawful, to think about its *Cooperation in Governance Act* and respect that and hold a Yukon Forum, to have regular meetings between the Yukon government, the Premier and ministers, with the Yukon First Nation chiefs.

This motion fails to uphold the principle of amendments to the regulatory regime, amendments to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* being

done in a manner that includes all parties — the Yukon government, First Nation governments and the Government of Canada. This government's actions are not consistent with the highest standards of responsible government and of inclusive governance.

Mr. Hassard: It's a pleasure to rise today to speak on behalf of Motion No. 756. I would like to begin by thanking the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward this important motion.

As a lifetime business person, I understand the importance of ensuring that regulatory regimes are clear, consistent and competitive. I didn't have a career with a government; therefore, I didn't have guaranteed paycheques every two weeks. When you are on your own like that, a clear, consistent and competitive regulatory regime has quite a different meaning.

I chose the career path I did, Mr. Speaker, entirely on my own accord, and I have no complaints or regrets about the decisions that I made. My son has chosen much the same path on his own as well. My point is that it would be nice if our young people who have decided to follow career paths such as the one I did could follow those career paths and stay at home — if they could work in the Yukon instead of going to B.C. and Alberta for the winters. The Yukon has the resources and it has the people to extract the resources. We just need to ensure that government is in a position to let the Yukon thrive. We need to have the regulators in place and they need to have the tools that they need so that people can undertake the work in an environmentally responsible manner.

In the past, the Leader of the NDP has asked if we would like to see the Yukon become the next Fort St. John. Well, Mr. Speaker, I spent a few winters working in Fort St. John while my children were growing up, and I was pretty damn happy that Fort St. John was there. I wasn't happy to leave home, but I was happy to have a paycheque. I still have many friends and some family as well in Fort St. John, and I think it's a pretty good place.

I am not in favour of court cases and lawsuits, and I would like to see a Yukon where the entire territory will move forward together. Unfortunately, all people will not agree at all times, but we still have to try to figure out a way to forge ahead.

It's interesting to listen to the Leader of the NDP talk at length about the economy and investor uncertainty. It poses a certain amount of irony, as I remember very clearly the mass exodus that the Yukon saw the last time the NDP was in power. This government understands the importance of an economy. We want to see our young people working in the Yukon, buying houses in the Yukon and raising their families in the Yukon. Yes, it is a balancing act, but I believe that that balance can be found and that this government will do it.

This great territory we call home was founded on resource extraction and that cannot be forgotten. We tout tourism as being such an important part of our economy and it is. However, a large part of the tourism is a direct result of resource extraction. Dawson City, for example, would have a

lot less tourism had they not hosted the gold rush. It seems that a lot of people forget that if it wasn't for mineral extraction here in the Yukon, we would have a very different looking Yukon.

People love to drive up the Canol Road in the fall to shoot their moose. The Canol Road wouldn't have been there if it wasn't for the pipeline. Whitehorse residents love to walk their dogs on the Copper Haul Road. Once again, that road wouldn't have been there if it wasn't for a mine. The list goes on and on.

This government understands the importance of maintaining the integrity of the environment. I'm not saying that the way things were done in the early 1900s or even up into the 1970s was the right way, but we are righting the wrongs. We have regulatory regimes in place, such as YESAA, the Water Board and the Utilities Board, and these organizations work in conjunction with such outfits as the chambers of commerce or the Klondike Placer Miners' Association.

We listened to the NDP here today, but we just have to think back about the mess that the Yukon protected areas strategy was when this Yukon Party government took over in 2002. It's just another example of why we need to take extreme caution when considering what the NDP have to say in this regard.

I would like to see this motion come to a vote, so I'll just close by saying thank you to the Member for Watson Lake, and I'll take my seat.

Ms. Stick: I just have a few comments to make. It was interesting to listen to the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin about listening to Yukoners and what's best for them when his own First Nation in the Teslin Tlingit Council has been very vocal about this Bill S-6 and the consequences it's going to have. We need certainty; I agree with that. Certainly we need certainty in the Yukon, but this kind of action and this moving forward is not going to provide that — not for Yukoners, not for First Nations, not for investors and not for companies wanting to come here.

It's going to push us into a court system and prolonged cases that we don't need, that will be costly and that are grinding things to a halt.

It is so important that the First Nations have invited all Yukoners to come to a public discussion tomorrow night with regard to it. They are talking about having your voice heard, and they're inviting everyone — not just First Nations, not others, but all Yukoners — because they believe that everyone has a right to voice their concerns on the proposed changes, and that is something that has not happened. Without that, if this bill were to go forward, we will not have what this motion is asking for. It will not be clear, it will not be consistent and it will not be competitive.

Some of the Northwest Territories' regulatory regimes have gone to court and it's because of uncertainty. I'm not going to comment on what the NDP did 12 years ago, or 15 years ago or 20 years ago. We're talking about today. We're talking about a place in Yukon's history where we have land

claims, where we have First Nations that are very clear and very concerned about what's happening to something that we passed many years ago and that was supposed to be the way forward for all Yukoners, not just for First Nations, not just for those governments, but for every level of government, including the territorial and the federal.

By going ahead — it says here in this news release — it would create uncertainty for new investment and development in the Yukon. This means a huge step backward for the Yukon, and we believe all Yukoners should have a say if Canada chooses to redraft our made-in-the-Yukon assessment process.

Why are we allowing changes that take away — that allow others to come in and decide for us? It is not just one First Nation. It is not two. Even the Council of Yukon First Nations has come out opposed to this, because what we are looking at is regulatory regimes, according to others, that are going to cause it to be unclear, inconsistent and not competitive. We have heard that from industry. They are concerned with what's happening — not just with falling prices, but with the uncertainty here in the Yukon. It is not a place where people want to come and invest when they are looking at this.

I won't speak to the amendment, but it would have been clearer if those had been included. Unfortunately this is just not clear enough. It doesn't give this Legislature, or this government, a good direction that supports all Yukoners and not just one or two levels of government. We are dealing with three here, and they should all be included.

Ms. White: I am rising to speak to Motion No. 756. I listened with interest to the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin because I have worked in industry in the Yukon, in mining camps — quite a few mining camps, actually. That was an interesting experience. I saw both really environmentally responsible companies, and I worked for some less environmentally responsible companies. I was in a mining camp where it cost \$23 million a day to be in a holding pattern, but the mine was shut down because the water couldn't be treated adequately before it could go back into the environment. I also worked in mining camps where I saw a Cat fall into a creek and everything spill out and there no spill reported. What spill happened?

It's interesting. The Premier talked with great pride that Bill S-6 passed the Senate without amendment. It's interesting to note that it is the same Senate that is not elected — so the appointed members of the Senate, not the elected members of the Senate. It passed without amendment in front of people who were not elected by their peers to represent them. They were appointed politically by parties in power. Congratulations to a non-elected Senate for passing that bill without amendment. I guess that's something they could be proud of, but I am more concerned that it went first in front of a Senate committee and not in front of a parliamentary committee with parliamentarians who were elected to represent their jurisdictions.

We are obviously on different sides of the picture and we all feel strongly about our convictions. It has been an interesting thing to see play out right now, because First Nations have been picking up momentum toward their disagreement with the changes to Bill S-6. It started off with just kind of a murmuring underground to know that the 14 First Nations in the territory were welcome to speak in the Senate committee, but there was only an hour allotted for those. If every First Nation spoke, it would be about four and a half minutes per First Nation to say whether they were for or against the amendments, which alone is a disrespectful action toward governments that are involved in this tri-party agreement.

What we have seen in recent weeks is that First Nation governments have started to organize, so much so that they are having — as was mentioned by the Member for Riverdale South — an open house to discuss how Bill S-6 affects Yukon, how they're really clear that it is our land, our economy, our Yukon, and that it's not between First Nations and non-First Nations, but it's everyone who lives in the Yukon and how this will affect us.

One of the many things that YESAA does by working through the proposed projects is it really gives those projects social licence, because they are asked questions by the community and they answer them. There are open houses and there are all sorts of processes to go through so communities are more comfortable with them by the time they're approved, because they have had this process of getting to know the proponents, of getting to know what the project is and how they are going to mitigate their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, the last time we talked about differences, I pulled up legislation from Saskatchewan and B.C. I could have done the same thing but sometimes I wonder if it makes the most sense to rush to the bottom of the barrel so we can undermine our own environmental regulations, so we can become more attractive to maybe the wrong kind of development. We've seen some unreal things happen in recent years. We have Canadian mining companies that have faced charges by Guatemalan original peoples for, essentially, human rights violations — to know that those charges were laid in Canada on Canadian soil against those companies that did business on foreign soil.

One of the concerns I have is, if we're so intent on watering down our regulations and following other regulatory regimes and making them softer or easier to bypass, or with fewer checks and balances, what are we really advancing that for? What is our final goal? We want to have the least amount of environmental protection? The least number of checks and balances? Then what kind of companies will we attract? What kind of development will we attract?

Like I said, I've worked at a couple of different mining companies and seen the different way that people will interpret those things. The only thing that really effected change was the sound of the helicopter, because the mining inspectors come in helicopters and you can hear them coming. When you're in mountain valleys, you can hear them from quite far away. You would see changes. What could get swept

under the carpet in a short amount of time really would happen when you heard the helicopter coming. In the companies that followed the rules, there was less concern about the helicopter arrival and the mining inspectors.

It just makes me wonder why, in this day and age, we're talking about lessening, we're trying to match everybody else — and I don't necessarily think that's in the best interest of the territory. We are in a unique position here with the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and those signed final agreements, and we're in this incredible position to be in a jurisdiction in Canada where we still have so much that is left untouched and there is still so much value in that wilderness.

We've seen commodity prices drop and we've seen commodity prices rise, but the ultimate truth is that something that's finite, that will reach its end, will only continue to go up in value. So all this mineral wealth that we have and these possible oil and gas reserves that we have will just increase in value over time. I'm not sure that this is something right now that we need to rush forward to make it easier to access. It's a savings account for the future by making sure that we have those now and into the future.

It is what it is, and I definitely liked the amendment to the motion, which we are not talking about. I think that there are different companies and they behave in different ways and I lament the fact that we're looking at rushing to match everybody else.

Thank you for the time, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. Stick: Disagree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Mr. Tredger: Disagree.

Mr. Barr: Disagree.

Mr. Silver: Disagree.

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

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

Motion No. 756 agreed to

Motion No. 723 — adjourned debate

Clerk: Motion No. 723, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod; adjourned debate, Mr. Barr.

Mr. Barr: I rise again to speak on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party. As I stated before, we will be supporting Motion No. 723. I will briefly comment on some of the things that I have already, to put it all into context again.

I had spoken about the vision of Raven Recycling and their efforts over the past 25 years that they had the foresight to bring to the territory. I remembered in those comments that those efforts of those folks — one particular friend, Ray Massey, along with others — likely led to recycling in Alaska — and I remember those days when I would walk in the fairgrounds looking for a recycling bin and there was none. I'm happy to note that Alaska and many other places have joined in and do recycling.

I also think back to going to the Whitehorse landfill. Not only leaders such as Mount Lorne and Marsh Lake that had transfer stations and Dawson City and other places that have great free stores — not only are we able to take our refundables to have compensation exchanged for that but we are recycling in many different ways. Under the leadership of the city council, the water and waste service departments and the environmental sustainability team, the City of Whitehorse no longer has a dump. They now have a waste management facility. This operation is something to see and if you haven't been up there, you can request a tour. Garbage is no longer garbage. Waste is being dealt with in many different levels. I was up there not that long ago with a friend of mine and it is amazing what you can find. This young lad is interested in learning guitar and so this whole box of cables and things like that is there. He says to me, because I have a little bit of experience in musical stuff, "What's this? What's that?" I said, "That is \$20. That is a pedal — that's \$200." I said, "Your son is going to be so happy with these little things that you are able to take home to him." He was pretty happy to show me this \$200 German-made knife that was laying there in the bin that is now in his cupboard.

There is organic waste that no longer goes into the waste stream. It's separated out and we have beautiful compost. I was reflecting on this when I was thinking about compost and the efforts that rural landfills such as Carcross, for example, and Tagish — the plans for compost to be able to mature in those rural communities isn't happening. It's kind of sad, because I myself at home would really like to have a compost pile, but because many of us who live in the communities see the bear attraction that is caused by compost. It creates unsafe situations and we certainly have heard recently of a friend's wife who is no longer with us as a result of issues with bears coming into yards and such. I myself on Crag Lake know our neighbours just had a grizzly bear announcement. We keep

watch on each other. Just last week again, when you think they're denning and things like that, that's not happening.

Although we would like to have compost — and I would like to as many of my neighbours would — we don't for those particular reasons. I do know that it takes special people or people with commitment and passion, such as I did reflect on in Mount Lorne for their composting pile that they would administer.

I know that there is growing interest for a higher level of recycling and waste management in the communities, now that other people are becoming more educated. I would encourage this government to be aware of that. I do know that other folks have put together proposals for recycling and educating those in the classrooms — who are willing to go to communities — who don't have the knowledge but have the will. I know there was a proposal put out there, which I understand, from the Minister of Community Services — it's still waiting on whether we are going to hear or not that this would be something that would be funded. For people who would like to know more about recycling, they could have the benefit of the expertise, of the trial and error, of people who are very committed to recycling in the territory. I would encourage that, when any of these proposals come in, they are given the weight that would allow us to see a greener future in the territory.

I did want to also speak about that, from the successful curbside composting program, a new pilot project has sprung, targeting businesses and multi-family buildings.

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

Debate on Motion No. 723 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 170

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, November 13, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME CONSTITUENCY PORTFOLIO

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Vuntut Gwitchin
Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
Patti McLeod	Watson Lake

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

New Democratic Party

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

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, November 13, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Diabetes Awareness Month and World Diabetes Day

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, November is Diabetes Awareness Month and tomorrow, November 14, is World Diabetes Day.

On behalf of all members of the Legislature, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the International Diabetes Federation calls diabetes a “global epidemic.” In Canada in 2013, 2.6 million people between 20 and 79 years of age had diabetes, and over 17,000 people in the same age group died of diabetes-related causes. With diabetes, the body either does not produce insulin, produces too little insulin or the insulin does not work properly, resulting in high blood sugar and damage throughout the body.

This condition increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, blindness, kidney failure and limb amputations. Diabetes symptoms frequently include slow healing, weight gain or loss, frequent urination, intense hunger and thirst and tingling or numbness in the hands and feet. There is still much that isn’t known about type 1 diabetes, usually diagnosed in children, and what places someone at risk in developing this disease. We do know that having a close family member with type 1 diabetes increases the risk, but there is still more to learn.

Much more is known about type 2 diabetes and the ability to delay or prevent its progression with regular physical activity and a five- to 10-percent weight loss in people carrying extra weight. There are many risk factors, including being of aboriginal, Asian or African descent, which is why the Canadian Diabetes Association is promoting the CANRISK on-line questionnaire. It is designed to help us identify our risk factors, if any, and then guide us as to what we can do to help reduce those risks.

Earlier this year, the Department of Health and Social Services partnered with a number of Yukon First Nations, the staff of Kwanlin Dun Health Centre and Yukon College staff on the Yukon CANRISK prediabetes and diabetes survey. Over 300 Yukoners, 80 percent of whom were First Nation people, took part in the survey helping to ensure that other Canadian First Nation adults between the ages of 20 and 29 will be able to get an accurate risk score when they do the CANRISK survey.

In Yukon, we have a wonderful on-line resource at yukondiabetes.ca, which is being updated by the Diabetes Education Centre and the chronic conditions support program of Health and Social Services. The site provides valuable links to a number of resources and events to help prevent and manage diabetes. This month I encourage all Yukoners to visit www.dontberisky.ca to see if they have any of the risk factors that could lead to diabetes. There are steps we can all take to keep healthy and lower our risk of type 2 diabetes. We should consider it.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.
 Are there any returns or documents for tabling?
 Are there any reports of committees?
 Are there any petitions to be presented?
 Are there any bills to be introduced?
 Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

(1) recognize the important paramedical first-response role played by ground and air ambulance paramedics in providing critical care medevac service to Yukon;

(2) acknowledge that ground and air ambulance paramedics undergo intensive professional development to ensure their ability to respond to medical emergencies in an effective manner; and

(3) publicly recognize EMS employees who practise ground and air ambulance paramedicine as “paramedics”.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon Liberal Party to explain why it does not support ensuring that Yukon’s regulatory regimes are clear, consistent and competitive with other jurisdictions, while also providing for sustainable and environmentally responsible development of Yukon’s resources.

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

THAT this House recognizes the negative economic impact of having the entire Ross River traditional territory, an area equal to 13 percent of the Yukon, under a mineral staking ban for almost a year.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Economic outlook

Ms. Hanson: Yesterday I pointed to Yukon statistics demonstrating that in 2013, retail and wholesale sales decreased and Whitehorse business licences fell by nearly 800. When I asked what action he is taking to support small

businesses during this time of negative economic growth, the minister dismissed the importance of the question by saying, "When the member opposite asks for statistics or for evidence, I suggest she go walk around her community." Mr. Speaker, I do walk around my community and I do see small businesses who are struggling and who feel abandoned by the government. Perhaps if the minister was in better touch with this community, he would see the same.

Why can't this minister give a straight answer on what action he is currently taking to support small businesses?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I thought I answered quite clearly yesterday when I indicated that upon reflecting on the 2013 data that we received recently from Stats Canada, which indicated that 2013 was a very difficult year for Yukon's economy, that the Yukon government responded by bringing forward the largest capital budget in Yukon's history.

We did this, in part, because of the fact that we knew the construction industry is so important, not only for the businesses that are directly impacted by construction, but by the spinoff of those construction projects to other local businesses, whether they be service and supply companies or other businesses in the community.

So we've done that; we've brought forward the largest capital budget in Yukon's history. We've increased government spending on capital projects and, as I indicated yesterday, the evidence of that is very apparent throughout the City of Whitehorse. You can see instances of large capital projects going forward, and you can see instances of a variety of small businesses working on these projects, whether they be contractors themselves or service and supply companies that support those businesses.

We're confident the investments we've made are positively impacting Yukon's economy, right from the large construction companies all the way down to the smaller retail and wholesale companies.

Ms. Hanson: In fact, the challenging times facing the Yukon economy are not new. The rate of annual GDP growth has declined each year since this government was elected. Now that the economy is bottoming out, this government intends to spend its way out of the economic crunch. Large construction projects can be good stimulants for economic growth and job creation when they are done correctly.

According to the minister's own numbers, only 33 jobs have been created by the F.H. Collins construction so far, despite over \$25 million allocated to this project for this fiscal year. Can the minister give Yukoners a straight answer on what actions are being taken to ensure small Yukon businesses see direct benefits from local construction projects?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: First of all, I have to point out that the reason we're able to make the investments we're making in capital projects is because of the responsible stewardship of Yukon's finances by this government.

In combination with the largest capital budget in Yukon's history, we continue to have a very large surplus as well. What this means is that we are spending and we are increasing

our spending, but we are doing so responsibly while maintaining a strong public finance for Yukon taxpayers.

When we invest in projects throughout the territory, we know that it is not just the company constructing the project that benefits; we know that there are spinoffs related to the financial expenditures of those large capital projects. We know that small businesses benefit when there is economic activity going on in the territory. But I have to point out as well that that is not the only thing we have done. There are a number of measures in place that support small businesses in the community. We do that through the Yukon Chamber of Commerce and others. We have a number of funding programs that are available to Yukon businesses. Of course, I have to point out that earlier this year we reduced the small business tax credit by one quarter. We have made Yukon businesses more competitive. We are trying to have Yukon be an attractive place to own and operate a business and to start a new business. That's what our target is, that's what our goal is and we'll continue to take measures to support Yukon small businesses.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. The reason the minister has money is because there is between a six-and-nine-percent annual increase every year in federal transfers.

The reality is that the private sector is attracted to investment environments that are sound, supportive of and receptive to the potential benefits they offer. Small businesses, in particular, benefit from clear, accountable and valid procurement policies, including public tendering and requests for proposals. Obtaining contracts, for example, requires a certain level of training, education and capitalization. This government has sat idly by while local industry and businesses have lost contracts to Outside proponents.

What actions will the Premier take to increase the awarding of government contracts to Yukon small and medium businesses?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This government has not been idling by. The results of that have been very well illustrated in the last 10 years. What a good thing to have — over 10 years of growth. The Leader of the NDP is worried about the rate of increases. What we can talk about is that this is a territory that did see a decade of positive GDP growth. There is no place in this country that can talk about the great growth that we've had in our economy and in our population.

What we do hear is that the opposition doesn't understand small business, and that was truly illustrated when these parties were in power last time, when we had a mass exodus of employees, workers and small businesses that left.

The Minister of Economic Development articulated very clearly efforts that we are doing. When you inject cash into the economy, whether it's through, for example, investment in exploration or whether government invests in infrastructure, there is a trickle-down effect that affects the whole economy, whether it's directly to the contractor or to the subtrades, to those employees or where, when they go in, they buy a truck or they buy a new stereo, and of course they get their groceries.

Investment in this economy is a benefit to small business as well as large business.

Question re: Teacher Qualification Board

Mr. Tredger: The Teacher Qualification Board is the ultimate authority on the credentials of new teachers entering our education system. The Education minister's credibility is already shaken by recent revelations regarding the board's chair's credentials.

According to the *Education Act*, every new teacher's qualifications are to be reviewed by this board to ensure they are able to effectively teach our children and determine their salary based on their education and past experience. When did the Teacher Qualification Board last meet?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I just want to say that it is a rather sad day again here in the Assembly when the member opposite in particular finds it amusing to make a compelling case to debate the credentials of our public service on the floor of the Legislative Assembly.

I might add that those public servants don't even have the capacity or the ability to actually defend themselves on the floor of the Legislative Assembly here. I just want to point out that we do defend our public service. We are in support of the good and hard work and valued service that they do provide on behalf of all citizens of the territory and we'll continue to defend our public service and all the processes that are in place, including the Teacher Qualification Board and the Teacher Certification Board which the member opposite speaks of.

There have been no meetings of the Teacher Certification Board since approximately 2010 and that is because we have a number of those certificates. They are routinely issued by the registrar to teachers who come to the Yukon with a valid teaching certificate from other jurisdictions. There has been no requirement to refer any of the teacher certification matters to this particular board.

Mr. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, I asked about the qualification board. It is a matter of public concern and it hasn't met in years. The minister should know better than to avoid the concerns of Yukon teachers. She is responsible for ensuring that the *Education Act* is followed. Potential teachers deserve to have their applications reviewed in a timely manner and their right to timely appeals of their reviews respected. The Department of Education website tells us that the Teacher Qualification Board meets twice a year.

Mr. Speaker, how many potential teachers are currently waiting the final review of their credentials by the Teacher Qualification Board?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Again, I don't have the specific numbers in front of me. Mr. Speaker, we have a number of boards and committees that each and every department houses. I can say that, with respect to the Teacher Qualification Board — which we now apparently are on — it is comprised of representatives of the Yukon Teachers Association and a representative of the Department of Education and a professional educator who is selected by mutual agreement between the Yukon Teachers Association

and our department. We also have an administrative individual who is appointed to the Teacher Qualification Board.

According to the information that I have, and as recent as just a couple of days ago, the Teacher Qualification Board does meet approximately two times per school year. I have not been made known otherwise — that they have not met. Again, that board is in place. In fact, I know a couple of the individuals who sit on that particular board, and I have been made very aware that they have been meeting on a routine basis. Unless there is something that the member opposite is not revealing to me — then please, by all means, share that with me.

Mr. Tredger: I have been told that it has been at least four years since the board's last meeting — four long years for a board that is supposed to meet twice a year. Fortunately, the Department of Education is not the Newburgh Bible Seminary. We just can't take God's word for it when it comes to accrediting Yukon teachers.

Being reviewed by the board is a legal requirement. If a teacher isn't reviewed by the board when they start teaching, they receive an interim rating that needs board confirmation. The Minister of Education has lost control of the situation. It has become a political fiasco and an embarrassment to the high standards of our education system.

When will the minister call this Teacher Qualification Board from its extended break and instruct it to hold its next meeting?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I think the member opposite is thoroughly confused. Let me take it through for the member opposite very slowly because we have a difference between the Teacher Certification Board and the Teacher Qualification Board. To my understanding, the Teacher Qualification Board, which is compelled to meet twice a year, has in fact been doing that. The Teacher Certification Board — there have been no meetings of that particular board since approximately 2010. I think the member opposite perhaps is a bit confused with respect to whichever board that he seems to be on.

The TCB — the certification board — and because of the *Agreement on Internal Trade* and those changes that have evolved since 2010, any teacher who has a valid teaching certificate from another Canadian jurisdiction and is in good standing in that jurisdiction is granted a certificate of qualification to teach in the Yukon by the registrar.

There haven't been any meetings for that very purpose because they are routinely issued by the registrar because of the changes to the *Agreement on Internal Trade*.

What I do find embarrassing, however, is that this member continues to mock the qualifications of each of our public servants on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. Those public servants don't have the ability to actually defend themselves on the floor of the Assembly.

Question re: Mineral staking on settlement land

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, in 2013, as a result of another legal battle with Yukon First Nation governments, the Yukon

government was under a court order to find a way to work with the Ross River Dena Council on what land would be available for staking in their traditional territory. I asked the minister in November 2013 if he would be forced into placing a staking moratorium in Ross River traditional territory due to this court order. We didn't hear an answer in the House; however, we did find out days after the legislative session concluded that this government was unable to reach an agreement with Ross River on what area would be withdrawn.

In lieu of said agreement, the entire 63,000-square kilometer area was taken off the table. The government has extended the staking ban more than once since then and it continues to be in place today. Is the government any closer to reaching an agreement after a year of negotiations?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Of course, the member opposite is talking about the Yukon Court of Appeal declaration that came into effect last year around Christmastime. There were two declarations — one dealing with class 1 or low-level mining exploration activity, and we're making progress on that. In fact, we have recently signed an MOU with a number of First Nations and are working through the Yukon Forum that was held in late May of this year to set up a working group to address the class 1 mineral exploration activities.

When it comes to the other declaration that deals with the withdrawal of the Ross River area, of course, it is something that we had to do because of a court order. We are working with the Ross River Dena Council. It is something that is being led by Executive Council Office. My understanding is that the staking ban is due to come off at the end of January and we will have lands identified within the Ross River area that will no longer be available for staking at that time.

Mr. Silver: Almost 13 percent of the Yukon is now currently off-limits to staking because of this government's frayed relationship with the Ross River Dena Council. The staking ban has been extended twice and now stretches until January 2015. It will have been in place for more than a year if a deal is reached by this time. If not, it will be extended once again. The government's strained relationship with the First Nation government is not good for the economy as it marginalizes the mining industry. It must be difficult for the Yukon Party to come across as pro-mining with an ongoing inability to work with the First Nation government when it comes to the resource sector. What would be some of the outstanding issues that remain unresolved?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Of course, as I've mentioned on the floor of this Legislature before, it serves no purpose for us to negotiate on the floor of this Legislature in public. As I've mentioned, discussions are ongoing, led by Executive Council Office with the Ross River Dena Council on this particular issue. As mentioned, the staking ban is due to come off in January of this year and we look forward to that very mineral-rich area being opened up to staking and additional resource development as early as this next exploration season.

It is interesting to note though, again there are constants that we always come across in November. We always set our clocks back an hour and we can count on the Liberals to come up with some sort of pro-mining stance, but the Leader of the

Liberal Party broke that trend yesterday when he voted against a motion brought forward by the MLA for Watson Lake to address regulatory certainty. He has asked about regulatory certainty every November that this House has sat, and now he has changed his tune. When it comes to the identity crisis that the Leader of the Liberal Party seems to have with respect to supporting responsible development, he may want to check the calendar. It's November; he is supposed to support mining in November.

Mr. Silver: Yesterday I voted against a unilateral approach by this Yukon Party government — which clearly has a problem with economic development, as we can see by the GDP numbers.

Mr. Speaker, 13 percent of the Yukon remains closed to mining under the leadership of this Yukon Party government. One hundred percent of the Peel has been banned from any exploration because of this Yukon Party government. So let's stick with the actual question and let's see if we actually get an answer from the minister. Maybe I can ask him one question and get an answer without getting heckled from the Minister of Economic Development.

Could the minister at least comment on the fact of whether or not he has sat down and negotiated with the government, and when was the last time he and the Ross River Dena Council have met?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: What is not good for the economy is the Liberal Party and the NDP. That is quite clear. We saw it again yesterday when both parties voted against this strong regulatory system — improving our regulatory system for responsible resource extraction and responsible resource industry in this territory.

The Leader of the Liberal Party does not support the YESAA amendments, even though the Senate Liberals unanimously supported them in Ottawa. For the record, we know where the Liberal leader is when it comes to the Peel. He wanted the Peel shut down. Now he is calling for us to open it up — another example of the leadership that we see from the Liberal Party, depending on who he is talking to and who he supports. That's what we expect and that's what we get.

Question re: Medevac flights

Mr. Tredger: On several occasions I have raised a concern I've heard from the residents of Pelly Crossing: medevacs take far too long to take critically sick or injured patients to Whitehorse. People being medevaced out of Pelly Crossing are taken by Pelly ambulance to Stewart Crossing, where they are transferred to the Mayo ambulance, which takes them to the Mayo hospital and, from there, they are medevaced to Whitehorse. This has been going on for far too long.

In the spring, the minister indicated that his government took the safety of Pelly Crossing residents seriously and would look into extending the runway on an interim basis. What is the status of the interim extension to the Pelly Crossing airfield?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I do thank the member opposite for the question. I was hoping I would get this question.

The gravel airstrip at Pelly Crossing — I just want to give him an update. I'm not sure if he knows how long it is. It's 3,300 feet long and is primarily used for small private and charter aircraft the RCMP and occasionally for medevac flights. It is believed that Pelly has fewer than 200 aircraft movements annually.

The airstrip was constructed in 1986 to support light- and medium-size aircraft certified for use on gravel runways. It was not designed to accommodate the higher performance aircraft, like the Beech King Air 300, which is used for medevac flights today. The runway surface and the subsurface are in fair condition. Soft sections do occur in the spring and with moderate precipitation in the summer months. Reconstruction of the existing runway is scheduled to begin in 2015-16 and, in the interim, the department is investigating the cost-benefit of extending the runway by approximately 1,000 feet.

Mr. Tredger: This spring, we were talking about extending the runway. We need to take concrete steps to actually fix the problem. The health of critically ill patients is being compromised. When the family of the individual being medevaced out of the community makes it to the Whitehorse General Hospital before the patient does, it says a lot about the state of the medevac process.

This is a serious health and safety issue for the residents of Pelly Crossing. The government knows this and they have acknowledged it in the House, but it has gone on long enough. This government needs to make the safety of Pelly Crossing residents a priority. How much longer will the community of Pelly Crossing have to wait for an airstrip that can accommodate medevacs?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: On this side of the House, we have the utmost respect for our first responders, those folks who work on the medevac flights or are in an ambulance. The medevac carrier requires that runway surface condition reports be provided before they could consider using a runway. Presently, at that location, there is no program or trained staff available to provide these inspection services on a routine basis. We are, however, investigating the possibility of training volunteers to provide unofficial runway conditions. I spoke a little bit earlier about looking at the cost-benefits of extending the runway by approximately 1,000 feet and I talked about the construction work that is going to happen in 2015-16.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that we efficiently manage and maintain four airports and 25 aerodromes in the Yukon Territory. You just need to look at the budget — over \$18 million put into our airports.

Question re: Residential Landlord and Tenant Act amendments

Ms. White: On November 2012, a government news release indicated the new *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* would provide modern, clear and effective legislation to

benefit landlords and tenants and promote a healthy private-rental market. The release indicated the act would create a new dispute resolution process, where the Residential Tenancies Office would hear and settle landlord and tenant disputes outside of the courts and have the ability to make binding decisions on those disputes. This news release also indicated the new act would come into force in 2013, after the regulations had been approved.

We are months away from 2015 and still, there are no regulations. Can the minister explain what has changed for landlords and tenants since November 2012, when the government announced the new act would come into force in 2013?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would like to begin by thanking our staff of Community Services, who have worked on the development of the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and who worked on the development and consultation as well on the regulations for the act. Consultation on the regulations occurred this spring and as I indicated to the member in a previous response, I look forward to, in the near future, announcing the regulations, once they have been approved by Cabinet.

I would point out to the member opposite that this act had not been modernized in 50 years. It followed the work of an all-party committee — significant consultation with landlords and tenants and other stakeholders in development of the act and again, consultation on the regulations. This is a very important matter. We look forward to announcing the regulations in the near future, but we are also very much committed to getting it right and that is exactly what is being done.

Ms. White: I too look forward to the day the regulations are tabled and that the Residential Tenancies Office can do the good work that they are set out to do.

On a weekly basis, we have people coming into the office — and I understand the frustration that a tenant or a landlord has when they seek assistance currently from the Residential Tenancies Office. They are shown a brochure outlining what should be happening and told if they are unable to resolve their dispute, they have to file a claim with the Small Claims Court.

The government's inability to approve the act and regulations means Yukoners are forced to continue using the legal system to resolve those problems rather than a dispute resolution process administered by the knowledgeable staff of the residential tenancies office. What is the delay in enacting the legislation that would empower the Residential Tenancies Office to hear and settle disputes outside of the courts?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would point out to the member opposite that this legislation had not been modernized in over 50 years, including three terms of NDP governments that did nothing to modernize this legislation. We created an all-party committee which consulted with Yukoners on this important matter. That led to the development of the act, which included public consultation, and the regulations themselves, which involved public consultation and also involved consideration with other involved departments — because there are some

very key provisions in these regulations — which is why it's important that we get it right and that is exactly what is being done.

The office has now been staffed and staff will be ready to take on their new powers under the act once those regulations are put in place in the very near future. I want to again thank staff and thank the legal drafters and everyone involved in this process, including stakeholders and citizens who have commented, for their good work in modernizing legislation that had not been modernized in over 50 years.

Ms. White: I would point out to the minister that it was his very own news release — or his government's news release — that said it would be enacted in 2013. Maybe this minister doesn't fully understand the impact his inaction has on tenants or landlords.

I have spoken with many mobile home owners who are experiencing damage to their personal property because the mobile home park has water drainage problems. These homeowners are forced to go to the courts because of this minister's continued inaction.

In 2012, the government said the new legislation was modern, clear and effective. So how can the minister justify that two years later, landlords and tenants are still dealing with legislation that is outdated, unclear and ineffective?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: While I won't comment on specific court matters, I think the issue that the member is referring to, first of all, has not actually gone to the courts and, in fact, is being worked on right now, without homeowners actually having to seek court action.

Again what I would point out to the member is that the member doesn't seem to understand that when there is significant policy work being done and we hear feedback from stakeholders that requires adjustment and legislative re-drafting — that does take time. The consultation that occurred on the regulations this spring — again we hear the Leader of the NDP not appreciating the importance of this topic or how it affects Yukoners through her off-mic comments. But again, Mr. Speaker, we very much appreciate the importance of ensuring that this balances the rights of landlords and tenants fairly, as committed to in the project. We very much appreciate the good work done by the staff of Community Services and other involved departments, including Health and Social Services and Yukon Housing Corporation staff who are affected by this legislative change and deal with groups and citizens who are directly affected by the provisions of these changes.

We are committed to getting it right, and that is exactly what our capable and competent staff are going, and I thank them for the good work they are doing.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 75: *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 75, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Dixon.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I move that Bill No. 75, entitled *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission that Bill No. 75, entitled *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It's a pleasure to rise today at the second reading of the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*. I would like to begin by thanking a number of folks in the Public Service Commission who aided in the development and construction of this act. The folks who have worked on this over the past number of years have done so diligently and done a fabulous job. I would like to thank the staff in the Public Service Commission who have done the difficult work of bringing forward this legislation and also working with the Department of Justice officials who drafted the bill itself and were able to arrive at the bill that we see before us today.

This bill ensures that an employee who believes that wrongdoing may be occurring in the Yukon public service workplace has a legal avenue to bring those concerns forward, secure in the knowledge that the law is designed to protect them from workplace reprisal.

The fundamental premise of this kind of legislation is that the public interest is best served when strong mechanisms exist to prevent and address wrongdoing in the workplace. This legislation is an important addition to our governance and public accountability toolbox. It supplements existing laws and policies governing the conduct of business in various Yukon public service workplaces.

Business is conducted by people and the people we entrust to conduct public service business on behalf of Yukoners are expected to do so with professionalism, integrity and honour. However, if a person commits a wrongdoing, we want to know about it and what, if anything, can be done to fix it.

We also want those with responsibility for wrongdoing to be held accountable for it. This bill aims to help ensure that wrongdoing can be identified and appropriately addressed. It does this by setting out the kinds of wrongdoings that we believe need to be within the scope of the act, setting out ways that such wrongdoings can either be prevented or addressed, setting out some possible consequences for those who are found to have committed a wrongdoing, and setting out how Yukoners will be informed about a activity occurring under the act.

With the introduction of this bill, we join the federal government, seven provinces and one territory that have

already passed or introduced similar legislation in Canada. One other province also covers similar ground under a more narrowly focused law. Internationally, countries such as the U.K., the U.S., Australia, New Zealand and South Africa have also enacted laws dealing with wrongdoing in the public service. We can expect many more to do so over time.

This bill contains our recommendations for wrongdoing disclosure legislation for Yukon based on consideration of the Assembly's select committee report on whistle-blower protection, a review of similar laws in other Canadian jurisdictions, input received last spring from employees and members of the public, and dialogue with and input by interested key stakeholders.

Relative to other jurisdictions with such laws, we are a jurisdiction with a small public service workforce. We purposely looked to find a way to meet the need for efficient and effective legislation that would work to fulfill its intended purpose. I believe the bill strikes a good balance in addressing the interest of all concerned Yukoners for this legislation.

For the purposes of this act, "wrongdoing" means: (1) breaking a Yukon or federal law, (2) doing or not doing something that creates a substantial and specific danger to people or the environment, (3) gross mismanagement of public funds or assets, or (4) knowingly directing or counselling someone to do any of these things.

Regardless of the basis for their employment, all employees of Yukon government departments, directorates, secretariats or other similar executive agencies, the Yukon Development Corporation, the Yukon Energy Corporation, Workers Compensation Health and Safety Board, the Yukon College and the Yukon Hospital Corporation are eligible to make wrongdoing disclosures under the act. The offices of the Chief Electoral Officer and Child and Youth Advocate are also included.

The wrongdoings that can be disclosed are ones that have occurred, are occurring or are likely to occur if action is not taken to stop it. A wrongdoing disclosure could be made about a fellow employee of the same organization, an employee of another organization covered by the legislation, a governing board or board member of an organization covered by the legislation or for whom an employee provides support as part of their job duties or a responsible minister for an organization covered by legislation.

A wrongdoing disclosure means disclosing something that an employee has learned of in the course of their employment. In other words, a disclosure cannot be made based on rumour, gossip or innuendo. The employee must reasonably believe that they have information that could show that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed.

Under the act, there are up to four possible avenues for an employee to get advice about disclosing or to actually disclose a wrongdoing: first of all, their immediate supervisor; second, the chief executive officer for the organization they are working for; third, a person formally designated in procedures that may be established by a chief executive office to receive

and deal with disclosures; or fourth, to the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner.

The Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner is a newly created position under the act with responsibility to investigate disclosures and complaints of reprisal the commissioner receives under the act. Unless another person is appointed according to the process set out in the act, Yukon's Ombudsman will serve as that commissioner. Yukon's Ombudsman is also the Information and Privacy Commissioner under the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Unless someone else is appointed as Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner, this same office will field inquiries and deal with matters under all three acts. This leverages the expertise and resources that that office has to fulfill these very important functions on behalf of Yukoners.

I want to extend my appreciation to the Ombudsman for helping in our work to shape this bill. The Ombudsman offered several suggestions for our consideration and I am confident that, as commissioner, the Ombudsman will do an excellent job dealing with disclosures and complaints received by that office, as well as well as serving as the primary point of public information and annual reporting on all organizations' activities under this act.

I mentioned that an employee could potentially choose to disclose wrongdoing to a person who is formally designated in procedures that may be established by the chief executive officer to receive and deal with disclosures. The act sets out minimum content that disclosure procedures must include if a chief executive officer elects to establish them.

Aside from the designation of a senior official to receive and deal with employee disclosures, this includes: (1) procedures for receiving, reviewing and investigating disclosures and reporting on outcomes of investigations; (2) ensuring that rights to natural justice and procedural fairness of all individuals involved is respected; and (3) ensuring the confidentiality of information collected and protecting the identity of individuals involved.

The commissioner must be provided opportunity to review and comment on any proposed new or amended procedures and must be provided a copy to the final procedures that a chief executive officer elects to establish after receiving the commissioner's comments. This is important for two reasons: the commissioner may have suggestions for procedural improvements that could better enhance protections for all parties involved and, if the commissioner receives a disclosure from an employee or an organization that has established disclosure procedures, the commissioner can only investigate the matter if the disclosure has previously been made according to those procedures, and either (1) the internal investigation has been completed, a final decision has been issued and the employee is dissatisfied with the decision or action of the organization, or (2) an unreasonable amount of time in the circumstances has passed since the disclosure was made and the internal investigation has not been completed.

However, the commissioner can investigate a disclosure at any time if the disclosure implicates the employee's chief

executive or designated officer, or the commissioner believes it would not be appropriate, considering the circumstances of the employee, to require the disclosure to be made or dealt with according to the organization's disclosure procedures. So it is essential for the commissioner to know when a chief executive establishes new or amended disclosure procedures and what those procedures contain.

It is also essential for employees to know about this act and about any disclosure procedures established by their chief executive officer. The act requires chief executives to widely communicate such information to their own employees.

A disclosure made internally or to the commissioner may or may not result in a formal investigation being undertaken. Every disclosure will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, and much will likely depend on the depth and quality of the disclosure and the seriousness of the alleged wrongdoing. If the commissioner receives the disclosure, the commissioner is authorized to take any steps considered appropriate to help resolve the matter within the affected organization. This is good, as it may not be necessary or even desirable to launch into a formal investigation in every instance if the matter can be more readily resolved through other means.

In the event of an emergency situation where there is no time to make a disclosure through the regular process, there is also provision for an employee to make a public disclosure if they believe there is an imminent risk of substantial and specific danger to people or the environment. In this case, the employee must first contact an appropriate law enforcement agency and follow any direction of the agency before going public about the matter. The employee must then inform their employing organization that a public disclosure was made.

We truly hope that it will never be necessary for an employee to make an emergency public disclosure. However, we believe it is an important public interest safeguard to enable an employee to do so, should circumstances warrant.

There are only three matters that employees are prohibited from disclosing under this act: first, information as set out in subsection 15(1) of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, except as permitted by subsection 15(2) of that same act; second, information protected by solicitor/client privilege; and, third, in the case of a public disclosure, information that is restricted under federal or Yukon law. For example, an employee who publicly disclosed an emergency situation could not, as a part of that disclosure, publicly release personal information details about the alleged wrongdoer that would typically be restricted from release under ATIPP act or other health information protection legislation.

In every instance of a wrongdoing disclosure, if the disclosure involves personal or confidential information, the employee must take reasonable precautions to ensure no more information is disclosed than is necessary to make the disclosure. In other words, only essential information should be disclosed. The act allows a person receiving a disclosure to ask for any additional information they may reasonably require to investigate the matter. It is also important for employees to know that making a disclosure under this act

does not alleviate any obligation they may have under other Yukon laws to disclose or report on the matter. For example, if an employee is required to report on an unsafe situation under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the employee would continue to have that obligation even if the matter was disclosed to a person under this act. If a disclosure investigation is conducted either by an organization covered by the act, or by the commissioner, there are obligations to report on it. I will outline this in more detail a little later on.

What I would like to note now is that the commissioner will have the discretion to not investigate a disclosure and could cease a disclosure investigation under various scenarios — for example: if the commissioner believes there is another procedure available to the employee that could adequately deal with the matter in whole or in part, for example a procedure provided for under Yukon or federal law; if the disclosure is frivolous, vexatious or has not been made in good faith or does not deal with a sufficiently serious subject matter; if so much time has passed that there is little to no value in pursuing the matter; if the disclosure relates to a matter resulting from a balanced and informed decision-making process on a public policy or operational issue; if insufficient information has been provided to support the decision to investigate; or, if there is another valid reason for not investigating. The key point is that the decision to investigate an employee's disclosure or to cease any disclosure investigation is largely within the commissioner's sole authority to make.

Also within the commissioner's authority is an ability to investigate another possible wrongdoing that comes to light in the course of a disclosure investigation. The act obliges the commissioner to prepare a report following a disclosure investigation. It must include findings and reasons for the findings and may include recommendations. In making recommendations, the commissioner can also request information from an affected organization on steps taken or that will be taken to give effect to the commissioner's recommendations.

An affected organization will always be provided reasonable opportunity to make representations on the commissioner's draft report before the report is finalized. If the commissioner believes the affected organization has not appropriately followed up on the recommendations or did not cooperate in the investigation, the commissioner can also make a report on this.

The act details the parties to whom the commissioner must give various disclosure receipts, decision notices and investigation reports.

I want to assure the House that we have taken care to ensure that any time a chief executive is implicated in a wrongdoing disclosure to the commissioner, the responsible minister and, if applicable, the chair of an organization's governing board, would be made aware of it.

An employee who is found to have committed wrongdoing is subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. In addition, they may face other penalties, depending on the nature of the wrongdoing. For example, a

breach of another law could potentially be prosecuted to the fullest extent under that law.

Fundamental to this legislation are the provisions governing reprisal against employees who sought advice about, or made a disclosure, cooperated in an investigation under the act, or declined to participate in a wrongdoing. Under this act, it is an offence for a person to take reprisal against an employee for doing any of these things. So in addition to a possible fine of up to \$10,000, a person who is found to have committed the reprisal could also face discipline up to and including dismissal.

A reprisal can be committed by one or more subordinates, peers, colleagues or managers, can take many obvious and indirect forms and can be indicated by a single incident or series of negative measures or behaviours. A reprisal is a retaliatory measure or threat that adversely affects the employment or working conditions of the affected individual, such as unwarranted discipline, a demotion, termination of employment, denial of training and development opportunities, or harassment or shunning.

The act enables an employee who believes they are suffering reprisal to choose the door through which they will endeavour to have the matter satisfactorily resolved. For example, if they are governed by a collective agreement, they may want to file a formal grievance through that process. Alternatively, they may wish to present their reprisal complaint to the commissioner for investigation consideration.

Generally, an employee who chooses to file a complaint with the commissioner must do so within 90 days. Typically, collective or employment agreements have shorter timelines for initiating a formal grievance. The 90-day timeline is designed to encourage reprisal reporting as soon as possible after the employee becomes aware of it so that an appropriate action can be taken to deal with it as quickly as possible, including remedying the situation for the person against whom a reprisal is found to have been taken. However, the commissioner will have discretion to accept a later complaint, depending on the employee's circumstances.

The act disallows duplication of process to deal with a reprisal complaint. It does this by prohibiting the commissioner from investigating complaint if the employee who made the complaint has commenced or commences a related procedure under another Yukon or federal law, a collective or employment agreement, or policy of the affected organization. This means that an employee cannot look to the commissioner's office to re-hear a reprisal-related complaint that was already dealt with or is in the process of being dealt with elsewhere in the hope of getting a more favourable outcome. This is significant, as most grievance-type matters can be pursued through binding adjudication or appeal to the courts. For this reason, the commissioner will not be stepping into any reprisal-complaint arenas where an employee's complaint has been or is being dealt with through another forum.

However, it is also important to note that, similar to a disclosure, the commissioner will have discretion to not investigate or to cease investigating a reprisal complaint if the

commissioner believes that the subject matter could be more appropriately dealt with initially or completely through another procedure available to the complainant, or if the complaint was not made in good faith, or there was another valid reason for not investigating.

For this, it will be important for an employee who believes they are suffering reprisal to give the soonest possible consideration as to which door they might want to enter with their complaint. The requirement for chief executives is to ensure wide communication about this act to their employees aims to help ensure that employees not only know that reprisal is an offence, but what their options are for making a reprisal complaint and how such complaints might be dealt with by the commissioner's office

The act encourages informal, expeditious processing of disclosures and complaints where possible. In relation to a complaint, the act empowers the commissioner at any time during or after an investigation to take any steps they consider appropriate to help settle the matter. Any proposed settlement relating to a remedy to be provided to an employee who made the complaint must be agreed upon by the affected employee and the person in the affected organization with the authority to implement the remedy.

As with the disclosure investigation, upon completion of a complaint investigation, the commissioner must prepare a report containing findings and reasons for the finding and may also offer recommendations. An affected organization will have the opportunity to make representations under the commissioner's draft report before it is finalized.

Without 30 days of receiving the final report, an affected organization must decide whether it will follow any report recommendations and give written notice of the same to the commissioner. Organizational failure to provide the written notice within the time frame will be considered a deemed refusal of the recommendations made.

If the organization agrees to follow the recommendations, it must take action to implement the recommendations as quickly as possible. If an organization decides to not follow the recommendations, the act lays out a process by which a finding of reprisal or the remedy to be provided to a complainant can be taken to arbitration for a final binding decision. If the arbitrator finds a reprisal has been taken against an employee, the arbitral award may require the affected organization to do various things to remedy the situation of the affected employee, including, but not limited to: permitting the employee to return to work; reinstating the employee or paying damages to the employee if the arbitrator believes the trust relationship cannot be restored; compensating the employee for lost remuneration; and paying for any expense or other financial loss the employee incurred as a direct result of the reprisal.

The award is binding on the commissioner, the affected organization, the employee who made the complaint and the person or persons who took the reprisal. If the award requires action by an organization, it must take the action as quickly as possible. The arbitrator's fees and expenses will be equally cost-shared by the commissioner and the affected

organization. A significant transparency and accountability element of this legislation is the annual reporting obligations of the chief executives and the commissioner. Chief executives must prepare and submit to their responsible minister and, if applicable, to the chair of an organization's governing board an annual report on any disclosures and complaints of reprisal made internally, including information on the number of these that were received, acted on or not acted on, the number of investigations commenced, and where a finding of wrongdoing or reprisal was made, a description of the matter and information on corrective actions taken or reasons why no corrective action was taken.

A copy of this report must be provided to the commissioner, who will include in his or her own annual report information received from the various organizations.

The commissioner's own annual report must include similar information as well as information on the commissioner's own activities under the act including: the number of recommendations made and whether the applicable organizations complied with the same; the number and description of matters referred to arbitration; whether the commissioner believes there are any systemic problems that could give or have given rise to wrongdoings; and any recommendations for improvement the commissioner considers appropriate. The commissioner's annual report must be given to the Speaker for tabling in the Legislative Assembly within 15 days of receiving it if the Assembly is sitting, or if it is not sitting, within 15 days after the next sitting begins.

The commissioner will also have the authority to publish special reports relating to any matter with the scope of the commissioner's authority, which must also be provided to the Speaker for tabling.

Finally, the commissioner may be asked by the Legislative Assembly or any of its committees to investigate and report on a matter. Subject to any special direction the commissioner must investigate the matter so far as it is within the commissioner's jurisdiction and can report back as the commissioner sees fit.

Allegations of wrongdoing or of reprisal are extremely serious matters. The act accordingly vests the commissioner with very strong powers to investigate such matters. This includes the powers of a board of inquiry under the *Public Inquiries Act*, with various provisions of the *Ombudsman Act* applying to the conduct of such investigations, such as the power to enter premises and speak in private with any person, require information, documents or things relating to an investigation to be produced or provided, and summon and examine under oath a person the commissioner believes can give the investigation relevant information.

We are also proposing to make it an offence for an employee to make false or misleading statements in relation to a disclosure or reprisal complaint, and for a person to obstruct another person in the performance of their functions or duties under the act, or for a person to destroy, falsify or conceal evidence, knowing it was likely to be relevant to an investigation or to order or counsel another person to do this.

It's essential that action be taken as quickly as possible to deal with and prosecute alleged offences under this act. For this reason, we are proposing that prosecutions must be commenced within two years of the alleged offence being committed. It is my belief that the vast majority of Yukon public servants and those employed by the organizations encompassed by this act work diligently every day to uphold Yukoners' trust in them. I want to thank them for their contributions in helping to make Yukon a great place to live, work and play. I also believe that our employees are deserving of strong legal protection if they act in good faith to prevent or stop wrongdoing that they might become aware of in the course of their employment.

We want to ensure that this legislation works to uphold the public interest in having a mechanism in place that puts their interests first. For this reason, within five years of the act coming into force, a review of the legislation will be initiated.

I'm happy to present this important bill to the Assembly for its consideration. I look forward to our future discussions and to seeing the bill pass so the hard work of preparing for its implementation can begin in earnest. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I commend this bill to the House at second reading.

Ms. Stick: I would like to thank the minister, his department and staff for bringing forward this long-awaited bill or act. I want to thank the officials for the briefings that we received. It was very thorough.

The Official Opposition are pleased to see this legislation come forward. It has been a long time, going back to 2007 when the first select committee was established to look at whistle-blower legislation. Again, in 2012, this select committee was re-established to review the work done by the previous select committee and come forward with recommendations. I think we should give thanks to both of these committees for the work that they did on those.

The final report of the Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection was tabled in this House in December 2012, so again, Mr. Speaker, we are happy to see this finally arrive here.

It was interesting to go back and look at the many documents, reports, drafts and consultations that resulted from those years of work. I recall being daunted by a three-inch binder, with hundreds and hundreds of pages of reports and documents and legislation from across the country. I am always amazed that so much information can be taken and result in a nine-page final report, and then on to 31 pages of legislation in both English and French.

Legislation from across this country was reviewed and looked at so that best practices could be implemented here. Many individuals and groups put a lot of time and effort into this and I hope that they see their concerns reflected in this new legislation. I want to thank the many individuals and groups, including the Yukon Employees Union, Yukon Federation of Labour and many interest groups that provided information for consideration.

We know that public consultations were carried out through an on-line questionnaire and report asking Yukon citizens to give their opinions. We heard from the Ombudsman during this process, who raised concerns with regard to reprisals and protection for employees coming forward. She made a number of recommendations and put forward different options. I'm happy to see included in this new legislation the ability of the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner to appoint an arbitrator to decide and make recommendations with regard to reprisals. Protection from reprisals for employees is one of the keys to this legislation being as strong as it is.

The Ombudsman has come out again, though, since this legislation or act was tabled, to make a few more suggestions; in particular, with regard to wording at clause 34(2) around timelines and recommendations made by the commissioner. Currently, the wording is: "...as soon as is reasonably practicable", and that leaves this open-ended. I just want to be clear, Mr. Speaker. There is "practical", which is a synonym for "useful", but "practicable" is a synonym for "doable" and "feasible."

It's important to recognize this difference in the words because the Ombudsman has suggested that it just leaves it too open, that there needs to be clear timelines — and we would agree with this. If an employee has suffered reprisals for information that they have disclosed and recommendations have been made with regard to the remedies, then the employee should feel confident that they will be followed immediately — not later down the road, not if practicable.

The second issue is a bit murkier and I believe the Ombudsman was looking at clarification with regard to public disclosure in matters of imminent risk to life, health, safety, health and safety of individuals or the environment. Currently the legislation would not allow public disclosure if it is information that is subject to any restriction created by a Yukon or federal law.

I think a person would have to be quite versed and have quite the background to be able to understand any restrictions that might exist. The concern with this is that in an emergency or when there is imminent risk, an individual may not be aware of all the restrictions territorially or federally. If they were to disclose something, they would not be protected from reprisal if it turned out that there were restrictions.

The last item is no less important — the issue of regulations and what will be included in those. We heard from the Ombudsman that for the powers of a Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner or an arbitrator, there should not be the potential in the regulations to limit those powers already given in the act. These powers are — or should — remain as stated.

We do support this legislation. But do we think it could be improved? Yes, in some of these areas that the Ombudsman has pointed out. We hope that employees will feel the protection that they have asked for in this legislation.

We also appreciate the review period mentioned in this legislation at the end, although we had heard earlier in this sitting that the Premier did not believe in the legislative

reviews. We believe it is important and that it is an opportunity to review and see what's working, what's not and what could be improved on. We believe that one of the recommendations that extending coverage to other public institutions, non-profit organizations and private organizations could be reviewed in this review that needs to be done by fifth year.

We look forward to further discussions in Committee of the Whole and perhaps some of our questions and concerns can be addressed there. I again want to thank the minister for bringing this forward and his officials for the briefing and their work on this legislation.

Mr. Silver: It gives me great pleasure to rise to today to speak on Bill No. 75, *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*. I do want to thank the minister as well for bringing forth this bill. As he is aware, the Yukon Liberal Party has been calling for this piece of legislation for some time now. It has been a long road to get to where we are today to be discussing an actual tabled bill, so I commend him for his efforts.

I have served on the most recent Select Committee on Whistle-Blower Protection. The final report of that select committee was tabled in December 2012, as the Member for Riverdale South mentioned. At the time, the committee had issued 10 recommendations to guide the creation of this act. This legislation is missing a couple of these recommendations, most notably the sunset clause provision.

In the 32nd Legislative Assembly there was also a select committee on whistle-blower legislation, as mentioned today in the Legislature. This select committee never did table a final report. I must give credit to the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission for tabling this bill and succeeding where the previous Yukon Party government could not.

There are a handful of concerns that I do have, and I am hoping that the minister will be able to address these in Committee. There are also some issues that were flagged, as mentioned by the Ombudsman. I am quoting these out of her statement: (1) there is a need to define a time frame in which recommendations are made by the Public Interest Disclosure Commission, the PIDC, and accepted by a public entity to remedy a reprisal to be implemented; (2) there is a need to modify the public disclosure provision to allow a public service employee to disclose information publicly when he or she does not knowingly violate the law; and (3) the potential to limit the powers of the PIDC and the arbitrator through regulations should be removed.

I need to commend the officials from the department for doing an excellent job of clarifying these issues during our briefing. I want to absolutely thank them for that — and also the minister for addressing those concerns here today in the Legislative Assembly.

Some of my own concerns that I flagged with the bill are as follows — and I will be asking these again in Committee if the Official Opposition doesn't get to them before I do.

There will need to be appropriate resources and staff provided to the Office of the Ombudsman in order to carry out the new duties required under this new legislation. We're wondering what the expectations are, as far as increase to the ombudsman's office, following the adoption of this bill.

After an investigation, the commissioner only has recommending power when making a finding on wrongdoing. When investigating complaints of reprisals, the commissioner can make recommendations but if they are not accepted, the commissioner, or the public entity, can send that matter to an arbitrator, who can make binding decisions that must be implemented. We're going to need more explanation as to why this decision was made, as far as the arbitration position.

Section 5(1) states that a public entity may adopt procedures for disclosure, but they need not. Based on the delay and slow implementation of consistent procedures within government under the ATIPP act, the fact that adopting procedures are not required will likely result in many departments or organizations not adopting such procedures, as it will not likely be a priority for them. So we're looking for the minister to explain why these are not mandatory.

In section 56(i), the provision permits new definitions to be added to the process by regulation, rather than in the act, where most definitions are embedded. We're looking for clarification as to why this is.

In summing up my comments today for second reading, I just want to say that the all-party Select Committee on Whistle-blower Protection had lofty expectations with our recommendations being modelled from the Province of Manitoba, which is a gold standard across Canada for this type of legislation. I found that the all-party committee's deliberations were very amicable and, based on the history of the previous committee's inability to come to any agreements, it mirrored our relative seamless process that we had and so therefore our lofty expectations were validated, I believed.

I'll echo the comments from my colleague from Riverdale South, this legislation does fall a bit short of the gold standard of Manitoba, but it is absolutely a positive first step forward. At this time, I am intending to support the bill as I feel that it is, like I said, a step in the right direction and I do look forward to debating it further in Committee of the Whole.

Ms. Hanson: I just want to reiterate the comments from my colleague from Riverdale South and the Member for Klondike. The Official Opposition is very, very pleased to see Bill No. 75 reaching the floor for public debate. As the Member for Riverdale South has indicated, we do support the fact that we have a much more robust piece of legislation than the concepts that were put forward last spring.

We do want to enter into discussions with the minister and with the members of this Legislative Assembly about ways to address what we believe are the very valid and substantive issues that remain identified by the Ombudsman.

It's difficult, unless you have been a public servant, to really understand the implications and the power that is

embedded in this legislation and the danger that exists too if as a public servant you cannot rely upon some certainty. The key ones that the Ombudsman has identified are very, very important with respect to not getting caught in a never-ending limbo land in terms of the notion of not having a specified time frame within which recommendations should be implemented. At least to have a framework within which to operate is incredibly important, because otherwise it becomes one of these — you can push it out forever. We have all seen processes from various ombudsmen and other things that have been set up from the military Ombudsman to various other organizations where these are not clear and ultimately, the individual who takes the risk suffers. We really hope that we could have a good conversation about that.

Of the two that the Member for Riverdale South also pointed out, the real challenge of the issue of knowing the laws and the importance of the need for the modifying of the public disclosure provision to allow public servants — because no one of us is an expert and ignorance of the law is supposed to be no defence, they say — but for God's sake, if we're going to penalize people because they don't know all the laws or not allow them to go forward, that's a challenge.

In terms of the actual notion of "fairness and transparency", the real importance is if we put something in legislation, then let's be prepared to stand by that legislation and not try to change it or be perceived as changing the effectiveness or the import of that through regulation.

I think the third comment made by the Ombudsman is really important — that we must make sure what we set out in the legislation, if there is a need to limit the powers of the PIDC and the arbitrator then say so in the legislation. Say what those limitations should be, but don't try to do it behind the scenes through regulation, because that is how it will be perceived by the public servants who are forced to try to make this work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do support the overall intent of this legislation and we will very much look forward to the conversations and debate that will ensue as we move this legislation forward.

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

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thanks to members who have spoken at second reading and voiced their thoughts on the bill. I do look forward to getting into Committee of the Whole in this bill so that we can explore some of these issues a bit and discuss why some of the decisions were made about various provisions in the act.

I will make sure we have the appropriate staff with me in the Committee of the Whole so that we can answer some of the more technical questions. For instance, I know there are certain reasons why certain words were chosen and that having drafting counsel and relevant Public Service Commission officials accompanying me in committee will benefit that discussion.

I also wanted to note that many of the comments made by the opposition parties about the bill related to the Ombudsman's input. I should note again here that we have received a total of four different letters of correspondence from the Ombudsman in the development of this. The first was on April 16, where she was providing input based on the public consultation documents. Following that, we made a number of changes, including going down the path of arbitration, which we'll discuss in Committee.

Then we received another letter on July 17, noting a number of additional issues, which we responded to by making changes in what we were doing. Then once we had a draft bill — a finalized draft bill — we provided that draft bill to the Ombudsman and she responded to that draft bill on September 26, noting four particular issues. We responded to those issues, or the vast majority of them at least — I think three, for sure, and the fourth was somewhat responded to. The last letter or public presentation of issues with this bill from the Ombudsman came actually after the bill had been tabled in the House, which was difficult for Public Service Commission staff obviously, because we had provided the draft bill to the Ombudsman, heard her input, responded to it and then tabled the bill, and then she came up with new issues that we had never seen before after the bill had already been tabled.

So it was difficult for officials to incorporate the Ombudsman's comments when the Ombudsman is providing those comments after the bill has been tabled.

That input provided on November 3 through a news release, emailed not to the Public Service Commission but to the members of the Legislature, indicated that there were three issues that were referenced by both the Liberals and the NDP, two of which we had never heard of before — or we had never heard the Ombudsman take issue with them prior to that. Obviously, officials and I had some consternation about those issues because of the fact that we hadn't heard them before until after the bill had been tabled, despite the fact that we had provided a draft bill to the Ombudsman prior to tabling.

We can get into all of this in Committee, and I look forward to doing that and explaining why the decisions were taken with regard to the various provisions. But I look forward to getting into those in Committee and explaining the various aspects of the bill. At this point, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see at least the initial support of the NDP and the Liberal Party for this bill. Once again, I would like to commend the officials in the Public Service Commission, as well as the drafters in the Department of Justice, who collectively worked to see this bill come forward and ultimately be tabled in the Legislature for us to consider in this present sitting.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yea, nil nay.

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

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 75 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 15: *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Hon. Mr. Kent: It's my pleasure to rise to speak to the supplementary budget, the vote for Energy, Mines and Resources. Before I get into opening remarks, I would like to welcome the officials who have joined us here today to provide support during Committee debate on this vote — no stranger to the Legislative Assembly, Shirley Abercrombie, who is one of the assistant deputy ministers we have in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, and one of our newest officials to arrive at the department, the deputy minister, Mr. George Ross. Mr. Ross joins us from a similar posting in Ontario, where he was deputy minister of Northern Development and Mines in that jurisdiction. We're very happy, pleased and excited to have him on board here in the Yukon. To be able to attract an individual of his calibre speaks a lot to what is going on in the Yukon and what we have to offer when it comes to energy, mines and resources and all the associated activities that accompany it.

In the department of Energy, Mines and Resources, we're very proud of recent achievements that have met our government's mandate as well as the platform commitments, and I want to highlight a few of those in opening remarks before we get to specific questions from members of the opposition.

When it comes to providing land for Yukoners, this is something that EMR plays a very key role in. Urban land in Whitehorse has become available through phase 2 of the Whistle Bend project. Country residential and commercial lots have been made available in Carmacks and country residential lots were recently developed and made available in Teslin on Sawmill Road. Lots continue to be available in Dawson City, Haines Junction, Carmacks, Destruction Bay and Grizzly Valley.

Approximately 83 rural residential lots have become available as the result of new subdivision policies for areas in the Whitehorse periphery, specifically the Hot Springs Road, Ibex Valley, Golden Horn, Mayo Road as well as the Hamlet of Mount Lorne. Amendments to the Mount Lorne zoning regulation in March 2014 will allow the subdivision of privately owned rural residential and agricultural lots. This could, or has the potential to, result in an additional 93 rural residential lots over the next few years.

The remote recreational lots development area regulation was developed and approved in August 2014 for 19 recreational lots on Tagish and Bennett lakes. They were released by lottery in September 2014. They were released by lottery in September 2014. I don't believe we'll know until December, when the payments are due, how many of those have actually been spoken for. If there are extra lots available or some that weren't purchased as a result of the lottery, we will use a fair and transparent process to dispose of any additional lots, but we won't know until December. I believe that is the time frame.

Over the past year, the Yukon government sold approximately 177 hectares of new Crown land for agriculture. Government is currently preparing another 370

hectares of land for sale through the planned land area review process in a number of areas throughout the territory, including Ibex, Sunnysdale, Marshall Creek, Golden Horn and Watson Lake.

Land planning at regional and local area scales continues as well. A parcel of Carcross-Tagish First Nation settlement lands — the C-31 FS block on Bennett Lake in Carcross has been rezoned to a mixed residential commercial zone in the spring of this year. This will facilitate the development of this parcel in accordance with the Carcross local area plan and the memorandum of understanding that was signed between the Yukon government and CTFN in December of last year.

A local area plan for the Fox Lake area is also underway. This area has, in the past few years, experienced intense development pressures as a result of new lots and increased activity. The planning area extends from north of Deep Creek to Little Fox Lake along the Klondike Highway.

Development of a local area plan for Tagish is also underway in accordance of the provisions of the CTFN final agreement and self-government agreement. The planning committee has been established. Comprehensive zoning regulations are being developed for Carcross and West Dawson/Sunnysdale and will implement the policy and land use designations in the plans.

They are being developed collaboratively with the respective First Nations — of course, THFN in the Dawson City area and CTFN in Carcross. The Yukon government is also working closely with THFN and Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation on a number of other initiatives when it comes to land planning with respect to the local area.

When it comes to the economy, the Yukon government has actively pursued strategies and activities to support our economy, specifically through resource development when it comes to the responsibilities of Energy, Mines and Resources. Through the Growing Forward 2 program, a five-year funding agreement continues to support various projects, including ongoing agricultural marketing activities at the Fireweed Community Market.

Applications were accepted in the summer of 2014 for the third consecutive year for tier 1 commercial harvesting opportunities as per the Haines Junction wood allocation strategy. Opportunities were designed with the Yukon Wood Products Association to support new entrants to the commercial firewood business as well. Wood supply continues to be developed in other areas of the Yukon — of course, Haines Junction was mentioned previously, but also Whitehorse, Dawson and Carmacks. Additional timber harvest plans have been prepared to meet wood supply demands. In accordance with the MOU that I mentioned and that was signed by CTFN and the Yukon government, there is a feasibility study for the development of a marina in Carcross. I believe that RFP closed most recently. I am not sure that it has been awarded yet, but I did see it advertised that it was scheduled to close, I believe, last week.

The Energy Solutions Centre's wind prospecting service is now in its fifth year. The Yukon Geological Survey supported 47 exploration projects in 2014 with a total of \$1.4

million in grants under the Yukon mineral exploration program. These program grants leveraged an additional \$3.9 million in investment commitments. The Mineral Resources branch continues to process decision documents and approvals that support industry work in the territory. There have been eight new quartz approvals, six placer class 3, nine amendments to approvals and 24 placer class 4 decision documents that were signed this year so far.

North American Tungsten's Mactung project received a favourable decision document from the Yukon as well. As an executive committee screening, of course, the decision body on that is done through the Executive Council Office. In visiting the Cantung mine and speaking with company senior officials, I was accompanied by the MLA for Watson Lake as well as the MLA for Porter Creek Centre on that trip. We certainly had a good opportunity to learn more about their plans — not only enhanced plans for the Cantung mine, but future plans for the Mactung property as well.

In support of exploration and future development, this government has continued research through the YGS and other branches of EMR. The digital bedrock compilation map of Yukon continues to be upgraded. By November 2014, data between 60 degrees north and 64 degrees north will be incorporated into this compilation. Digital shape files will be available for download from the Yukon Geological Survey website.

I would encourage all members of the Legislature and anyone listening to visit with the YGS folks. They will be set up at the Geoscience Forum, which is put on by the Yukon Chamber of Mines and starts this weekend with a number of activities, including an investment forum and technical talks, as well as the trade show. It's something that has become a very well-established annual event — well over 40 years old, I believe — with respect to the Geoscience Forum. It's something that is a must-do on many calendars for mining executives, not only mining executives in support companies, not only here in the territory but those from southern jurisdictions as well.

In July 2014 the Yukon government hosted an open house at the Gunnar Nilsson and Mickey Lammers Research Forest. I was happy to attend with the MLA for Lake Laberge and get a tour of that facility and the forest itself. It was a great opportunity for me to see some of the great work that is being undertaken by the Forest Management branch of EMR.

In spring 2014, a strategic plan for this forest was completed, which will increase family and community engagement within the research forest.

The 2013 forest health report has been finalized. It outlines the results of our forest health monitoring program, including information on monitoring of mountain pine beetle. The south central Yukon vegetation inventory project, which is part of the forest management implementation agreement with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, is also well underway. The aerial photography has been captured and the interpretation and inventory are underway. This is a fundamental information source for making sound forest investment and management decisions.

The Yukon government has undertaken strategic initiatives in implementing both the climate change strategy and energy strategy for Yukon. The Energy Solutions Centre's refrigeration and freezer retirement program is in its third year of operation. This program provides Yukoners with a \$50 rebate for the retirement of older inefficient refrigerators. Over 670 appliances have been retired during the course of the program, resulting in an estimated 630,000 kilowatt hours of energy savings.

Implementation of the microgeneration policy, which we brought forward in October 2013, is providing opportunities for residential and commercial electricity customers to generate electricity. Ten applicants are now generating electricity through renewable energy systems and exporting a portion of that power to the grid. It's a very successful program that has really been in existence since January, which was when the program came into existence following the development of the policy, so we're excited with these 10 individuals and hope for many more to join the program in the months and years ahead.

Over the summer in 2014, the public had a chance to review and contribute to a draft independent power production policy, which will enable small producers to generate power to help the territory meet present and future power demands. As of spring 2014, the Energy Solutions Centre's good energy rebate program has completed seven years of program delivery. Over 6,600 clients have participated in the program and contributed to the program's projected lifetime savings of approximately 17 million kilowatt hours of electricity; 10 million litres of displaced oil consumption and 24,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions.

Championed by the Energy Solutions Centre, the Faro community energy plan was publicly released in November of 2013. It provides recommendations for reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in Faro. The Old Crow community energy plan is in the final stages of development and should be released publicly this winter. Since 2008, EMR has led and directed ongoing care and maintenance operations at the abandoned Faro and Mount Nansen mine sites without incurring any significant lost-time incidents, thereby effectively ensuring the ongoing protection of human health and safety.

Yukon government has taken action on several fronts to ensure the health of our air, land, water and wildlife. We have advanced initiatives to ensure high regulatory standards and compliance for industry. By spring of this year, EMR had come to an agreement with the City of Whitehorse to accept liquid processing waste, worked with the Department of Environment to develop composting guidelines and has provided Environmental Health with engineered plans for approvable septic systems for abattoirs.

Oil and Gas Resources branch completed final abandonment of the B62 well in Eagle Plains. I should note that this project did come in underbudget too, so a big thank you to Oil and Gas Resources branch officials as well as the contractors who worked on the final abandonment of that well.

Through the implementation of the select committee report recommendations, EMR has amended the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* and is preparing for public consultation on regulations for the management of off-road vehicle use in the territory.

As follow-up to the resource access roads framework document, EMR is developing a set of regulations to enhance its ability to manage resource roads. Public consultation closed in August of this year and there was quite a bit of interest, so obviously we are still sifting through those public comments to come up with a process for the resource access roads framework that will work going forward.

Assessment and Abandoned Mines branch successfully completed the construction of a new \$16-million water treatment plant at the Faro mine complex in order to continue to protect the environment. Just prior to the commencement of this fall sitting, I travelled to the Faro mine complex with the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin, as well as the new deputy minister and a number of other officials, and was able to see the water treatment plant in action up there. It is a very impressive facility, and I know it will help to, as I mentioned, protect the environment as it treats water and releases it back into the natural environment.

Yukon government's \$254-million five-year plan for work at the Faro mine includes development of an overall remedial solution for environmental assessment by 2017, execution of a series of interim capital works and ongoing routine care and maintenance activities.

Land administrators continue to harmonize and streamline the land and subdivision application and development processes. Mineral Resources branch completed amendments to the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act* and associated regulations to ensure that legal obligations as per the court declaration with respect to class 1 activities were in place. Yukon government has worked collaboratively also with other governments and partners. A partnership created by the Alaska-Yukon Intergovernmental Relations Accord, which was signed by the Premier and Governor Parnell in June 2012, has led to an investigation of the viability of a southeast Alaska and Yukon economic development corridor. If constructed, it could increase telecommunications as well as electrical transmission capability to the Yukon and also to southeast Alaska.

The Yukon government, as mentioned before, has worked with Carcross-Tagish First Nation and the Kwanlin Dun First Nation to develop local area plans in Carcross and Marsh Lake. The Carcross local area plan has been completed and approved. A local area plan for the Fox Lake area is being developed collaboratively with Kwanlin Dun First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

Energy, Mines and Resources continues to work with KDFN, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Carcross-Tagish First Nation on the development of a new forest resource management plan for Whitehorse and Southern Lakes region. We also continue to work with Kwanlin Dun First Nation to enable the leasing and development of their land.

The Yukon government has committed to continue working with the YESA board to improve clarity around assessment for oil and gas projects, conducting full and vigorous scientific review of any proposed oil and gas projects and working with the VGFN and others to facilitate a broad oil and gas engagement framework.

Seeing as my time is running short, I have a few brief comments that I will save for my next speaking opportunity with respect to the supplementary estimates, but I will save those and turn the floor over to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for the introduction to EMR. I too would like to welcome the officials. Ms. Abercrombie has been a fixture here many times and is much appreciated. Her help with the department has been noticed and I know, in talking with various people, it's much appreciated.

I would also like to welcome our new deputy minister to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources as well as to the Yukon. You are spoken of very highly and I look forward to working with you and you working with all Yukoners — and particularly the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources — at what I believe is a fairly critical juncture as we step forward into the future. Energy, Mines and Resources are critical to how we enter and how we make a living in the 21st century. Welcome and good luck.

I would like to also thank those in public service in Energy, Mines and Resources. In particular, I would mention the Yukon Geological Survey. I know when I was in Vancouver last January for the mineral Roundup, people talked very highly of the survey and how they were punching above their weight. It's quite exciting this year. I came across the new map system that the minister referenced and it is a tremendous resource. I would encourage everybody to take a look at that. It's on-line and it provides information in a geographic information system for geo-science data, mineral tenures, and First Nation settlement lands. The map includes parks, protected areas, base map features and imagery. It was quite a thrill when I pulled it up and was able to find my place on the map. It was very good.

I have nothing but good things to say about the Agriculture branch and the work that they are doing, particularly through Growing Forward, but also working with farmers, producers and consumers in the Yukon as we work toward more sustainable and local food production.

The Energy Solutions Centre, mentioned by the minister, continues to deliver good results. On a very critical issue, I have had a number of interactions — I was going to say run-ins, but that wouldn't sound right — with Compliance Monitoring and Inspections. They were very positive and the work that they are doing in the field and in Yukon is much appreciated. They get to know the situation, they have a hands-on approach and they get involved.

This coming week is the Geoscience Forum and again, as the minister did, I would encourage everyone to attend and spend a little bit of time there. There is a lot of information. I am particularly pleased to see the number of booths and

projects that cater or attract young people. As a former educator, it is so important that our children get exposed to some of the ways we have of making a living and some of the ways we relate to our land. There are some excellent booths at the Geoscience Forum, so if there are any parents out there listening, this weekend would be a wonderful time to take your children down to the convention centre.

Energy, Mines and Resources — it's through those that we determine how we are going to make a living on our land. One of the elders — a chief, actually — mentioned to me the other day that it was a relationship of people to our natural environment that is critical and the relationship of one to each other. When many of our resources are gone, the people will still be here. They will still be drinking from our lakes and rivers; they will still be sustaining themselves off the land and our relationship there is critical.

Yukon people want development. The Yukon is blessed with resources and vast tracts of land. Yukon people need energy. It's a challenge to obtain the energy we need in a world that is increasingly being impacted by climate change or, as one scientist put it, climate chaos. Yukon is rich in resources. Our forests are vast; we have agriculture; there's wildlife, fish, caribou, moose; our rivers, our land — how do we go about developing that? How do we have discussions? How do we ensure that we're on the right way forward?

Of critical importance are our relationships. We cannot afford to become mired in conflict and in legalistic wrangling. We don't need polarization. As a member of a small community, I have watched polarized discussions, conflicts and unilateral decisions tear that community apart. We have in place systems that allow us to work through these. Are they perfect? Not yet. But I believe in the Yukon people and their ability to work their way through that.

The NDP believes that the Yukon people have the ability, the interest and the desire to work together, to come together and to meet the challenges and the NDP will promise “no sudden moves, no hidden agenda.” The NDP will ensure that all parties are at the table. The NDP will respect treaties and agreements.

We came through a mining peak time. It wasn't that long ago that the cycle was high — that exploration was peaking and that the Yukon was humming. Now is the time to sit back to consider, to explore and to contemplate what worked and what didn't. How did we go from an exploration boom to where we are now? Some of it is international markets, some of it is our monetary system, but some of it we can control. We can do something about it.

We don't want to lose the opportunities and the discoveries that were made. We need to use our *Umbrella Final Agreement* and our self-government agreements. We need to use the goodwill of industries that want to come here and develop. We need to use the people in each and every one of our communities, and we need to involve them from the beginning as stewards and as entrepreneurs.

I'll ask questions about a number of things as we go through today, but I wanted to lay that bit of groundwork, because Energy, Mines and Resources is serious business. We

need to work together and play together. We need to grow our communities to ensure that any distribution of gain is fair and equitable and that we don't leave behind a community or an area or a people. Too often that is the way resources have been developed around the world, and I look to my area — Carmacks, Pelly, Mayo — home of the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, Selkirk First Nation and Na Cho Nyäk Dun, rich in development. The First Nations there want that development, but not at any cost. They don't want to be sitting by the roadside, seeing the big trucks coming and going, and all they get is the dust and the noise.

How do we go from here? We need to build those relationships. We need to listen to everyone.

I'll start by talking a little bit about energy and a question for the minister.

Yukon 10 years ago had a couple of the only windmills in Canada. Now when you go south, you see windmills in Alberta, in Dawson Creek. Each day you hear — Scotland, the other day, set a new record for wind production. The government has steadfastly refused to consider renewable energies. We have watched as our energy consumption met the line of our ability to produce energy, backing us into a corner.

Other jurisdictions looked at wind, solar and geothermal. We are late to the game. We have been backed into a bit of a corner and I hear the Premier and the minister saying, well, we have no choice but to go to liquefied natural gas — a fossil fuel in this day and age when other jurisdictions are realizing the need to get out of it.

We are experiencing catastrophic events due to climate change right here in the Yukon. Ask the Minister of Highways and Public Works how much the melting permafrost is affecting our roads, our buildings. The average temperature in the Yukon has increased dramatically, far more than the rest of the world, because we're in the north. Our rivers are warming. There is some speculation that part of the problem with our returning salmon is the fact that the Yukon River is now at least one degree warmer than it has been. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has stated that if we are to avoid catastrophic increase in temperatures and the accompanying chaos, 60 percent of our known fossil fuel reserves must stay in the ground.

Given what the minister knows about climate change, given how the minister knows it is affecting us and costing us, as we speak — in terms of salmon habitat changes, roads, wetlands — I saw a chart the other day on how many of our glaciers have melted and are melting at an ever-increasing rate.

Given that knowledge, how does the minister reconcile this government's commitment to combatting climate change with the development of a novel, or brand-new, fossil fuel industry in the territory, where we continue to explore and develop a fossil fuel industry? How can that be reconciled?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I thank the member opposite for his opening remarks. I'll just beg his indulgence so I can just complete my opening remarks with respect to the supplementary estimates, and then I will get into specifics

around his question about energy and perhaps touch on a couple of the other points that he made in his opening remarks.

For this supplementary budget, EMR is requesting an overall increase of \$12.4 million for operation and maintenance expenditures and a decrease of \$1.9 million for capital expenditures. O&M expenditures for the Sustainable Resources division have increased slightly by \$253,000 from the original \$9.9 million mainly due to increases for the Forest Management and Agriculture branches.

A \$150,000-revote is allocated to the Forest Management branch to complete forest inventory work. Forest Management branch is updating the forest inventory in the Haines Junction and Whitehorse regions, which will provide essential information to support annual allowable cut determinations and forest resource management planning.

A minor increase of \$22,000 is to complete legal surveys for the Lands branch. An increase of \$81,000 is allocated to the Agriculture branch for a balance of the Canada-Yukon Growing Forward 2 program not spent in 2013-14, as well as funding for food safety.

Growing Forward 2 places emphasis on proactive, strategic investments and innovation; market-based profitability; adaptability; and long-term sustainable growth. The agreement provides \$1.48 million annually for five years beginning on April 1, providing a suite of agricultural and agri-food processing projects and activities.

In the first year of Growing Forward 2, which was 2013-14, the agreement funded 82 projects in the Yukon with expenditures of \$1.2 million. The O&M budget estimate for the Energy, Corporate Policy and Communications division has increased by \$392,000 from the original \$4 million, due to increases under the division's Energy Solutions Centre and the Corporate Policy and Planning branch.

The \$254,000-increase in the Energy Solutions Centre budget is allotted primarily toward the pre-feasibility study that will investigate the viability of an electrical interconnection between Yukon and southeast Alaska, as per the Intergovernmental Relations Accord MOU that I spoke of earlier. The State of Alaska is contributing \$150,000 toward this amount.

Technical scenarios describing the engineering requirements of a transmission line through the corridor have been completed. The consultant is now working to determine the economic costs and benefits of the project, which will be presented in a final report as early as February 2015.

The \$138,000 increase for Corporate Policy and Planning is primarily to cover research work in support of the implementation of the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan*. This research is focused on seismic line recovery and wildlife usage and occupancy.

The Canadian High Arctic Research Station is providing \$100,000 for three Yukon government initiatives: seismic line recovery through Energy, Mines and Resources; ecological land classifications through the Department of Environment; and cumulative effects being led by Executive Council Office.

Operation and maintenance expenditures for the Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources division are increased by \$11.7 million from the original \$57.8 million, primarily due to increased funding under the Assessment and Abandoned Mines branch. Assessment and Abandoned Mines will see a net increase of \$10.8 million, mainly due to an increased allocation for Faro of \$14.7 million, which is offset by decreases of \$1.4 million for Mount Nansen, \$2.2 million for Clinton Creek and \$75,000 for Keno. Of course, members know that these allocations are recoverable from the Government of Canada.

Yukon government's Faro project team is in year 1 of a four-year and approximately \$180-million plan that includes the development of a long-term remediation solution, a series of interim capital works designed to address emerging risks to human health and safety in the environment, and ongoing care and maintenance activities.

Yukon Geological Survey will have its budget increased by \$950,000, due to additional funding from the federal strategic investments in northern economic development, or SINED, fund. This federal program focuses on strengthening the driver sectors of the economy in the territories, economic diversification, and encouraging the participation of northerners in the economy. SINED has been operating in the north since 2004. The program has four streams: the targeted investment program, the innovation and knowledge fund, the partnership and advisory forums and the pan-territorial fund.

When it comes to capital, the capital expenditure estimates for Corporate Services are increased by \$1.3 million, primarily due to funding allocated to the Dome Road relocation project. The \$3.2-million decrease in capital expenditures for the Land Management branch reflects EMR's new responsibilities for rural Yukon land development, transferred from the Department of Community Services last spring. We've signed land development protocols with the Town of Watson Lake, Dawson City, Teslin, and I believe one was recently completed with the Town of Faro as well.

What these protocols do is outline a proactive and collaborative approach to fostering planned development to meet community needs for affordable lots. We're currently engaging with Mayo, Carmacks and Haines Junction to finalize the remaining protocol agreements in this current fiscal year 2014-15. These protocol agreements establish clear roles and mutual responsibilities for Yukon government and each community and land development projects.

Capital expenditures under the Agriculture branch are increased by \$50,000 to reflect additional funding required to complete roadwork in the Haines Junction area to allow access to agricultural lots.

This concludes comments with respect to the supplementary budget itself. I know I will get into more detail when we get into line-by-line on this, or perhaps even in general debate.

I wanted to address the comments made by the member opposite, starting with energy and this government's commitment to renewable energy. Members will recall that last October in this House, I tabled a motion that outlined our commitment to a clean and renewable energy future for the

Yukon Territory. Obviously one of the most important projects that serves as the long-term bookend to our plans is the next generation hydro. It's being led via a directive that we issued to the Yukon Development Corporation to develop a business case so that we can begin planning and seeking partnerships to develop that large-scale hydro project here in the territory.

As members know, it was the work of individuals decades ago in establishing some of the hydro facilities around the territory that we are able to enjoy today. Of course, there have been enhancements to those facilities through the years at the Whitehorse Rapids facility, more recently Mayo B and work at the Aishihik dam as well, and refurbishing of Yukon Electrical Company Limited — or what has now been rebranded as ATCO Electric Yukon — of their Fish Lake facility. I was able to visit that facility earlier this fall with the Minister of Environment and the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin. The company general manager, Mr. Dwight Redden, and some of his staff, gave us a very good tour of what they have done to refurbish that project. They should be congratulated for the work that they have done. I know it is something that the company is very proud of and does supply clean, affordable energy to Yukon customers.

When it comes to that hydro piece that I spoke about — and we'll get into more detail, I'm sure, when we talk about the Yukon Development Corporation. I should also just restate for members the commitment that I made in the spring, and again earlier this sitting, that officials from the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation will be appearing as witnesses in this Legislature prior to the rising of this current Fall Sitting.

We haven't nailed down the exact date yet, but we certainly look forward to having them here to answer questions on the projects that are underway, including on the next generation hydro and the contractors and timelines that have been set forth by the Yukon Development Corporation to complete that work.

When it comes to renewable energy targets that were set in the 2009 *Energy Strategy for Yukon* — I think it was the first press release I put out after assuming my duties as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources last year. It was a press release put out on August 28, 2013, entitled "Government of Yukon on track to exceed renewable energy targets". Highlights of that include that the vast majority of electricity generation in the territory comes from renewable sources. The report states that, in 2012, 95 percent of the electricity demand was met by renewable energy and nearly 20 percent of heating demand was met by renewable wood-based heating. Per capita, this is greater than any other jurisdiction in Canada. Additionally, it mentions that the Aishihik third turbine and Mayo B projects have increased Yukon Energy Corporation's renewable generation capacity by 22 percent, already exceeding the territory's target of increasing renewable energy by 20 percent by 2020.

Again, we were able to meet that within four years of the release of the strategy, but we certainly don't want to rest on our laurels. That is why we have also implemented programs

in the energy strategy, such as the microgeneration program. I am not sure if the member opposite is still one of the 10 individuals who was taking advantage of that program, but I know that he had submitted an application early on and I am hopeful that he is still participating. I think that it's a great program that allows individuals to contribute excess renewable energy back into the grid beyond what they use for themselves.

Again, we're very excited about bringing that program forward and I should also congratulate the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources for the work on the independent power producers policy. That was out for consultation this summer and we're now, as I mentioned, going through all the public comments that we received. We would expect to make an announcement I would think sometime early in the new year as to what that IPP policy will look like.

It was released for public review in May of 2014 and it proposes to allow larger scale generation of electricity for sale to the utilities. Much of that will be done through renewables but, as part of the 2009 energy strategy, we contemplated the use of natural gas as well for some of the larger scale projects that could be developed. Again we included that in the consultation. Whether or not that ends up in the final policy is yet to be determined. At the time, the energy strategy went through significant public consultation. Granted, public thoughts with respect to natural gas have changed, so perhaps there will be a different product at the end.

Again, the IPP policy will be released and I'm sure I'll be answering question perhaps in this sitting and definitely in the next sitting as far as the IPP policy and what it entails and how we expect to see it contribute to our energy needs.

I should also mention that the Yukon Energy Corporation — this year alone, 99.5 percent of the grid-supplied energy was from renewable sources. That is a tremendous number, Madam Chair, that all Yukoners should be proud of. Most of that was hydro and there was some wind energy generated by the two windmills that are close to Whitehorse.

Wind energy remains something that I am very interested in seeing advance. I think that, as Yukoners, we need to ensure that we have an informed discussion when it comes to wind energy. It is, as I mentioned on the floor before, an intermittent source of energy. Obviously, the wind in Whitehorse often blows quite strong — or near Ferry Hill at Stewart Crossing where there is another opportunity for a wind project — but it is not a consistent source of energy. There needs to be backup power to kick in when the wind isn't blowing. We certainly want to ensure that we have sufficient backup power to offset when that source isn't available.

I mentioned before that in many southern jurisdictions, natural gas is used as the fuel to generate that backup power. There are cost implications to bringing the wind piece forward. I have asked the new president as well as the current chair of the Yukon Energy Corporation through the Yukon Development Corporation to come forward with options and opportunities so that we can have that informed discussion as Yukoners, so we can truly understand what the true costs of

wind will be and what the true benefits of adding that type of energy production to our grid would be with respect to the renewable opportunities — and how we can look to meet some of the growing energy demand with clean, renewable wind power.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, the Energy Solutions Centre has a wind program for monitoring wind flow that they continue to use. This is something that multiple departments are looking at — the line departments as well as the two Crown corporations for which I have responsibility. Madam Chair, I'm happy to talk about renewable energy and our commitment to renewable energy all day, whether it's wind or hydro or the work that will be undertaken for a biomass strategy. There are several things that we're looking at and some opportunities to invest in other types of renewable energy sources, such as geothermal energy. Are there opportunities to use geothermal to provide energy or electricity generation or is it more along the lines of providing space heating and that type of thing? Again, these are informed conversations that we as Yukoners need to have.

Attending the Opportunities North conference that the Yukon Chamber of Commerce put on here in Whitehorse in early October, I sat on an energy panel with officials from the Energy Corporation as well as someone from Northern Cross Yukon. There was good discussion at the panel.

I spoke specifically to the next generation hydro work that we're doing, but some of the questions from the floor were very good and some of those in attendance also recognized the need for fossil fuel to meet short- and medium-term demands.

It's something that we've talked about in our 2011 election platform and we do need to ensure that we meet those increased demands for electricity that are occurring just from natural growth of the population, but also with increased industrial demand for projects as well.

We see natural gas as a cleaner and cheaper alternative to diesel. Diesel is primarily being used for that backup and off-grid power generation in the territory right now. I think that fossil fuels are an integral part of any energy system, particularly those like ours where we have an isolated grid and some communities and projects that aren't connected to the grid, so we do have to look for alternatives. It would be great if we could supply all of the demand through renewable sources, but we do have to look at fuel sources such as natural gas to provide some of the energy demand that we're going to require over the next number of years.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that discussion. As we tackle our energy it's not going to be easy but other jurisdictions are doing it. Each day we hear of jurisdictions, small and large, moving further and further away from fossil fuels. We are even hearing of industries and countries like Norway that are very dependent on fossil fuels now producing more and more without that dependence, and divesting themselves of their interests in fossil fuels.

Some people have mentioned it as a transition. The economics of fossil fuels ensure that it's not a transition fuel. Those LNG backups are expected to last 50 years. That's not a

transition. That is an investment in an energy system. Don't call it a transition.

Fossil fuels are a commodity destined to the vagaries of a market, ever harder to procure and increasingly obtained by questionable means. These costs will only escalate over time. Currently, the fossil fuel industry is dependent on massive subsidies to even exist.

The difference between fossil fuels and renewable energy, other than from an environmental standpoint, is that renewable energy is based on technology and technology, as we have seen, drops dramatically over time. A \$5,000 computer can now be had — the computing power can be had far more in an iPad and far more cheaply. We have seen the cost of solar drop 90 percent since the year 2000 and it continues to dramatically drop. Reading the financial pages, this new agreement between China and the United States — if it goes through, will only accelerate that drop.

Other jurisdictions have found ways to shave the peak periods off so that they don't have to use gas or fossil fuels. They have worked with demand-side management. They have developed geothermal — which by the way, we are sitting in a very favourable geothermal area. Geothermal is on all the time. It could solve your problem of needing a reliable backup. Renewable energy will only increase in value. Fossil fuels — their extraction and their delivery will only increase.

The question is: Will this government reconsider its support of the fossil fuel industry and make a wholehearted effort to develop the renewable energy industries? We have been talking about wind since 1993. Other jurisdictions have done more than talk. Engineers and scientists who have looked at the Yukon situation say that wind and hydro are a good match; that in the spring, when our hydro is low, the wind blows. The Energy Solutions Centre was at the forefront of discovering ways to make it work. They looked at the frosting of the blades and overcame that. It's unique in the north. Now they are conducting more wind studies. We have some proven resources for wind.

I am concerned. When we look at our energy consumption in the Yukon, transportation is 55 percent of Yukon's total energy use. Space heating is 20 percent. Diesel-fuelled electricity, as the minister mentioned, is less than one percent and renewables or hydro are 17 percent.

Yes, due to the legacy and the foresight of previous leaders, we have had an easy ride and we have had hydro energy, but this government has sat there for 10 years watching the two lines come closer and closer to the point now where, in the winter, our hydro isn't quite enough. There are solutions. We encouraged you to look at electrothermal storage. We encouraged geothermal and we encouraged other alternatives. Right now, countries are developing storage capacities and new storage systems. The easy way for short-term gain and long-term pain is to continue or to go to LNG. But Yukoners want more than that. They want some hard targets.

I'll ask the minister a couple of quick questions. When we got into microgeneration — and by the way I am still considering it, I just have to talk to my banker. Once that

discussion is done, I'm sure I can convince him to let me invest in that.

What was the specific target? How much energy did the minister want to produce with the microgeneration policy? Have we met those targets? Are we looking at what is admittedly an attempt to come up with a solution? It is a bit experimental — you're not sure of the costs and stuff — but what are our targets? What would a successful microgeneration policy look like? Would we be looking for solar panels on every house, on every second house? Would we be looking for geothermal projects? What percentage of our electricity could we look for in the next year, in the next five years, in the next 10 years? I am sure the department and the minister have looked at that in their long-term planning.

Hon. Mr. Kent: There are lots of comments to respond to that the member opposite made. Some aspects I will repeat from my opening remarks because I thought I had touched on some of things and some of what we've seen with respect to offsets.

Of course, I have mentioned the good energy rebate program, which has completed its seventh year of program delivery. There were 6,600 clients participating in that program and contributed to the program's projected lifetime savings of approximately 17 million kilowatt hours of electricity, which would be a displacement of 10 million litres of oil consumption or 24,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions. Those are tremendous numbers for what is a relatively small jurisdiction — probably over that time frame, growing from about 33,000 or so people to what our current population is now.

We have come up with community energy plans for Faro and are working on one for Old Crow as well. Since 2008, EMR has led and directed a number of aspects through the Energy Solutions Centre with respect to the refrigerator buyback and retiring some of the old fridges that I mentioned.

Madam Chair, to restate the number that I mentioned in previous remarks as well, 99.5 percent of the grid-supplied energy being renewable in the territory is a tremendous number. I know that there are projects underway and some microhydro projects underway, as well as geothermal investigations in your riding of Watson Lake — as it is an isolated community from the electrical grid. Power is supplied there by ATCO Electric Yukon. They are not only looking at the biofuel project to reduce the CO₂ emissions from the diesel generators by blending that diesel with natural gas, but I know they are investigating microhydro and even geothermal opportunities in the immediate vicinity.

Something I didn't mention earlier is that the Energy Solutions Centre is putting together a geothermal favourability map as well to highlight some of the zones. They are working with the Yukon Geological Survey to develop this, and I think it will provide opportunities for individuals who are seeking to develop geothermal energy. As I mentioned before, it is certainly something that can be used for space heating for sure, but whether or not there is enough geothermal energy to generate electricity is another question — perhaps on a small scale or perhaps on a larger scale. We just don't know.

It is something that is very expensive to find and to develop. Given the size of our ratepayer base here in the Yukon as well, what comfort level would Yukon electricity consumers have in seeing their electricity bills increase by a substantial amount? Those are the questions that we have to answer as Yukoners with respect to those costs. Everyone puts together a budget when they run their households and utilities are part of that budget. Are Yukoners willing to see their electricity bills double or triple or more? I certainly don't think they are and that's why we have continued the interim electrical rebate. It has become more than interim; it has certainly been something that we've recognized and that Yukon consumers recognize as something that they want to see to combat the high price of electricity that they have.

That is not to say that we're abandoning these opportunities for geothermal. As I mentioned, we're looking at areas and zoning so we can narrow down the focus for people who want to develop that and see opportunities to develop that. It doesn't exist everywhere in the territory and that's why we're using experts in the Yukon Geological Survey to help us find and identify those areas where it exists.

I should say that it's my understanding that finding reliable geothermal sources in the Yukon is much like finding a viable mine. It's very difficult but if we can narrow that search and have individuals or perhaps even the utilities expend some money — but, again, there is a cost that is associated with that and that cost has to be borne by someone and usually that's borne by the individual ratepayer.

It's something that we have to have an informed and adult conversation with Yukoners about when it comes to developing these new forms of renewable energy. The same goes for wind. I'm very interested in having that informed discussion when it comes to these wind-energy concepts.

As I mentioned, I've had conversations with YDC and YEC senior officials about the opportunities that exist. Much like what would occur at the member's home near Pelly Crossing if he were to access the microgeneration program — whether he installed wind or microhydro or solar there, I'm sure that if he were living out there year-round he would certainly want some sort of backup source of power. That is normally done through fossil fuels. I'm not sure what fuels his generator now or even if he has a generator at his home. I'm sure perhaps he does.

When you have an isolated grid such as we do, I've heard the president of the Yukon Energy Corporation — who has spoken about this topic inside this House both previously to when I was minister and the last time and in local media — say when it comes to backup power and power to meet peak demands, renewables are just not an option on an isolated grid like we have here right now.

When it comes to the LNG generators, we have felt, since the Energy Corporation and the Development Corporation made the recommendation to our government to replace those 45-year old diesels with natural gas generators, that it was a cheaper, cleaner and more affordable option for us to go through. I know that certainly isn't something that the member opposite or members opposite and I will agree on, but there

were a number of studies commissioned — I believe three studies commissioned — by the Energy Corporation to look at that. It was something that the Yukon Utilities Board looked at, through an economic lens, and they recommended that the project proceed without terms and conditions.

The independent assessor — the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board — also reviewed the project, looking at environmental and socio-economic impacts of that project and they too agreed that the project should proceed with some terms and conditions. The decision document issued by the Yukon government reflected that.

When it comes to backup power — I have said it a number of times on the floor of this Legislature before — it's a very small portion of the energy mix that we have in the territory, but it's an incredibly important aspect of that energy mix as well. We need to ensure that Yukoners are safe in their homes in the wintertime when there are power interruptions. If it was 40 below — and often here in Whitehorse, when it is 40 below or colder — and I don't mean to scare George; it's not 40 below that often here — but when it is 40 below or colder, the wind doesn't tend to blow and that is when energy demand is definitely up, as everyone's furnace is running or their space heaters are running or their vehicles are plugged in and, boy, I am sure happy that we have a reliable source of backup power to keep my family safe and warm, and I am sure all members who are on this side of the House agree with me on that. I am sure many people who are listening — many Yukoners — agree with me on that. I can imagine the calls my office would receive if the power went out and it didn't come back on — if we had no reliable backup or reliable energy to meet that peak demand.

I know the member opposite has cited other jurisdictions, and perhaps some of them are unique like us in the fact that they have isolated grids — perhaps not. I am not meaning to answer a question with a question but, if he has ideas for backup power beyond fossil fuels beyond what the experts at the Energy Corporation and others have advised the government, I am certainly willing to listen to what those options are. I would ask him to take those to the experts at the Energy Corporation or ATCO Electric Yukon, and others who are much more informed than I in this field of electricity generation and what works, and ask them the viability of what he would suggest to use as a reliable source of backup in peak-demand energy.

Mr. Tredger: I guess I will answer a couple of those questions.

The minister mentioned the safety of Yukoners, and of course the safety of Yukoners is of concern to me. Of course I want Yukoners to be warm in their homes. We do use fossil fuels. We as a society have become dependent on fossil fuels, to the point that it has made our planet a very precarious place to be. Yes, I drive a vehicle; yes, I use a generator — but dammit, I want to get off of that. I want to move past that so that we, as a society, don't continue to pump out greenhouse gases.

There are other jurisdictions that have followed it. There are other ways to ensure the safety. Geothermal storage — we

had the opportunity to put it into one of our new buildings. We had an opportunity to put it into F.H. Collins school and develop an industry around that. We didn't. We watched through a high-rise boom, as high-rise after high-rise — perfect for geothermal — went to electricity.

We've watched the price of oil and natural gas go up, go down, go sideways — that's not certainty. We've watched the price of renewables in other jurisdictions go down and down. The minister says: Would I want to pay double or triple or four times what I'm paying now for electricity? I'm not sure where he's getting his numbers.

But right now, in many jurisdictions around the country, without the massive subsidies that our fossil fuel industry is receiving, many jurisdictions are providing competitively priced electricity through various means. We're doing wind studies, we're going to do another geothermal study, we're going to look around, and we're going to say that this is safer or that is safer than another thing. We know.

I have solar out at my place — at my home. It was kind of a delicious feeling to be sitting out there one day, listening to the radio via satellite Internet, with power, when all of Whitehorse didn't have power and the Internet was down.

It was provided through solar. There are times when solar and wind are more reliable. There are times when the propane will freeze. There may be times in the near future when the LNG trucks can't get up and down our roads. If you want certainty, what would be more certain than every house having a solar panel on it? What would be more certain than pumping heat from the ground that is right there into our buildings? What would be more reliable? Yet we're caught in the 20th century. I hope I have that right. We need to move into the 21st century.

A geothermal favourability map — a number of years ago, Yukon Energy Corporation did a study on geothermal. They spent about \$20 million on that as I recall. I could be wrong. Don't quote me on the amount, but they spent a fair bit of money on a geothermal map. That has never been made public. I would ask that the minister make that public, so independent people can use it. The Canadian Geothermal Energy Association has offered to come up and partner. Thank you to the members of the Yukon Geological Survey and if I hear from the minister right, perhaps the Energy Solutions Centre is going to work with them to do a favourability map.

As a first step, that first study should be made available. Too often our public institutions have done studies — a wind study done many years ago took years before it was released. Geothermal — the potential and the possibilities. Yet we are still building buildings — 55 percent of our greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation and another 20 percent from heating. Yes, as the minister has repeated, our electricity is largely produced by hydroelectric. Wouldn't it have been nice to have been on top of it 10 years ago, when the Yukon Party first came to power, and developed some of that so he wouldn't be looking 15 years minimum down the line to a hydroelectric project — 15 years minimum.

The IPP policy, when it originally went out for consultation, talked only about renewable energy. Now we are

talking about renewable energy and fossil fuels being less greenhouse gas emission-producing than diesel. That's arguable, and I know the minister and I don't agree on that.

I will cite a couple of numbers from the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions. Coal produces 1,000 tonnes of CO₂ per kilowatt hour; natural gas produces 469 tonnes per kilowatt hour — approximately half. However, the caveat on that is that CO₂ and the fugitive emissions and the amount of methane that escapes from natural gas has a far greater influence on our greenhouse gases than an equivalent amount of CO₂. That is not taken into account in that number. Science has looked at that and determined that anywhere from two percent to seven or eight percent escapes into the atmosphere. Anything over 2.5 percent renders natural gas equivalent to coal. It is somewhere in between or maybe it is over. Our instruments for measuring methane are in their infancy. But, here is the kicker: solar, cradle to grave, produces 46 — an order of 10 times less CO₂ than natural gas. Wind is at 12, another huge drop.

Given the state we are in, Yukon people are looking for some leadership. Yukon people want to see an aggressive move toward renewable energy. Saying it's going to cost twice or double or four times, that's not valid. That's not valid.

The study that was done around geothermal was done a number of years ago and, in conversations with CanGeo, they have developed new technologies — the beauty of technologies — to do a similar study for a lot less. In fact, they're talking in the neighbourhood of \$200,000 for a favourability map. It's there. We're not stuck in the 20th century. Technology is enabling us to make a difference and to move.

As I mentioned, LNG — and the Premier mentioned that we have an industry waiting, that we have developed the regulations around that — is not an interim fuel. Infrastructure built around that is expected to last, at a minimum, 40 to 50 years. There has been some talk from this government of moving our fleet vehicles to LNG, on the premise that it's cleaner than diesel.

I would question that. It may be marginally cleaner, but science will tell you that if you have a solid, it's easy to contain it. If you have a liquid, there will often be spills, but it's quite a bit more difficult to contain. So when you go to gas, as in gasoline, or in our water systems, there are commonly leaks because it's a liquid. When you move to a gas in a gaseous state, it is even more difficult to contain. Anybody who has bought a bottle of propane will recognize that, when you turn the valve and it goes psssst as they're filling it up, each time there is some gas escaping. Magnify that by a fleet.

Before we go to natural gas, we need to consider being able to measure the fugitive emissions accurately, because science tells us that if we are going to have any benefit at all, we must cut fugitive emissions to less than two percent. It hasn't been done yet. Even the best scenarios have not achieved that. Many connections will increase the risk. Has the minister in his oil and gas regulations considered fugitive

gases, invested in the technology and the instruments to be able to measure gas escaping from around a site and in a site and be able to report to Yukoners with some reliability the amount that is escaping?

Chair: Would members like to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. We're going to resume general debate on Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Just to follow up on the Member for Mayo-Tatchun's questions and comments he made prior to the break, I think we're certainly able to make a bit of a breakthrough when it comes to power generation. It's really from the member's own personal experience at his remote property, where he did say that he does have solar panels and renewable energy opportunities there, but he does have a diesel generator as well. I think that highlights that he, at an isolated property, similar to us as Yukoners with an isolated grid, do rely on fossil fuel — in his case, it's diesel; in our case, it's diesel and, soon, cheaper and cleaner burning natural gas — to provide that backup power that does contribute to the health and safety.

I think that's another thing we were able to find some common ground on, prior to the break. He does agree that Yukoners need to be safe in their homes and they need reliable power for those individuals whose heating is electrical and, of course, rely on electricity to power their furnaces as well. Obviously we were able to establish a little bit of common ground on the energy file.

He spoke quite extensively about geothermal opportunities with respect to space heating and buildings. He mentioned that the price for a favourability map is relatively low. I did mention in earlier comments that the Yukon Geological Survey and the Energy Solutions Centre were working on that favourability map so that we can narrow down those zones when it comes to geothermal heat.

As chair of a group looking at the education reserve that has, among others, Selkirk and the new F.H. Collins School being built on there, as well as a few other ancillary facilities on that site, we did have the opportunity at the initial meeting to speak about heating options for the new school. In its previous location, geothermal was certainly an option to be considered, given its proximity to the well that was going to be used.

I can't state enough that I am certainly not an expert or a scientist when it comes to electrical generation or geothermal or any of this stuff. I rely — as I believe do most individuals in this Legislature — on experts in the field and what you're able to research and read to provide the advice that we need when it comes to making decisions.

With geothermal, my understanding is that the proximity of the well to the new location of the building may introduce

some challenges, but it is not to say that it has been ruled out. It is not to say that it has been ruled out for the tech ed wing, which is now a stand-alone building that will require a heating system of his own as well, given the revised design and location of the school. What the member opposite suggested is that we had abandoned geothermal at F.H. Collins and I don't believe that to be the case. I am sure the Minister of Highways and Public Works, during debate on his department, will be able to provide further information. I know there are alternative energy sources being looked at for the buildings on that education reserve.

Let's talk a little bit about the price. Obviously when I was mentioning what Yukon consumers would be willing to pay for alternative, renewable energy systems, I referenced two, three, perhaps four times as much. Of course those are hypothetical. I wasn't assigned numbers and I apologize to members of the House, in particular the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, if he thought I was quoting numbers from some source. Those were hypothetical numbers that I think Yukoners would want to look at.

Consumers are obviously concerned. Our residential electricity bills are the lowest of the three northern territories and are actually right now competitive with other jurisdictions in Canada. This includes the interim electrical rebate, but I will just run through a few numbers to give individuals here an idea of what the residential electricity bills are throughout Canada and in particular our two northern neighbours.

Based on 1,000-kilowatt-hours-per-month consumption, the following numbers are the current net monthly bills, including those applicable rate relief and taxes for several cities across Canada: Whitehorse, \$138.57; Toronto, \$175.33; Regina, \$140.78; Edmonton, \$135.29; Calgary, \$178.97; Yellowknife, \$325.80; Iqaluit, \$541.90. Obviously our two northern neighbours are two and three and perhaps even as much as four times the monthly bill that we are paying here in the territory, and that is due largely in part to the 99.5 percent that I quoted earlier as far as renewable energy that is being fed into the grid.

We are looking at other renewable options, but again, when it comes to fossil fuel, I know that members opposite perhaps prefer the use of diesel for that fossil fuel backup, but we consulted with experts on at the Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation. They brought forward ideas that the two 45-year-old diesel generators at the Whitehorse facility should be replaced with natural gas and, looking through that, we agreed with them. It is not only us who agreed. The Yukon Utility Board agreed and the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board agreed with that, and the NDP Official Opposition doesn't agree with it. That's okay. It is certainly their prerogative to not agree with independent boards and the experts at the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation who brought forward this, and it's the decision ultimately that the government made.

As a majority government in here, we're elected by Yukoners to make decisions on their behalf and this is a decision based on the best evidence and experts at the time.

It's a direction that we decided to go and it's something that I think will provide savings to Yukoners once switching from diesel to natural gas generation is accomplished. I mentioned those boards — the Yukon Energy Corporation, the Yukon Development Corporation, the Yukon Utilities Board, the YESA board — all recommended that that project proceed.

I think one of the important things to touch on as well is the lifecycle analysis that the Yukon Energy Corporation commissioned to look at the comparison of the direct and indirect environmental effects of natural gas versus diesel. Yukon Energy Corporation had three independent analyses done. The studies confirm that, by switching from diesel to natural gas generation, greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced by up to 26 percent. Yukon Energy Corporation is of course committed to providing Yukoners with a sufficient supply of reliable, affordable and safe backup power and natural gas meets that bill on all accounts.

I'm just going to highlight those three independent assessments for members. I'll read directly from the briefing note, so there is nothing lost in translation here from what was provided to me by the Yukon Energy Corporation.

The first one was done by ICF Marbek — a comparison between LNG and diesel. They looked at all components of diesel, conventional gas and shale or unconventional gas at all stages from drilling through production and processing, transportation to Whitehorse and the generation of electricity.

The comparative assessment was done based on industry standards and confirmed the following: greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced if Yukon Energy switched from diesel to natural gas; nitrogen oxide and particulate air emissions would also be reduced; unconventional gas uses about three times more water than our diesel source, and conventional gas uses 10 times less water than our diesel source.

A second lifecycle analysis was done by the Pembina Institute. They did an assessment of the initially presumed LNG source, which was just outside of Calgary. That project is no longer going to be the source. I understand the proponent decided not to proceed with that project, so a different source was found.

Anyway, the Pembina Institute is a not-for-profit environmental think-tank that advances clean energy solutions through research, education, consulting and advocacy. Pembina was hired to do a lifecycle analysis of the LNG from Shell's Jumping Pound complex outside Calgary — which, again, at the time, Yukon Energy believed would be the source of LNG for the proposed project. Compared to emissions from the new diesel engines, Pembina's study concluded the following: the first is that the environmental performance of the LNG system modelled was better than diesel across all categories of environmental impact.

Sulphur dioxide emissions were much higher for the LNG pathway due to the high sulphur concentration in the conventional gas fields supplying Shell's Jumping Pound facility. The LNG pathway continues to have lower greenhouse gas emissions than the diesel pathway for both

methane and nitrous oxides, using the 100-year global warming potential.

Once Yukon Energy learned it would no longer have access to the LNG from Shell's Jumping Pound complex, it secured supply from FortisBC, which is located in the lower mainland of British Columbia and is currently supplying LNG to the Inuvik market.

Yukon Energy Corporation had this third independent assessment done by (S&T)² Consultants Inc., based on the new confirmed LNG source. (S&T)² Consultants Inc. is a nationally recognized company, specializing in energy and environmental issues and technology assessment. The company developed the greenhouse gas emissions lifecycle model used by Natural Resources Canada. That assessment determined that the reduction in lifecycle emissions for Yukon Energy Corporation to convert from diesel to LNG is 26 percent; 708 tonnes of greenhouse gases per gigawatt hour for LNG compared to 957 tonnes of greenhouse gases per gigawatt hour for diesel. It also confirmed that nitrogen oxide emissions are reduced by up to 50 percent, sulphur oxide emissions by up to 80 percent and particulate emissions by up to 99 percent.

These aren't my words; these are direct words and an assessment of the three lifecycle analyses that Yukon Energy Corporation had done and obviously, by three very reputable organizations. The Pembina Institute is the one that I am obviously familiar with as the not-for-profit environmental think-tank. We thank the Yukon Energy Corporation for the foresight in soliciting these independent lifecycle analyses. If members opposite have more questions or seek more detail, officials from the Energy Corporation and the Development Corporation will be appearing during this Fall Sitting to answer any questions specific to this.

It's a number of people and experts from the Development Corporation, the Energy Corporation, the Utilities Board and the YESA board as well as these three independent analyses that have said that switching from diesel to natural gas is a good thing. Of course the NDP doesn't believe it's a good thing, but that's okay. I have to say I am going to listen to the experts and these three independent lifecycle analyses rather than listen to the opinions of the NDP on this.

One of the final questions, I believe, that the member asked about was with respect to oil and gas regulations and what we are doing with oil and gas activities here in the territory. There are a number of regulations that the Oil and Gas Resources branch is looking at. Obviously we signed an MOU with the BC Oil and Gas Commission to assist us with our regulatory regime — very similar I believe to the government of N.W.T. coming out of devolution, where they assumed responsibility for management of their oil and gas resources and partnered with Alberta and perhaps even the National Energy Board for advice.

My understanding from officials in the department is that the BC Oil and Gas Commission is one of the most respected in the country, if not the world, for regulating that industry. Perhaps members opposite may not agree with that

assessment, but I certainly value and appreciate the advice that I get from officials in the oil and gas branch and Energy, Mines and Resources.

There are a number of activities that the government is doing to develop and safely manage oil and gas activities. The Yukon government is strongly committed to the responsible and sustainable development of oil and gas resources, as stated in the *Energy Strategy for Yukon*. We continue to develop and modernize oil and gas regulations to achieve clarity, certainty and transparency; engage and collaborate with First Nations, other governments, regulators, industry and the public on oil and gas legislation, as well as proposed oil and gas activities within the territory; ensure timely review and completion of decision documents, benefits agreements and licence applications; offer oil and gas rights twice annually and regulate oil and gas activities; conduct a geological assessment of our oil and gas basins to better understand their potential; collaborate with the Department of Environment to establish baseline water conditions to support water management decisions; market our oil and gas resources by advertising, participating in trade shows and events, and hosting events that target industry; and enhance training, employment and business sector opportunities for Yukoners within this important sector.

I did, of course, mention previously in the House — I think perhaps it was during Question Period — that oil and gas has a long history here in the territory. I think the first well was drilled in 1957. We have had about 76 to 78 wells drilled since. The two wells that produced at Kotaneelee at their peak were two of the top 30 producing wells in the country, and also contributed in the neighbourhood of \$45 million in royalties to the Yukon government — \$10.5 million of which was shared with settled First Nations or those having final agreements.

Again, there were opportunities for us to use our share of the royalties, just as previous governments have used those royalties to spend on important priorities for them. The common things that we all spent money on were teachers, doctors and nurses and I think it's important to recognize that that resource has contributed significantly to the territory and we certainly see a long future for conventional gas and oil development.

The Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing is examining those and we expect the report before the rise of this Fall Sitting and we're looking forward to reviewing those recommendations once they are done.

Again, that said, we do have companies still looking for conventional resources. EFLO in the Kotaneelee field — they are the owners of the Kotaneelee field — currently have a submission before YESAB. It was unfortunately mischaracterized by the Leader of the Official Opposition that it was for fracking. It is not. Go on the website, go on the on-line registry and read for yourself. It's not for fracking.

Northern Cross Yukon, which spoke at Opportunities North 2014, is looking for conventional resources in the Eagle Plains basin. I was on the phone talking to them this morning

and they have spent approximately \$120 million over the last three years and plans to spend similar amounts going forward. They are currently before YESAB and are looking to have their proposal come through the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Assessment phase, but again this industry has a long history in the territory.

I know the NDP doesn't support it. That's again another industry that they don't support as far as providing economic benefits to the territory. That said, we on the government side support oil and gas development and recognize its long history, what it contributes today and what the opportunities are for it to contribute, going forward.

Mr. Tredger: I'm glad to hear the minister's interpretation of what the NDP is for and what it isn't. It's obvious that he hasn't been listening all the time and chooses to misinterpret —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Mr. Cathers, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It would appear to me that a member accusing another of choosing to misinterpret would be contrary to Standing Order 19(h), and of course, that is just what the Member for Mayo-Tatchun did in reference to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Chair: Ms. Stick, on the point of order.

Ms. Stick: I don't believe my colleague — that that would actually come under 19(h) at all, and I would suggest this is just a dispute between members.

Chair's ruling

Chair: There is no point of order.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think it's important to acknowledge that we as a society do depend on oil and gas. But it's also important to acknowledge that we have to move beyond it and the sooner we do, the better it will be for the earth. We need creativity and foresight. We need leadership to help us as a society move to renewable energy solutions and we need it sooner than later. It's important to listen, work and engage with everyone, because as the Secretary General of the United Nations said, it is not going to be easy but we can do it.

We have to base our decision-making on what we know and we have to hope that there is the political will to do so. I won't go to many of the statements that the minister made and his opinions, because we need to move on.

Oil and gas has potential in the north and it has potential in the Yukon. We as a society need to decide if, when and how to develop that. I apologize if I sometimes politicize that, but this is far too important. There are unique challenges in the Yukon around oil and gas, and they're unique to the north. It seems we are entertaining, right now, a couple of plays on oil and gas in the Yukon — one in southeast Yukon and one in the north, on Eagle Plains.

The Premier has said we are ready. The minister mentioned the regulations that are being put in place. We

know that the technology around resource fossil fuel extraction is changing and it's changing rapidly. My question for the minister is: What training has been provided to client services and inspections? What other jurisdictions have we looked at, so that we can analyze the successes and the failures and the problems encountered? What research has been done to apply that to the unique area that is the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I'll have to get back to the member opposite. I don't have a note on the type of training that Compliance Monitoring & Inspections has been given with respect to oil and gas activities, but I will commit to get back to him, either later this session or, if we don't get another opportunity to have Energy, Mines and Resources come up, I can certainly provide that in a letter to him, just so he has a detailed answer, and I'll provide the same letter to the Leader of the Third Party. I can certainly provide that in a letter to him, just so that he has a detailed answer, and I will provide the same letter to the Leader of the Third Party.

The other jurisdictions that we have looked at with respect to assisting us in developing regulations — the one aspect I would reference is the MOU that we signed with the BC Oil and Gas Commission, a very well-respected regulator. They have an awful lot of oil and gas activity in northeastern British Columbia that they regulate very closely in very similar geological formations to what we have in one of the plays that the member opposite talked about — the Liard Basin. Obviously they're doing a lot of work down there with shale gas. We're still waiting for the report from the select committee of government and opposition members, when it comes to shale gas, and look forward to receiving that during this sitting.

When it comes to the current activities that the member opposite referenced — just to be clear, obviously the Eagle Plains oil and gas basin activities — Northern Cross Yukon recently completed a 325-square kilometre 3D seismic program and is currently evaluating the results of that program and are planning to continue with the exploration program by drilling up to 20 exploratory wells with extended flow tests over the next — the note that I have says eight years. I would have to check that against the proposal that's in the YESA process. As I mentioned, that proposal is currently in the "seeking views and information" stage of YESAA. In July, it was submitted by Northern Cross Yukon to YESAB. The Oil and Gas Resources branch expects to receive a licence application, once the decision document is issued, and that could be as early as sometime in December.

A benefits agreement for oil and gas activities, in accordance with section 68 of the *Oil and Gas Act* between Northern Cross, Yukon government, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, expired on August 31, 2014, and talks are currently underway to renew that agreement. Again, when it comes to the Liard Plateau oil and gas basin in the southeast Yukon, the two wells at the Kotaneelee gas field have been shut in since late 2012. EFLO Energy is proceeding slowly while conducting repair and maintenance activities to existing infrastructure. They are, of course, before the YESA board right now with an application

to look at repurposing a couple of those wells and doing other associated work on that property. Again, it is not an application to conduct hydraulic fracturing.

The final one is the LNG project that Yukon Energy Corporation is doing. I have spoken at length about that. I guess the only thing to add is that the Yukon asset construction agreement, or YACA, which is pursuant to chapter 22, is in place with Kwanlin Dun First Nation. There isn't a requirement for one to be in place with the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and both First Nations waived the requirements for a section 68 benefit agreement under the *Yukon Oil and Gas Act*. Obviously construction is currently underway at that facility. I think the gen-sets are now in place and the storage tanks are in place as well, so any Yukoners driving on Robert Service Way or any residents of Whitehorse will notice the activity on that site.

Again, the member opposite is correct in that the Yukon is quite unique when it comes to oil and gas activities. There are a number of basins — two that are seeing activity right now — Eagle Plains and the Liard Plateau. The only one that is on delivery infrastructure for natural gas is Liard. It has the existing pipeline that feeds, I believe, into the Spectra Energy pipe system of northeastern British Columbia. The Northern Cross Yukon site resources are somewhat locked in — and the Minister of Economic Development perhaps would be able to speak a little bit more to this — but they are looking at some opportunities for the feasibility of a refinery on-site to use some of their conventional resources to produce, I believe, diesel or some sort of fuel for domestic use here in the territory, with the possibility, I would assume, of some potential exports of that resource as well.

That is the type of activity that is underway. We have an opportunity here in the Yukon where we are with our oil and gas industry, and there isn't a lot of historical or long-term development, so that we can build the industry properly and we can manage it safely and properly and use best practices from not only British Columbia, but other jurisdictions and borrow from the best and brightest regulators and regulations that exist, not only in Canada, but throughout the world.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you for that answer. The Kotaneelee field is connected by pipeline. I believe it is the Pointed Mountain Pipeline and it goes into Spectra. It was built in 1971-72 during the winter. That is over 40 years ago.

At the time and while it was in operation, it was reputed to have many leaks and spills. Much of this was never made public. Last year we heard reports of hundreds of leaks in the pipeline system around Norman Wells and the distribution system. According to Yukon Environment, our greenhouse gas emissions as reported dropped when the Kotaneelee production slowed down.

Can the minister tell me what testing has been done to assure the Yukon public that the pipeline remains viable? What percentage of fugitive emissions was escaping from the pipeline during its operation? Reports of previous leaks and spills — are they available to the public or are they in the public domain? Given our ongoing knowledge about the effects of methane, what device or what instruments do we

have to detect fugitive emissions and potential leaks from the connections to ensure that our greenhouse gas emissions don't go up when the Kotaneelee field comes into play?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned previously, those two wells at Kotaneelee have been shut-in since late 2012. I'm not aware and we'll have to look into the assertions that the member opposite makes about the decrease in greenhouse gas emissions and whether or not they were related to that or whether or not they were related to perhaps us meeting some of our renewable energy targets or other aspects of success that we've seen with respect to the Yukon. Again, I'll endeavour to talk to the Minister of Environment and see if what the member opposite asserts is exactly the case.

EFLO Energy Yukon is proceeding slowly while conducting repair and maintenance activities and has been directed to provide more detailed plans for the maintenance and compliance work on-site. When it comes to the pipeline itself and the emissions and data the member opposite seeks, I will consult with my colleague, the Minister of Environment, and perhaps get a better understanding of what type of monitoring there is. I don't have any information in front of me with respect to the questions asked by the member opposite, but I'll either get a response from the Minister of Environment or see if there's some additional information from the Oil and Gas Resources branch in EMR.

Mr. Tredger: With the oil and gas industry and the new advances in the size and chemicals that are being used, has the minister developed a new emergency response to potential spills or to the dangerous transportation of it? Who would head the cleanup? What training have they received? What would happen in the case of an unforeseen blowout or a human-caused error that would cause a major spill into what is basically a very isolated area?

Hon. Mr. Kent: When it comes to the safe transportation — whether it's by pipeline, ship or truck — of natural gas, I think there are a number of different regulators that play a part when responding to potential spills. There could be spills on-site that would be responded to by one agency. In the case of the recent incident that we saw in Dawson City, where a natural gas tanker that was taking liquefied natural gas to Inuvik — that incident and the response by those first responders should provide some comfort to Yukoners who are concerned about the safe transportation of that gas. LNG has been safely transported around the world by ship and truck for more than 50 years. My understanding is that they have an outstanding safety record. With respect to the Dawson incident, there was no fire, no venting of gas was necessary and there were no environmental issues.

Had that been an accident with diesel, the story perhaps would have been a lot different. I know there was something that happened in Dawson City by the airport, I believe, a number of years ago that led to a significant cost for cleanup when diesel was accidentally spilled into the ditch. Congratulations to the first responders who were on-site in Dawson City, showing Yukoners that when an accident does occur, we do have the capacity to deal with that accident when

it's being transported like that. There are several agencies and departments — Highways and Public Works is one — that will respond and there are also federal regulators that have a role in responding to these types of incidents as well.

Mr. Tredger: I was more concerned about environmental spills than environmental hazards. I just remember reading about a project in the Beaufort Sea in northern Canada that insisted that a spill response plan be in place. I was looking for regulations that we had that would ensure that any company that was working with oil and gas and working in the Yukon would have adequate means to be able to clean it up and ensure that our environment is safe. It's not just the transportation — there are often blowouts; there are sometimes spills on-site.

I would like to just put forth a couple more questions. One of the other concerns I've heard is that in the Yukon, the permafrost is somewhere between zero and minus one degree. In the Northwest Territories, it is usually around minus 20 degrees. This means that our ground is much more susceptible to disturbances and changes. Seismic lines, roads and well pads that might work in other jurisdictions, or even in the Northwest Territories, don't necessarily work here.

Can the minister tell me what research is being done, how that is being evaluated and over what period of time? Often the changes to the permafrost, as we've seen in schools and roads, don't occur for one or two years, but when they do happen, it's very dramatic. I know the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin has talked about lakes disappearing; I have heard stories about roads turning into bogs, and things like that, after they have been used for several years.

What research is being done into the permafrost to ensure that, one and two and three years after a development starts and finishes, we don't end up with a quagmire?

I guess the other question I have for the minister is: What type of security has been obtained for well sites? I know that in Alberta, they have a common pool that all the oil and gas companies pay into for if a company is unable to keep a well site environmentally sound, or if they have to abandon the wells.

One of the concerns with the oil and gas industry — and as the minister himself talked about — in Eagle Plains there was an abandoned well that we had to come back and clean up later. The more wells, the more likelihood that would happen. We know, even though wells are cased and plugged, that isn't 100-percent effective and there are incidents where previously cased and plugged wells do, in fact, begin to leak.

I am wondering what kind of security there is and how the minister intends to ensure that, in five, 10, 15 or 50 years from now, the company responsible for these wells is able to ensure that any spills and any discrepancies will be covered by the company and not be a burden for the Yukon people.

Hon. Mr. Kent: When it comes to the permafrost information, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources does have some responsibility under the *Climate Change Action Plan*. The first one is to develop a decision-useful permafrost information inventory, and that work is in progress. The Yukon Geological Survey maintains the Yukon

permafrost network. It's available on a website, <http://permafrost.gov.yk.ca>, and is working with the Northern Climate ExChange to map areas in and around communities that are susceptible to permafrost degradation.

The Geological Survey is also collaborating with Yukon Energy Corporation, Northern Climate ExChange and several universities on a study of the Llewellyn glacier above Atlin Lake. The objective of the study is to assess the potential impact of different climate change scenarios on the Whitehorse hydro dam. I think I just included that for information purposes. It wasn't really specific to permafrost.

That said, I think one of the projects that has gone ahead — I haven't been fortunate enough to visit the Northern Cross Yukon site in the Eagle Plains, but I know colleagues, including the Premier, the previous Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and, of course, the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin have visited that site. As well, the Minister of Environment had the opportunity to go up and witness some of the work that was being done.

When it comes to where the drill pads are, I know the company took extra care. I understand they put down sawdust and matting to set their drills on. They used existing seismic lines for transportation corridors — obviously complying with the YESAB recommendations to ensure that there was adequate snow cover in the area when they were conducting their seismic work and other things.

It is certainly something that we, as Yukoners, should be proud of when it comes to these companies conducting work in the north. They readily admit that the cost of doing business in northern Yukon is a little bit more expensive than it is in the south — not just because of permafrost activities, but also because of transportation lines and the distance between the traditional service sectors of northeastern British Columbia and Alberta, and where the Eagle Plains Basin is. They readily accept that additional cost of doing business and work hard to ensure that they are leaving the least environmental impact that they can when they are conducting explorations. The same can be said, of course, for those that are involved in the mineral exploration industries — some of these small drills that companies are slinging into projects.

One only has to look at the work of Kluane Drilling, which is a local company, working all over the world in mountainous regions, in sub-Saharan and tropical regions. Their drills and drill sites are everywhere, from Africa to South America to Asia and, of course, North America. We should be proud of the innovation that companies such as Kluane Drilling and Northern Cross (Yukon) are showing, so that we can minimize the impact that exploration has on the environment.

Of course, millions of dollars and hundreds of projects are actively explored but do not lead to any production, whether you are talking about oil and gas and/or mining. Narrowing that number down to actual producers is something that these companies work hard at, and they invest a lot of risk capital and they would certainly want to make sure that they leave the environment in as good, or better, shape than when they started to work there.

We have the Leckie Award coming up on Monday evening for the Geoscience Forum, where we'll honour those involved in quartz and placer mining activities for environmental responsibility and remediation and reclamation. It's certainly something that I'm looking forward to. I was able to hand out those awards last year, and I look forward to doing that again this year, to some exciting Yukon individuals, and I look forward to paying tribute to them here in the Legislature on Tuesday.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 171

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Monday, November 17, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME CONSTITUENCY PORTFOLIO

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

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Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Vuntut Gwitchin
Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
Patti McLeod	Watson Lake

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New Democratic Party

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

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, November 17, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Bob Cathro

Hon. Mr. Kent: Today I rise to pay tribute to Bob Cathro. Bob was a pioneering mineral exploration geologist, mining industry leader and amateur historian who died at age 79 at his home in Chemainus, B.C. on August 26 of this year.

Although raised in Winnipeg and Chilliwack, much of Bob's identity was defined through his career in northern Canada. After graduation from UBC Geological Engineering in 1959, he worked as a mine geologist at the Eldorado uranium mine, Verna uranium mine, Giant Yellowknife gold mine and the United Keno Hill silver mines in the Mayo/Elsa area of the Yukon.

In 1966, he and fellow United Keno Hill geological engineer Al Archer struck out on their own founding the consulting firm Archer, Cathro & Associates Ltd. The firm has specialized in Yukon mining exploration since then and is recognized as one of the top exploration companies after nearly 50 years.

Bob was a partner in AC until his retirement in 1989, during which time the firm participated in or made several notable discoveries and advancements of important Yukon mineral deposits. These include Casino, Wolverine, Mactung, Carmacks Copper and the Wellgreen project.

Bob was an important mentor for hundreds of young geologists, dirt-baggers, prospectors, bush pilots and engineers who discovered and shared his love of wilderness, remote camps and hard, dirty work that builds character.

A careful researcher and data miner, Bob played a leading role in the 1972 creation and annual updates to Archer Cathro's Northern Cordillera Mineral Inventory. Through the 1970s and 1980s, the Inventory, a private publication financed by annual subscriptions from resource companies, was the most comprehensive file on mineral exploration history and property data in Canada. It was sold to the Yukon government in 1990 to become the foundation for the current Yukon minfile database.

His passion for research and science history flourished in retirement, when he authored nearly 50 articles on the evolution of economic geology for *CIM Magazine* and edited a series on the great mining camps of Canada for Geoscience Canada.

Bob always believed strongly in giving back to his industry. He served as director and vice-president from 1978 to 1981, president from 1982 to 1983, and past president for 1984 and 1985 of the B.C. and Yukon Chamber of Mines, which is now AMEBC.

The present Mineral Exploration Roundup Conference had its roots in 1982 as a conversation on a ferry between chamber Managing Director Jack Patterson, President Bob Cathro, and soon-to-become Vice-President Nick Carter. Back then, as now, the exploration sector was facing a challenging time, and the chamber's executive members saw a need to pull together all those who had an interest in the survival of mineral exploration in B.C. and Yukon.

Over his career, Bob received several awards, including the A.O. Dufresne Exploration Achievement Award in 1991 from the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum, for outstanding contribution to mineral exploration in B.C. and Yukon and for his commitment to the north.

In 1999, Bob and Al Archer were co-winners of the H.H. "Spud" Huestis Award for excellence in prospecting and mineral exploration, awarded by AMEBC.

In 2002, Archer Cathro was inducted into the Yukon Prospectors' Association honour roll, reflecting their exploration successes over the years. The Geological Association of Canada presented Bob with its Distinguished Service Award in 2003.

A friend and mentor to many in the industry, he will be greatly missed.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Bob's son Mike, who has joined us here in the gallery today, as well as a number of friends and colleagues who make up the various companies that owe their roots to Archer Cathro, including ATAC and Rockhaven, and many of those. Welcome to the Legislature.

I understand there will be a special presentation at this evening's Yukon geoscience awards banquet for Bob.

Thank you for attending.

Applause

In recognition of the Yukon Geoscience Forum

Ms. McLeod: It gives me great pleasure today to rise to pay tribute to the 42nd annual Yukon Geoscience Forum and trade show. From November 15 to 19, the Yukon Chamber of Mines has organized a tremendous venue and opportunity for geologists, miners, businesses and public to showcase the best Yukon's geoscience industry has to offer.

The forum includes geoscience technical sessions, short courses, poster sessions, themed events from day to day and social events, all providing an excellent opportunity to build relationships, exchange ideas and share expertise.

This unparalleled event — one of Yukon's largest — showcases the Yukon government's commitment to mineral exploration and mine development and the invaluable service and world-class research conducted by the Yukon Geological Survey. The research findings from our geologists help companies and government make important resource management and project development decisions.

I would like to thank the Yukon Chamber of Mines for the tremendous job they do in organizing the forum. It is important that we acknowledge the contributions of the sponsors, speakers, exhibitors and organizers. Their preparation and hard work are what makes this a signature event for Yukon's geoscience and mineral resources industry.

The Yukon government is pleased to play a strong role in this forum and share the work it has undertaken to move the industry forward. Excellence across the mining industry requires a dependable regulatory environment, a promising resource base founded on quality data such as that collected by the Yukon Geological Survey. The Government of Yukon continues to work in support of industry through the Yukon Chamber of Mines, the Yukon Prospectors' Association and the Klondike Placer Miners' Association.

Last year's geoscience event had 300 delegates, 50 exhibitors and saw 200 visitors to the trade show. Already, this year's banquet and trade show are sold out and attendance is expected to match, if not exceed, that of last year. Members of the government caucus and Cabinet will be attending many of the events and we look forward to hearing first-hand from those involved in the industry about what is important to them.

Mr. Tredger: I rise to pay tribute on behalf of the Yukon New Democrats to the Yukon Geoscience Forum and Trade Show currently being held at the High Country Inn Convention Centre. The Yukon Geoscience Forum is a showcase of achievements, challenges, hopes and projects of our mineral economy — a collaboration of industry and government. It is also a gathering place to celebrate these achievements of the mining industry, to grapple with the challenges, to incubate ideas and, most of all, to share stories in community.

I must give a shout-out to the Yukon geoscience branch of Energy, Mines and Resources for the continued outstanding work they are doing. Their reputation for excellence and innovation is recognized across Canada. At the Cordilleran Roundup last spring, I heard repeatedly from delegates from other jurisdictions of the outstanding quality of the data and the leading research. Our geoscience branch is punching above their weight.

This year, I'm particularly excited about a new mapping service. The minister and I have both mentioned previously what a great tool and resource for all Yukon people the new mapping system is. It's accessible on-line, provides information, geoscience, mineral tenures, First Nation settlement lands and the map includes lands available for agriculture, parks, protected areas, base map features and imagery, with many more databases being brought on to the database. I encourage everyone to check it out at mapservices.gov.yk.ca.

I was fortunate to attend Saturday's investor forum, presented by the Yukon Gold Mining Alliance, in partnership with the Yukon Chamber of Mines. I found it informative to hear from a cross-section of junior mining companies of their concerns, their hopes and their potential projects. It was

heartening to hear of their visions and, perhaps most importantly, their enthusiasm and belief in their projects and their hopes for the mining industry in the Yukon. It was exciting to hear them putting their hearts and their souls into building a business.

I heard from industry and from First Nations looking for ways to build and sustain the industry, as stewards of the land, to share the benefits and the fruits of their labours. It was a gathering of many innovators, entrepreneurs and investors — solid citizens committed to the Yukon.

Each year at the Geoscience Forum, a highlight for me is the series of educational displays and activities for families and the wider Yukon community. The hands-on interactive booths perked the interest of many of the younger generations and begins discussions and conversations that may lead to careers in the mining industry. I would like to thank the staff present from the departments of Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources.

I was only able to drop in on the placer forum for a short time this year, but did get to renew my acquaintances with several placer miners and those involved in the exploration aspect of the industry. I admire them and their commitment to Yukon and to Yukon communities, as well as their commitment to innovation and best practices. The contributions of the placer mining industry to Yukon — in particular to my area of the Yukon, the Mayo-Tatchun riding — and the Yukon people are many. Placer mining continues to be a reliable cornerstone of our economy.

I also got to see many of the booths and displays of the trade show proper. I was especially pleased to see many of the booths and companies represented, promoting job and career opportunities for Yukon men and women. Significantly it was a treat this year to meet several former students who were working the booths employed in the Yukon mining industry — it was a real treat — Yukon students graduated, back home and employed. Thank you to the mining industry.

During my visit, I was reminded that now is the time we must take advantage of the current lull in activities to fully prepare for emerging opportunities. Leadership from industry, First Nation governments, Yukon government and the Canadian government is critical. Now is the time for land use planning and ensuing certainty. Now is the time for all three signatories to our *Umbrella Final Agreement* and local agreements to work cooperatively to ensure a regulatory regime is in place that will ensure a timely, profitable and responsible mining industry. We must ensure that all have a place at the table and there are no surprises. I know that all Yukoners can work together for the benefits of all Yukon people.

I heard again of the value of the Yukon mining incentive program, which was incidentally brought in by a Yukon New Democratic government and was recently renamed the Yukon mineral exploration program and expanded. This program, designed to encourage exploration in the Yukon, continues to provide instrumental seed monies for exploration. The program was developed for just such times as we are now experiencing. I am pleased this morning to learn that this

valuable program will be continued and indeed, as we heard this morning, it is being expanded. Thank you to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for his efforts on this file.

I take this opportunity to congratulate and thank members of the mining community for their commitment to responsible mining in the Yukon. Throughout the events, lectures and displays, I was inspired and fortunate to hear from so many people who so obviously love their work and are committed to the Yukon.

The Yukon Geoscience Forum is an opportunity to meet with people enthusiastic about the mining industry, to hear their concerns, their hopes and potential projects, their visions and, perhaps most importantly, their commitment and their belief in their projects and the mining industry in the Yukon. The annual forum is an important forum for the placer and quartz mining industries and an important venue to communicate new ideas, to share successes and display the success of our mining industry.

It continues throughout the week and I encourage everyone to drop by, take advantage of the works on display, walk through the show, enjoy the displays, visit with the people engaged in the mining industry and help celebrate their successes.

Thank you.

Mr. Silver: As we work into the week of the Geoscience Forum, I would like to pay tribute to all the geoscientists for their contributions to the Yukon. Geoscientists include professional geologists, geophysicists, palaeontologists, seismologists and many more who have combined efforts and have literally put Yukon on the map — a little geologist joke for you there.

Back in 1887, before Yukon was a separate territory, George Dawson made his way north as the assistant director of the Geological Survey of Canada. He created numerous maps of the area. Some were the first of their kind, which were later republished to provide a much-needed reference for the thousands of stampeders who headed to the Klondike. Both Dawson City and Dawson Creek have been named in his honour.

Today we still have talented men and women examining a wide array of geological data, providing us with a scientific and knowledgeable base to develop our territory as we see fit. This information is extremely important. We need it to make informed, educated decisions on how we use our territory's resources and how we preserve them as well. Without it, we would be blind to the range of resources the Yukon has. Prospectors, exploration companies and miners depend on the work of geoscientists. They have opened up new possibilities for Yukon and continue to support numerous industries throughout the territory.

I would like to thank the Yukon Chamber of Mines and the valued key sponsors for hosting the 2014 Geoscience Forum and show my appreciation to all the men and women who work as geoscientists in the Yukon. The Yukon Liberal Party is grateful for all that you do.

In recognition of National Addictions Awareness Week

Hon. Mr. Graham: I rise in the House today to pay tribute to National Addictions Awareness Week, which runs from November 17 to 21 this year. The theme for National Addictions Awareness Week this year is "Youth Substance Abuse Prevention."

As we are all aware, the Yukon is one of the highest alcohol-consuming jurisdictions in Canada. It's also no secret to us that the Yukon has a drinking culture and that drinking is high among youth. According to the most recent report on the health and health-related behaviours among young people in Yukon, more than 35 percent of grade nine and 10 students in Whitehorse reported drinking alcohol within the last month of the survey.

Alcohol and Drug Services offers a range of services to support youth and families to prevent or reduce the harm associated with substance abuse and to improve health and well-being. In Whitehorse, we offer a youth counselling program. We have alcohol and drug youth counsellors in the three Whitehorse high schools and we provide support to students at Gadzoosdaa student residence. In addition, the new Sarah Steele Building, when completed, will have a space dedicated to family therapy and youth counselling.

The issue of addictions is costly and complex. In Canada alone, the estimated societal cost of substance abuse of almost \$40 billion. Focusing on youth and providing them with supports to help them avoid or limit alcohol consumption has proven to have huge downstream benefits. They will have fewer chronic diseases and mental health problems and will have fewer encounters with the justice system. This week provides me with the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to thank all those individuals and organizations who work to support youth and reduce the devastating impacts of alcohol and drug abuse in our communities. Supporting youth to lead healthier lives is in everyone's best interest.

Mr. Barr: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party in recognition of National Addictions Awareness Week, November 17 to 21 this year. This is a week for us to raise awareness about the effects of addictions in the Yukon, especially with a focus on our youth this year, but not limiting others for sure, recognizing that this disease is a family disease — addictions.

As elected representatives, this is our opportunity to move more effectively and mobilize our communities toward working together to overcome the destructive impacts of addictions to gambling, tobacco, alcohol and illegal or prescription drugs. Addicts often think that their behaviour is a personal problem, yet the collateral damage is all around them. Addiction is an equal-opportunity destroyer of lives and knows no prejudice. Families, friends, colleagues and our communities feel the distress caused by addictive behaviours, yet it is also important to use this week to celebrate the successes. Those of us who have overcome our addictions know the challenge of taking the first steps toward a healthier lifestyle.

I was unable to attend, but very happy to run into a few community members from Carmacks on Friday, who were shopping for their first roundup in Carmacks this last weekend. I got to select some of the tea. It reminded me of the first roundup that I attended in the Yukon close to 30 years ago, and I was pretty new to the Yukon at the time.

When I was invited to the roundup, I was happy but I was a little confused because I didn't see a lot of horses and cows in the Yukon. You know, when you're young and still kind of know everything — especially as an addict — you don't want to let that be known, and so I was, for the first week, kind of querying where all the cows and horses were, but I came to find out that it was actually a roundup of people who wanted to get sober, people who wanted to deal with their addictions, both professionals and so on and so forth. That was my first introduction to a roundup.

Carmacks — knowing progress in this area is slow and yet it is happening in the Yukon and in our communities, and to know that Carmacks had its first one this weekend is amazing and inspiring. All of us owe much gratitude to the dedicated professionals and volunteers who diligently assist Yukoners to overcome their addictions.

I'm especially concerned about the numbers of youth in Yukon who are on the path to substance abuse. The human brain continues to develop until the age of 25. Heavy use of alcohol or drugs during this development period can cause permanent damage that causes difficulties with learning and memory.

As well, substance abuse increases a young person's risk of developing mental health and social problems, such as depressions, personality disorders, and drug abuse and alcohol dependency. For instance, youth who begin drinking alcohol before the age of 14 have almost a 50-50 chance of developing alcohol dependence, compared to those who wait until age 21, who have a 10-percent chance of developing dependence.

Recovery from this dependence is a lifelong process. I know from experience that it is not easy. However, as it was explained to me a long time ago, we must all be working toward something in our lives and when we are working toward a life in recovery, there is a light at the end of the tunnel and things slowly get lighter and better. I would never have imagined I would be standing here today, thinking back to 30 years ago.

I am forever grateful for the support that was given to me, and it helped me to realize that I was worth it. Now I always do my best to remind other addicts that they are also worth it. It is by giving it away that we are able to keep what was so freely given to us.

We in government must do our part to provide options and opportunities for Yukoners to help them recognize that recovery is possible. To close, I ask that we all join together as one to let others know that there is help and it is okay to ask for it. Come, join the circle and add your strength to it.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to work with stakeholders to develop a broader mineral development strategy, with priorities including regulatory streamlining, fostering a healthy business climate, First Nation engagement, environmental stewardship, infrastructure development and workforce training.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to provide \$1.4 million to extend the funding for the Yukon mineral exploration program (YMEP) for the 2015-16 fiscal year.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to recognize that streamlining regulatory processes is an important part of fostering a healthy climate for private sector growth, and the opportunities that growth creates for Yukon people and local businesses.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support mineral exploration by doubling the value of filed assessment work on claims during 2015.

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

THAT this House calls on the Government of Yukon to enact legislation to ensure that, unless there is evidence to the contrary, instances of post-traumatic stress disorder suffered by emergency care workers such as firefighters, emergency medical personnel and police officers should be presumed to be work-related if it arises out of, or in the course of, the emergency care worker's employment.

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

THAT this House calls on the Yukon government to:

(1) acknowledge the opposition of Yukon First Nation governments and Yukon citizens to changes to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* contained in Bill S-6 that undermine the spirit and intent of Yukon final agreements;

(2) recognize that in a challenging market environment, it is critical to create certainty by preserving Yukon's reputation as a stable jurisdiction that has a well-respected environmental assessment and regulatory regime; and

(3) urge the federal government to withdraw Bill S-6 until the conclusion of a comprehensive consultation with Yukon First Nations and the Yukon public on the amendments to YESAA introduced after the completion of the five-year review process.

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

THAT this House calls on the Government of Yukon to exclude Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP disability benefits, paid through Veterans Affairs Canada, from calculations of veterans' incomes for purposes of calculating financial assistance.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to invite the House of Commons committee responsible for Bill S-6 to hold public hearings in Yukon in order to listen to concerns from Yukoners on the proposed changes to YESAA.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explain to the mining community how potential lawsuits brought about by Bill S-6 will streamline the green-lighting of resource development projects in the territory.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: YESAA process

Ms. Hanson: On Thursday, the Council of Yukon First Nations hosted a public forum on the proposed changes to YESAA contained in Bill S-6. Yukon First Nation governments made it clear that four amendments were added to Bill S-6 after the five-year review consultation process. There was no consultation — not with First Nations, not with the Yukon public. Yukon First Nations have said that amendments to YESAA proposed by S-6 undermine the spirit and intent of First Nation final agreements. Despite these clear statements, this Yukon Party Government continues to try to convince Yukoners that all is well.

Will the Premier at least acknowledge that Yukon First Nations are staunchly opposed to Bill S-6 in its current form?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: First Nation chiefs of course represent their First Nations, and as Premier, it is my responsibility to represent all Yukoners. This government supports these amendments quite clearly and simply because they are good for Yukon.

They focus and create the opportunity for us to have fair and consistent legislative amendments that will be similar to the other jurisdictions across Canada. This government is quite simply focused on Yukon families and we're focused on Yukon jobs and we're focused on creating an opportunity for prosperity for all Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: This week is the annual Geoscience Forum, where industry and government come together to develop common ground. Yesterday's theme was "Seeking certainty through progressive partnerships."

Industry partners know that the certainty they need to attract investment can only come through partnerships and collaboration from all levels of government. Yet the Premier keeps telling Yukoners that should anyone believe that the amendments to YESAA contravene the final agreements, then they can go to court. What the Premier doesn't seem to realize is that Bill S-6 may not be challenged directly, but rather, government decisions authorizing certain projects will. This means that companies looking to invest in Yukon will have to roll the dice, never knowing which project will draw the short straw and be challenged in the courts. This is uncertainty.

Does the Premier recognize the uncertainty brought on by Bill S-6 and the lawsuits it could trigger will hurt Yukon's economy?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: What I will acknowledge is that the Leader of the Official Opposition is trying to put words in my mouth. Not once has this government said let's go ahead and go to court. What we have said is that there have been seven years of consultation on the proposed amendments. We feel that these amendments are good for Yukon because it will provide legislation that is consistent with other jurisdictions across the country that allows us to be competitive. This government is focused on Yukon families, on Yukon jobs and creating opportunities and prosperity for Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: What Yukon citizens and Yukon First Nation governments want to see from their government is some leadership, not the constant bowing to federal pressure that we see from this Yukon Party government.

Twenty years ago, in June 1994, elected Yukon leaders set aside their differences to support legislation they knew would be good for Yukoners. Premier John Ostashek, NDP Official Opposition leader Tony Penikett and Liberal leader Jack Cable travelled to Ottawa together to show their support with Yukon First Nations for Yukon land claims and self-government legislation.

We have an opportunity and a responsibility to Yukon citizens to stand behind our commitments made through the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and, together with First Nation governments, oppose these unilateral changes to YESAA.

Will the Premier stand with Yukon citizens and Yukon First Nation governments and oppose Bill S-6, or will he continue to blindly follow the Harper Conservative marching orders?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I have risen in this House and I have spoken outside of this House as well, saying that we believe that these amendments are good for Yukon; they're good for Yukon families; they will create jobs for Yukoners — all Yukoners — and that is a priority for us.

I have also spoken many times that, if there is any conflict between YESAA and the final agreements, the final agreements will prevail — clearly articulated in section 4 of the YESA act. Yukon First Nations have guaranteed participation in the assessment process because they put

forward three people out of seven people on the board. They have guaranteed participation on the executive council and they have guaranteed participation on the board as a whole.

These amendments are good for Yukon. They create opportunities for Yukon families. They'll create jobs and prosperity, and that is the priority of this government.

Question re: Patient safety reviews

Ms. Stick: Cynthia Blackjack of Carmacks died on November 7, 2013. The Yukon coroner determined the cause of death to be multi-organ failure. In the judgment of inquiry into this death, the coroner made eight recommendations, four of which are directed specifically at the Department of Health and Social Services.

Ensuring patient safety requires continuous monitoring and the search for new strategies and best practices. We have asked in the House before about patient safety reviews.

From reading this judgment of inquiry, it seems that a patient safety review should have immediately been set in motion by the department. Will the minister tell Yukoners if an independent patient safety review has been conducted in this case?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Any death that occurs in the Yukon is taken very seriously by the Department of Health and Social Services. The department received from the Yukon coroner a copy of her judgment of inquiry and all of the items listed in that judgment have been addressed or are in the process of being addressed by the Department of Health and Social Services.

The specific recommendations cannot always be addressed 100 percent immediately, but we have agreed with the point of care testing for community health services. We remind staff to follow up and initial the checklists to make sure that all of our equipment in the various health centres is present and is working properly and we will continue to undertake improvements whenever possible.

Ms. Stick: It's good to hear that these recommendations have been looked at and are being addressed. Just to be specific, I would like to ask about one of them, which was that a review should be conducted of the policies and procedures for transfers of patients from community health centres to Whitehorse.

This review should include the indications for transfer, including the need for timely investigations, such as laboratory analysis not available in the community.

Can the minister tell us whether or not this systematic review of these policies and procedures around patient transfers has been conducted, as well as what the outcomes of the review of these are?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Recommendation 4, which was to review the policies and procedures for the transfer of patients from community health services to Whitehorse, is currently underway. It is something that would be undertaken anyway, because we believe that any time there appears to be a fault in the system or the system did not work correctly, they should be reviewed. We will review our clinical practice guidelines to ensure that appropriate and timely referral of patients from

any community health centre to Whitehorse occurs, but we will also continue to encourage patients to seek alternate forms of transportation to Whitehorse when the conditions are non-emergent or do not appear to be emergency-related. In that manner we hope to ensure also that the YEMS, Yukon Emergency Medical Services, are available for extremely urgent and emergency situations.

Question re: Shakwak reconstruction project

Mr. Silver: I have a question for the Premier on the future of the Shakwak project. Since the 1970s, the United States government has, under the Shakwak project, been providing funding to upgrade the highways from Haines, Alaska, to Beaver Creek.

Over the years, the funding provided for construction has totalled over \$400 million. This year's budget is \$15 million. The problem is the funding for the project for future years was cut off by the United States in 2012. Since then, the government has been lobbying unsuccessfully to have this funding reinstated and has also spent down what monies had been banked over the years. This reserve is now almost empty.

How confident is this government that funding will be restored?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As we heard from the member opposite, this is an agreement that began in 1977. This is an agreement between the United States of America and the Government of Canada, between two sovereign nations — in fact, between the two largest trading partners in the world.

We are working diligently with our friends in Alaska to work with both houses in Washington to see that this funding is reinstated. This highway, this transportation corridor, is of vital importance to mainland Alaska. Approximately 80 percent of the traffic that travels on the north highway is U.S. traffic and we believe that with continued vigilance we will work on that opportunity to ensure that the U.S. government sees the importance of that infrastructure and will continue to invest in it.

Mr. Silver: I don't have to impress upon the minister how important to our economy the road-building industry is and the funding therein. Each summer, hundreds of Yukoners are employed because of this funding. It wasn't that long ago that the Yukon was spending \$25 million to \$30 million from Shakwak on our highways.

This year, it is only \$15 million and it is getting smaller every year. It seems that the government's lobbying in Washington was ineffective. The Premier was down there in March and we have heard very little ever since. We also know that the federal Conservatives have provided little help on this file as well in terms of lobbying efforts bearing any fruit. According to the Government of Yukon's website, there is \$240 million dollars of work left to do as part of the Shakwak project. Now it is certainly beyond the reach of our own budget to get this work done.

What follow-up has been done with the minister since the Premier's unsuccessful trip to Washington this spring?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The issue of the Shakwak project has been a priority for this government since 2012, when

unknowingly — this was at the last minute that this language was dropped out of the new transportation bill. Since that time, we have been working with the federal government, speaking with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and also regularly with the Canadian Ambassador to United States.

In fact, when the United States Ambassador to Canada was up here not long ago, this was the very first issue that we talked about. This is an important issue because this government does not have the finances to be able to continue on with the level of support that is required to get that highway to the standard that it should be. Quite simply, this is an agreement between two sovereign nations. There is an obligation in that agreement that stipulates the work that will be done. The U.S. government agrees to get that highway to a modern two-lane highway and the Canadian and the Yukon government is committing to do the ongoing operation and maintenance.

Of course, we know that this is an election year in the United States and sometimes politics get in the way of such things. Now that we are getting through that season, we look forward to re-engaging with the U.S. government.

Mr. Silver: The Shakwak project means millions of dollars and hundreds of jobs to Yukoners. It has been a mainstay of our highway budget for more than 30 years and it is in danger of drying up. As the Premier mentioned, when this cut was first announced, this government was caught by surprise. Now this is alarming, seeing that this funding represents the largest part of our road-building budget.

Since the cut was announced, the combined lobbying efforts from the Premier, our senator, our MP and the federal Minister of Foreign Affairs have yielded no results to date. We need U.S. federal support to continue improving the Shakwak highway corridor. So far this government's efforts have fallen short. I guess the next question is: What are the next steps to getting this crucial funding restored?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I'm going to assume that the Leader of the Liberal Party does understand that, after elections, sometimes priorities do change and that's what happened in 2012. All indications we had was that the language was remaining in the bill and it was at essentially in the last hour that the language was removed from the bill. We did have money from that agreement that we continued to invest in that project. We continue to invest in that project. All the while, we will also continue to work with the new governor in Alaska, with their representative, with their senators, with our federal government and effort within ourselves to ensure that the awareness is there of the importance of this highway for Yukoners, but also its importance to Alaskans and U.S. citizens. We will be diligent to ensure that we can get that funding reinstated.

Question re: Food security

Mr. Tredger: In the summer of 2012, Yukoners got a wakeup call about just how precarious our just-in-time food supply really is. Mudslides and washouts cut off several

sections of the Alaska Highway, leaving Yukon grocery stores without the food shipments they rely on to stock their shelves.

A stronger, locally grown food sector may have alleviated some of the problems caused by these washouts. For a long time, this government has talked about its support for the expansion of locally grown food, but results show the need for a more strategic follow-up. This government has committed in the past to create a local facility to process, store and possibly distribute locally grown meats and vegetables long term.

When will this government live up to its commitment and create a long-term food storage and processing facility to increase Yukon's local food security?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As members know, we've debated two motions in this House that have received unanimous support with respect to the agricultural industry. When it comes to our commitment to the industry, we had very solid commitments in our 2011 election platform, many of which we've accomplished already. One, of course, that we still need to work on is a local food policy.

So the objectives of this policy are to make the agri-food sector competitive, resilient and responsive, give local food producers opportunity and profit, make local food conspicuous and widely available, and make consumers appreciate and, therefore, choose local food. It was to this end that, at the recent North of 60° Agriculture Conference and Banquet, I was able to inform attendees there that we are moving forward with a Yukon-grown food strategy. We'll include some potential policy.

I know that we made a commitment in one of the motion debates to explore Ontario's local food act and some of the opportunities that exist there. This broader strategy will help inform the development of local food policies so that we can enjoy as much local product on our shelves as possible.

Mr. Tredger: Indeed, food security is important to Yukoners. How precarious it is can be seen on the empty shelves at Superstore every Sunday. This government's commitment to locally grown foods does not extend much further than its platform platitudes.

Besides storage, what local growers need to expand their production in the long term is a steady base of sales that they can rely on. This government has the opportunity to provide that steady market that local growers need to expand their production. Many Yukon government facilities like the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, Copper Ridge, hospitals and schools require large amounts of food.

Will this government move from promises to action and make a commitment to source more of their food purchases from local producers?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Indeed, this government does support the local agricultural industry. I would say that over the past number of years, this government has done more than any previous one with respect to investments in the agriculture sector through Growing Forward and Growing Forward 2.

As I mentioned in my previous response, we will be looking to develop a local food strategy. We will include the aspects the member spoke about, with procurement for some of our larger institutions from local sources.

I was able to visit a number of farms this summer, including the Yukon Grain Farm, which supplies an incredible amount of what consumers use for their root vegetables — their potatoes, beets and carrots — a very exciting farm to visit, with great opportunities and entrepreneurship shown by those individuals who own that farm.

So again, with the development of this strategy, we feel that involving local industry and the public, it will attempt to identify policies and programs that may play a role in guiding other government, industry, business and individual decisions about local food.

Mr. Tredger: Many Yukon growers have indicated that they require more training and certification to capitalize on the food sales market in Yukon. These codes, standards and regulations are referred to in the industry as good agricultural practices, or GAP. GAP provides a number of standards and best practice to safely and sustainably expand the production and sale of agricultural products. Yukon grocers require food producers to have GAP certification to sell their food in Yukon stores. The more Yukon farmers who have GAP training, the more locally grown food in Yukon stores. Will this government work with the Yukon Agricultural Association and fund GAP education and awareness to allow more Yukon farmers to sell their production to local grocers?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned in my previous response, the Yukon Grain Farm and others have their product widely available through Yukon stores right now. We also have, of course, the Fireweed Community Market here in Whitehorse that is supported by Growing Forward 2. Funding for that operation was enhanced a year ago, in August, with respect to allowing that facility to continue. There are also farmers markets throughout the territory in many other communities that provide local product to people that are available.

As part of this food strategy that I spoke about and introduced at the North 60 agricultural banquet in my remarks, there are 19 potential initiatives that would lead toward helping with our objectives. As I mentioned, there are policy initiatives and there are program initiatives and we are looking at what Ontario has done and seeing whether or not we have to bring forward an act.

In conversations that officials have had with officials from Ontario, the Ontario officials suggested that what they accomplished through the act could have been done through policy and programs. That is why we have chosen to embark on the local food strategy. There are a number of things that we'll consider when developing that strategy to make sure that more local product can be on Yukon shelves.

Speaker: The member's time has elapsed.

Question re: F.H. Collins Secondary School reconstruction

Ms. Moorcroft: As the construction of a new building for F.H. Collins high school continues, many Yukoners who were consulted as part of the development process are wondering about the plan to heat the new space using

geothermal energy. Many of us believe renewable energy should be used wherever possible. Certainly community members enthusiastically supported the initial plan to heat F.H. Collins with geothermal energy. Feasibility studies performed before construction began, including a test well, showed us that geothermal heating was — pun intended — more than just a pipe dream.

Bearing in mind the support for geothermal heating for F.H. Collins Secondary School, can the Minister of Highways and Public Works confirm if this element of the plan is moving forward?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Of course we're committed to developing and building a new school to meet the long-term needs of our community. It's well-underway and I look at the local Yukoners working there. This construction project is designed to be energy efficient with the F.H. Collins project being just like the rest of our construction projects. We're building a state-of-the-art facility that will meet the needs of students for the next 50 years.

Several cost-efficient and environmentally friendly heat sources options were explored for F.H. Collins, including the geothermal heat like the member opposite talked about. Currently a propane boiler radiant heat source is planned for the school. However, the construction and design is being managed to allow for a possible future integration of alternate heat sources, such as biomass and geothermal.

Ms. Moorcroft: This is about political will. Heating F.H. Collins with geothermal could pay off within a decade and if this government was truly interested in renewables, it could promote a geothermal industry. What's more, Yukoners are being denied a source of pride as we continue to work toward a cleaner future that involves more renewable energy sources.

Giving up on geothermal heating at the new F.H. Collins school is giving up on another opportunity for renewable energy in the Yukon. If the minister cannot commit to finishing the geothermal heating project for the new F.H. Collins school, can he at least admit that this was a missed opportunity to combine cost savings and renewable energy?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I do thank the member opposite for the question. Given the new location of the school and the proximity of the well, more research is required to determine the viability of geothermal heating for the school. The Energy Solutions Centre is doing a comparison right now as we speak of biomass and geothermal benefits. The results will be incorporated into the planning for future development of a possible connection to the new school.

I don't want to lose sight of the fact that the new school is being designed to meet LEED silver energy efficiency standards — a LEED standard for leadership in energy and environmental design — and sets a benchmark for design in construction and operation of high-performance green buildings. This certification is the most recognized global standard for high-performance building. It's effective; it's cost-effective and better for the occupants and for the environment. We look forward to moving forward on this

project. There are Yukoners working on this project, so we have the best place in Canada to live, work, play and raise our families.

Question re: Drinking and driving

Mr. Barr: We know that alcohol or drug use increases any driver's crash risk. This is especially true for young drivers who are still learning to drive and usually lack the road experience to recognize or manage a potentially dangerous situation. Even small amounts of alcohol can impair a young driver's judgment and significantly increase their risk of an accident. That is why there is a zero tolerance on alcohol for drivers with a graduated driver's licence. Can the minister tell us how many young drivers with graduated driver's licences have had roadside suspensions in the past year due to impaired driving?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As most members in this Legislative Assembly know, impaired driving is one of the most serious public safety concerns facing law enforcement across the country. The RCMP have made a strong commitment to address drinking and driving and to continue their enforcement efforts. I know there's a national campaign coming up within the next few weeks here.

The Yukon government provided funding to support Mothers Against Drunk Driving — MADD — on their Red Ribbon campaign, designated driver rewards program and school assembly program. Impaired driving in Yukon is not only a policing priority but a combined public safety and health issue that can only be addressed through tougher enforcement, education and appropriate programs.

I commend the RCMP for the work that they do on our roadsides to address this very issue and also extend a thank you to the good volunteers with MADD Whitehorse, with their work as well reaching out to the schools and communities.

Mr. Barr: Maybe the minister can get back to us with those stats.

All jurisdictions in Canada have a graduated driver's licensing program with a zero blood-alcohol content restriction for the first two years before a full driver's licence is issued. Some Canadian jurisdictions take it further by having a zero blood-alcohol requirement for all drivers until age 21. Other Canadian provinces require a zero level for five years after a new driver has gotten their licence, regardless of age. Statistics show that behaviours are not changing fast enough in Yukon and too many young drivers are taking to the road after consuming alcohol or using drugs.

Is the minister willing to take any further measures to prevent impaired driving among new drivers or does he believe the existing system is adequate?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: When the member talks about adequate, I take great offence to that because I look at how hard our RCMP members, Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Citizens on Patrol work to mitigate this issue and to keep drunk drivers off the streets of our territory. We only need to see the number of signs that have been placed around the territory to encourage other drivers if they suspect somebody

of drunk driving or driving while impaired to call 911 and report that vehicle and that driver.

The good work of the RCMP and their continued efforts and national campaigns — again this year, I will be out with the RCMP doing checkstops — and with Mothers Against Drunk Driving, working with their national campaign.

I do take offence when the member opposite refers to the current services as not being adequate. The RCMP work extremely hard at keeping impaired drivers off, and I also encourage Yukoners, if they see someone they suspect as driving while impaired, to call 911.

Mr. Barr: I would encourage the minister to listen to what I am speaking to. We're talking about safety and lives, and I was referring to laws that this minister can change — certainly not efforts. What can we do to help?

The number of deaths and injuries among teens and young adults highlights the need for new, effective initiatives. In Yukon, a young driver caught driving under the influence gets only a roadside suspension and no additional driver education, yet the stats underscore the importance of having measures such as driver education for novice drivers. This type of training is even more critical when a young driver chooses to drive under the influence. We also know that the involvement of parents and the community can expand the outreach and prevention initiatives. Will this government improve the safety of all of those who share the road by implementing better driver —

Speaker: Order please.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Again, in addressing the member opposite, I give top marks to our RCMP members, our volunteers with the auxiliary police, volunteers with Mothers Against Drunk Driving, with Citizens on Patrol, working within our community to address impaired driving.

We see a large number of Yukoners starting to report suspected drunk driving, with the signs that the Minister of Highways and Public Works worked with MADD and the City of Whitehorse on to put those signs up in this community. We've also seen the Minister of Highways and Public Works work on issues or circumstances with Mothers Against Drunk Driving with the roadside signs around graduation time.

I commend our RCMP members and all the volunteers within the territory for the work that they do at targeting individuals who are driving while impaired.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Speaker: Government bills.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 80: Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 80, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that Bill No. 80, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 80, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I'm pleased to rise today to introduce Bill No. 80, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*, to this House. This bill amends the *Assessment and Taxation Act* and the *Municipal Act* to provide a mechanism to extend the rural domestic water well program and provide property owners in participating Yukon municipalities with the opportunity to access this successful program.

We estimate that in Yukon municipalities there are more than 500 properties that could be eligible to take advantage of this new drinking water option for their homes by accessing this program — although needless to say, that would be over the lifetime of the program, not all in one year.

To set the stage, I would like to begin by providing an overview of the successful world domestic water well program. This program was introduced in 2004 under the *Assessment and Taxation Act*, because of its structure that provides the ability to provide a loan for the property owner for the costs of putting in a well, but provides security to the government and to taxpayers for repayment. It is currently only available to properties that are within the Yukon government's taxation authority because currently we only have the ability to levy a local improvement charge in areas outside municipalities where YTG is the taxation authority.

The program was designed to give rural Yukoners access to low-interest loans to drill water wells on their property or enhance existing water wells, and the program is modelled after the rural electrification telephone program, which had successfully been in operation for years prior to the implementation of the well program.

Loans are 100-percent recoverable and are repaid through a local improvement charge that is added to the property owner's annual tax notice. The loans are then repaid over five, 10 or 15 years as decided by the property owner. Because of the nature of it being a local improvement charge added under the *Assessment and Taxation Act*, it also provides increased stability for repayment of those loans because it is secured against the property.

Since 2004, the rural water well program has provided nearly 250 families in rural Yukon with loans to develop drinking water sources through construction of private wells. In the 2013-14 fiscal year, 30 projects were funded for a total of \$728,607 and there are 20 projects underway in the current fiscal year.

Earlier this year, we contacted Yukon's eight municipalities to propose expansion of this successful and popular well program to residents within municipal boundaries and there was sufficient interest to move forward with a model proposed in the bill before us today. I should note that the selection of the model proposed is the result of

government proposing four possible options at two municipalities. The option that was supported by municipalities and preferred is the one that is provided here within the bill. I should also note that, at the request of municipalities who asked for the ability to add a fee to help compensate them for administration of the program, the structure does allow for a fee to be added on to the amount the property owners within municipalities would have to pay. The exact amount of that fee would be the subject of agreements between the Yukon government and municipalities who sign on to the program. We will also have the ability, through that structure, to adjust them as time goes on to reflect actual costs. Again, that is the direct result of a change that was requested by municipalities during the consultation.

Bill No. 80, as I noted, enables municipalities to choose to participate in a new municipal domestic water well program and they have the option of opting into the program by entering into an agreement with the Yukon government. The Yukon government provides all of the funds for installing the well and other eligible water infrastructure associated with the program, based on the same criteria as has been in place for the past 10 years under the rural well program.

Here is how the municipal domestic water well program will work in participating municipalities. As I noted, the same eligibility rules for properties as applied to the rural domestic water well program would be in place. As with that program, applications received would be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Interested property owners under this program would apply directly to the Yukon government which would conduct most of the work required in administering the program, including conducting the review, making the decisions around approval of elements of the infrastructure that the loan was requested for and then, following that, would communicate directly with participating municipalities.

Just as with the rural domestic water well program, all applicants to the program must have property taxes paid up to date and the same maximum amount for a loan of \$50,000 would apply. As well, it would be restricted at 25 percent of the total assessed value of their property, whichever is the lesser. It cannot exceed either \$50,000 or 25 percent of the assessed property value, and that 25 percent is the same number that has been used successfully under the rural electrification program for decades and under the current rural well program for the last decade.

Once an application is approved, the Yukon government will notify the property owner of the approved amount for the property owner, work out the repayment schedule and work can begin.

As with the existing program, any risk associated with drilling the well, including the possibility of a dry well or one that produces non-potable water, continues to rest with the property owner who sought and accepted the loans and spent the funds.

The main difference between the rural domestic water well program and this new program enabled by this legislation is where the municipal government's role comes into play as the taxation authority. For this new program, the Yukon

government will send the final amounts of loans to the participating municipal government. The municipality, through the agreement they signed, will agree to apply a local improvement charge to the property on the owner's taxation notice, which will then inform the property owner of the cost. The municipality will then be responsible to collect through its taxation authority and forward these amounts to the Yukon government each year to satisfy the loan costs.

When this suite of legislative changes, including the regulations, is complete, it will enable us to begin offering the domestic water well program in participating municipalities and, as I noted, each municipality will have the choice of whether or not to participate and will have the option of withdrawing from the program if they do not wish to participate in it. I am pleased to note that we have had interest from all municipalities and currently most have indicated that they will be signing on to the program.

The target for program implementation is summer of 2015.

The changes will provide property owners living within participating municipalities' boundaries access to the funding source for their water wells through low-interest loans, repayable over up to 15 years and secured through the local improvement charge on their property.

The addition of a water well on a property provides benefit to the homeowner and their family for access to water. It also has an economic benefit, as it increases the value of the property for the property owner and, for the municipality, a secondary benefit is it also increases their total tax base by adding to the value of properties within the municipality.

There are other provisions contained in this bill that amend the *Assessment and Taxation Act* to expand the coverage of the rural electrification program to allow its use — or expand its use — for solar, wind and other electrical energy projects that can be funded under the rural electrification and telecommunications program. Again, though that is not part of the title of this bill, that is an initiative that will help homeowners who choose to put in solar, wind or other alternative systems to have the ability to access loans under the rural electrification program. Just as with loans that are used to connect to the grid, this will give homeowners the ability to have alternative energy projects funded under this program and to repay it over up to 15 years.

I should also note that there's a clarification contained in this bill to strengthen the legislative provisions and clarify them, pertaining to dry wells and other unsuccessful attempts to secure potable water. That is aimed at further supporting what has been clearly spelled out within the program criteria and the contracts that citizens sign in accessing the rural well program.

I hope that we will receive the support of all members of this Assembly for these amendments and this effort to extend this program to Yukoners living within municipal boundaries.

Mr. Barr: The Yukon NDP supports this Bill No. 80. I'll keep my comments brief at this point and reserve further questions for when we get into the Committee of the Whole

and the third reading. I would like to make some initial comments.

To start with, these amendments have been a long time coming and the expansion of the domestic water well program will have a real impact on residents in places like Copperbelt. The domestic water well program will make clean water available to more Yukoners by providing funding to homeowners who wish to drill a well and then repay the cost on an annual basis through their taxes on a low interest loan. I would like to thank the minister for the briefing on this. It was very informative.

Also it will be happy news, because the residential subdivisions in the countryside that are still within Whitehorse city limits do not have access to city water services and their intended benefits. Through these changes, subdivisions like Mount Lorne, Mount Sima, McCrae, Spruce Hill, Cowley Creek and others will now have access to the domestic water well program.

We do realize that this legislation is long overdue. The City of Whitehorse has called for these amendments for a long time now and it's exciting to see them finally come to fruition.

This does beg the question of how long it will take to conclude an agreement with the Yukon government and the city to implement this program. However, as I said, I just want to make these opening remarks and I look forward to further discussion in Committee of the Whole and third reading.

Mr. Silver: It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill No. 80, the *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*. The rural water well program has been very helpful to many Yukon residents and I'm extremely happy to see it being expanded to include municipalities, as I think this expansion to the program is long overdue.

There are a handful of questions I hope to have answered by the minister as we move forward into debate. The minister had expressed that the program would be implemented while working with municipal partners, and that each municipality will have an option as to whether or not to participate in the program. I guess the question begged is: Were the municipalities consulted and worked with up to this point? Also, how many municipalities have agreed to participate in this program?

Currently the program funding is for \$800,000 a year, with a potentially large range of new people who can access this fund. Other questions come to mind. What is the expected increase to the annual budget to account for these increases in potential applicants?

As it stands, I think this amendment is a much-needed addition to the program and I intend to support it. I look forward to discussing this further in Committee of the Whole debate.

Ms. Moorcroft: I am pleased to see this bill coming forward. Clean, safe drinking water is vital to life. In Yukon, rural residents have, up until now, had access to the domestic water well program. The *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act* amends the *Municipal Act* and the *Assessment*

and Taxation Act to make the rural domestic water well program available to country residential residents within the City of Whitehorse limits and indeed, in all municipalities.

Since 2011, I have spoken to many country residential residents, to the mayor and the council of the City of Whitehorse and to the Yukon government about making this program available to my constituents in Copperbelt South. If you live in Mount Sima, McCrae, Wolf Creek, Pineridge, Mary Lake, Fox Haven, Spruce Hill or Cowley Creek, you must make your own arrangements for drinking water supply because you live outside the City of Whitehorse water and sewer services system. So it is important to recognize that those country residential subdivisions must either have water delivery or drill their own well and they also have to have their own septic system. That could lead to contamination if there are increased numbers of well and septic systems, given the proximity of the lots.

I have to point out in this Assembly that former city councils and former MLA Steve Cardiff also advocated for this domestic water well program to be available to people in municipalities who don't have access to municipal water services.

I am pleased to hear the minister say that they hope to sign agreements to bring this program into effect before the summer of 2015. This domestic water well program provides funding to homeowners to drill a well and repay the cost annually on their taxes on a low-interest loan over a five-, 10- or 15-year period.

I was also intrigued to hear the minister say that these provisions will also accommodate people within municipalities who may want to add a solar or wind or other alternate energy system to their homes. He may provide further information in his closing remarks or in the Committee of the Whole. With an increased number of wells potentially being drilled in neighbouring subdivisions, the availability of good data on water courses, water quality and water flow on residential, commercial and industrial water use and on the location of wells is of critical importance.

In my riding, Mount Sima is an industrial neighbourhood that also permits residential use of properties. My constituents, as well as the Yukon Conservation Society and others, have called for more monitoring of wells in order to determine any impact that industrial activities would have on water tables.

I look forward to the debate in Committee of the Whole. We will be asking the minister how high he anticipates the municipal administration fees might be, and whether those would be applied one time or be an annual fee. We are interested in details from the minister about how soon the government anticipates moving forward on this initiative so that my constituents will be able to apply for a low-interest loan to fund improvements to their water systems.

It is a pleasure to be able to support a bill brought forward by the government and I look forward to further debate.

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

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would like to thank the members who spoke in favour of this for their words of support.

I would just point out to the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes that I think he is incorrect in noting that the city has been calling for this extension in the past. In fact, there has been past discussion and a previous amendment to the *Municipal Act* which allowed municipalities more ability to create their own programs, but municipalities did not choose to do that. This step that has been taken here is a result of an initiative by the Yukon government where we offered to extend the program within the municipalities, subject to reaching agreement with municipalities on an option for ensuring security of payment.

I would like to thank the Member for Copperbelt South for her words of support and also join her in acknowledging the support of former MLA Steve Cardiff for this program and for the possibility of extending it within the municipalities. I would like to thank my colleagues from Watson Lake, Pelly-Nisutlin and Klwane for their interest in seeing this program extended to their constituents living within the municipalities.

Of course, I have heard from a number of constituents within Hidden Valley and MacPherson, as well as other areas of Whitehorse, who would like to see the opportunity to participate in this program.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will make further remarks in Committee of the Whole and commend this bill to the House at second reading.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 80 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 80, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*.

Do members wish a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 80: Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 80, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As I already spoke to this in second reading, I won't spend a great deal of time in my introductory remarks, but I would just note a couple of sections that I would specifically draw members' attention to. We can discuss those further in clause-by-clause debate.

That is section 271.02(1), which provides the ability for a municipality and the government to agree in writing to make the domestic water well program available in the municipality. It also goes on — I would point out another section, under 271.04(1), where each amount determined under paragraph 271.03(1)(a) in respect of a local improvement in a municipality is, for the purposes of this act and the *Assessment and Taxation Act*, deemed to be a tax levied by the municipality on the property to which the amount applies. (2) If subsection (1) deems a municipality to have levied a tax, the municipality must collect the tax as though it had imposed the tax by bylaw.

That was, I know, a little bit wordy and legalistic for some, but simply speaking to what those sections do is they provide the ability that once a municipality has entered into a program agreement, it allows us to offer this program within municipal boundaries. They are then obligated to levy a local improvement charge on that property owner. They do not have to go through the normal bylaw process, which is somewhat time intensive and places an additional burden on them. As long as they have agreed to operate in the program, they then consequently agree that if we approve a loan to a property owner within their boundary, they will then apply a local improvement charge to that property owner's property.

The one other amount that had been asked by, I believe, the Member for Copperbelt South was a question of what the administrative charge was going to be. I would again note that it was a request that came specifically from municipalities. Our suggestion — and frankly the Yukon government's preference — would be simply to offer the program directly to residents of municipalities. We see the municipality itself also deriving the benefit, not only from having satisfied citizens who are able to access government support for increasing their property value, but it does add to the tax base of a municipality without a direct cost to them, but because the request for administrative fee was something that did come from a couple municipalities, we did agree that we would create the ability to do that. The exact amount would be the subject of agreements, which could be revised from time to time.

Our suggestion to municipalities, based on our understanding of their desire for some amount of money under that section — and our preference to keep it as low as possible for property owners because that cost would be directly added on to the amount that the property owners would have to borrow — we have suggested at this point that it might be a charge of up to \$500. Again, that is something that will be discussed and negotiated directly with the municipalities. We

will continue to emphasize to them the reminder that if we go higher than \$500, while it may be directly beneficial to the administration of the municipality, it will be a direct increased cost to the property owner and a higher amount that they have to pay under the program compared to what they would have had to pay outside of municipal boundaries.

Mr. Barr: I would like to welcome the officials and thank them for their hard work. I also thank the minister for his comments. He already answered one of the questions, so I will just get into the next.

The minister said that he is aiming for this legislation to allow country homeowners to drill new wells by the summer of 2015. Do the regulations need to be implemented before Yukoners can begin to access this program's expansion? How quickly can the government and the City of Whitehorse sign an agreement? In short, what is needed before the country residential Yukoners can take advantage of these amendments and what is the government's timetable for their implementation?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I thank the member for the questions. I would note, first of all, that the exact timelines for the City of Whitehorse or other municipalities is really a question that they are best positioned to answer. We certainly are of the view that there should not be any reason — if they are interested in offering the program and working with us in this — that we could not have this all done in time to offer the program in the next fiscal year. But again, I have to emphasize that we can't guarantee that a municipality will participate. We have deliberately chosen not to force them to offer the program, as we don't want to interfere with their taxation authority or undermine their powers as a municipal government. We believe that we are offering a very good deal for municipalities and a very good deal for municipal residents by agreeing to provide the money — the full cost of the loan.

I am just looking for the answer to another question the member had asked. The act amendments create the general framework of law for these changes including the power to make regulations. Regulations provide the specifics of the programming into law. We will be working with municipalities in the creation of regulations that outline program operations and that is because those program specifics can change and regulations are easier to adjust.

As I noted, from the Yukon government's perspective, from our timelines, we are hoping to have this in place for the beginning of the next fiscal year, but we do require at this point the confirmation from municipalities that they are prepared to sign the agreement, so those discussions are underway. As I noted in my speech at second reading, we are proceeding forward with these changes and, in discussing the specifics with municipalities, we hope that they will see the benefit in allowing us to offer this program to Yukoners living within municipal boundaries.

Mr. Barr: I am pleased to see that solar, wind and alternative energy projects can be considered in local improvements in both urban and rural developments. Would you please indicate what alternative electrical energy this

includes? How many such solar and wind projects have been brought forward in the last three years?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I should note in clarification, and I draw the member's attention to that section of the act, the changes regarding the alternative energy systems at this point only apply outside of municipalities. What it does is strengthen the existing provision which, as I understand it, allowed people who were not near the grid to access funding under rural electrification for solar or wind. This would then allow people who are connected to the grid to access rural electrification for renewable energy systems.

It is part of implementing our commitments to give citizens the ability to invest in renewable energy systems, and it allows them to increase the ability to not only power their own needs, but to take advantage of the new microgeneration program, which will pay people a slight premium for producing and adding renewable energy to the grid. It's currently 21 cents per kilowatt hour within the hydro portions of the grid and 30 cents per kilowatt hour for people who are in diesel communities.

That provision does not at this point enter into municipalities. It is expanding the ability of people outside of municipalities to borrow money under rural electrification for solar, wind or other alternative energy systems.

Mr. Barr: Just for some clarification and to repeat the one question: Does the minister know what uptake on solar and wind systems has been for the last three years?

For clarification — regarding solar and wind: can it be used for people who are near the grid now? That is what I was hearing from the minister. For example, folks in my riding can upgrade to solar and/or wind — whichever it is they choose — or other renewable energies, even if they are on the grid.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I understand that the number of applications for solar energy systems under rural electrification has typically been at three to five annually. Prior to this bill that is in front of the House, it was only available for people whose homes were not connected to the grid. This legislation would create the ability for rural residents who are connected to the grid to borrow money under rural electrification to put in a renewable energy system if they meet the other eligibility criteria of the program.

That includes also meeting the appropriate requirements as far as connection standards under the microgeneration policy, assuming they were going to connect to the grid. It requires them as well to have not maxed out the amount under their property that they can borrow under rural electrification or under the well program, which again is capped at 25 percent of their total assessed value. It requires them to have their taxes in good standing. We don't loan money to people who have delinquent property taxes.

It would work for anyone who meets the other program criteria. It may not be available for every person — if, for example, they are delinquent on taxes or have already borrowed too much money under previous electrification loans or well loans that they have yet to repay.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response. I am thinking of a particular constituent who just upgraded. Would

there be any retroactivity to this? Now they are selling to the grid. Also, what is included in an alternative energy system? Is it renewables only?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The program is available for wind, solar and microhydro. That is what is currently covered under "alternative". It was worded that way to not rule out the possibility if there is some other future technology. At this point, it is my understanding that it is confined to renewables. As the member will see in the microgeneration program, there is specific reference to renewable energy systems.

This is part of how we're proceeding forward, pursuant to the energy strategy and the commitments we've made on promoting renewable energy use. One of the ways we're doing it is through helping citizens make those personal choices, which increase their own energy independence and, although each part is a relatively small contribution to the overall grid, we think it provides the opportunity for a positive trend, in terms of people making those personal investments that invest in renewable energy systems.

As far as the application of this — please bear with me a moment, Madam Chair.

As the member will see in the tail end of the legislation, the act applies on the day that it's assented to. The program is not retroactive, so I do sympathize with his constituent, who may wish that he or she had waited just a little bit longer. What I would note is there are a significant number of Yukoners, including my constituents in the South Fox Lake area, and there are constituents of my colleague, the Member for Kluane, in the Mendenhall area, and others I know out in the Mount Lorne and Southern Lakes area who have, over the years, put in solar panels or wind, either to directly power their home or supplement it. We're trying to maximize the effect of public funds and taxpayers' money to get more people having the opportunity to buy these systems, not compensate people who have already made those choices. We commend them for those choices. They do have the potential to apply for upgrades under this money.

Pardon me, Madam Chair. I am almost addressing the member directly, which I know is a no-no.

The Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes' constituent may indeed potentially be eligible for assistance under the program, but that would apply to upgrades to the system and potential enhancements to the system. It would not repay him or her for investments that have already been made.

Mr. Barr: Something that has also been brought to my attention in the Mount Lorne area specifically, but may affect the minister's area in other rural areas that are unincorporated, is that there was interest in the community club out there in Mount Lorne to possibly move toward outfitting that club with this program. Is there interest with the government moving toward upgrading various community clubs where O&M falls under the government that would include solar or wind in the upcoming time and that could lend to adding surplus energy to the grid?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: To the member's question about whether a community centre can be funded under the rural electrification program to construct an alternative energy

source, to qualify for a loan a community centre needs to meet the same eligibility criteria as residential properties. That usually is not possible. The rural electrification and telephone program must guarantee 100-percent cost recovery of the loan and that loan is based on both the property ownership and the value of the property — land and building value.

Many community centres do not own the land on which they are built, so there is no party that can actually guarantee that repayment. In addition, the rural electrification and telephone program loan repayment is done through the annual process of paying property taxes and many community centres are granted with exemption from property taxation under current laws and orders-in-council, so they do not participate in the process of paying property taxes, which is also the process for repaying these loans as local improvement charges.

Finally, the amount of electricity funded by a community centre is very likely beyond what this program can fund. The funding is geared toward the power needs of a residential building, usually single family. I would also note that with regard to community centres, as the member may have seen we've just — on Friday when the Premier and I, along with the Member for Kluane, visited communities in his riding including Beaver Creek and Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay and met with citizens as well as with the Kluane First Nation and the White River First Nation, we announced an increase to the community recreation assistance grant, which will almost double the amount that is currently being paid to unincorporated communities.

I will be directly contacting and sending a letter to all of the communities that are benefitting from this increase in funding, but for communities including Mount Lorne, which I recall being one of the ones on the list, will receive an increase to their annual funding.

We're not directly them through this legislation here, but again, as I noted, the amounts per unincorporated community recreation society do vary, but they're based on a new formula that ensures that we are equitably funding all of the unincorporated communities assisted through this. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge and give credit to the Member for Kluane for his support and efforts in this endeavour in bringing it to my attention in the first place. I would also acknowledge the fact that local advisory councils, including Mount Lorne, Marsh Lake and Tagish, all raised funding for their community centres as an issue when I have met with those local advisory councils. I would like to acknowledge their support for making the changes that we've responded to through the press release, issued on Friday.

One other matter I would like to touch on briefly, which I had intended to answer earlier, was the question of consultation that took place in municipalities. Yukon and municipal government officials have discussed this proposal over a series of meetings and conference calls.

I have also discussed this proposed change with the Association of Yukon Communities and directly written to mayors and councils regarding this program. I have had the opportunity during a number of meetings to talk with

municipalities directly about this program. Though I have not had the opportunity to speak directly to each of them at a meeting about this, I have had the opportunity to speak to them as part of the Association of Yukon Communities' board meeting, where most are represented, and directly through correspondence with those municipalities to offer to extend this program into Whitehorse and other municipalities — as well, offering our four suggested options for doing so — based on what we heard back municipalities — selected the option that was favoured by the municipalities that participated in that consultation.

Mr. Barr: I thank the member opposite for the indirect compliment to the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, who is speaking, which we don't get to hear very often. I remember a drive that the Member for Kluane and I took about three years ago, speaking to addressing formula change, so I see the trickle-down effect. Slow progress is alive and well and I know that it will be very happy news for those community members who have been seeking this — long before I have been involved — to hear about funding increases, especially Mount Lorne.

It has always been the topic — the great services and programs they provide and that go on there at Mount Lorne, which attract so many other people from surrounding areas, Whitehorse included, to use the facilities. Although it is very welcome, it does add to those extra expenses, and I'm sure that this announcement will be welcome by the users — very much so. They will be able to enjoy it even more so. I thank the minister for his comments.

This good legislation comes at a critical time for our understanding of well water use. As more wells are potentially drilled in neighbouring subdivisions, it is critical that we have good data on water courses, water quality and flow, water use by residents, businesses or industry, and the locations of the wells themselves. I also hope that these amendments lead to a better understanding of the water tables in these areas.

Currently, well drillers do not have to report the location and depth of a well. When more wells will be drilled in an area, this becomes an important question. When the Yukon government develops the regulations, will it require that information about well depths and water well locations be provided to the Yukon government so it can track the location of these wells?

I would further add that with wells, often there are septic beds, and septic systems must be 100 feet away from a water well. Well drillers are not required to report the location of wells or to confirm that wells are 100 feet away from septic systems. In a country residential subdivision with small lots and a high density, septic systems could contaminate wells.

Has the government thought about how to improve on this — its water data recording keeping — to avoid any such problems?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I should point out first of all is in fact through the water strategy — work being led by the Minister of Environment and led by the Department of Environment with involvement from departments — including Community Services and Health and Social Services — that

getting better data collection on Yukon's groundwater is a part of that strategy. That has included specific investments that the Yukon government has made in data collection around the territory.

While there is no Yukon-wide requirement for well drillers to submit their well logs, it is a requirement under the rural domestic water well program that they do. In fact, for wells that have been drilled under that program, we do have records of where the well is located, the depth, information about water quality, et cetera. A well drilling log of a water well — which has to be submitted to Property Assessment and Taxation under the rural well program — verifies the work has been done. It provides project information, including well location and typically also depth, flow rate, water quality before treatment, and, where applicable, indication that the well has been capped.

Work is ongoing in an effort to continue to manage groundwater, and this includes collecting the data from those well logs received under the rural well program and under the municipal domestic water well program that will be created if this bill is passed, and thus subject to municipalities signing on the dotted line to allow the programs to be offered.

The wells also have to pass the Canadian guideline for drinking water quality test. In ensuring that a well is safe from contamination, the rural domestic water well program policies take a number of steps to do that, including ensuring that a sketch plan and drilling log are submitted to the government. A rough site sketch has to demonstrate where on the property the well will be, in relation to surface water sources, septic systems or any other site likely to impact a well. A well drilling log of a water well verifies the work is done and meets the existing requirements and standards. In addition, water produced by the drilling must be tested for mineral and organic safety and, if the water tests are safe and meet the Canadian guidelines for drinking water quality, only then are the final funds paid out for the project under this program.

I would note, in reference to the member's question about septic systems, I don't have the specific details of how Health and Social Services and Environmental Health deal with issuing permits for that, but I do know that one of the things that they consider in issuing permits for a septic system is proximity to wells and to surface water or groundwater that could potentially be contaminated by a septic system.

I said that already, Madam Chair, so I won't repeat myself.

Mr. Barr: I do thank the minister for his responses.

In the matter of the last part of his answer where Health and Social Services is involved, I guess a concern is — in especially a rural area where it may be on that specific property that the 100 feet is adhered to from well to septic, but is there a log or data entry relation from another person's property? Is there a correlation to keep those distances congruent from a neighbouring lot that would have a well and a septic system?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The specifics of exactly all the details of how Environmental Health Services does this is something I don't have — that information about Health and

Social Services — in front of me, but I do know that, before issuing a permit for a septic system, Environmental Health Services does consider the proximity to wells not only on that person's property but gives consideration to whether there are other wells in the area. I would feel fairly safe in assuming that one of the things that they immediately check for is a record of a well on someone else's property nearby and that, in the absence of knowing that there is a well and it is a safe distance from a septic system, I would be confident that they would take appropriate steps to determine whether there might be a well within the area that could be contaminated by a septic system.

Again, as I noted, I do know that Environmental Health Services, when they are issuing those permits, considers what potentially might be contaminated, including surface water within the area. That is something that is handled at an operational level by the officers in Environmental Health Services. They make those decisions and I am confident that they are exercising due care and diligence prior to issuing permits for septic fields. When it comes down to the efforts in drilling a well, an important part of what we have been able to do through the rural well program in collecting better data about the location of new wells. It does allow a better understanding of the usage of groundwater and the locations of wells that could potentially be contaminated by septic fields or other activity through the work that is being done. Both here and through the water strategy for Yukon, officials from all affected departments are working together to improve our understanding of Yukon's groundwater, including potential contamination sources. One of the reasons for that is to ensure that we are doing the very best job that we can in ensuring that permits are not issued either for drilling a well or for putting in a septic system without knowledge of what might be impacted and potential risks that are in play.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response. It is essential that safety is paramount where contamination could occur and that water is not being contaminated. In Mount Sima, where residential properties sit beside industrial development, residents are calling for better monitoring of water wells to monitor industry's impact on the quality of the water tables. Does the government have a plan to improve our knowledge of what is happening to the water under our feet there?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I thought I just answered that. That's work that's being done under the water strategy for Yukon. I should also just add and clarify my previous response to the member that, in providing funding under the rural well program for drilling a water well, the sign-up form for the service provider registry requires any well driller who wants to be registered as someone who can receive funding under this program to, as a starting point, sign a form that indicates the following. For the purpose of the rural domestic water well program, any service provider that agrees to undertake the duties associated with coordinating a project under this program will be required to take responsibility for submitting the following elements on behalf of the applicant: a full bacterial and chemical analysis of water well from any

new system, which demonstrates the water meets current Canadian guidelines for drinking water quality; a clear demonstration that a full treatment plan and appropriate system is in place if analysis indicates treatment is required; if the well is a surface water well, treatment will be a required component of any application.

It also requires proof in the form of receipts that well drilling has been completed by a registered well driller, well logs that include well location, depth, flow rate, water quality before treatment and, where applicable, an indication that the well is capped. All receipts eligible for financing in the program — the service provider will also enter into a contract with the Government of Yukon and take on the responsibility of ensuring that payment is made for any receipts submitted for the given project and financed under this program. The service provider will ensure that all rules and regulations related to project installation are followed. Given those duties, company named “blank” agrees to be listed on this registry as a registered service provider. As a registered service provider, the following is confirmed — and this is a checked box section of the application — in good standing with Yukon Workers’ Compensation Health and Safety Board, registered with Corporate Affairs and legally entitled to work in the Yukon.

Additionally on the signup form for the well-driller registry, for the purpose of the rural domestic water well program, a “groundwater well” is defined as any drilled well that is at least 15 metres away from any surface water source and at least 30 metres deep, and which meets standards set out in the Canadian Ground Water Association guidelines for water well construction. Given that definition, “fill in the blank” agrees that any groundwater well financed through the rural domestic water well program will be installed at or above standards set out in the Canadian Ground Water Association guidelines for water well construction and, again, it requires that driller to confirm that they are in good standing with Workers’ Compensation Health and Safety Board, Corporate Affairs and are entitled to work in the Yukon.

That is the starting point before they even get into the system. They are also obliged through the program — there is a requirement that recipients of the program follow the steps of this as well. Again, the obligation is placed on the driller to ensure that they are installing a well that meets Canadian drinking water standards including the assessments of water quality. I hope that has answered the member’s question.

Mr. Barr: Yes, the minister answered the question, and he was quite thorough previously. I did want to mention the specific requests of the constituents — not of mine, but others — in Mount Sima who wanted to be clear for themselves so they can hear that geared right toward them.

I have one last question regarding administration fees. The minister said that these amendments include the ability for levying a municipal administration fee at the request of municipalities. He also said he will encourage municipalities to keep the administration fee at a low cost.

Can the minister say whether the administration fee will be a one-time or an annual charge, and have his discussions with municipalities addressed that question?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The administration fee that I was referencing was an upfront charge. That is what has been discussed at this point between staff and Community Services and municipalities during meetings and conference calls. The amount that has been discussed was a \$500 administration fee. I would emphasize and underline that we appreciate why municipalities are asking for it. It was our preference not to provide it at all, but in the interest of offering this program and working with municipalities, we agreed to tack on an administration fee, although we do also see there being a benefit to municipalities in the long term from having citizens have access not only to cleaner water but to increasing the tax base through the investments under this program.

Again, I recognize the concern that municipalities had and so as a result of that did agree to change what we had proposed to allow for an administration fee, which again would go directly to the property owner. The municipality does have a certain administrative role to play in recovering the money including adding on to the tax bills a local improvement charge. There is also some potential that in the event of default, a municipality could have to take action to recover that along with any municipal taxes owed to it. Most of the administrative work under the program will continue to be, just as with the rural water program, borne by Property Assessment and Taxation branch and the municipality’s responsibilities under this will be limited to the requirement to levy the local improvement charge, collect it and remit that fee to the Yukon government.

Mr. Silver: I would like to thank the department officials for coming here today and also for the briefing. My staff said it was very informational. Also, thank you to the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for his questions. I only have a couple of follow-up questions that I don’t think have been answered at this time.

The minister already commented on the level of consultation with the municipalities. So I just wanted to know a bit about the methods of awarding these loans. Is it a first-come, first-served basis or is there more of a process to this? Once again, the departmental officials at the briefing did a great job of explaining the difference between municipal and rural, but I just wanted to know overall if there is a first-come, first-served basis for the loans?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, what I should note in answer to the member’s question is that the program — just as with the rural well program, is that they assess applicants when they come in the door. It is to an extent first come, first served. If someone has been approved for a payment under it, they do provide it based on when people come in and not based on weighing the merits of individual projects. They assess whether the elements of a well projects are eligible. If someone is eligible, they issue a loan for it as allowed by budgetary restrictions.

What we’ve done and the exact amounts that are available, both within the rural well portion of the program

and the municipal water well portion, will be subject to annual budgetary appropriations. What is envisioned at this point is that there will be a portion specifically designated for rural and a portion specifically designated for properties within municipalities at the beginning of the year. Then projects in either of those two parts will be reviewed. Then after July 31 of each year, any remaining amount from either part of the program would be available for people, regardless of where they live.

So to phrase that a little less clumsily, what that would mean is that if someone within a municipality had applied on June 1 and the municipal portion of it had been fully expended, if there was an amount remaining in the rural portion of the fund after July 31, then that money would be made available to the person within the municipality. That's what we're attempting to do to ensure that if there's unspent money, it isn't simply lapsed — that the two pots would be combined into one — or the two parts of the budget would be combined into one after July 31 — either inside municipalities or rural areas, whichever the case is in that situation, to access those unspent funds.

So pots will be divided until July 31, and after that all remaining money will be available for anyone in either two divisions of the budget that was not able to receive funding prior to July 31. That will be first come, first serve and after July 31, any new applications in the door in either category will simply be rated equally based on who applies first.

Mr. Silver: I am taking a look at the variance in prices for certain well projects. Clearly, how far down you are going to have to go is going to determine how much money you are going to spend on wells. I have seen projects in Dawson reach over \$50,000. I am wondering if the minister expects an average amount per loan or are they going to just assign the amounts based on the size of the project?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The way that it works now is that someone comes in — when they are approved, there would be a quote from the well service provider which they would be approved based on. Then if they are higher or lower than the estimate then there can be an adjustment made.

Illustratively, if someone was approved for — if the quote that was approved — when the project was approved — was for \$25,000 and the actual cost came in at \$30,000, the eligibility of that additional work would be assessed, including whether they had maxed out their 25 percent on their property and, of course, scrutiny being conducted by officials of whether the elements of the project and the bills were reasonable. That then can be added and lead to an adjustment. Of course if they came in under the quoted amount and there was money available then that would go into other areas.

That is one of the reasons why in budgetary years the amount that is estimated for the program does sometimes go higher because we've chosen to do it that way rather than saying to someone that if the project is slightly over what the original quote was that — to prevent them from being able to access it and having to pay that additional amount directly out

of pocket rather than borrowing it and amortizing it over up to 15 years.

In terms of the cost of a well, the annual cost has varied slightly and gone up slightly over the years. I believe last year was about \$24,000; I understand roughly \$25,000 is the current cost of wells and equipment — the average cost. But it should be noted that wells that go down deeply, or wells that are shallower than average, do skew those costs. That's an average cost.

Again, a key element of this program — and personally, I believe, one of the reasons it has been successful in the decades since its implementation — is that this does not provide anyone with a blank cheque. It is still a financing program, but it remains a personal responsibility, and people choose — if they wish to keep drilling, they take the risks associated with that — and paying for a dry well, they don't simply pass that on to the government.

That is, in part, because, long before my time as an MLA, there had been a program offered under Yukon Housing Corporation for well drilling that had mixed success. One of the criticisms I had heard from constituents about that program was that some people kept drilling exactly to the amount that was approved as a loan and, under that program, they didn't have to pay it back if it was a dry well. So it led to people sinking holes and not going further — that was the criticism I received from constituents.

The suggestion that had been made when this program was originally suggested, by some of my constituents, was that we model it on the rural electrical and telephone program and maintain that personal responsibility and people taking the risks themselves rather than passing it on to government or fellow citizens.

If there is a dry well, they still do have to pay for it. The program does have some risks, and it's one that we encourage people to carefully consider, but also to note the number of projects that have been approved and completed as of the end of March 2014 — the end of that fiscal year. A total of 240 projects occurred in the life of the program, with \$5.4 million expended by the government on this program. It has helped, as members can see from that, roughly 240 families as of the end of last fiscal year and currently this year, I believe, there were an additional 20 wells under construction. As noted in my second reading speech, I believe I said there were roughly 250 projects, but in fact the actual number is closer to 260 if all complete their work in the current fiscal year.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate the answer from the minister. I'm just trying to add up the numbers here and the amount of money allocated this time around compared to the need. It doesn't really match up. With 25,000 or 30,000, we're not going to get past 40 well projects before this money dries up — pardon the pun.

I am wondering, is there room in the budget for more if this project is successful? How much deliberation has the department done for when this initial allotment of money ends?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I can hint at for the member is that it is our expectation that we will be adding additional

resources to this total program, but the exact amounts of that will be subject to approval by Management Board and subsequent tabling in this Assembly as part of the 2015-16 budget. I'm not in a position to pre-announce that, but it is our expectation that we would seek additional resources for this program to extend the number of people that can be assisted by it. Unfortunately I am not in a position to pre-announce the amounts at this point in time.

I would note, again, that when the member is looking at the numbers, I do have to point out that in talking about the total number of projects approved in the past 10 years, the average cost of wells and well systems approved under it has gone up on about an annual basis largely based on increased costs of systems and, to some degree, due to fluctuations in fiscal years of how many projects are approved and how many are completed. Something I should note is that the average cost of a well is now roughly \$25,000 and the maximum amount is \$50,000.

In some cases, for really deep wells with a significant amount of treatment, that might not cover all of someone's costs, but the program is not designed for extreme cases. It's designed and has been successful at assisting most people who choose to put in a well who are eligible for the program having the same type of assistance that has been successfully provided for a number of decades under the rural electrification program. Government will help them borrow and amortize the money up to 15 years. They pay it back annually with their taxes and are charged a low-interest rate on those loans, but there is also security for repayment provided to government and taxpayers because it is secured through a local improvement charge against the property.

Chair: Is there any further general debate? We are going to proceed with clause-by-clause reading of the bill.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Clause 2 agreed to

On Clause 3

Clause 3 agreed to

On Clause 4

Clause 4 agreed to

On Clause 5

Clause 5 agreed to

On Clause 6

Clause 6 agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Just before I move to report the bill, I would like to thank Kelly and Shehnaz for their assistance here today and thank Charlene and others who have played a major role in the development of this legislation — Paul and Kelvin as well — and anyone who I've missed — I know there are several — I thank them for their good work on this.

With that, Madam Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 80 without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that the Chair report Bill No. 80, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*, without amendment.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 80, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 81: Court Security Act — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 81, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Nixon.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I move that Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: In second reading, we often talk about how the bill fits with the government's overall policy initiatives. I would like to share how this bill fits in with what we are doing as it relates to the platform.

The bill before us today is a part of a broader package of creating safer Yukon communities as part of the building a better quality of life pillar. The Yukon Party team has accomplished a great deal in delivering on our platform commitments. We have successfully used our budgets to translate our platform commitments into reality for Yukoners.

Let me share with you some of the commitments that we made to Yukoners that fall within my area of responsibility. We committed, in partnership with Yukon First Nations and Yukon College, to establish a law enforcement career orientation program at the Northern Institute of Social Justice to prepare First Nations and women for careers in law enforcement or in the justice system.

In response, we conducted a pilot project for a law enforcement career orientation program at the Northern Institute of Social Justice, which went ahead in the summer of 2012. That program continues to do very good work for professionals in our territory. Our Yukon Party government developed and has committed to implement the *Substance Abuse Action Plan, Yukon* that focuses on education, prevention, harm reduction, enforcement and treatment.

Within the enforcement pillar, the Department of Justice established the SCAN unit, which continues to enforce the SCAN act. Recently, Yukoners have seen an increase in print and on-line public service announcements, as well as radio announcements, with regard to safer communities and neighbourhoods. As a result, we have seen an increased number of activities to the branch.

SCAN has collaborated with partners such as the Yukon Liquor Corporation and with the RCMP on efforts to address illegal activity and associated harms. SCAN is working with an ambitious three-year strategic plan as it is fully operational and continues to carry out its mandate to address illegal activity on property in Yukon. I would certainly like to take any opportunity, especially now, to thank the staff of SCAN for a job very, very well done.

We have also supported an Alcohol and Drug Services addiction counsellor for the Community Wellness Court and have ensured that the correctional service staff in contracted services is ongoing to support the Community Wellness Court.

Speaking of which, we have committed to support the Community Wellness Court to address specific social problems in the north, such as substance abuse and FASD, by emphasizing individualized court orders and supervised treatment.

Speaking about FASD, I was pleased to announce with great support from the Yukon Party government to conduct the FASD prevalence study that will be underway shortly. I am looking forward to the good work that will take place here in Yukon. The entire country is watching Yukon on this front and I would like to extend my thanks to all of my government caucus colleagues for their support on this important project. As you will remember, we also committed to make the justice system better suited to individuals with FASD by addressing the recommendations of the Path to Justice: Access to Justice for Individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder conference. Yukoners will likely also remember that we have implemented a new philosophy of corrections, emphasizing that the protection of the public holds offenders accountable and provides appropriate opportunities for rehabilitation.

WCC offers programming on substance abuse management, cognitive skills, violence prevention, anger management, spousal assault and sexual offence, as well as programming relevant to First Nation inmates — just to name a few, Mr. Speaker.

The *Victims of Crime Act* that passed in the spring of 2010 has been supported with a number of public education initiatives, outlining information on how victims of crime have rights. The victims of crime emergency fund, including

emergency cellphones, has been implemented to address some of the emergency aspects of being victimized. This government has invested in corrections infrastructure that supports the principles of public safety and offender accountability, such as the replacement facility for the Whitehorse Correctional Centre.

We have ensured that the arrest processing unit includes access to medical resources for individuals requiring them. We have implemented the recommendations of the Internet Safety Advisory Committee to ensure that Yukoners are protected from cyber crime and Internet predators. I'm especially pleased that we've been able to build on the good work of the Internet Safety Advisory Committee and make a connection with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. I'm very proud of the work this team does nationally with the public, the federal government and many levels of government across our nation. I applaud the leadership of the Minister of Education on such files as this, in partnership with the Department of Justice, working with the Centre for Child Protection to better protect our children and youth from on-line risks and sexual exploitation.

Under the Department of Justice, we've entered into a three-year agreement with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection to build awareness of the www.cybertips.ca website. If you haven't visited this website yet, I would strongly recommend that you do. The site hosts valuable information for both kids and parents.

Speaking of children, our government also continues to respond to justice-related needs of children who witness domestic violence and other forms of victimization through project Lynx. There is good work being done here and all involved should feel very proud of their contributions to Yukon.

Over the last couple of years, you will have heard me talk about the Yukon Police Council. We in fact engaged First Nations and the public in the oversight of the police force by creating the Yukon Police Council in February 2012. You will remember that the creation of the council was a recommendation of the 2010 *Sharing Common Ground* report. There is no doubt in my mind that we have a solid group of dedicated individuals working on this council and I continue to be so very pleased with their work.

Just recently, the Police Council issued a release encouraging Yukoners to share their input into their recommendations on policing priorities. The Police Council used these submissions when making their recommendations for our policing priorities.

We recently celebrated the community safety awards, which were created in 2012 to recognize citizens who make significant contributions to community safety in our territory. I would like to extend my most sincere appreciation and congratulations to this year's winners.

I'm very proud that Yukon is working with the governments of Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Canada to respond to the unique challenges of policing in the north. Yukon negotiated a 20-year territorial police service agreement that reflects the unique nature of policing in the

north and includes provisions for cost mitigation and harmonization of RCMP standards with best practices or new Yukon legislation.

The bill being tabled today puts existing court security practices into legislation. Yukon is the only jurisdiction without legislation governing court security, and this bill will bring Yukon into line with the rest of Canada. Our government is committed to ensuring a safe, effective and efficient justice system, and this new legislation will provide more safety assurances for all court users and enhances court security operations in Yukon courts.

A few years ago, Yukon's judiciary identified that a court security act would create greater certainty and clarity around aspects of court security. Although the judiciary have inherent jurisdiction over their courtrooms through common law, it has not been clear whether this authority extends outside the courtrooms and to other areas where threats to security may arise.

Other jurisdictions in Canada have found that without designating court areas and establishing explicit authority in legislation for security practices, such as sheriff screening for prohibited items or evicting people with cause, the ability to enforce prohibitions or actions is compromised and subject to challenges. The Sheriff's Office provides court security, manages juries, ensures that court orders directed to the sheriff are carried out and serves civil and criminal documents throughout Yukon. The Sheriff's Office is responsible for the enforcement of civil judgments issued to the sheriff by Yukon courts and the Federal Court of Canada, jury selection, management of judge and jury trials, serving civil documents and for providing security to the law courts and the judiciary.

Members of the public who have questions about jury duty, about the seizure and sale of property to comply with court judgments or document service, should contact the Sheriff's Office. Their hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

I would certainly like to commend the team at the Sheriff's Office for their continued commitment to Yukoners and for consistently conducting themselves in a professional manner. Their duties are often carried out behind the scenes — in the shadows, in a sense. Mr. Speaker, I can recall working with the Sheriff's Office prior to my days as an elected official, when I owned and operated my property management company. The sheriffs were extremely helpful when I experienced a substantial breach in a tenancy agreement and had to evict a tenant. I would like to thank them for their service and their contributions to our community and our territory.

Having the parameters of court security rules and legislation makes rules more clear and effective. Many people — witnesses, accused, jurors and court workers — go to court because they are required to. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the justice system to maintain safe court premises and to have consistent security rules and practices. Luckily, Yukon has not had security problems like other jurisdictions in Canada. However, there are legitimate security concerns and

this new legislation is a proactive measure to ensure the continued safety of all court participants.

Mr. Speaker, I will now begin to briefly review some of the key points of the new legislation. This legislation will what define designated court areas are — including areas outside the court room, like interview rooms, common areas, building entrances and exits at the Whitehorse law courts and buildings used for circuit court.

It will also allow for security officers to screen people before they enter in court areas and to deny entry to those who are either carrying a prohibited item or who refuse to be screened.

The sheriff will similarly be allowed to evict a person who is creating a disturbance or who is found to be carrying a prohibited item. The legislation will prohibit unauthorized recordings by camera, cellphone, recording devices or other equipment and will allow the sheriffs to seize the equipment and destroy the recording and/or remove the person who is making that recording.

It will also provide clear authority for sheriffs to assist the RCMP in carrying out searches of people held in court cells. Sometimes, when there are no RCMP officers present, the sheriffs are required to search persons before they can be safely held in court cells. Furthermore, female sheriffs are sometimes called upon to assist when a female in custody must be searched and no female RCMP officer is present. These practices will now be explicitly authorized.

Similar to our neighbours in the Northwest Territories, the legislation will also enable penalties for persons who contravene the act. Persons may be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months or both.

In conclusion, the Department of Justice is committed to ensuring access to high quality justice services and the new *Court Security Act* will clarify court security practices and ensure consistency throughout Yukon. The new act will formalize current security practices by clearly outlining them in legislation, which will increase public confidence in Yukon's justice system.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to speak at second reading in favour of Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*. I would like to thank the Justice officials who gave the opposition a briefing on this act earlier in this sitting. We understand the bill to address security measures in Whitehorse courtrooms and any facility similarly used for court proceedings, whether in Whitehorse or the communities, follows an extensive security audit of court buildings that was done six years ago. The judiciary then identified some legislative changes to deal with security matters.

Looking at the explanatory note, the bill will prohibit unauthorized possession of weapons, alcohol and illegal drugs in court areas. It will allow designation of areas the public is denied entry and areas in which the unauthorized use of cellphones, cameras and other devices is prohibited. It will prevent unauthorized recording of court proceedings other

than in handwritten notes or drawings, and gives security officers the power they need to enforce these rules.

The general rule in Canada is that court proceedings are open to the public, including the media, and may be reported in full. In *Edmonton Journal v. Alberta (Attorney General)*, [1989], 2 S.C.R. 1326, Madam Justice Wilson of the Supreme Court of Canada wrote the following regarding the purpose of having court proceedings open to the public and to the media: “In summary, the public interest in open trials and in the ability of the press to provide complete reports of what takes place in the courtroom is rooted in the need (1) to maintain an effective evidentiary process; (2) to ensure a judiciary and juries that behave fairly and that are sensitive to the values espoused by the society; (3) to promote a shared sense that our courts operate with integrity and dispense justice; and (4) to provide an ongoing opportunity for the community to learn how the justice system operates and how the law being applied daily in the courts affects them.”

In recent months, the Yukon Supreme Court demonstrated considerable openness to these principles that accommodate public interest by making extra space available for an overflow crowd interested in the proceedings of the Peel River watershed legal case. For the first time ever, the court permitted the filming of opening arguments on the first morning of the trial held in July 2014. Both the court room where the trial was heard and a second room where the proceedings were livestreamed on video were packed every day of the trial. More than 50 elders from Peel communities joined First Nation leadership to witness this case when the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun and the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in First Nation, along with Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society Yukon Chapter and the Yukon Conservation Society, challenged the constitutional legality of the Yukon Party government’s unilateral land use plan for the Peel region. Also of note is that CPAWS Yukon was granted permission to live tweet the entire proceedings of the legal challenge to the Yukon government’s unilateral Peel land use plan.

The default requirement in place at present in the courts is for a party to request authorization for filming or taping a trial, and the judge could and did allow filming and Twitter access in this case. The new provisions in this *Court Security Act* establish the ability to enact regulations dealing with security measures. The new rules that can be made under the *Court Security Act* may also allow for a Twitter feed or photographs to be taken.

It is also important to acknowledge that there are legitimate exclusions to an open court. When confidential family matters such as child custody are dealt with in court, the courtroom can be closed. These protections of personal privacy, when warranted, remain in place. Similarly, in sexual assault trials, a judge may order a prohibition on publishing the names of victims or other parties to protect their privacy. This is known as a publication ban and will not be affected by the *Court Security Act*.

At the information session held by the department, I asked about what would change as a result of the bill. What plans are in the works for court screening procedures in the

future and what affect might it have on public access to the courts? We are in support of the public interest in open trials and believe security measures must respect the principles of openness articulated by Madam Justice Wilson that I read into the record a few moments ago. We do not want to unduly restrict the public’s ability to observe court proceedings. It is our view that the approach taken must respect the values we take for granted in Canada — democracy, human rights and the rule of law — when looking at these new security measures.

I was assured the new security provisions would not be arbitrary or discriminatory. I was also told that screening would not necessarily be a routine procedure. The regulations will set up parameters of what screening methods may be used for access to public courtrooms. Some courts routinely screen people as part of operational needs; others may screen at high-risk trials.

Officials indicated the Yukon courts will develop a policy framework and we look forward to seeing those when they are developed.

The Provincial Court of British Columbia, like many other courts across Canada, posts on their website the court’s policies on public and media access. A provision of the *Court Security Act* prevents unauthorized recordings of court proceedings other than handwritten notes or drawings. I’ve been present in court when reports were taping the proceedings with their recording devices. This would seem to indicate that at present the judiciary can allow media to record court proceedings as indeed the judiciary also allowed a twitter feed of the Peel watershed land use plan legal case.

I will be interested in hearing from the minister how the prohibition on recording court proceedings reconciles with the practice of allowing the media to record trials and whether there will be changes. Will media automatically be allowed to record trials notwithstanding the prohibition found in this act?

The Yukon NDP supports the general intent of the bill. We recognize that there was a need to bring Yukon’s court security legislation and regulations in line with other jurisdictions. As an example, changes to the legislation that provide the judiciary and security officials with the ability to designate areas as restricted entry areas are consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions.

We also recognize that many of these changes were prompted by cumulative issues and events occurring in other jurisdictions, as well as requests from the judiciary. We support the work of the Sheriff’s Office and court security officers and this bill formalizes how that work is done in the courts.

In closing, the Official Opposition is interested to hear from the minister how long he anticipates it will take to develop the regulations and when the government anticipates that it will proclaim the *Court Security Act*.

Mr. Silver: I rise to speak on Bill No. 81, the *Court Security Act*. I thank the minister for putting this forth and also the officials from the department for their work on it.

For the most part, this bill seems like a fairly straightforward piece of legislation. It is surprising, however, how long it has taken for us to take a look at this. It is surprising how many items are not already part of the courts' procedures, especially the provisions surrounding the court security offices. The changes will allow greater authority for our court security officers to deal with disturbances and other problems in Yukon's courts, including the sub-sections around screenings, which are very important, as mentioned in those high-profile cases.

The direct addressing of cellphones and recording devices shows how much technology and journalism, for that matter, have changed. These changes highlight how outdated some of our laws are and bring us in line with the rest of Canada.

At this point in time, I intend to support the bill and I look forward to discussing it further in Committee of the Whole.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 81 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*. Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 81: *Court Security Act*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would first like to thank my department officials for joining me today — Deputy Minister Tom Ullyett and Lawrence Purdy. They've done an incredible amount of work on this particular bill, so I thank them and thank the other individuals back in the Department of Justice for their work as well. I know this has been something that has been in the hopper for some time, so a lot of people have had their hands in this.

As I mentioned earlier, this bill being tabled today puts existing court security practices into legislation. Yukon, as I mentioned, is the only jurisdiction in Canada that doesn't have this type of legislation, so it's important that we move this

forward. Our government is committed to ensuring a safe, effective and efficient justice system, and this new legislation will provide more safety assurances for all court users. It enhances court security operations in Yukon courts.

I would again like to commend the team at the Sheriff's Office for their continued commitments to Yukoners and for consistently day in and day out conducting themselves in a professional manner. A lot of their work, as I had indicated earlier, is really not seen by the public and I know as minister I feel inclined to more frequently thank them for their good and important work.

Having the parameters of court security rules and legislation makes the rules more clear and effective. This legislation will define what our designated court areas are, which include the areas outside the court room, like interview rooms, common areas, building entrance and exits not only at the Whitehorse law courts and buildings but also in the communities when there is circuit court.

It will also allow for security officers to screen people before they enter the court areas and to deny entry to those who are either carrying a prohibited item or who refuse to be screened. As we get into the finer details of this legislation — I know the Member for Copperbelt South had asked earlier about media and that is certainly a circumstance where a judge can continue to make those exceptions as they see fit.

The Sheriff will similarly be allowed to evict a person who is creating a disturbance or who is found to be carrying a prohibited item, without those exceptions from the judiciary. This legislation will prohibit unauthorized recordings by camera, cellphone, recording devices or other equipment and it will allow the sheriffs to seize the equipment and destroy the recordings and/or remove the person who is making that recording.

It will also provide clear authority for sheriffs to assist the RCMP in carrying out searches of people held in court cells. A lot of that work is done by the RCMP now and certainly we have seen the Sheriff's Office step up to the plate time and time again.

Having said that, I will let the members opposite ask questions as they see fit.

Ms. Moorcroft: As the minister acknowledged at second reading, we've had no significant security breaches in courts in the Yukon. The Sheriff's Office, which provides security to the courts, does excellent work. I want to thank the officials for coming in this afternoon and thank them for the information they presented at the briefing on this bill.

The officials indicated that there was an extensive security audit done of the court building in 2007-08. The first question I have for the minister is: What prompted the 2007-08 security audit? What recommendations came out of that security audit? How are those recommendations addressed in the bill? Are there any recommendations that are not addressed?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Certainly the review that was conducted back in 2007 was a result of the judiciary coming forward and asking for such a review. The report had many, many recommendations in it, many of which have been

addressed in this piece of legislation, but certainly not all of them. I don't have the detailed recommendations in front of me at this time, but we certainly consulted with the judiciary on this bill to move it forward and they certainly have supported this bill as it's written now.

Ms. Moorcroft: I thank the minister for that answer. Is he able to give any information about the nature of the recommendations that were raised at the court security audit that are not addressed in this bill?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As I had indicated earlier, I don't have the full list of recommendations in front of me at this time so I'm unable to provide those to the member opposite. However, I can provide them perhaps at a later date if she would prefer.

Ms. Moorcroft: If the minister would undertake to provide a written answer, I'll submit a written question and look for him to answer it before this sitting rises. I'll let the minister speak to acknowledge that and then proceed.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for her question. I can definitely commit to providing a written response to the member opposite.

Ms. Moorcroft: I spoke at second reading about the fundamental tenet of democracy that our courts, and indeed our legislatures, are open to citizens. I want to ensure that we are not looking at undertaking any extreme measures that may be unnecessary or that may intimidate people from attending in the court. I am confident that the judiciary will continue to preserve the democratic values of an open court and, that said, I look forward to reading whatever policy framework is added to the existing policies that the court has.

Can the minister tell us if there are any budget implications to the *Court Security Act*? Does he anticipate that he will be coming in with capital and operation and maintenance expenditures to implement the act?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: There may be some expenses pertaining to new equipment — so if we needed a wand for the Sheriff's Office — but it would be a nominal amount. It would just be for equipment. There wouldn't be any new staff required at this time.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to now ask the minister if he has a target date for the development of regulations and for the bill coming into force. Does he have an idea of how long that may take?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Like most new acts, there are extensive regulations to be drafted and that will take some time. Also, given the importance of our courts to the public and the public's access to them, we will have a public consultation on these regulations. After the public consultation, Cabinet will consider the regulations prepared by the Department of Justice. It will be well into 2015, I would suggest, for the regulations to come into force.

Ms. Moorcroft: Can the minister tell us when the public consultation period will begin on the regulations?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: There have not been any dates set for public consultation at this point.

Ms. Moorcroft: Maybe I'll just add one question now, before we go into Committee, in case any other members wish

to come in and pose a question in general debate. I had asked a question related to the media's ability to tape-record trial evidence. Is that something that is allowed on a case-by-case basis, and media outlets must request authorization from the judiciary for or has it become standard practice?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: In response to the member's question, this comes down to a piece of legislation and then the judiciary would make exceptions.

That is a relationship between the media and the judiciary, one that has been positive, it seems, so far. I don't know if I should necessarily comment on how the judges are going to conduct any sort of policy or procedure within their courtrooms. That's something that the judiciary can take on with this new act and when the new regulations come into force.

The Yukon government is committed to ensuring a safe, effective and efficient justice system for all. This act provides a legislative addition to existing judicial authority and a clear basis for court security policies resulting in greater safety and transparency for all court users. The act ensures consistent security, technology and search and screening practices at all Yukon court facilities, including those that are used for circuit court.

Having the parameters of court security rules in legislation makes those rules more clear and it makes them more effective. Many people — whether they are witnesses, accused, jurors or courtworkers — go to court because they are required to. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the justice system to maintain safe court premises and to have consistent security rules and practices. This act improves safety for Yukoners by giving the sheriffs legislative authority to screen when it is needed for prohibited items before persons enter the court premises. The act also allows sheriffs to ask persons to leave if they refuse to be screened, possess a prohibited item or cause a disturbance.

The same court security rules have been in place, but they were directed by the judicial policy in common law. The *Court Security Act* formalizes these existing rules through Yukon legislation. Court security for Yukon's territorial and supreme courts is provided by the Sheriff's Office in the Court Services unit of the Department of Justice and is managed with the judiciary's direction and oversight. Since this legislation reflects many of the current policies and practices, the public will likely not notice a big difference in how they currently attend court or would expect to attend court.

Sheriffs are peace officers as defined in the *Criminal Code* of Canada. Peace officers are granted of power of the *Criminal Code* to arrest without warrant a person who has, is about to, or is committing an indictable offence. However, sheriffs did not previously have the explicit authority within legislation to screen for weapons or prohibited items. All persons using the court house should have the confidence that they are safe when conducting business in court or other associated areas. Creating the authority for sheriffs to screen and seize illegal items, to ask a person to remove prohibited items or to evict a person for disruptive behaviour is a

proactive risk management measure and it is consistent with the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Screening may include the use of handheld or walk-through metal detectors similar to airport type screening equipment or hand searches of backpacks or briefcases. Instances when screening takes place may be rare, but in some high-profile cases there may be reasons to do so.

All persons may be screened unless specifically exempted. Persons who may be exempted might include court staff, judiciary, lawyers, courtworkers and RCMP officers.

We talked a little bit about prohibited items. These items might include alcoholic drinks, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, weapons — defined by the *Criminal Code* — and other items that could compromise safety. The member opposite talked about digital devices, such as cellphones, cameras and recording devices. These are all considered restricted equipment and their use is prohibited at all times in the courtrooms and restricted areas, unless permission has been granted by the judge.

Restricted equipment zones will be marked but, if in doubt, a person should ask a sheriff for that clarification. Anyone not following the rules regarding the use of restricted equipment may be asked to leave. There may be instances where the news media or other court staff are given permission by the judge to use their devices.

So like other jurisdictions in Canada, penalties will be imposed for those who do not follow the rules. If a person is found guilty of an offence under the *Court Security Act*, they may face a fine of up to \$5,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or both.

Penalties may be imposed if a person enters a courtroom after refusing to be screened, enters or refuses to leave a court area or restricted entry area without authority under the act, possesses a weapon in a court area when not authorized to do so, or uses a camera, cellphone, recording device or other prescribed equipment without authority under this act.

Luckily, Yukon has not had any security problems like other jurisdictions in Canada; however, there are legitimate security concerns and this new legislation is a proactive measure to ensure the continued safety of all court participants.

Court areas are proposed to be outlined in the legislation to include courtrooms and other areas used for court proceedings, such as the Court Registry, Sheriff's Office, cell areas — perhaps interview rooms or common areas around the courtrooms — and entryways to and from the buildings and the parking lot. The legislation would also outline court areas in Watson Lake and Dawson City in what may be viewed as court buildings, or areas, or spaces when used for circuit court. Some court areas would be designated as restricted areas and they will be marked. Unless it is expressly permitted by the sheriffs or other authorized person, persons must not enter these areas.

Chair: Does any other person wish to speak in general debate?

We are going to move on then to clause-by-clause debate.
On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Clause 2 agreed to

On Clause 3

Ms. Moorcroft: The security officers who are designated as peace officers in this clause of the bill — does that apply to sheriffs as well as to security officers, or are those security officers additional to the Sheriff's Office?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The act intends to make clear that sheriffs and deputy sheriffs are peace officers under the act, similar to all other jurisdictions. This section allows a security officer without needing the permission of a judge to refuse entry or remove a person when there is reason to do so, so they would fall under the same classification as sheriffs.

Clause 3 agreed to

On Clause 4

Clause 4 agreed to

On Clause 5

Clause 5 agreed to

On Clause 6

Clause 6 agreed to

On Clause 7

Clause 7 agreed to

On Clause 8

Clause 8 agreed to

On Clause 9

Clause 9 agreed to

On Clause 10

Clause 10 agreed to

On Clause 11

Clause 11 agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Madam Chair, I move that Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Nixon that that Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*, be reported without amendment

Motion agreed to

Bill No. 15: *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — continued

Chair: We are going to proceed with Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, in Department of Health and Social Services, continuing with general debate.

We will recess for five minutes.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. We're continuing general debate on Vote 15, Department of Health and Social Services.

Department of Health and Social Services — continued

Hon. Mr. Graham: There are a few points of clarification I would like to draw to the members' attention as a result of our discussion of the Department of Health and Social Services the last time we were on the agenda.

For the official Hansard record, I would like to clarify that the Blues on that day indicated on page 5029 that I stated, "I should add that two physicians in the territory total approximately \$35 million in this budget." The statement should read, "I should add that payments to physicians in the territory total approximately \$35 million in this budget."

With respect to our somewhat lengthy discussion on FASD that the Member for Riverdale South and I had with respect to the revote of \$105,000, I want to clarify that only a portion of the \$105,000 in funding includes a contribution of \$15,000 toward the FASD prevalence study being carried out by the Department of Justice. The funding is also being used to support the development of a common case management approach as well as the development of a local adult diagnostic team. The revote will be used to carry over funds needed to continue with the project management function as well as to finalize training events and to complete the development of an evaluation framework.

When we also had the discussion on home care, I indicated that we doubled home care in the last year. That was somewhat of an exaggeration because we didn't double it last year. The prior year was the big increase, and last year was an increase as well, but over the past few years, we have increased it tremendously to meet the increasing demand. I should add that we have also included home care in the communities in addition to Whitehorse.

Regarding the new continuing care facility and consultations with respect to the continuing care facility, I would like to ensure that all members realize that we will be engaging in targeted consultations. We will not be going to each community in the territory, nor will we be having massive public meetings, but we will be seeking input from clients, from staff members engaged at the department level.

We'll also be looking for First Nation input, as well as input from other stakeholder groups, such as seniors' organizations around the territory. We will be having public information sessions where the general public can review some conceptual designs and learn more. At that stage, they'll be able to provide general feedback on the concept plans.

With respect to our discussions on nurse practitioners and the revote on collaborative care, I can say that it did take some time for the working group, which was co-chaired by the assistant deputy minister of Health and Social Services and a YMA member, to decide upon the criteria for seeking an expression of interest from the Yukon medical community to use the collaborative care funding. That's why the revote was necessary.

The group is just now looking at whether or not we go out again for an expression of interest with the remaining limited funds, or use that funding to increase supports to the programs already running. The committee will meet in two weeks to further discuss the options we want to explore with them.

With respect to the discussion on audiologists, there is one private business operating — a resident audiologist — and she operates her business part-time. The name of her business is Better Hearing Audiology Clinic and it is operated by an audiologist with 16 years of experience, 12 of which were in Yukon. Her advertisement indicates that the clinic is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Finally, a member opposite asked about the increase in operation and maintenance costs once the Sarah Steele Building is completed. We do not have that figure at this point in time, as that is one of the details that are currently being worked on. Once I have a solid indication of that funding requirement, I will be more than happy to share it with members of the Legislature.

I believe that probably clarifies a number of issues that we discussed last time and I would like to welcome my departmental officials here today and we look forward to answering any other questions that you may have.

Mr. Silver: I would like to welcome the department officials to the House.

I am pretty much through all of my questions from the last time the officials joined us here. I have one last topic left — and it is great that the minister was talking about collaborative care, because it pertains to that.

In a report that was released last spring, it was recommended that six collaborative care centres be created outside of Whitehorse. Also, there were the recommendations, following Dr. Peachey's needs assessment for the hospitals — collaborative care and a couple of different areas here. I am wondering if the minister can do a little bit more of a breakdown on the timelines — the timing of the changes in the communities — for a more collaborative nurse-driven health care model.

Also, what is it going to cost to modify the hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson that are acute-care facilities to properly work in the new changed model? I think it was almost a year ago when the minister confirmed from the number one recommendation from the Peachey report needs assessment that he and his department were going to move forward on the collaborate care number-one recommendation. This report has more recommendations, including mental health services.

Can the minister maybe update us on any other forward progression from the Peachey report as well?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I guess the member opposite seems to think that because the Peachey report was done that it's a static report and we are going to implement everything in that clinical care report immediately. It's not — it's a consultant's report; it's another tool that we will use in future planning for health care services in the Yukon.

As for collaborative care, we started that process in the territory long before the clinical care services plan was in place. We passed the legislation in this House. We hired our first nurse practitioner before that process began, and I know that we've already begun collaborative care in the Dawson City facility.

It isn't going to require a number of dollars to change the facilities themselves. The facilities are there and we'll work with what we have. People are located in both the Dawson and Watson Lake hospitals, and it's not always a nurse who has to be involved in the collaborative care clinics that we're working on.

We are having discussions right now with respect to setting up more collaborative care in the territory, and we are having an ADS worker and a mental health services worker and perhaps a social worker involved in the program. The idea is to involve as many medical practitioners as we possibly can when we talk about collaborative care. It's a method of providing the best possible care for patients. What is the saying — the best care at the right time at the right place. That's what we are trying to make sure happens here in the territory.

Department staff in Watson Lake is already doing collaborative case management for people with complex care needs. Usually, if a person goes in and visits their doctor, they are diagnosed and a program is sometimes laid out for them, but we can't expect a physician to administer all of that follow-up care, whether it is making sure that the person takes their drugs at the proper time or gets injections or changes dressings on a wound. All of those things have to be followed up by other people. That is part of what collaborative care is all about.

I have some notes here and I'm not doing such a good job of reading them.

As I've just been informed, we're moving on a bunch of different fronts all at the same time. It's not that we're going to run out there and set up a new clinic that is a collaborative care clinic for Dawson City, the Town of Watson Lake or the City of Whitehorse. What we're trying to do is integrate as many clinical professionals into care for clients that we possibly can.

I hope that answers at least most of your questions. No, it isn't going to cost us any more money to renovate. We're not going to do that. They're new hospitals and we'll be using them as they are.

Mr. Silver: I think the minister and I are going to disagree on the extent to which collaborative care is needed in the communities, but I would remind him that we did have this conversation in the Legislative Assembly in December of last year, where the minister did — I'll have to get the Hansard from that again — get up in this House and say, we are moving forward on the number-one recommendation of the Peachey report, a report — this needs assessment — that came out as a direct result of the Auditor General's rather scathing report on the capital investments that this government has provided for the communities, and their methodology therein.

The report had a number of recommendations. I'm wondering, past collaborative care, if the minister would comment on some of the other recommendations. I realize these are recommendations, but I also realize that these recommendations come from a needs assessment that happened after the fact because of the Auditor General.

I'm wondering how much of that report the minister and his department are moving forward on.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'll go back to what I stated at the beginning last time. The Peachey report is a report providing some information — I think I called it a road map — for the department.

Now we integrate that with a number of other reports that have been done and needs assessments that have been done and consultations with the medical community in the territory, be that the nursing association, the Yukon Medical Association, the pharmacists — whoever. We work together with all of these people to try to determine where we're headed in the territory. We said that collaborative care was a very important part of what we're doing. It is a very important part. Collaborative care is about a culture change in the system.

When we first discussed the implementation of nurse practitioners with some members of the medical community, we were met with great resistance. Since that time we've had a chance for everyone in the medical community — as well as us because it's a learning opportunity for us in the department as well. We've had that opportunity and members of the medical community have seen that collaborative care in some instances can be a wonderful thing. We've also seen that there are some pitfalls that we have to avoid, so we're continuing to work together with the medical community — and by that I mean the whole medical community, doctors, nurses and everyone — because we need to do good planning.

We don't have an unlimited budget so we need to make the best possible use of every dollar that we have in this budget. We're not Ontario. We can't establish 18 new nurse practitioner-led clinics, as they did in Toronto in a very short period of time. We simply can't do that.

We have to work with the folks that we have here; we have to do what we can do in the territory. We know that in the communities there is a great need for mental health practitioners and for ADS workers and we're working at that. But we want those people to make sure that they work together with the medical facilities and with the staff that are already in the communities. We have ongoing discussions with the Whitehorse medical community.

Just in the last couple of weeks, we have had some really interesting discussions with them about an entirely new way that we should be going here in the Yukon. It is something that we are really interested in, because we can see, working in collaboration with these medical practitioners, wonderful results for patients. That is what it's all about. Many people lose sight of the fact that we're talking about health outcomes for people and that's what we'll continue working for. If the consultant's report becomes advantageous to us to see better outcomes for patients, then we'll work with it. Where we see difficulties, we will work in a different manner. It is all about people — it's all about patients — and that is what we're trying to do.

Ms. Stick: I thank the minister for clarifying some of the information that was given to us the last time. I was really

excited about the \$35 million that two physicians were getting, so I am pleased that he was able to clarify that.

I have a few questions that I would like to go back to — looking for a bit more clarification.

One of the things that has come out recently is with the women's clinic that was located at the hospital — the women's maternity clinic. It had a number of doctors available and had clinic space at the hospital for women who might not have family physicians or who were looking for some extra maternity care. We heard that it was going to be moved to the old Klondyke Medical building, but since then it seems that it is going to close at the hospital and is moving into two different clinics. I am just wondering if the minister could comment on this and what has happened to what was a very appreciated and accessible space for women with maternity issues.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I have said this on any number of occasions, but physicians are private business people. They have the ability to create or implement new clinics or close down current working clinics at any time. As I understand it, that is what has happened in this particular case. The clinic at the Whitehorse General Hospital was closed, or will be closing, but, as I understand it — and I was trying to find it — a new maternity clinic is opening at the Klondyke Medical Clinic, and there are four or five doctors involved in this and they are taking new maternity patients as we speak.

Both the Sage clinic and Klondyke clinic will be working together to give choices to people in the territory. I believe there was actually an advertisement — they've sent out messages to physicians saying that these physicians are currently taking new maternity patients. I think it's wonderful that a new clinic can be created and they are expanding their service to infertility and fertility.

I won't go any further there.

Ms. Stick: Yes, the reason I was asking the question is there was an ad in Friday's paper with regard to this and the fact that the clinic is closing at the hospital and then moving into two already existing clinics. It will be like a subclinic within the Klondyke clinic and within the Whitehorse Medical Clinic. I wonder if the minister can tell us what will happen to that space at the hospital that was used for this clinic, how it will be repurposed, and whether it will possibly be for more beds.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I wish I could tell you that this is exactly what it will be used for, but it is a Yukon Hospital Corporation building. No decisions have been made, as far as I know.

I am sure that my department will be consulting with the folks at the Yukon Hospital Corporation to discuss possibilities, but I know from what I have read in the news media over the last few days, there is going to be a huge lineup to use that space. They should be interesting discussions. At this time, I really don't know.

Ms. Stick: Speaking of space at the hospital, there was an article in the paper that mentioned that — as part of the hospital expansion for the Emergency department and for the MRI — there would also be 10 more beds — 10 new inpatient

beds. How exactly those beds will be used is not yet determined. This was the first that I had heard that there would be 10 new beds added to the hospital. I wonder if the minister could give us more information on that. How will those beds be used? I can't imagine building them without knowing ahead of time why you need them.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I didn't read the news article, but I know that if you saw it in the news or on TV or read it in the newspaper, it must be true. What we are doing at the hospital is a revision to the Emergency department and to intensive care. There will be spaces added. Exactly how that will be has not yet been determined.

There are several concepts — this is a lot like the long-term care facility — there are concepts; there are general orders of magnitude of money involved but, at this point, we haven't determined that these will be Emergency beds, these will be medical and these will be surgical. There will be space for new beds. We anticipate there will be some changes in the intensive care unit — more than anything — and perhaps those beds will be then opened up for other uses.

I think these are good questions that you can ask the Hospital Corporation when they arrive here in the next week or so.

Ms. Stick: I certainly intend to ask the Hospital Corporation when they're here, but I thought the minister responsible for the Hospital Corporation might have more information, especially when it regards 10 new beds at the hospital.

It seems in the last week or so there has been quite a bit of information in the news about beds — or lack of beds, sometimes — at the hospital. I did read this also in the paper, but I'm going to take it as the truth, because it was Dr. Chris Simpson, who is the president of the Canadian Medical Association — talking about hospitals are not places for people to go for long-term care, or seniors to wait, and certainly are not good for people with chronic disease. He talked about home care.

Again, I know I asked this question previously, but home care does — the minister explained that, yes, they have increased home care, but it is still limited in that individuals cannot receive any home care outside of office hours, cannot receive home care over the weekends, and this is a problem for people. Even those kinds of changes, extended hours — I know the minister will talk about trying to find staffing, but those kinds of services are still cheaper — even though it might require more hours — than keeping people in acute-care beds. I just wondered if the minister had any comments on what the president of the Canadian Medical Association spoke to.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I will give a short answer. We do provide home care outside of basic office hours. We have for awhile and we will continue to do so, because not all families can look after bedridden, shall we say, patients. We do provide home care in certain instances outside of normal working hours. I am not going to comment on what the president of the Canadian Medical Association said in his comments. Why I am fumbling around a little bit when we

talk about beds is because a bed is not always a bed. They are not all the same. A bed in intensive care — when compared to a bed in Emergency — is like the difference between night and day. In Emergency, they are surrounded perhaps by curtains and in a long row. In intensive care, it is completely sealed and it has its own ventilation. So it is really difficult to say there will be 10 new ED beds or there will be 10 new intensive care beds because, at this time, those decisions haven't really been made.

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

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Graham that the Chair report progress. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

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

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Seeing the time, I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:27 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 172

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, November 18, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

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Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
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Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, November 18, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: Before we start, the Chair wishes to inform the House of a change which has been made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 767, standing in the name of the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, has been removed from the Order Paper as the action requested in the motion has been taken.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Leckie Award and Yukon Chamber of Mines award winners

Hon. Mr. Kent: Today I rise to pay tribute to the 2014 Robert E. Leckie Award winners as well as two companies that received community award recognition from the Yukon Chamber of Mines at last night's annual Geoscience awards banquet.

The Leckie Award was created in 1999 as a tribute to Robert E. Leckie, a mining inspector from Mayo who passed away in November of that year. Robert was an innovator who promoted planned reclamation, research and cooperation that benefited government, industry and the people of the Yukon. The award acknowledges quartz and placer mining companies that demonstrate excellence in environmental stewardship, outstanding social responsibility, leadership and innovation in mining practices.

The nominees for the 2014 Leckie Award for quartz mining were Agnico-Eagle Mines Ltd., Chevron Canada Resources, GroundTruth Exploration Ltd., Kaminak Gold Corporation, Minto Exploration Ltd. and Sa Dena Hes Operating Corporation.

The Leckie Award for responsible and innovative exploration and mining practices in quartz mining was awarded to GroundTruth Exploration Inc. GroundTruth Exploration places a huge priority on developing exploration methods that cause minimal impact. They have developed a number of state-of-the-art technologies such as a flying drone to capture baseline data on claims, and a lightweight rubber-track vehicle called a Geoprobe that can traverse land without impact or the need for trail construction. The company has also developed new drilling technology called rotary air blast drilling, which requires no water, no drill pad or helipad. These are just a few examples of the ways that GroundTruth Exploration Inc. is innovating mining techniques across the territory.

The Leckie Award for excellence in environmental stewardship in quartz mining was awarded to Sa Dena Hes Operating Corporation. The Sa Dena Hes mine is a historic lead zinc mine 45 kilometres north of Watson Lake in the traditional territory of the Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council. It has been under care and maintenance by Teck, who purchased the site in 1994, two years after operations shut down. Teck is the managing partner of Sa Dena Hes Operating Corporation and has been working closely with LFN and the RRDC to understand the site's historic use and the ways the First Nations would like to use the site post-closure.

Teck is recognized for a number of achievements, including the design of an innovative risk-assessment framework to improve the site decommissioning plan, the removal of the mill and camp and reclamation of the waste rock storage, tailings management facilities and all mining entrances. This is an extremely important project for the Yukon. It demonstrates how previous operating mines can be responsibly closed and decommissioned in a way that protects the land, respects First Nations' wishes, and prevents costs from being assumed by the public.

This year's Leckie Award for excellence in environmental stewardship in placer mining was awarded to Fell-Hawk Placers. Fell-Hawk Placers operated on Ballarat Creek in the Dawson mining district until 2013. Throughout the life of this operation, the company adhered to extremely high operational standards. This was demonstrated in a number of areas, including water-conveyance structures, new road and trails, camp construction and the final decommissioning of the site.

The Fellers family undertook tremendous planning and foresight in order to accomplish the high level of reclamation that was completed on Ballarat Creek.

An honourable mention for excellence in environmental stewardship this year in quartz mining goes out to Chevron Canada Resources. Chevron has spent three years rehabilitating the Crest iron-ore lease at Snake River in the Peel region. They removed debris and completed remediation on 705 cubic metres of soil that was impacted by mining that took place over 50 years ago. Chevron utilized thermal technology that is more efficient in northern climates, spending approximately \$9 million to complete this work.

This year's winner and nominees have demonstrated exemplary work in the fields of reclamation, remediation and innovation. This high standard of work reflects the level of commitment and dedication shown by all of Yukon's mining companies to responsible mineral development and environmental protection.

The Chamber of Mines also made two awards at last night's banquet, and I would like to at this time mention the recipients. Kaminak Gold Corporation received an award for their commitment to the community. I know the chairman of the board of Kaminak was on hand for the award, and he brought up his entire team that is here in the Yukon, including some young people from Dawson City who are working on that project.

Casino Mining Corporation also won a community award from the Yukon Chamber of Mines for their dedication to the community, but specifically for their project this summer where they brought salmon into the communities to provide to the elders, given the voluntary fishing ban those First Nations put on the Yukon River this year.

So a big congratulations goes to all the winners. I would like to introduce a few of the people who are here in the audience. From GroundTruth Exploration Inc., we have President Isaac Fage and Tao Henderson, the vice-president, who have joined us here today. From Sa Dena Hes Teck, we have Gerry Murdoch and John Pugh from AMEC, who was the construction engineer on that project.

Although they're not with us, Will and Melanie Fellers from Fell-Hawk Placers came down and attended and accepted the awards on behalf of their mining company last night. I would just ask members to join me in welcoming our guests and congratulating them for their excellent work.

Applause

Mr. Tredger: I rise to pay tribute on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Official Opposition to the recipients for excellence in mining practices and the Robert E. Leckie Awards.

Rob Leckie was a mining inspector in the Mayo district office. He had a passion for the environment and a good understanding of the need for a strong Yukon economy. As the Mayo region mining inspector, he sought to find practical solutions to the difficult issues surrounding sustainable development in the 1990s. He was a forward thinker who worked closely with the prospectors, the miners and the government officials during a time when people may have been polarized. He was responsible for bringing in scientists to research in the Mayo area, which helped bring about practical, sustainable solutions to the issues facing the new demands on reclamation work being done in mining and, in particular, placer mining. Bob Leckie was known to be a consensus-builder and he recognized the value of having all parties in the conversation.

Last night in the awards banquet, in conjunction with the Yukon Geoscience Forum, was a showcase of achievements, challenges, hopes, and projects of our minerals economy — a collaboration of industry and government. It was a gathering of businessmen and businesswomen, innovators, citizens, and entrepreneurs who so obviously love their work and are committed to the Yukon.

Thank you to the Yukon Chamber of Mines for organizing and hosting the awards and the banquet. I take this opportunity to congratulate and thank members of the mining community for their commitment to responsible mining in the Yukon — in particular, those individuals and companies who received awards last night for their environmental stewardship for the responsible and innovative exploration in mining practices, for their ingenuity and, most of all, for their engagement of local communities. GroundTruth Exploration, Fell-Hawk Placers, Kaminak Gold Corporation, Casino Mining Corporation, Sa Dena Hes Operating Corporation and

the Yukon Chamber of Mines — those companies and individuals that the minister has acknowledged. These individuals, companies and organizations exemplify and represent the mining industry at its best — their vision and, perhaps most importantly, their commitment and belief in their projects and the mining industry in the Yukon, especially for their commitment to the Yukon. To you and all of your colleagues, congratulations — you are helping to build Yukon's future.

Mr. Silver: I also want to voice my congratulations to the companies and individuals that have won awards over the week, especially prospectors of the year, Ed Gallant and Mike Hamilton — and again for those great stories that they had last night at the banquet — and also the Leckie Award for excellence in environmental stewardship for the Sa Dena Hes Corporation — absolutely. But I just want to have a personal moment here for some of the Dawson winners of these awards. First off, the Fellers family name — not just Will and Mel, but the whole family has been a cornerstone in the placer mining community of Dawson for decades.

Will and Mel specifically are not only excellent and conscientious miners, but they are also extremely involved in the community. They are excellent neighbours and they are good people. I do want to warn you, though, Mr. Speaker, that if you are in Dawson on one of those rare nights when Mel makes an appearance at the poker table at Gertie's, do not sit down because she will take your money.

I have watched the GroundTruth crew continue ever since they began, at their inception, and their evolution since their inception. There have been many of Isaac's dirt-baggers camped out on my lawn over many summer months and into the winters, using my shower on the odd days that they were actually in town. I have seen many of his workers also fall in love with our community and with the town, and grow roots in different occupations after their employment with Isaac. I have also seen a lot of my ex-students and other locals benefit from his leadership and from his employment. From the beginning, Isaac's goal was always more than just personal gain. To Isaac, it is about family, it is about community and it is about the environment.

Tao Henderson — the minute that Tao moved to town, everybody loved him. I don't know how he did it but he managed to get the respect of everybody in the community from a really early, early time. That's a hard thing to do in Dawson. I believe that it is his positive attitude and it is also his amazing work ethic. I remember the night that Tao came to my house for a beer, because he was asking all of his friends what they thought of this new partnership idea that Shawn Ryan and Cathy Wood were offering him in exploration — and this speaks to his character because one of the biggest hurdles was, even though he stood to gain very much for his family through this opportunity, he had started working for the City of Dawson just a short time before and he was very, very worried about letting his co-workers down.

So after much soul-searching, Tao took on the offer and Talus Exploration was born — and we're extremely grateful

that he did. Working in tandem with Isaac Fage and with his team at GroundTruth, this partnership was a key economic driver in Dawson's exploration boom of a few short years ago. After the boom, the companies merged and continued to revolutionize the industry.

Now I won't bother going into detail with that, because I believe the minister did a great job of summing up the reasons why they won their award. But I just want to personally say a big thank you to both Tao Henderson and to Isaac Fage for their work in the industry. You are the future of the industry and that's something that your community is extremely proud of.

Thank you.

In recognition of Yukon Prospectors' Hall of Fame inductees Ed Gallant and Mike Hamilton

Ms. McLeod: It's my great pleasure to rise today to pay tribute to Ed Gallant and Mike Hamilton. They were inducted last night into the Yukon Prospectors' Hall of Fame. The Yukon Prospectors' Hall of Fame recognizes outstanding achievement by individual prospectors who worked against great odds to make significant discoveries. Often a single discovery is a life's work, but in this case, these two men, with their team, discovered three significant deposits in the Yukon.

Ed was born in Three Lakes, Saskatchewan and earned a diploma in mining engineering technology from Northern College, Haileybury School of Mines in 1970. After graduation, he worked for Cordilleran Engineering Ltd. as a geological technician, prospector and field manager until 1995 throughout B.C., Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

From 1996 to 2007, Ed worked for Fairfield Minerals and Almaden Minerals on projects throughout the cordillera straight down to Mexico.

Ed still prospects for various companies working in the Yukon and northern B.C., but these days, thankfully for him, it's more on his own schedule.

Mike Hamilton was born in North Carolina and graduated from the Colorado School of Mines in geological engineering in 1969. He joined Cordilleran Engineering in 1970 and worked on exploration projects primarily in the Yukon. He headed south in 1978, working with Wesley Mines Ltd. in Nevada on projects, including the Santa Fe mine in Mineral County. He moved on to work with Franco-Nevada Corporation before retiring in Boulder, Colorado.

While working for Cordilleran Engineering, Mike and Ed played key roles in the discovery of the Goss creek deposit northeast of Mayo in 1973, and the Logtung deposit between Swift and Morley rivers in 1976. Ed then led the team that discovered the Logan deposit northwest of Watson Lake in 1973.

During this period, Ed and his Cordilleran team also discovered the Silvertip deposit near Rancheria in northern B.C. and lead-zinc deposits at Gainer River in the Northwest Territories and Robb Lake in northeastern B.C.

While this tribute is to Ed and Mike in recognition of their individual efforts and accomplishments, it's also a tribute

to Cordilleran Engineering, a company that made an outsize contribution to mineral discovery in the Yukon. Mike Hamilton could not be with us today, but Ed is, and I would like to invite members to join me in welcoming Ed today.

Applause

Speaker: Introduction of visitors?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I would like to ask members to join me in welcoming my fiancée Brittany McNeil and our daughter London Haley Dixon.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: I would like to invite people to help me welcome Judy St. Amand. Judy has been the driving force behind the Leckie Awards and making sure that that is all coordinated and we thank her very much.

Applause

Mr. Barr: I would like the House to welcome a constituent of mine, Mr. Werner Rhein, a long-time volunteer in the community of Mount Lorne and just all-around great guy.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to require a mandatory remedial program for all impaired driving offenders, including drivers with graduated driver's licences who receive a roadside suspension for impaired driving.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explain the details for the Klondike palaeontology centre, as mentioned in the Minister of Tourism and Culture's fall 2014 budget response.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to release the numbers of local employees, to date, from the F.H. Collins reconstruction site, including subcontractors.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD**Question re: Securities regulation**

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, this government has been in negotiations with the federal government regarding the possibility of Yukon joining a national securities regulator. Currently, Yukon exercises the right to regulate securities.

B.C., Ontario, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan and P.E.I. have all agreed to a more streamlined regulator. However, Alberta and Quebec, who represent 40 percent of Canada's securities market, are both holding out, citing concerns about the impact a national regulator would have on their ability to tailor securities regulation to their own jurisdiction.

Yukon has enjoyed the benefits of a territorial securities regulator. Does this government support Yukon's inclusion in a national securities regulator?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In fact, the Yukon government is currently assessing and considering two security regulatory options, one of which encompasses an agreement to form the cooperative capital market regulatory system which was developed by the federal government, British Columbia and Ontario. Jurisdictions that have signed on to that include Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. The other option is being led by Alberta and Quebec, which is intended to enhance the existing securities passport model that has been in operation at this time. Yukon is currently reviewing both models and will consider and balance the interest of all stakeholders before we make a decision.

Ms. Hanson: It is interesting to note that one of the Yukon programs that could be affected by joining a national securities regulator is the Yukon small business investment tax credit. Established over 25 years ago by an NDP government, this credit has benefited businesses — such as Air North, which used it to raise capital on a number of occasions.

Generally, an investment tax credit requires a prospectus, an expensive procedure that would prevent Yukon's small businesses from taking advantage of the tax credit. However, because we have a Yukon regulator, Yukon businesses have been granted an exemption. Joining a national securities regulator could put at risk tax incentives like the small business investment tax credit, which have been shown to benefit Yukon businesses and keep money in Yukon.

Will the minister give this House assurances that regardless of the choice this government makes, unique Yukon programs like the small business investment tax credit will be protected?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I can inform the member of is that, in fact, as I noted, we are considering both models. We need to recognize that nationally change in how securities have been regulated is coming, whichever model is put into place or if both are in operation.

We are working closely with other jurisdictions and considering the benefits and potential risks and costs associated with each of the models. One of the interests that we have identified to those who have formed the single regulator model — those being Ontario, British Columbia and the federal government as the lead three jurisdictions on that

— indeed one of our priorities that we would like to see addressed within that is flexibility for local business incentive programs.

But we need to recognize that there are many issues at play, including the fact that the system by which corporations engage in securities — if the Yukon has a system that is at odds with what the rest of the country is doing, we may simply not see the benefit of registrations that we currently do, because we are a relatively small market. Again, we need to work closely with other provinces and the federal government, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Ms. Hanson: I think the minister may be on the right track, Mr. Speaker, so I just want to clarify that, because, as part of a government, it is important that we make sure that we are hearing and articulating the unique circumstances. We know that, from a business standpoint in the Yukon, there are potential negative impacts on Yukon's securities market, businesses and economies if we join, unchecked, a national securities regulator.

We do know that Yukon's business climate is unique. We have seen it again demonstrated this past weekend and throughout this last year. There is a very real chance that a national securities regulator, run out of Bay Street, may not be able to or may not be willing to adequately understand and reflect the unique needs of Yukon's business community.

What is important here is to know that this government and to have this government commit to Yukoners that they will not support a national securities regulator if there are no guarantees that Yukon's unique local business context can be respected and understood.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As I noted in my previous response, the flexibility for local business development programs is one of the interests and priorities that Yukon government has identified. We do recognize, first of all, that change is coming in how securities are regulated across the country. It's important to ensure that we're not left alone in not moving forward.

There are again two different options that have been developed and proposed. We are assessing both of them — the single national regulator, which has been proposed by Ontario, British Columbia and the federal government. At this point, the provinces of Saskatchewan and New Brunswick have also signed on to this CCMR system. The alternative option, led by Alberta and Quebec, has been proposed to enhance the existing passport model.

Again, we're working to assess both and recognize that in fact with the changes that will come with either model, there will be some benefits and some downsides to doing so, but as a very small player in this area, it's important that we be aligned with other jurisdictions and have the opportunity to see the continued strong registry of corporations operating in the Yukon and not be left as an anomaly in the country, not participating in either system.

Question re: Drinking and driving

Mr. Barr: Motor vehicle accidents are an important public health issue because they are the leading cause of death

among youth. Young people are less likely to drive impaired than an adult driver, but the youth who do drive under the influence are at a very high risk of collision. The RCMP does a great job of enforcing and addressing drinking and driving. However, government needs to do a better job of educating youth so they choose to not drive while impaired or be a passenger in a vehicle with an impaired driver.

Is the minister willing to take any further measure to prevent impaired driving among new drivers?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: If the member opposite had paid attention to the Red Ribbon campaign, he would know that we are working with Mothers Against Drunk Driving locally as well as COPS — Citizens on Patrol — and the RCMP. He is right that the RCMP do a phenomenal job, but our community working together with MADD and COPS and the citizens of Yukon reporting instances of alleged or suspected drunk driving is certainly key. This is a community responsibility and this government continues to work with the community.

Mr. Barr: We are aware of what the government is doing. We would seek more.

Yesterday, I noted that some Canadian jurisdictions have a zero blood-alcohol requirement for all drivers until age 21. Mothers Against Drunk Driving also recommends the zero blood-alcohol requirement for drivers under 21 and for drivers with less than five years' driving experience. MADD Canada also urges governments to address drug-impaired driving by prohibiting drivers under age 21 and drivers during the first five years of getting their licence from being positive for drugs.

Will the minister support the good work of MADD Canada and consider making these legislative changes to better address impaired driving?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'm not sure if the member opposite is just not listening or failing to reflect the information that we have provided. This government works hand in hand with organizations like Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the RCMP, COPS — I know the Minister of Education — there's IMPACT, which is a program that is run through the school systems. This government takes this very seriously.

In fact, I was at the MADD Canada conference in Toronto just a couple of months ago receiving a citizen of distinction award for the important work that this government has done with MADD and MADD Canada. We will continue to work with those community members. I urge the member opposite to pay attention.

Mr. Barr: The minister deserved an accolade, but we are looking for something to prevent deaths — not the *Fatal Accidents Act* that was put forward.

The minister's words of praise for the RCMP and Mothers Against Drunk Driving is not supported by government action. The track record of Yukon is very poor, according to provincial and territorial legislative review by MADD. The review indicates that the Government of Yukon needs to enact major reforms to its licensing provisions, short-term administrative licence suspensions, remedial programs and the vehicle impoundment and forfeiture programs. Will

the minister turn his words into action and follow MADD's recommendations to broaden police powers and strengthen the administrative sanctions for drivers who violate the graduated licence program?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Again we see another clear example of the member opposite not paying attention. The member opposite may know — I will let him know now — that we have run programs with MADD through graduations. There have been social media programs. I commend the partnerships that we have had with, just for example, the Department of Education and the Department of Highways and Public Works. This government takes drinking and driving very seriously. We urge all Yukoners, if they see or suspect someone of drinking and driving — the member opposite doesn't seem to think that this is a community issue. It is a community issue, and it is going to take a community response, not just a government response, to address this.

If the member opposite would please pay attention to the social media programs, the graduation programs, the programs offered through Education, through the Department of Justice, and the RCMP then he might know that this government is working very hard on this matter and we will continue to work with our community.

Question re: Dawson City waste-water facility

Mr. Silver: I'm going to return to a topic of great concern to my constituents. The Government of Yukon announced it was transferring the ownership of the Dawson waste-water treatment facility to Dawson City earlier this year. The transfer was supposed to happen mid-March. This didn't happen. The samples taken at the time failed to pass the water quality test. The contractor who built the facility was supposed to operate it for one year and then turn it over to the city. Yukoners are well-aware that the \$25-million plant has not operated properly since it has opened.

Can the minister confirm the hand-off to the City of Dawson has not in fact occurred because the plant still isn't working properly?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As I indicated previously in Question Period, in fact, the Department of Community Services and the Department of Highways and Public Works are working closely with the City of Dawson. We are committed to continuing to do our utmost to holding Corix, the contractor, to the terms of their contract and ensuring that they do what they committed to in that contract, which is deliver a plant that meets the terms of the contract and meets the needs of the City of Dawson.

As I have indicated previously, we have committed to continuing to work with Dawson in that regard to ensure that we are fully supporting and assisting them in doing what is necessary to have that plant operating as it is required to do by the contract.

Mr. Silver: With all due respect, we heard the same thing from the minister last week. His quote was, "...holding Corix to the terms of the contract and are doing everything within our power to ensure that the plant performs as it is supposed to." What's the long-term plan for this facility? It

hasn't operated since it opened in October 2012. The City of Dawson is well within its rights of refusing to take over the responsibility for this facility and the government is currently left indefinitely holding the bag. Can the minister explain why the plant isn't working? Is it a mechanical problem, for example, or a design flaw or some anticipated reason like higher-than-anticipated mineralization of the water?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member opposite for the question and I thank my fellow colleague for his first answer.

The Dawson waste-water treatment plant is essential to a clean environment and a healthy sustainable future for the community of Dawson. We know how we got to this situation. They pleaded guilty. We're here and helpful and we're partnering with the City of Dawson to address the core infrastructure priority. Highways and Public Works and Community Services now has been communicating and consulting with the Dawson residents on this project for about six years. We've had a lot of meetings.

Corix, the design/builder of the plant, has hired several Yukon and Dawson subcontractors and three local Dawson residents as part of this operation, which has provided a bit of an economic driver for the City of Dawson. The Dawson waste-water treatment plant is more than a robust compact and environmentally appropriate system. It's an innovative milestone project that takes work — this technology — to find it a better way to meet the critical infrastructure requirements that will meet the needs of today and tomorrow.

Corix has been operating the plant for more than two years. We're working with the City of Dawson — my fellow colleague and I — through this process while we work with Corix and the City of Dawson to make this plant operational.

Mr. Silver: This innovative project, as he is explaining, doesn't work. It hasn't worked since it began. We've heard the briefing notes before but it's clear that the white elephant is that the new waste-water treatment facility is going to cost Yukon taxpayers for years to come.

Last week, the minister seemed to indicate that it was the contractor's fault — and we heard it again today — that the system is not working. Okay. Interestingly, the Yukon Party government of the day went out of its way to disqualify a Yukon company so that Corix was the winning bidder. Two years after the plant opened, the government is now blaming its hand-picked contractor for a facility that does not work and which may never actually work.

How long does the government intend to let this situation continue before it takes real action against the contractor?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, I would point out that the Leader of the Liberal Party should know that he made a misstatement of fact in suggesting that the government hand-picked a contractor and he really deserves the employees of the Department of Highways and Public Works and Community Services an apology for his assertion.

I would point out again, we are fully committed to holding Corix to the terms of their contract, and I would again remind the member that a mechanical treatment plant was not the Government of Yukon's preference or the City of

Dawson's preference. As a result of the decision by the citizens of Dawson — their request, as stated through a plebiscite, that objected to located a conventional sewage lagoon as a treatment option, we then had to go to plan B to respect the wishes of the citizens of Dawson. Mechanical treatment plants are more complex. They have more issues in commissioning than a sewage lagoon, but we are respecting what the citizens of Dawson asked us and the town of the City of Dawson to do.

We're working closely with the City of Dawson and are doing our utmost to fully hold Corix to the terms of their contract and ensure that they deliver on what they committed to do.

Question re: Veterans' disability pensions

Ms. White: Veterans' disability pensions are meant to compensate for injuries sustained while on duty and to help veterans meet their daily expenses and the often extraordinary costs associated with their injuries. Having raised this issue several times in this House, I was thrilled to hear this morning that Yukon Housing Corporation's new rent-assessment process will no longer include veterans' disability pensions as income when assessing applications for social housing.

That this government has now recognized that veterans' disability pensions are tax-free and not an income replacement for the purposes of rent calculation is an incredible first step.

Will the Premier now change policies that amount to clawing back veterans' disabilities pensions when it comes to applying for other supports and services of the Yukon government?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: All of us in the House certainly applaud and recognize the commitment that is made by Canada's veterans. Mr. Speaker, you and our Minister of Highways and Public Works are included in that list. We've just recently gone through Remembrance Week and most of us participated in ceremonies here in this territory and, in fact, record numbers of people across this country took time to pause to reflect and thank members.

This government is very proud of the assistance that we provide to all Yukoners in need. That is a priority for this government. We can talk about the huge increases in funding that this government has done over the last number of years to provide assistance to those people in need. That's what we'll continue to do: ensure that this government is here to provide assistance to all Yukoners who are in need.

Ms. White: I thank the Premier for his acknowledgement for veterans in words, but what I'm looking for are actions. Sadly, it has taken too long for this government to recognize that veterans' disability pensions should work to support veterans, rather than count against them — a principle that has been validated at the federal level and the Supreme Court of Canada. No veteran should ever have to live in poverty as a result of their service to our country. Let's not wait for court decisions to determine what is right for Yukon veterans.

Will this government update the *Social Assistance Act* to recognize that veterans' disability pensions are a payment for pain and suffering, are tax free according to the Canada

Revenue Agency and should be exempt when determining eligibility for assistance?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I'm confused at how the member opposite is implying that — poverty and service together. What I will say is that this government has in the past and will continue in the future to ensure that all Yukoners who are in need — we'll provide the service and the funding that they require. When we look across this country, the supports that are provided here in Yukon are very favourable compared to almost all jurisdictions across the country, Mr. Speaker.

This government will continue to honour all veterans and support all Yukoners in need.

Question re: Renewable energy strategy

Mr. Tredger: I was glad to hear last week about a \$1.4-million investment to support Yukon College's cold climate innovation work. The work the college does in this regard is remarkable. For example, they recently helped Northwestel use solar energy at a remote microwave station to reduce their costs and their environmental footprint.

Other jurisdictions, like Alaska, are leading the way on alternative energy through projects like Kodiak Island. Meanwhile, our visionary wind energy plans fell apart in the early 2000s. We have gone from innovative leadership to sitting at the back of the pack. We need a renewable energy strategy that picks up the ball.

When will the government table a renewable energy strategy that shifts Yukon's dependence off of fossil fuels like natural gas?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I have mentioned a number of times on the floor of this Legislature, we are very proud of our plans for renewable energy. Of course, the long-term anchor for that is our work on next-generation hydro. We continue to invest in and develop the existing hydro facilities that we have as well. Members know, of course, of the two windmills that are up on Haeckel Hill. There have been studies on Ferry Hill near Stewart Crossing for potential wind energy. As early as this morning in conversations with the chair of the Yukon Development Corporation, we will be moving that wind-monitoring equipment to Mount Sumanik here in Whitehorse as well to gauge the viability of wind.

Mr. Speaker, I should at this time mention though that we did let members of the House know that over the weekend, we did have some icing problems at the hydro facility here in Whitehorse, which led to the closure of those specific hydro facilities. The fossil fuel backup that we have came into play. It kept Yukoners warm; it kept businesses operating while repairs were made to the hydro facilities.

I have mentioned a number of times that it's a very small portion of the energy puzzle that we have here in the territory — that backup of fossil fuel — but it sure is an important one.

Mr. Tredger: This weekend might have been a perfect time to have hydro — or rather, wind power as the backup, as it was the wind.

The microgeneration and independent power production policies enable Yukoners to invest in renewable energy, but when will this government show leadership and do the same?

Like many other jurisdictions, we need to put in place a long-term strategy that aggressively guides the territory toward a competitive, renewable energy future. After all, we are the land of the midnight sun.

Solar energy is a unique opportunity for the government to take action to reduce Yukoners' energy footprint. We have already seen the difference it can make, thanks to projects like the Northwestel remote stations, and we know that solar energy is a positive step forward for the Yukon. We have seen leadership on the solar energy development in the private sector. How will this government follow suit?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The member opposite referenced the potential this past weekend for wind to have been one of the energies that would provide what the demand would have required but, of course, for most of this past week, it wasn't that windy either. I looked up on Haeckel Hill and the two wind turbines weren't turning on the weekend either. Again, that reliable backup energy system is extremely important to the Yukon and to the safety of Yukoners, and to the businesses that operate here in the territory.

When it comes to renewable power, the member opposite referenced the microgeneration program that we have as well as opportunities in early 2015 with the independent power producers policy. Solar energy is something that is used currently in Old Crow. They have a number of photovoltaic cells on buildings feeding solar energy into the community grid.

The costs are high for solar energy. Developing technologies may soon make solar a more affordable option for Yukoners, but we need to have an informed conversation when it comes to renewable energy and we need to ensure that the costs are reasonable and that we can continue to provide the quality of electrical generation for Yukoners that they have come to expect.

Mr. Tredger: Many jurisdictions have shown that the costs are reasonable and very competitive. Yukoners need leadership on renewable energy. It is about the political will to support renewable energy. A narrow-minded focus on non-renewable resources whose price will increase over time may seem pennywise, but we can only be sure of our long-term energy security when we diversify our sources of renewable power technology like solar and wind energy. We know which side Yukoners are on, Mr. Speaker. It is the side of renewable energy and sustainability.

When can Yukoners expect this government to show the same determination developing solar and wind energy as they do plowing forward on their oil and gas agenda?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned in my first response, the long-term anchor to our renewable or clean power strategy is of course the next-generation hydro. We issued a directive to the Yukon Development Corporation to begin planning on that. There are a number of workshops that will be hosted by consultants starting later on this month. I believe next week is actually the first workshop with respect to the next-gen hydro.

I mentioned the wind monitoring that has occurred at Ferry Hill near Stewart Crossing and the monitoring equipment that is being moved down to Mount Sumanik here

close to Whitehorse to look at the opportunities there. I mentioned that solar is an expensive form of power, but it may be something that becomes a more affordable option for Yukoners in the future.

When it comes to backup generation and using fossil fuels to meet our peak demand, I thought we made a breakthrough with the Member for Mayo-Tatchun earlier this week in debate when he actually admitted that at his remote cabin or home that he owns that he uses diesel to generate power when the sun is not shining and perhaps the wind is not blowing. If it's that important for him there, he has to recognize that on an isolated grid here in the Yukon, we need that reliable power to ensure that Yukoners are safe and that our businesses can continue to operate.

Question re: Air quality in government buildings

Ms. White: On April 11, 2014, the Yukon Housing Corporation held a tenant meeting to address air quality issues that have over the years been of concern to Closeleigh Manor residents. One of the documents provided to those in attendance was a Closeleigh Manor ventilation system report by Northern Climate Engineering. This third-party report includes nine recommendations to help improve air quality at both Closeleigh Manor and the two government offices housed in the complex: the Film and Sound Commission and the Commissioner's Office.

Will the minister tell this House which of the recommendations have been completed to date, and when will all of the recommendations be implemented?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I would note is that in the 2014-15 capital budget, we provided \$250,000 to Yukon Housing Corporation to upgrade the ventilation system in the Closeleigh Manor residence. I don't know the exact status of that work. I can look into it for the member opposite, but it is a corporation that is accountable to government and reports to me, but I'm not involved in the day-to-day operational details of when work that has been put into the budget is performed and when it's underway unless I specifically request, as I will do in this case.

Ms. White: We know the Yukon Housing Corporation understands the critical importance of ensuring residents of Closeleigh Manor can breathe air that will not endanger their or their loved ones' health and well-being. This is why Yukon Housing Corporation has taken several initial steps to address indoor air quality concerns at the complex. However, the need to complete all recommendations grows more urgent as we head into another winter heating season. Can the minister confirm whether or not the Closeleigh Manor chimney currently meets code and, if it does not currently meet code, can the minister tell us when it will meet those health and safety standards?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the importance of the matter, but the level of detail the member is referring to — I don't have an update on the status of the work. I know that what we were asked for by Yukon Housing Corporation and provided was \$250,000 to take action including moving the building's air intake, extending the chimney, cleaning the

ventilation system and replacing components of the existing air exchange system. As I indicated in my previous response, I will happily undertake to get an update on the status of that work for the member opposite.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for his response. The Yukon Housing Corporation recently put out a public tender for balancing the ventilation system at Closeleigh Manor. This will help address the identified ventilation system problems. However, as of 2012, Alberta environmental public health reports notes state that approximately 50 percent of residential indoor air quality investigations do not lead to identification of the source or contaminant in subsequent complaint resolution. It is critical that indoor air quality be tested following completion of all recommended improvements of Closeleigh Manor. This indoor air sampling, if done through a certified technician and tested in an accredited facility, would ensure that the hard work of the Yukon Housing Corporation is validated and, most importantly, support resident's health and well-being.

Will the minister commit to having indoor air quality samples gathered by a certified technician and analyzed in an accredited testing facility once all the recommendations are completed?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I would note for the member is that, in fact, Yukon Housing Corporation is a corporation that is run under a governing board. I will certainly commit to passing on the member's suggestion to the board and staff, but that level of detail is not something that would be appropriate for me to operationally direct. I am confident, though, that if the staff and board feel that there are additional resources required to conduct any additional testing that they deem is appropriate, they will certainly let me know and we will, of course, do whatever is necessary to address any needs in this area. I do have confidence in the board and staff that if additional testing is necessary they will ensure that appropriate action is taken, and I'll pass on the member's suggestion to them for their consideration.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Ms. Stick: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, November 19, 2014. They are Motion No. 774, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre, and Motion No. 775, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Mr. Silver: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, November 19, 2014: Motion No. 729, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 80: *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 80, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that Bill No. 80, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 80, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It gives me pleasure to rise here today for third reading of Bill No. 80, the *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*. I would like to begin by thanking members for their positive comments regarding this legislation yesterday.

I would also like to just note — particularly in light of a matter that came up earlier today in this Assembly — that in fact, this legislation does allow people who are connected to the electrical power grid to access the rural electrification program to put in their own home renewable energy systems. While the title of the bill focuses on the amendments to enable the rural well program to be extended within participating municipalities, this legislation, once passed, would also provide increased stability for people to fund renewable energy systems through borrowing money under the rural electrification program.

The other provisions of that program would apply. It would allow people who are connected to the electrical grid currently to borrow money to put in a home renewable energy system and would allow them to potentially take advantage of the microgeneration program that we implemented earlier this year, which provides people with a premium rate for producing and adding renewable energy to the grid from their home, which is currently 21 cents per kilowatt hour within the hydro portion of the grid and 30 cents per kilowatt hour for people who are in diesel communities.

That, again, is another part of what our government is doing to further support the expansion of Yukon's renewable electricity production and also provide people an increased ability to provide the power needs of their home.

In speaking to third reading of Bill No. 80, the *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*, I would just note in recapping that the legislation amends both the *Assessment and Taxation Act* and *Municipal Act*. It provides a mechanism to extend the successful domestic water well program into participating Yukon municipalities. The costs of loaning money under the program would be borne by the Yukon government — pardon me, the upfront costs. The program continues to be 100-percent recoverable from property owners. The loans are paid through a local improvement charge that is added to a property owner's annual tax notice

and the loan is then repaid over five, 10 or 15 years, as decided by the property owner.

The legislation here would again provide for the ability of the rural well program, which has been in place since 2004, to be extended into participating municipalities. The rural water well program — as of March 31, 2014, 240 projects had been covered under this program, meaning roughly 240 families have been assisted through this program, which loans people money to develop a well or to upgrade an existing water well.

At the request of municipalities who, in our consultation with them this year, asked for the ability to add a fee to help compensate them for administration of the program. The structure of this legislation does allow for a fee to be added on to the amount property owners within municipalities would have to pay. The exact amount of that fee would be a subject of agreements between the Yukon government and municipalities who sign on to the program. I would also note that that fee is going solely to municipalities for their administration. The Yukon government is not adding an administration fee on to this. We are maintaining the same structure for residents within municipalities, as has been in place for the last 10 years for Yukoners outside municipalities.

For those who are not familiar with the structure, I should also note that the reason for the structure of the program — the reason that it requires an amendment to legislation — is that levying a local improvement charge on someone's property can only be done by the government as the taxation authority for the area. That means the Yukon government has the ability to do it outside municipalities, but incorporated municipalities are the only ones that can levy a local improvement charge within their boundaries.

What this legislation, once passed, will do is provide for the ability that if municipalities sign on and agree to allow us to offer this program within their boundaries, they will also be required to agree that they will put a local improvement charge on the property of anyone who successfully applies into the program and they would agree to recover that amount loaned through a local improvement charge and remit to the Yukon government the annual payments under the loan.

The program, as I noted, was originally designed to give rural Yukoners access to low-interest loans to drill water wells on their property or enhance existing wells. It was modelled at its inception after the long-standing rural electrification program. A central part of both programs is the principle that government assists people in upgrading their personal infrastructure associated with their home and property, but the money is a repayable loan. A caveat is put in place and the local improvement charge is applied through regulation to their property, and that is to provide security for repayment of these loans and ensure that public money and taxpayers' money is repaid under the program. Both programs have been very successful in doing exactly that.

In addition to the 240 projects that have been completed as of the end of the 2013-14 fiscal year, an additional 20 projects are currently underway in this fiscal year. As I noted earlier in my remarks, Yukon government contacted Yukon's municipalities this year to propose expansion of the successful

and popular well program to residents within municipal boundaries. We proposed four possible options to municipalities and the option presented in the legislation before this House is the one that was the preferred option of municipalities.

The program does give municipalities the choice of opting in and opting out of the program, should they choose to at any point in time. This is, we believe, a very good deal for Yukon municipalities and for Yukoners within any participating municipalities as the bulk of the administration of the program and the costs of the program are borne by the Yukon government. The investment does allow people to not only access clean drinking water, but adds to the value of their property which consequently adds to the total tax base within the municipality.

With that, I will not go on at great length in speaking to this as I provided most of those remarks yesterday at second reading and Committee of the Whole. I would just close by thanking members for their positive remarks and commending this legislation to the House.

Mr. Barr: I rise on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party Official Opposition to speak to Bill No. 80, *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*.

As I was saying yesterday, we are happy to support this act. Although we realize the changes are overdue, it is welcome to the people of the Yukon who will be affected by this. As the minister had noted, the inclusion of adding home renewable energy systems, whether you're adding or upgrading existing systems, is welcome news.

The act also highlights the need for better water quality reporting. As more wells are drilled in rural municipal subdivisions, it's critical that we have good data on watercourses, water quality and flow, water used by residents, businesses or industry and the locations of the wells themselves. As we spoke, this will all be looked at as we move forward.

It's also important to note that it's essential that safety is paramount where contamination could occur and the water is not being tapped out by concentrations of high-use domestic water wells. Our hope is that the government will move to enact this legislation in a speedy manner and give us a clear timeline on how it plans to implement the act, including negotiations with the city.

We hope that this legislation can be in place and effect by next summer, so that Yukoners can take advantage of this great program. With that, I turn over remarks to whoever is next.

Mr. Silver: I rise to speak to Bill No. 80 in third reading, entitled *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act*. As I said yesterday, the rural water well program has been helpful to many Yukon residents and I'm happy to see it will be expanded to include municipalities, as I think the expansion of the program is long overdue. I hope most municipalities will opt in to allow their residents to take advantage of the program. I want to thank the minister for

bringing forth this bill, and also to the officials of the department for their help working on. I think this amendment is a much-needed addition to the program and I will be voting in favour of it.

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

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I thank members for their support for this. As I mentioned earlier when speaking to this, I would also like to thank and acknowledge colleagues of mine, including the Member for Watson Lake, the Member for Kluane and the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, for their support of expanding this program to benefit their constituents. I would like to thank municipalities for their participation in this consultation and the interest we have received from municipalities in signing on to this program that will provide a beneficial service to citizens living within municipalities.

I would echo comments from other members in hoping that municipalities do choose to sign on. As I noted earlier, municipalities, because of respect for their taxation authority, do have the ability to sign on to the program and choose to opt out at a later date. We are hopeful that they will sign on and continue to offer the program and, at the direct request of municipalities, we agreed to add on an administrative fee in municipalities for property owners. That will be added to the amount that property owners will have to borrow. We have indicated our preference and suggestion that that fee should be kept low. We have suggested that it might be a charge of up to \$500, but the exact details will be negotiated directly with municipalities, while we will continue to emphasize to administrations and councils that, if we do go higher than that \$500 fee, it will be a direct increase cost to the property owner and a higher amount that they have to pay under the program compared to what other Yukoners outside of municipal boundaries have to pay.

I thank the members for their support of this program and am hopeful that municipalities will choose to sign on to this great opportunity for citizens living within municipal borders. I will close and commend this legislation to the House.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

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

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 80 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 80 has passed this House.

Bill No. 81: Court Security Act — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 81, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Nixon.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I move that Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Minister of Justice that Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The *Court Security Act*, Bill No. 81, puts existing court security practices into legislation. Yukon is the only jurisdiction without legislation governing court security and this bill will bring Yukon in line with the rest of Canada. Our government is committed to ensuring a safe, effective and efficient justice system, and this new legislation will provide more safety assurances for all court users and enhance court security operations in Yukon courts.

A few years ago, Yukon's judiciary identified that a court security act would create greater certainty and clarity around aspects of court security. Although the judiciary have inherent jurisdiction over their courtrooms through common law, it has not been clear whether this authority extends outside the courtrooms and to other areas where threats to security may arise — for example, the parking lot. Other jurisdictions in Canada have found that, without designating court areas and establishing explicit authority in legislation for security practices, such as sheriffs screening for prohibited items or evicting people with cause, the ability to enforce prohibitions or actions is compromised and would be subject to challenges.

Having the parameters of court security rules in legislation makes rules more clear and it makes it more effective. Many people, whether they be witnesses, accused, jurors or courtworkers, go to court because they are required to; therefore, it is the responsibility of the justice system to maintain safe court premises and to have consistent security rules and practices.

This legislation will define what are designated court areas, including outside the courtroom like interview rooms,

common areas, building entrances and exits at the Whitehorse Law Centre, but also with buildings that are used in the communities for circuit court. It will also allow for security officers to screen people before they enter court areas and to deny entry to those who are either carrying a prohibited item or refuse to be screened.

The sheriff will similarly be allowed to evict a person who is creating a disturbance or found to be carrying a prohibited item. This legislation will prohibit unauthorized recordings by camera, cellphone, recording device or other equipment and will allow the sheriff to seize the equipment and destroy the recording and/or remove the person who is making that recording.

It will also provide clear authority for sheriffs to assist RCMP in carrying out searches of people held in court cells. Sometimes when there are no RCMP officers present, the sheriffs are required to search persons before they can be safely held in court cells. Furthermore, female sheriffs are sometimes called upon to assist when a female is in custody and must be searched and no female RCMP officer is present. These practices will now be explicitly authorized.

Similar to our neighbours in the Northwest Territories, the legislation will also enable penalties for persons who contravene this act. Persons may be liable on a summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months, or both.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice is committed to access to high quality justice services. The new *Court Security Act* will clarify court security practices and it will ensure consistency throughout the territory. The new act will formalize current security practices by clearly outlining them in legislation, which will increase public confidence in Yukon's justice system.

I thank the judiciary for their comments through this entire process. Providing the courts and our sheriffs with the tools necessary to carry out their day-to-day operations as well as those utilizing the courts is so very important. On another note, I would like to extend my deepest thanks to the legislative drafters in the Department of Justice for working on this piece of legislation and so many others. Their work is very important to each and every one of us in this Legislative Assembly.

Ms. Moorcroft: As I said yesterday in debate at second reading, the NDP Official Opposition supports Bill No. 81, the *Court Security Act*. This bill formalizes many security procedures that are already in effect in Yukon courtrooms, whether the law courts in Whitehorse or the facilities used in our rural communities for court proceedings.

We support the work of the Sheriff's Office and the court security officers. We recognize the need to bring Yukon's court security legislation and regulations up to date and in line with other jurisdictions.

As I noted at second reading, we support the principles of an open court. As Madam Justice Wilson of the Supreme Court of Canada said, "The public interest in open trials and the ability of the press to provide complete reports of what

takes place in the courtroom is rooted in the need ... to provide an ongoing opportunity for the community learn how the justice system operates and how the law being applied daily in the courts affects them". So bearing that in mind, we do not want to unduly restrict the public's ability to observe court proceedings. New security measures must respect Canadian values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

This bill was brought forward after an extensive security audit of court buildings, which was done six years ago, and requests from the judiciary for court security legislation in Yukon that brings it in line with other jurisdictions. We understand the *Court Security Act* was prompted by cumulative issues and events, including the 2008-09 court buildings security audit.

We're pleased to support the *Court Security Act*.

Mr. Silver: I rise to speak to Bill No. 81, entitled *Court Security Act*. As I said yesterday, this bill is a fairly straightforward piece of legislation. I think these proposed changes will increase the court's ability to maintain order and streamline court proceedings. The changes will allow greater authority for our court security officers to deal with disturbances and other problems in Yukon's courts and will address newer technology.

As I had stated yesterday as well, it is surprising to see how many of these items are not already part of Yukon's court procedures. I thank the minister for putting this forward and for the officials from his department for working on it, and I will be supporting the bill in third reading today.

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

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

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

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 81 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 81 has passed this House.

Bill No. 76: Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 76, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It is my pleasure to introduce Bill No. 76, *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*. This bill is primarily administrative so I will keep my comments brief.

The bill has three primary objectives: first, it broadens the types of fuels used for exempt activities to all fuel oil as defined in the current legislation; second, it provides a mechanism for suspension or cancellation of permits, licences and emblems; and third, it updates some provisions related to fines and penalties for offences and non-compliance under this act. The bill also contains a variety of minor housekeeping provisions.

The current *Fuel Oil Tax Act* is substantially unchanged from its original 1960s version. The act exempts certain activities consuming fuel oil from being taxed, such as heating buildings. The act also allows permit holders tax-free consumption of diesel or gasoline for certain exempt activities, such as generating electricity, mining, farming, et cetera.

This bill provides consistency between tax treatments of broadly exempt activities and the exempt activities requiring permits by standardizing the tax base to fuel oil and not specific types of fuel oil. It is the activity and not the type of fuel by policy that is exempt from tax. There is no impact on the Government of Yukon's fiscal framework with this legislation.

The bill also contains provisions allowing the minister to suspend or cancel permits, licences, or emblems with cause. Permits and licences are privileges and are not a right. The ability to suspend or to cancel these privileges for cause is consistent with many other acts that provide for permits and licences. This authority will also reduce the risk to Yukon that could arise from non-compliance of permit holders.

Finally, this bill increases the maximum fine for an offence under this act from \$1,000 to \$7,500 to adjust for the impact of inflation. The bill also enables a penalty of \$100 to be imposed for non-compliance when no tax amounts are due.

These changes, while administrative and therefore housekeeping in nature, will enable an improvement in the administration of the *Fuel Oil Tax Act*.

Ms. Hanson: I will say at the outset that although I appreciated the attempt by the Department of Finance officials in their briefing to do their best efforts to make Bill No. 76, *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*, riveting, it's really quite dry. I will say at the outset that the Official Opposition will be supporting these updates to, as the minister opposite has indicated, very outdated legislation.

Although, as I said, we do support in principle, I will have some questions for Committee of the Whole, keeping in mind that, as the minister identified that these are largely — I would say, the intent is administrative in nature — I will ask for clarification as we do go line by line in Committee of the Whole because there are a number of questions that did arise during the course of that briefing that really are subject to questions as opposed to a statement about the intent of the legislation.

Mr. Silver: It's a pleasure to rise to Bill No. 76, *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*. As mentioned, this act is administrative in nature, so I don't have a lot to say on it. Updating the terminology will modernize and streamline processes for the applicants and prevent loopholes in the legislation and will accommodate for the changes in our fuel use here in the Yukon. The amendments also highlights that our legislation now is changing to accommodate the common use of LNG in the territory. I would like to thank the minister for bringing forth this bill today and the department staff also for working on this bill. As it stands, I will be intending to support this bill.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 76 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the committee is general debate on Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 76: *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It's my pleasure again to speak to Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*. I'm pleased to be joined by my deputy minister of Finance for Committee of the Whole.

The current *Fuel Oil Tax Act*, as I have said, has remained very much unchanged from its original 1960s version. The act exempts certain activities consuming fuel oil from being taxed, such as for heating buildings. The act also allows permit holders tax-free consumption of diesel or gasoline for certain activities, such as generating electricity, mining, farming and golfing as well.

In the 1960s, diesel and gasoline were the only practical fuel sources for most of the exempt activities. With changing technology enabling new fuel sources, it makes sense to update the legislation to reflect all the options available for exempt activities.

Also, many of the provinces in the 1960s administered their exempt fuel sales by way of colouring — dying fuel — colour-dye fuel. I remember those days of purple gas on the farm in Saskatchewan. Yukon never implemented a similar regime, most likely due to the lack of scale required to justify industry duplicating resources in the local fuel market.

Therefore, this act simply replaces reference to diesel and gasoline to the more generic definition of "fuel oil". The bill also contains provisions allowing the minister to suspend or cancel permits, licences and emblems, with cause. This authority is fairly standard in most legislation, allowing for activities by way of permit or licence — a driver's licence is an example.

Finally, there has been inflation since the 1960s, and this bill increases the maximum fine for an offence under this act from \$1,000 to \$7,500 to adjust for the impact of inflation. The bill also enables a penalty of \$100 to be imposed for non-compliance when no tax amounts are due.

I would like to also thank the department for their work in putting this bill forward, and I'm proud to present it to the committee in the House here today and I look forward to some debate on it.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for his comments and the official for his presence here today — and, as I had mentioned at second reading, for his and his colleagues' best efforts to help the members on this side of the House go through this legislation — which I thought at the time was quite dry — and to illuminate us as to the intent of the changes that are proposed in the *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*.

As the minister has indicated, a large number of the amendments are to address the fact that the legislation is out of date. We understand that, essentially, the range of exempted activities — and I will be seeking confirmation for

this to make sure that I have, in fact, understood it correctly, and if I haven't, it can be clarified — remain the same. Essentially, what we are seeing is a change in language to include all types of fuel, and this is largely, as I understand it, because certainly we see down by the dam the inclusion of LNG as a fuel source. I understand, as the minister indicated, that this is revenue neutral. I will just ask him to confirm that.

The notion of bringing into current times the maximum fine for offences — I understand from the briefing that there have been not many but some instances of non-compliance with the act. I understand from the briefing that, in effect, this is like any other taxman kind of provision. The threat of being fined has been sufficient to motivate compliance. I would be interested in knowing if, in fact, there are any details of non-compliance and how they are identified. I believe I understood through the briefing that it is done by periodic audit, but I will be interested in knowing from the minister how that is done.

There is a provision in the proposed amendments in subsection 12 that talks about removing the expression “apply for”. I'm just assuming that every distributor and seller will still have to go through an application process to hold a valid licence and that maybe this is a language issue rather than a process issue, so we'll ask that of the minister.

I didn't ask this question in the briefing the other day, but I am interested in the user emblem provisions. Just for clarification — because as I read it again, subsection 16 removes the expression “about” and quotes “annual renewable fuel oil user emblems.” I think the way I read it that this appears to remove the need for operators of interprovincial carriers or carriers that go through our territory to renew their emblems annually. Again this is an assumption I'm making and I would seek confirmation or clarification that if that's intended to mean that the carriers would go through a one-time application process for a fuel oil user emblem. Does that then create a lifetime emblem for each licenced commercial vehicle or aircraft? I'm just curious about that, so the officials should be pleased that their briefing the other day did in fact take and generate some further thinking about it, which is a good sign, because sometimes you walk away and go, oh, well, I don't really understand any of that.

I understand that as I was going through this, the proposed amendments to the *Fuel Oil Tax Act* — and we did talk a little bit about this and I will be seeking some clarification to clarify that the proposed amendments — they have added a definition of “authorization” as “any permit, licence or emblem under this Act”. As I understand it, the proposed amendments appear to give the minister not only the authority to suspend or cancel any authorization for cause — and the minister spoke to that briefly in his second reading speech — but also the authority to issue authorizations so it's not suspension, but I think it's the issuance. I just want to confirm that.

I understand — at least the way I read it — that the proposed administrative provisions give the minister the authority to issue authorizations outside of a standardized application process. I'm wondering if that's correct as well. If that's true — if you don't need a standardized application

process to issue authorization, the question would be: What purpose and under what condition would that expanded authority be exercised?

Finally, Madam Chair, based on my notes that I took the other day and reviewed again, I believe the officials mentioned that there is an appeals process that's built in here and I just seek confirmation of that. Essentially, those would be the comments or questions that occurred to me, representing the Official Opposition in this case, as we have reviewed the *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I think I have got most of the questions there. The first one was clarification on whether the exempt activities remain the same. The answer is yes — there has been no change to the exempt activities. I will also confirm that this is revenue-neutral. As you are aware, Madam Chair, until this point for example, in providing backup electricity, we have used diesel, which has always been an exempted fuel, so with the introduction of LNG we would be replacing diesel as the fuel oil with LNG, so there is no revenue impact to the government.

In the context of what the fine now is — I guess there were two pieces to this. It is going from \$1,000 to \$7,500. I mentioned inflation, but the other part that was also considered was other jurisdictions as well, in terms of how much money they would charge for similar fines. Looking at other jurisdictions and combining that with inflation over the last 50-plus years, the decision was made to go from \$1,000 to \$7,500.

The member opposite is correct. The threat of fine has been very effective. I believe there has only been one instance of a recorded case over time where it actually did go to court, so over all these years it is practically non-existent.

There were a number of things that go on to ensure compliance. There is a reporting mechanism — a filing — that must occur by all permit holders but, on top of the reporting process, there's also the opportunity for on-site visits by officials. There is the ability for the government to audit as well. That is how the government goes about ensuring that what has been submitted is accurate.

To become a permit holder, yes, there is an application process — that was one of the questions. Then, with the use of emblems, interprovincial carriers must apply on an annual basis. Those who are not regular holders can be issued a temporary permit, but would require a new one each time there is a new requirement. They would have to go back and do that.

The last question that the Leader of the Official Opposition asked was just around authorizations. I guess the best description for this is we've actually encompassed a process around the fact that you need permits and emblems, so this lays out the authorizations now for that. It also, then, lays out the ability to revoke those licences or permits or emblems. It also lays out the appeal process that would be available to people if they choose to do so.

I believe that that answers all the member opposite's questions and look forward to the next one.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for his response.

I just want to go back to the issue of the — and maybe it's just that I am not reading it correctly. When I look at the proposed amendments to the act and the actual act, in 16(1), the way I read that is that it has removed the expression “for an annual renewable fuel oil user emblem”. That is why I asked the question on whether or not it was a requirement. I just wondered how we read into this that you are supposed to renew it annually. Maybe he could just clarify how that section will read now in total.

If you have the *Fuel Oil Tax Act* in front of you and you look at 16(1) where the way it is written now, it seems to have that piece of it missing — where it says, “shall apply for an annual renewable fuel oil user emblem”. That is what is in the current act under 16(1).

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The existing 16(1) does say that they “shall apply for an annual renewable fuel oil user emblem”. The intent is that it will continue to be an annual licence. I am unaware of whether or not it will actually exist in the regulations at this point, but the intention of this will be to ensure that it continues to be an annual licence.

Ms. Hanson: It just begs the question of why it is left out. That is a fairly standard kind of thing to have in a piece of legislation, because that is the overall intention. It's not something normally that you would put into legislation.

That is what triggered the questions that I was asking about the need, particularly if we are not clear, for somebody coming from out of territory, interprovincial — the carriers who go through this territory or go Yukon-Alberta-B.C.

We all talk about the clarity of one-stop shopping, so that people aren't having to go through 14 rafts of government documents or sources to find out. So this was pretty straightforward. That doesn't seem to be straightforward.

That's why I had asked the question about whether or not — because a way you interpret the current way it's drafted, it would seem that you could go through a one-time application process for this fuel oil user emblem. Then, if you got the approval, essentially you have a lifetime approval emblem — a lifetime emblem; an emblem that's good for the life of that carrier or that vehicle or aircraft. So that's why I was asking that question, because that is a substantive difference between an annual approval and an approval that applies to that vehicle for whatever the life of that vehicle is.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Under section 31(2)(c), which says, “may, in issuing an authorization, make the authorization subject to any terms or conditions that the Minister considers appropriate” — so that's where the authority is for the minister to continue for it to be an annual renewal. Currently that renewal annually expires with the government's fiscal year, and that's March 31 of each year. They can acquire this at the weigh scales when they're coming into the territory.

Ms. Hanson: I would appreciate if the minister could cite in which section of section 31 he gets that requirement to annually get this at the weigh scale.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It's 31(2) (c), which states that authorizations are subject to any terms or conditions that the minister considers appropriate, which then would default to

the regulation where it can be stipulated that that is in fact yearly, annually, and there is not intent to change it from its current annual cut-off date of March 31 of each year.

Ms. Hanson: So for clarity purposes and for clarity of those vehicles, commercial vehicles in particular, will the regulations be in place by March 31 of this year, coming up?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The regulations already exist, are in place in force and the annual cut-off date is March 31 of each year.

Ms. Hanson: I take that as an affirmation that the current regulations stipulate that it's March 31 for these emblems and that if you could just say that for the record, then that's what I'm looking for and would be happy.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Yes.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak?

We're going to move on to clause-by-clause debate.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Clause 2 agreed to

On Clause 3

Clause 3 agreed to

On Clause 4

Clause 4 agreed to

On Clause 5

Clause 5 agreed to

On Clause 6

Clause 6 agreed to

On Clause 7

Clause 7 agreed to

On Clause 8

Clause 8 agreed to

On Clause 9

Clause 9 agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that Bill No. 76, entitled *An Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Pasloski that the Chair report Bill No. 76, entitled *An Act to Amend the Fuel Oil Tax Act* without amendment. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

Chair: We are going to carry on now to Vote No. 52, Department of Environment, in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Committee of the Whole will recess for five minutes.

Recess

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

Bill No. 15: Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15 — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate in Vote 52, Department of Environment, in Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Department of Environment

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The supplementary budget that I am presenting today for the Department of Environment would result in an increase of less than one percent over the \$38.825 million voted to date. Much of the net \$300,000 increase is due to implementation of the *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan*. This budget is a good example of the wide range of activities undertaken by the department in support of our mandate. That includes: taking the lead role in regulating and enforcing safe standards for air, water and soil; managing human impacts on fish and wildlife; providing quality outdoor recreation opportunities in our parks and campgrounds; addressing the challenges of global climate change; and actively implementing the provisions of the First Nation final agreements.

With respect to our O&M expenditures, a total of \$726,000 is being sought. In the corporate services area, a total of \$108,000 is required; \$202,000 additional has been provided for three projects approved under the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*. These funds are 100-percent recoverable from Canada, which provides the Yukon government with just over \$1 million annually to implement federal obligations under the IFA. There is also an internal transfer of \$94,000 from the corporate services area to the environmental sustainability area to reflect the reporting relationship of the new health and safety risk management officer position currently being recruited.

In the environmental sustainability area, a total of \$523,000 is sought. The majority of these funds — \$420,000 — is needed for implementing the *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan*. The plan has six priorities and over 50 actions, as a whole, providing the Yukon government with a strategic, comprehensive approach for its water management decisions. The Water Resources branch plans to replace aging water monitoring equipment. To do this, \$88,000 of operation and maintenance funds must be transferred to capital purchases.

An additional \$40,000 is needed to fund extending full services at 10 Yukon campgrounds for an additional three weeks — September 30 of this year — which allows Yukoners to benefit from this enhanced service. In addition, it aligns visitor services with transportation schedules and industry operations and demonstrates the government's commitment to supporting Yukon's tourism industry. That commitment was made earlier this year by me and the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Two revotes totalling \$31,000 are sought in order to support projects brought forward from 2013-14. One is a technical review of our remediation plan and the other is for a successful wildlife-human conflict conference held in April of this year. Finally, a total of \$26,000 was requested for two

Fish and Wildlife projects with all funds 100-percent recoverable.

Operation and maintenance funds are needed for the environmental liabilities and remediation area. A revote of \$95,000 is sought to complete environmental assessment work at the Swift River highway maintenance camp that began in 2013-14. Assessment is the vital first step in determining the nature and extent of contamination and from there the best options for cleanup. That concludes the changes requested to O&M funds for the Department of Environment.

With respect to capital, the department seeks approval for reducing its overall capital budget requirement for 2014-15 by \$426,000. Most significant is the deferral of \$1.414 million in expenditures for construction of a new campground on Atlin Lake. The project is on hold due to legal action initiated by the Taku River Tlingit First Nation.

A revote of \$485,000 is sought for work underway on a new building for the Watson Lake district office. There is \$200,000 sought for tenant improvements at 10 Burns Road, the department's headquarters building in Whitehorse. Improvements include making the entrance to the building more energy efficient, constructing an accessible washroom and reconfiguring the client services area. There is \$30,000 needed for the purchase of a new boat for Herschel Island's Qikiqtaruk Territorial Park. This cost is 100-percent recoverable pursuant to the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*.

Lastly, a total of \$273,000 is sought to help expand government's water monitoring networks and programs by adding or upgrading six water quality and 25 hydrometric monitoring stations and actions supporting the Yukon water strategy of planning needs now and in the future. The new *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan* has been a major undertaking for the department and this is clearly reflected in this supplementary appropriation. I know we'll get into the discussion about the water strategy further on in Committee of the Whole.

Before I move on, I did want to note that I'm joined today by our deputy minister of Environment, Jim Connell, as well as the assistant deputy minister, Allan Koprowsky, for the Department of Environment as well.

Following my comments about the water strategy, I should take the moment to note that starting yesterday we are welcoming our new hydrogeologist to the Department of Environment, whose name is John Miller. I will maybe just read a brief piece about Mr. Miller.

The Water Resources branch is overjoyed to announce that John Miller has joined the team in the newly created position of hydrogeologist. For those of you following the water strategy development and implementation process you will know that this position was retained through the strategy and will be integral to implementing the groundwater aspects of the strategy.

John holds a master of science from the University of Waterloo and is registered with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of B.C. as a geologist. Some may know John from Environment Canada where he has been for the last 10 years as senior

environmental scientist. John has worked on initiatives such as providing hydrogeological and geochemical advice for environmental assessments in Yukon and across Canada, leading investigations into the fate and transport of contaminants in groundwater and developing groundwater models for mine sites in Yukon, providing residual risk assessments for closure of mine tailing facilities, and the decommissioning of groundwater monitoring wells at contaminated sites. John may also be a familiar face from the Mount Mac ski trails.

On behalf of the department and in particular, the Water Resources branch, I would like to welcome John to the Department of Environment.

Secondly, prior to proceeding further into debate, I did want to thank staff from the animal health unit for an excellent tour of their new laboratory at 10 Burns Road. I had a chance last week to visit the newly renovated lab and tour the facilities there. That lab actually, coincidentally, has received some national attention over the past 24 to 36 hours as a result of their handling of a number of Bohemian waxwing birds that have ended up in our care as a result of consuming too many fermented berries and becoming intoxicated, flying into windows and landing in the care of Environment Yukon.

While I was there, there were three Bohemian waxwings in our care. Those that survive are, of course, transferred on to the Yukon Wildlife Preserve where they're sobered up and sent back into the wild. The sobering process is a difficult one, but I think that they're able to be re-acclimated back into the wild successfully in most cases. The piece that got the most coverage in the national news, I think, was essentially what the national media referred to as a "drunk tank for birds" — the small hamster cages that are developed to hold these Bohemian waxwings while they recuperate — well, recover, rather than recuperate.

This is all to highlight the fact that we do have a phenomenal facility at 10 Burns Road now by way of our laboratory. That newly renovated facility is part of the evolution of the Animal Health Unit and one that I am quite proud to support. Obviously we passed the *Animal Health Act* in this Legislature not too long ago and the implementation of that unit is going exceptionally well. I know that both the Department of Environment and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources have benefitted extremely well from having that more robust Animal Health Unit. As well, it gives the department a much more professional and usable space at the laboratory and a much more efficient and effective facility for our purposes.

As we heard in my opening statements, there are a number of other renovations occurring at 10 Burns Road. It is our hope that over the course of the implementation of the Animal Health Unit that we are able to perhaps make available to the public more of the exceptional specimens that the Animal Health Unit has on display internally.

With that, having noted some of the aspects of the department that are of interest recently, I would welcome questions from members opposite on the supplementary budget.

Ms. White: The waxwing story is going to be a hard one to follow up with.

I would like to start by welcoming the officials and thanking them again for their really thorough briefing. Sometimes it is hard to ask questions because I have already been given the answers, but I remind myself that it's part of what happens. Everyone deserves to hear the questions and the answers.

I would like to start off by congratulating and thanking the Department of Environment's spill response team. So a report made to Environment Yukon's spill reporting phone line about a residential oil tank and a 45-gallon fuel drum that had been dumped along a back road along the north Alaska Highway prompted immediate action by the Environment staff.

The following day, staff from Environment Yukon's Monitoring and Inspections section visited the dump site to investigate whether a spill of hazardous material had occurred. Later that same day, the environmental monitoring officer followed up with the complainant to advise that there had been no spill and that they had removed the tanks, which also included two 30-gallon propane tanks.

It was incredible — from start to finish, I think it was 48 hours from when it had been recognized, to reported, to cleaned up. That's just an incredible example of the good work that the department does. So thank you so much to them, and I wanted to highlight that for everybody else in the general public who might not know that it's just that easy to report your concerns about spills or hazardous materials, and the Department of Environment will be right there to clean it up. So thank you so much for that, and I just acknowledge that with the minister here so everyone can hear how fantastic it is.

During the briefing, we had an opportunity to talk about a lot of different things that were both in the supplementary budget and just that were happening in general. We talked about some of the different things that the department has been doing. So if the minister would talk about the hunting ban of the Hart River caribou herd along the Dempster Highway, and kind of the state of affairs for the Porcupine caribou herd and the Fortymile herd, I would appreciate that.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the member opposite for the question and for the comments about staff in the department. It is appreciated. Making Yukoners aware that they can report spills, as the member opposite indicated, is very important, and I appreciate her efforts to make Yukoners aware that that is available to Yukoners. That is something we hope Yukoners will do more.

Specifically with regard to the Hart River caribou herd, this, of course, is an issue because the caribou hunting closure is required in areas along the southern portion of the Dempster Highway to protect that herd. The Hart River caribou herd is a small woodland caribou herd that shares part of its wintering grounds with the much larger Porcupine caribou herd. Current estimates place the population of the Hart River caribou herd at about 2,200 animals, whereas the Porcupine herd is much larger, at 197,000 caribou at last count.

Most years the Porcupine caribou herd spends part of the winter along the southern Dempster Highway, outnumbering the Hart River caribou herd many times over. This swamping effect normally reduces the risks to the Hart River herd of overharvest. However, this year only a small number of Porcupine caribou are near this area of the overlap, so almost all of the caribou currently in the area are Hart River woodland caribou. As such, a closure is required for the area of overlap, including game management subzones 2-16, 2-23, 2-27, 2-28 and 2-39. Those are between the North Fork Pass and the Ogilvie River, kilometre 77 to kilometre 195 on the Dempster highway.

Caribou from both herds are normally located within the overlap and several adjacent and nearby game management zones. These five game management zones have been identified for closure, as they provide significant access to hunters. Currently in the overlap area, caribou harvest by resident and non-resident hunters is managed under the Hart River caribou regulations until the Porcupine caribou arrive. Until October 31, one bull caribou may be taken. If the Porcupine caribou arrive, two bulls may be taken between November 1 and January 31.

I think that answers the member's questions with regard to the Hart River closure and as it relates to the Porcupine caribou herd, but I haven't yet touched on the Fortymile caribou herd, which she is looking for.

The Fortymile caribou herd is a barren ground caribou herd that ranges between Yukon and Alaska. Historically, it ranged between Fairbanks and Whitehorse and numbered in the hundreds of thousands. The population of this herd was last estimated at approximately 52,000 in 2010. At its lowest, in 1973, the population was as little as 6,500. The population low is driven by environmental factors and a high harvest in Alaska.

From 1997 to 2011, management actions have focused on recovery of the herd so that it can grow large enough to re-occupy its historic range in Yukon. In Alaska, recovery management has meant conservative harvest rates, wolf control, land use management and ongoing communication efforts. Alaska currently harvests approximately two percent of the herd in a highly regulated hunt. In Yukon, no licensed harvest has taken place since 1995 and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation has encouraged its citizens not to harvest the Fortymile caribou herd.

Yukon, including the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Dawson Renewable Resources Council, participates in the Fortymile Caribou Harvest Management Coalition with Alaska to ensure the continued conservation of the herd. Yukon has participated on recovery planning on the harvest management plans approved by the Alaska Board of Game. Technical staff from Yukon government and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in are undertaking discussions respecting harvest of the Fortymile caribou herd in TH traditional territory.

Yukon government is also engaged with neighbouring First Nations and will further engage if the herd range expands

into those traditional territories. An initial harvest strategy is expected to be completed by summer 2015.

In the spring of 2013, two regulation changes were advanced by me as minister and recommended by the Fish and Wildlife Management Board. These amendments are expected to take effect in the spring of next year.

They are, first of all, changing the current regulation that prohibits any licensed harvest of the Fortymile caribou herd so that licensed harvest is at the minister's discretion to support adaptive harvest of the herd. The second is altering four game management subzones from Porcupine caribou herd zones to Fortymile caribou herd zones to ensure that the Fortymile caribou is not accidentally harvested under Porcupine caribou herd regulations. Currently, a licensed harvester could purchase two over-the-counter caribou tags and harvest two Fortymile caribou in these four subzones.

In June of 2013, Alaska Department of Fish and Game managers travelled to Dawson City to meet with Yukon stakeholders, including our officials from the Department of Environment, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Dawson RRC. They met to discuss herd size and summer habitat.

As the herd has become more prevalent in Yukon, increased collaboration between jurisdictions resulted in Yukon government committing to more involvement in monitoring the herd. Alaska is determining the optimal number of caribou that can be sustained in the current range. Research to predict current and future habitats in both Yukon and Alaska are being initiated.

The winter diet of the herd across its range will be assessed, where feasible. Yukon has regularly monitored the herd's distributions since recovery actions returned the herd to the territory in large numbers around 2002. In 2013-14, increased efforts were made to document an expansion into habitats not used since the 1950s. The department has collaborated by purchasing, deploying and maintaining a number of satellite GPS collars on the herd to conduct research on the herd's range and productivity. The collars will track the herd's movement in real time to assist in harvest management and updating the population estimates for 2015.

The department works completed to date includes the development of a lichen map in parts of the herd's historic range, a habitat model and mapping of developments. Recommendation measures that could reduce human-made effects on the herd's range are also in the final stages of review.

As in winter of 2013-14, staff this year will focus on assessing the herd's distribution using aerial and ground telemetry and satellite collar locations. The department is also working directly with Alaska Department of Fish and Game field staff to ensure other monitoring — for example, fall capture and composition surveys — is completed, should the herd move into Yukon.

Management in Yukon this fall will focus on assessing harvest risk should the herd enter an area where harvest is currently permitted. To meet commitments made to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Alaska management organizations,

we will consider the use of emergency closures to ensure the herd is not heavily harvested.

In conclusion, I would just note that the Fortymile caribou herd is an excellent example of collaboration between the Government of Yukon and the State of Alaska. I know that officials on both sides of the border have really appreciated that collaboration. I had a chance to sit down with an official from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game this past summer and discuss a number of items of mutual interest, including the Fortymile herd. It's wonderful to have the support of our neighbours in the management of this herd. The resources that the Government of Alaska have to manage these types of herds and to take action on herd management tend to be far more expansive than ours, but the shared expertise and the shared willingness to manage these herds collaboratively is very important to both of us.

Obviously the approach taken in Alaska to managing caribou herds is a little bit different. They have a different view on wolf control, for instance, from we do on this side of the border, but that's something that we are able to manage and move past.

In general, I would say that the relationship is very strong, and the Fortymile caribou herd is not only an example of great collaboration between our territory and the State of Alaska, but indeed of a successful recovery of a herd that was almost decimated. That is a real story that we should, as Yukoners, be proud of — the fact that we were able to take management actions in collaboration with our neighbours in Alaska to recover the herd to what it is today. I think it bears reflection on some of the numbers that I spoke about earlier with regard to how low that herd actually got — down to several thousand caribou. It is worth reflecting on the success we have had in recovering that herd and the strong example of partnership between Yukon and the State of Alaska on that. I would like to thank the officials on both sides of the border for that work and commend that work to all Yukoners.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for his answers and that fantastic example of cross-jurisdiction management. That flows quite nicely into my next question about the Southern Lakes woodland caribou. We have talked about it on the floor of this House before — how the Carcross-Tagish First Nation has an internal ban on hunting of the Southern Lakes woodland caribou, whereas their neighbours to the south, on the B.C. border side, do not share that same hunting ban, which leads to the occasional disagreement between outfitters who take clients to hunt on the B.C. side and then they drive through the community of Carcross with Southern Lakes woodland caribou in the backs of pickup trucks.

Understanding the good cross-border relationship with Alaska, can the minister tell us how the management of the Southern Lakes woodland caribou is going with our neighbours to the south with British Columbia?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With regard to the Southern Lakes caribou herd, we have a licensed hunting closure there. Since 1993, Yukon has had a licensed hunting closure and voluntary First Nation hunting ban on the Southern Lakes caribou as a part of the recovery program.

Although British Columbia was involved in the development of the Southern Lakes caribou recovery program, a licensed hunting closure was never implemented in British Columbia. Senior officials in Yukon have engaged British Columbia multiple times to discuss the need for a matched licensed hunting closure in British Columbia, but that work continues to be ongoing and we have more work to do with regard to discussing those matters with British Columbia. We do know that ongoing discussions are happening with British Columbia to match the hunting ban on the Southern Lakes caribou.

The Southern Lakes caribou are comprised of three herds: the Ibex herd, the Carcross herd and the Atlin herd. The Carcross caribou herd — one of the Southern Lakes herds — is a transboundary herd ranging within both Yukon and British Columbia. The combined recovery target for the Ibex and Carcross herds is 2,000 animals. According to the 2008 survey, the Carcross herd is at approximately 800 animals and the Ibex herd is approximately 850 animals.

Developed by the Southern Lakes Caribou Steering Committee, the recovery program includes population monitoring, habitat assessments, game guardian patrols, public education and school programs. Between 2008 and 2014, the British Columbia resident and non-resident harvest levels, including outfitters, were an average of six caribou per year. Only bulls are harvested. There are two outfitting concessions operated in the British Columbia portion of the caribou range. The outfitters and B.C. hunters are harvesting the Carcross herd. The only road access into the British Columbia outfitting concessions is the South Klondike Highway between the British Columbia border and the United States border. Obviously there's more work to be done with regard to the Government of British Columbia and establishing what I earlier indicated was a need for a matching ban of hunting on that side of the border. That work is ongoing.

On a bit of a different issue, although it's related, I wanted to note that the departments of Environment and Highways and Public Works are working with local renewable resources councils to try to reduce the number of caribou involved in vehicle-wildlife collisions. Public education campaigns and roadside signage have been effective in warning motorists when they are in the area where collisions with wildlife are frequent. We are currently undertaking a study to better define collision hotspots so we can enhance our efforts in these areas. A road salt program is in place to protect wildlife and the environment, without compromising public safety.

The program includes using minimal concentrations of sodium chloride — same as table salt — in sand mix, which is applied to Yukon roadways only when necessary. Although measures are being taken to prevent vehicle-wildlife collisions, approximately six caribou from the Carcross herd are killed each winter by vehicle collisions. The Carcross caribou herd's winter range includes the Alaska Highway, Tagish Road and Klondike Highway. Caribou frequently cross

these roads between November and April as they move through their winter range in search of food.

Salt is sought by caribou and other ungulates due to its relative rarity in their natural diets. This work is the result of many years of collaboration between the Department of Environment and Highways and Public Works, as we have been working for quite some time to improve signage on the highways.

In 2012, the departments of Environment Highways and Public Works formed the preventing Yukon wildlife collisions interdepartmental working group that develops and implements adaptive strategies to decrease the rate of wildlife-vehicle collisions on Yukon roads. This working group recently commissioned a study by an independent contractor to conduct analyses of hotspots where wildlife collisions occur. The information gathered will inform the development of mitigations that could be implemented in Yukon to reduce the number of wildlife killed on Yukon roadways, and in fact any large mammal species on roadways.

Results of the highway collisions study will also be used to guide further efforts to mitigate vehicle-wildlife collisions. Mitigations currently implemented to reduce vehicle-wildlife collisions in Yukon include warning signs and digital message boards alongside highways, vegetation management within the highway right-of-way and public awareness events such as school visits and sharing information at the Environment Fair, as well as radio and newspaper ads and radio and TV interviews.

By way of financial applications, I should note that approximately \$4,000 is spent annually on road signage and paid advertising to bring awareness to reduce collisions with caribou. In 2013-14, \$18,000 was spent to complete the study on vehicle-wildlife collisions in Yukon. This is again an area where we try our best to work with the communities, the RRCs, and other departments to try to find solutions to problems that tend to occur in the Southern Lakes area with regard to that caribou population.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for reading my mind as to what the next part was, because we have talked about highway and animal collisions.

He mentioned the highway collision study and I think he actually had a completion date for some time in 2014. I'm wondering if he can let us know when that will be tabled. The population — the animal numbers that he cited — I think he said they were from 2008. Is there any plan to do a more current animal survey about the numbers of those herds?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With regard to the survey, the most recent data we have seems to indicate that the survey may just have been completed very recently. If it is something that is appropriate for me to table, I will look into tabling it. If not, I can perhaps share it with the member outside of the Legislature.

With regard to when we will be conducting the next composition study of the Carcross caribou herds — that's something we are working on right now. If members will bear with me for a few moments, I will give a response.

We will have to get back to you with a date on that one, Madam Chair. We conduct these studies as needed, and we do so in collaboration with renewable resources councils and First Nations. I don't have the date for when the next composition survey of the Carcross caribou herd will be completed.

Ms. White: I thank the officials who are going through their very large binders of everything in the department. If the minister would be so kind, once there is an idea of when that will happen, he could pass on the information that would be fantastic.

This summer we saw something pretty phenomenal happen, which was a total ban of fishing along the Yukon River for Yukon River salmon. I was wondering if we could have an update of the salmon statistics for this year's run, and maybe the minister could talk a bit about his intergovernmental relationship there as well, and what the next steps proceeding forward to protect the Yukon River chinook are.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This is indeed another example, I think, of the fairly strong relationship between the Government of Yukon and our neighbours in Alaska. It's an issue that's important to not just Yukoners along the Yukon River, but all Yukoners. The chinook salmon runs in the Yukon River have obviously been very poor over the last while and, without a doubt, there has been a clear need for action to be taken. In this case, obviously the substantive action that needs to be taken is on the Alaska side of the border. That's where the vast majority of the harvest occurs for chinook salmon.

We were actually very pleased to see that action was taken this year. It's not something that we should underestimate. I think the action taken in Alaska is very difficult. The use of the salmon for commercial purposes in Alaska is far more extensive than it is here in Yukon. In some communities along the river, the livelihood of the community is dependent upon fishing salmon.

So when measures are taken by the government, they're not taken lightly and they're taken when there's a defined need. This is a case where there was a defined need, where there was certainly action that needed to be taken.

We know that the 2014 Yukon River chinook salmon run was forecast to be poor. The run did end up being stronger than forecast. Through unprecedented restrictions to all fisheries on both sides of the border, conservation targets were met this year. We all want to see chinook salmon runs return to historic levels to meet subsistence and cultural needs of First Nations and to support sustainable recreational and commercial fisheries.

Yukon government continues to be very concerned with the current state of the chinook salmon and we're committed to working with our federal colleagues from Fisheries and Oceans Canada who manage salmon, our partners in Alaska and Yukon First Nations to ensure the fishery is sustainably managed and equitably allocated.

I should also note that while the conservation targets were met, from the information I've received these conservation

targets tend to be very conservative and the fact that we've met them is good and it is progress, but we know that there is much more work to be done. There is a range of opinions among Yukoners as to how long this kind of action needs to be taken. I know that some members of Yukon communities feel that there needs to be a closure for a full cycle — so seven or eight years of full closure to allow the salmon to recover. There are others who believe that more strategic closures are necessary.

But nonetheless, I have to highlight once again the fact that it's easy for us on this side of the border to say that there should be no fishing of salmon in Alaska, but the real ramifications of those decisions are over in Alaska. I don't envy the role of those folks in Alaska who have to make those tough decisions about closing fishing for some of those communities because, as I've said, in some of the communities along the Yukon River on the Alaska side of the border, the commercial fishery is the only livelihood that is available to many of those communities.

Again, I have to reiterate the fact that we really appreciate and respect and commend those in Alaska who are making these very difficult decisions and taking these very real and appreciated efforts. We respectfully ask that they continue to take those actions and we will continue to add our voice to those who want to see continued action — to the ultimate end of seeing this population of chinook salmon recover to historic levels.

We do know that the chinook salmon are tremendously important to Yukon people, to Yukon First Nations as well. Whether you are Yukon First Nation or not, everybody can appreciate the history that is involved with the salmon in Yukon. I have seen — and I am sure others have seen — pictures of not that long ago — a generation or two ago — when, in places like Teslin, they were fishing quite massive salmon and it is really unfortunate and sad that that is not able to occur any more.

So we want to try to do our part and we want to encourage others to do their part to try to recover that population to historic levels. We do that through a number of ways. Obviously the Yukon government has representation on the Yukon River Panel. We also work closely with Canada and Alaska on conservation and management of Canadian-origin Yukon River salmon.

At more senior levels, we also work and communicate directly with these governments to represent Yukon's interests on this important issue. We are committed to working at all levels to ensure that Yukoners continue to have access to healthy and sustainable chinook salmon for generations to come.

On both sides of the border, restraint and unprecedented restrictions led to the lowest harvest of chinook in recent memory. In Yukon, Fisheries and Oceans Canada took the unprecedented step to close all fisheries, including the First Nation subsistence fishery. When the chinook run materialized stronger than anticipated, DFO allowed First Nations, if they were interested, to harvest a small allocation as allowed under the *Yukon River Salmon Agreement of 2001*.

Most First Nations, though, did continue their closures and others harvested a small amount for ceremonial purposes.

It is also relevant — given the fact that it's Geoscience Week — that the Casino mining company received an award as we know yesterday — last night — for its work with First Nations to provide salmon to them, despite the fact that there was a closure in place. They flew in salmon from Outside so that First Nation could have access to salmon for the purposes of traditional practices and ceremonies. We see some fairly extraordinary efforts being taken by First Nations, by industry and by Yukoners of all sorts to do their part.

Obviously, while I did mention the significant sacrifice made on the Alaska side of the border, I would be remiss if I didn't also note that the sacrifice on this side of the border was indeed also considerable. Yukon First Nations have been very patient and very proactive in managing their salmon on the Yukon side of the border. Their voluntary restrictions and voluntary measures that they have taken over this year and the previous years are, again, no small task. The fact that they are willing to make these sacrifices is indicative of how important the salmon are to the Yukon First Nations. We certainly appreciate the sacrifices made by those First Nations as well.

To conclude, I should note that sacrifices have been made on both sides of the border. They are considerable measures and we need to continue to take these measures if we want to see salmon return to historical levels.

I wanted to also mention that there are some things going forward that we need to discuss and address over the coming years. Some of those relate to the *Yukon River Salmon Agreement of 2001* itself. Over the past 12 years since the *Yukon River Salmon Agreement of 2001* was signed, several substantive issues in the application and interpretation of the agreement have arisen. These are: first, that there is no oversight body or dispute resolution mechanism; the U.S. and Canada do not agree about the role of the Yukon River Panel in salmon management; Canada understands their role to be more important and significant than does the United States, especially when it comes to making recommendations to the management entities as per sections 14, 15 and 17; and, there are no actual consequences for overharvest. These issues have been raised at the Yukon River Panel meetings, but this has not proven to be an effective forum for making headway on these issues. In the March 2014 meeting, the United States delegation didn't permit or agree with advancing any of the substantial interests of the Canadian delegation. At this stage, Canadian First Nations and other stakeholders are starting to get frustrated with the lack of tangible progress made in Alaska with managing their harvests and are looking for all levels of government to engage to solve this issue. For our part, Yukon continues to work through all these channels to address these issues.

Both myself and the Premier have been in contact with the Governor of Alaska, the United States Ambassador to Canada, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for Canada and the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs to raise Yukon's interests in regard to chinook salmon. Department officials are also working with Fisheries and

Oceans Canada, as well as Alaskan agencies, to highlight these concerns.

I guess to conclude that aspect of my response, I should note that, while we've been successful in achieving some action, we think that there's the potential for further change that may be necessary to the institutions through which we manage this species, and we look forward to engaging with our colleagues across the border and across levels of government to pursue these interests.

With the election of a new governor in Alaska, I'm sure our Premier will be reaching out to the governor very soon in the course of intergovernmental relations. I will make certain that the issue of Yukon River chinook salmon is top of the list for the Premier to raise with the new governor.

I think that answers, as best I can, the question raised by the member opposite.

Chair: Before we continue, would the members like a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

We're going to continue general debate in Vote 52, Department of Environment.

Ms. White: I thank this House for that 15-minute break, because it helped me get a couple more papers together. On May 7 of this year, we debated a motion brought forward by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, talking about things we could do for salmon. I was just looking, and the reason I don't remember asking during the department budget debate, is because we debated the Department of Environment on April 22 — so prior to that debate.

The reason this is relevant is that the minister has just spoken about — he referenced DFO and things. Anyway, there was a May 8 press release by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans this year, where it was talking about the piscine reo-virus. That is the basis for this. I read this during the debate and I just have questions in relation to this.

I was lucky earlier this year to watch a documentary called *Salmon Confidential*. For anyone who is interested in the welfare of wild salmon, I suggest you watch it. The documentary follows the health of wild salmon and how they are affected by the fish farms along the Fraser River. That population of fish has crashed in recent years, all for hard-to-pinpoint reasons until the fish started to be tested for infections. European strains of the piscine reo-virus and infectious salmon anemia have been discovered in the wild salmon populations, and fish farms appear to be the cause. The reason that this is relevant, Madam Chair, is that the migration paths of our Yukon River chinook salmon and the Fraser River chinook and sockeye salmon — they cross paths. I had spoken to the biologist, Alexander Morton, about this — and she has been ringing alarm bells for some time about this

issue — and she explained that the viruses are designed to survive and that they depend on their ability to jump from fish to fish. The very strength of a virus is its ability to do the fish-to-fish crossing when those populations cross in the ocean.

I speculated during the debate — what if the decline in our chinook salmon run is directly or indirectly linked to what is happening in the Fraser River, and are we testing for these two European virus strains? Then, at the end of our conversation, she left me with a sobering thought. She said, "Why wouldn't you want to rule this out as a possibility?"

Then I went to the press release on May 8. The title is "Piscine Reo-virus (PRV) on the West Coast of North America" and it is halfway through the first paragraph. It says, "Since that time, additional survey work through various labs and agencies in Canada and the United States has expanded the known host range of PRV" — which is the piscine reo-virus — "to include: wild Cutthroat Trout, wild Chinook Salmon, wild Sockeye Salmon ..." — and the list goes on.

When I brought this up during the debate on the motion, I was told in the response that was the responsibility of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and I understand that. My question now to the minister is: Has he, as Minister of Environment, asked the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to test either for the piscine reo-virus or the infectious salmon anemia in our northern populations of chinook salmon?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: No, I have not.

Ms. White: Is this something that the minister would entertain as something to be tested for? Is it something that is on his radar as maybe being part of the causes of our declining populations?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, that is something that we have entertained and we'll look into that matter.

Ms. White: Fantastic. I look forward to further conversations with the minister and the department about that. I guess that's pretty exciting news if that's somewhere we go. I apologize to the officials because I didn't even ask about salmon during the briefing. It was just something I decided I would follow up on while we were here.

The fantastic news that Yukon now has a hydrogeologist on staff is really exciting with the development of the Yukon water strategy. During the briefing, we were told that there was some new equipment purchased for hydrology stations and the minister is going to correct my terminology. If he can give us some more information about what is being done with the *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan* — what kind of stuff the hydrogeologist has on his plate to start off with — and then maybe some information about those hydrology stations.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The development of the Yukon water strategy, of course, was a priority of the government and now that we have developed the water strategy, its implementation is one of the chief focuses of the Department of Environment right now. The member is correct and, as I noted in my opening remarks, we are very pleased that Mr. John Miller has joined us as the hydrogeologist as recently as yesterday. That is one aspect of the implementation of the water strategy, but I am happy to

provide a more fulsome report on how the water strategy is being implemented.

The Yukon government is investing \$2.7 million over the course of three years to execute the Yukon water strategy. Funds will be used for a variety of projects, including installing and upgrading 26 new hydrometric stations and establishing five new water quality monitoring stations. Work is already underway on several actions, including the hiring of the new hydrogeologist I just mentioned. A water-monitoring specialist will be hired to formalize the community-based water monitoring program, install and upgrade hydrometric stations, seek to add new wells to the groundwater network, plan a water forum in February 17 and 18, 2015 for water managers across the territory, develop a system to track water allocation for licences, and conduct a research study on the Dempster Highway that will help to better understand and adapt to climate change impacts on Yukon's hydrological regime.

A Yukon government working group, comprised of members from the seven departments with water related responsibilities, is working together to implement the water strategy actions. Yukon government will provide regular updates about implementation of the water strategy on yukonwater.ca and at water forums like the one I just mentioned. The strategy itself was developed over the course of two years through an extensive stakeholder and public engagement process. The strategy will be evaluated in five years with a report on progress.

To promote public awareness of the water strategy and implementation, we have invested approximately \$50,000 in a comprehensive two-phase publicity campaign, including print, radio, web, Facebook and Google ads. Members who frequent any of those sites I'm sure will have seen the advertisements in action. We've had good feedback about them and they seem to be well-received.

The new hydrometric and water quality monitoring stations were deliberately and strategically chosen to create a comprehensive network that complements the existing sites, which include Yukon government, federal and industry stations, and helps to address the following priorities: first, making more informed decisions about industrial development; second, providing baseline information for industry that will enable them to meet regulatory requirements more efficiently; third, providing information that can be used for expansion of sectorial needs in the future of hydroelectric municipal, mining, oil and gas and other resource development; and, four, to better understand and respond to the effects of climate change that cost our government money, including road washouts and damage to infrastructure.

This summer, we upgraded existing stations and installed six new hydrometric stations, including Eagle River at Dempster Highway; McParlon Creek on the Whitestone River in the Porcupine River drainage; DalGLISH Creek in the Peel River drainage; the Klondike River at Rock Creek; the Yukon River at Carmacks; and the Beaver River below Whitefish. This summer, we upgraded existing stations and installed two

new water quality stations, including the Porcupine River at Old Crow and the Old Crow River at the mouth.

Our department now has a total of 10 long-term water quality stations around the territory and three additional at Eagle River, Ogilvie River, and Haggart Creek targeted for future expansion. There are an additional 20 water quality stations designed to gather baseline information in the Eagle Plains Basin, the White Gold area and the Kotaneelee gas fields in Southeast Yukon.

The implementation of the water strategy is well underway. We're deploying significant new resources throughout the territory and we have been successful so far in recruiting the personnel we need to fill the positions necessary to see this work completed.

I'm very happy with the work we've done to date, the considerable expenditure we've undertaken already and the new stations that are now in place throughout the Yukon, with more to come in the coming years.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that and just want to give credit to the Department of Environment for the Yukon water website. It's a fantastic tool and it's pretty user-friendly for someone who's computer illiterate, so I appreciate that and look forward to more additions and more information coming along.

The minister mentioned that, in the Yukon water strategy, he was looking at having more groundwater wells added to the monitoring system. I was wondering if he could give me an idea of how many that might be, or timelines, or any of that kind of information.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The half-dozen or so hydrometric stations that I just listed, which were installed just recently, will be bolstered by a number of new ones in the future, including next year and beyond.

Those include the South Macmillan River at kilometre 407 on the Canol Highway; Boulder Creek at the Canol Highway; the 180 Mile Creek at Canol Highway; the Hess River, above Emerald Creek; Whitestone River, at the mouth; the Primrose River above Kusawa Lake; Drury Creek at Campbell Highway; Little South Klondike River; the Hyland River at Nahanni Range Road; Looney Creek, near the mouth of the river; Burwash Creek at the Alaska Highway; Dry Creek number 2 at the Alaska Highway; Rock River at the Dempster Highway; the Liard River at above Black River; the Bonnet Plume River at above Gillespie Creek; Big Salmon River near Carmacks; Sidney Creek at the South Canol highway; the Ogilvie River at the Dempster Highway; and the Babbage River, below Caribou Creek. Those are all planned for 2015. The last seven or eight that I listed were planned for 2016. In all, these represent 26 new hydrometric stations that will be added to our network in the coming years.

I think that was the extent of the question — how many new stations, where they were, and what the timelines were. I hope I have answered the question. If I missed an aspect, I look forward to hearing that.

Ms. White: I thank the minister. That is what I was looking for.

Today, with the passing of the domestic water wells act, I have some questions around how we are going to collect that water data survey. If we have a few hundred residents in a country residential subdivision who all put in wells, will Yukon government regulations ensure that all wells are reported so there is a data bank of information on water quality, water flow, seasonal flow and things like that? Will that data bank include all wells and not just those applying under the domestic water wells program, just to make sure that, if we have a flowering of wells in the near future, we are aware of how it is affecting our water resources?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'm not anticipating a flowering of new wells but perhaps there could be a flood of new wells. I'm not sure. In any event, yes, we are trying to incorporate the data that is compiled from private wells that are drilled by independent contractors. Right now we ask that people who are drilling new wells submit their data about the depth of well and the type of flow, et cetera and we incorporate that into a database. However at this point it is not mandatory for all new wells to have their data submitted. We have not gone down that path yet.

At this point, we have relied on voluntary submissions of data by individuals. We have been in touch with, to the best extent we can, all of the drilling companies — the ones that we are aware of at least — in Whitehorse and in the Yukon and have indicated to them our interest in bolstering the database of private wells to complement our general knowledge about Yukon's water resources. They are aware that we are interested in that data. We've asked them to submit it where possible. We have had a reasonable uptake of that and we do have data from private wells that is available but it's not a regulatory requirement and it's not a legal requirement. It's voluntary.

Ms. White: I give credit to the minister for finding the right language for what I was looking for, which would be a flood of new wells. Good for him.

Just in talking about that and asking about a voluntary disclosure of information for the drilling of new wells — understanding that we have existing wells and we might have new wells, depending on how much information is shared between the private contractors and government, would this be possibly something that the minister would look toward being a regulatory requirement, so we can understand more about where those wells are in the territory?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: We will consider whether or not to include that as a regulatory requirement, but I was reminded recently that, when funding is provided through the rural well program, the one that we've recently extended to municipalities, there is a requirement under that program to submit data. So if you're receiving funding from government through one of those programs, then there is the requirement to submit data, but if an individual or a company were to drill their own well, independent of government, there is no regulatory requirement for them to submit that information but, once again, as I indicated, we would ask that they voluntarily submit that.

At this point, we haven't considered making it a regulatory requirement across the board. That could be something we consider in the future, though.

Ms. White: I thank the minister. That makes perfect sense that if someone was applying for funding, he would have the information. So thank you for that clarification.

There were some concerns raised when we were talking about the domestic water well program prior — or just drilling wells, period — which is, in other jurisdictions, there's a legal requirement that the property owner or the well-driller can prove that the septic field is 100 feet away from the water source

I mean, there may not be a huge uptake on the program for the domestic water wells, but if there is, are there any concerns with the Department of Environment that wells will be drilled too close to septic fields or that someone might drill a well too close to their neighbour, or a neighbour might put in a septic field too close to a well that is already existing — or any concerns like that?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I am not aware of any concerns that Environment would have necessarily, but I would suspect that there are some environmental health requirements probably around drilling a water well through a septic field. I'm not sure if that's something that the Department of Health and Social Services looks at under Environmental Health. Members are indicating that it is in fact — so that is something that is looked at through Environmental Health, likely, but I am not aware of any concerns that the Department of Environment would have with that sort of activity.

Ms. White: This spring when we passed amendments to the *Environment Act*, the minister was given new powers to be able to ban hazardous substances in the territory. Today there is a release from Ontario of the Ontario Medical Association — I believe — and others asking the Ontario government to ban the use of neonicotinoids.

This has been a motion that I have rephrased several times, and I wanted to know if that was something that the minister was looking at under his new powers on hazardous substances, to look at banning something like neonicotinoids, which are associated with the decline in bee health and populations.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: When the member put forward that motion, I confess it was the first time I had encountered the issue, but have since followed up and looked into the issue.

I should also note that there is a bit of a national campaign driven by some environmental organization — I'm not sure which one — but that has seen tens of thousands of e-mails come to all Environment ministers across the country. Over the past number of weeks, my e-mail has been flooded numerous times by various Canadians urging me to ban neonicotinoids in our respective jurisdictions. I have had this discussion with department officials about whether or not we should enact a ban or whether or not other measures are necessary.

We have had some discussion with Agriculture in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to determine

whether or not this is a common substance in any of the products used by the agriculture industry in Yukon. Our understanding is that it is not currently being used in the agriculture industry in Yukon at this time; however, what we've determined, based on the information I have received, is that what is the most likely pathway for this substance to enter Yukon would be in bedding plants that are imported from the south. A regulatory ban on the product itself may not be effective in keeping that substance out through that channel.

What we're hoping to begin to do is communicate with some of the retailers or wholesalers of bedding plants in Yukon to get a sense of the supply chain of their products and whether or not, throughout that chain, this product would be used. There is a bit of responsibility incumbent on people who are purchasing those plants to ask about whether or not that plant had ever had any contact with this product, but in order for people to know whether or not they need to ask that, there is some education that is necessary. We are looking into how we might communicate with Yukoners about ensuring that we don't see this product come into the territory. We have contemplated a regulatory ban, but we're not sure that that would be effective. It may be a nice thing to do and it sounds good that we banned it, but there may be other measures that would be more effective, including education and discussions with some of the retailers of bedding plants in the territory, that may be more effective than a ban.

It is something we are looking at. If a ban is necessary, I am willing to do it and willing to undertake that through the *Environment Act* — especially the changes made earlier this year — but we want to make sure that it is a reasonable step and it is going to be effective. That's where we are on this issue.

Ms. White: Bees and beekeepers everywhere are happy to hear that news. Just to go along that line for a bit — and I am glad I haven't had to read this yet in a motion, because it has 15 or 16 letters and it is referred to as the new “f-word” for bees. It talks about how it is an insecticide systemic pesticide similar to the controversial neonicotinoids or neonic family of bee-killing chemicals. When applied to seeds or soil, it is absorbed by plant roots and travels to leaves, flowers, pollen and nectar, making the plant potentially toxic to insects.

That might be your next campaign, where you get 10,000 e-mails from concerned Canadians about pesticides that affect bees. I think that the real issue behind this is that it sounds like a minor issue, but without bees we don't have an agriculture system; we don't have fruit trees. They're the main pollinators in our environment.

So it's heartening to hear the minister talk about becoming more informed, and I'm sure the national campaign that I had no idea about has really helped that, but when will the department and the minister decide on the next steps with the neonicotinoids?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As I said, we've had discussions with officials; we've had discussions with agriculture and we've determined that, at this point, we think the best step

forward would be educating Yukoners about the issue. If it's determined that we need to take regulatory action, we'll do it at the appropriate time.

I don't have a specific time for the member opposite with regard to when we would undertake that, but the provisions of the act that we brought in last sitting make it possible, and there's willingness that I've expressing right now to do it. It's just a matter of whether or not it's the best course of action and that's something we're still determining.

Ms. White: That's fantastic and I thank the minister for that. Has he, with his new powers under the *Environment Act*, banned any hazardous substances so far? Just curious.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: At this point, no, we haven't banned any substances through the *Environment Act*, but we're taking a look at the list in other jurisdictions right now to determine what products we would need to ban and then making a list of the ones that are common throughout Canada. We'll bring them all in at once, to start off with. Following that, there would be a process by which products could be, for lack of a better word, nominated to be banned — once that process is in place that would be the process going forward. At this point we haven't formally banned any products, but we're determining which ones are appropriate to do so and we will be doing that in the future.

Ms. White: To go back to something that maybe isn't coming quite so far out of left field, I asked questions during the briefing about the Aishihik bison herd and I'll go back that way now.

We've talked about it before because the herd, unlike the caribou herd sadly that are struggling a bit more, has had no problem flourishing in the Yukon. The numbers are steadily increasing to the point that it has changed the regulations, so now I believe female bison can be — I believe it's open to everything — so if the minister wants to give us an update on the Aishihik bison herd and kind of what the department's doing in that management process.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, bison management is a bit of a contrast compared to caribou, as the member noted. The bison population is closely monitored in order to meet the management objectives established in the 2012 bison management plan.

The Department of Environment, in conjunction with its partners in bison management, is taking measures to increase opportunities for bison hunters. For example, maps of known bison locations are made available on the department website during the hunting season. These maps incorporate known bison locations from information gathered over the past three years.

Also, to help increase harvest numbers, the department has reduced the bison seal fee from \$50 to \$10 and will allow special guiding of bison to take place starting on April 1. Hunting is the primary method used to manage the herd's size. In 2013-14, 136 bison were harvested. Harvest models suggest that over the next three years, current harvest levels will need to be maintained or increased and the harvest more evenly balanced between bulls and cows.

The most recent inventory saw an increase from the 1,230 bison estimated in July of 2011 to approximately 1,470, including calves, in July 2014. Adaptive management for bison has been in place for about seven years. Sixty percent of the harvest last season was bulls. Harvest models predict that the population targets could be met by the end of the five-year management plan if current harvest levels were maintained and the harvest was more evenly balanced between bulls and cows. The 2013 fall hunt along highway corridors increased harvest rates and increased highway safety by directing bison off the highway corridors.

It is also worth noting that wolves have begun to prey on bison, which may help curb the growth of the herd in coming years. Interestingly, wood bison is a species at risk, listed under federal legislation. They were reintroduced into southwestern Yukon beginning in the late-1880s as part of a national recovery effort to restore populations.

The Aishihik wood bison herd is one of only nine free-ranging wood bison populations in Canada and the only one with a management plan in place. Additional flights to locate collared bison have improved the accuracy of the map available to harvesters describing bison locations. The Department of Environment finalized research on potential competition for food and habitat between bison and other ungulates. A key finding was that little competition exists among bison, moose and caribou.

Obviously, from those numbers it is clear that the bison herd continues to grow despite the fact that it is being actively managed and actively hunted by Yukoners. As of April 1, the availability will be there for non-resident hunters through special guiding to hunt bison. The current trends appear to me that more liberal measures may be needed to curb the growth of the herd, but that is something that we will do through our management practices and regulatory regimes, including discussions with Fish and Wildlife Management Board, the bison management team, the bison technical team and the officials in the Department of Environment. In some senses, the bison population is good story. It is a species at risk federally, but locally it is most certainly a herd that is thriving — a species that is doing very well in the Yukon. As our most recent data indicates, it's a species that doesn't appear to be creating much undue impact on other species, such as ungulates. I hope that is a sufficient update for the member.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for those responses.

Earlier in this sitting, when the Chair brought forward a motion for debate, I was always so close to being able to talk about it. So my question for the minister is: What role does he have in the waste diversion for recycling that is affecting Raven Recycling and P&M right now?

If he can just separate the Department of Environment from Community Services, then I will make sure I focus on what he's able to answer.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: At a high level, I would say that the distinction between the departments relates to the roles that they play. Environment is the regulator, as opposed to Community Services being — for lack of a better term — the boots on the ground. They are dealing with the management

of solid waste throughout the territory in a very literal way and hands-on way, and the Department of Environment is more focused on the regulatory aspects. We administer the *Environment Act* and the regulations pursuant to the *Environment Act*, including the beverage container regulation and the designated material regulation, which are currently out for public consultation. I believe they close on the 21st of this month. That is the distinction between the departments and I sense that there are further questions about our roles, so I will defer to the member.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that initial groundwork.

When Yukon government, last December, matched the city's diversion credits of \$75 a tonne, was that coming through Community Services, through Environment, or from general budget, and can he speak to that?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Through the regulation, Environment Yukon sets the rates at which designated materials are charged, which beverage containers are charged and the flow of money into the recycling fund. The recycling fund itself is now managed by the Department of Community Services, and the funding for the diversion credits are provided through the Department of Community Services as well. Our role in Environment is strictly a regulatory one, where we administer the regulations pursuant to the *Environment Act*.

Ms. White: I was so close to being able to use half of those notes, but I will leave them behind and concentrate on the review of the recycling system that is open for public input until very soon — November 21, I think the minister said.

It is interesting to know that it has been 22 years since this was opened up — credit to the minister for bringing it forward and opening up the topics for discussion and the products that we can look toward paying an upfront fee for and then not having to pay it to dispose of them. A lot of people in this House are older than I am and they all remember the time before tires had a recycling fee — just regular car tires. I remember being a kid and there being lots of tires in the woods, and then it seems to have eased off a bit. That has to do with the initial fee when we started recycling tires. It's exciting to know that the tire rim size is increasing.

It is interesting that, under the *Environment Act* regulations, when it talks about the review of the recycling system, it almost seems disingenuous, because what we are really talking about is reviewing the beverage container regulations and the designated material regulations. Those are the ones that collect money, but recycling as a whole has a lot of things that don't collect that money, which I think is problematic, and that has kind of led us to this current position.

Under the review of the recycling system, there were a couple of questions I had that had been flagged by not just the recyclers themselves — by both the organizations and by people.

We have the increased surcharges of the beverage containers, which I think is totally reasonable. The concern now is that we're going to classify them as big and as small,

so one litre or less and more than one litre. I was wondering if the department had thought about what that would do to wine bottles, which now would be considered small, as opposed to large — given the fact that they are one of the largest generators of income for both the recyclers.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member opposite is quite right that there are a number of materials out there that are recyclable that aren't covered by these regulations, and that's the way it is. I don't believe it's disingenuous to say it's a review of the regime. I think this is the regulatory regime, as we have it right now, so we are reviewing it, in that sense.

The specific question about wine bottles is a very valid one, and it's one that has come up through the public consultation, that folks have noticed that some categories of alcohol containers will see a decrease, as opposed to other products that would see an increase. We may, at the end of this, based on what we hear through the public consultation, take a different tack with liquor bottles. That's something we're considering and something that came up through the public consultation, or has come up through public consultation, that we're aware of, and it's something we're willing to consider — or reconsider, actually.

The intent behind the initial decision to have the 1,000-millilitre threshold and two clear categories was for simplicity.

That was something we had heard previously — that the system works better if it's very clear what is involved and what isn't, and what is characterized as what. Right now, there are five different categories that depend on what the substance is that the container is carrying, and how big, and a variety of different containers.

Simplicity was our intention, but we recognize that there is still a different role for liquor and we may consider making a change to our proposed changes to accommodate the need to treat alcohol a bit differently.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that acknowledgement. I had an animated conversation with a constituent who, when reading through it, understood that products of more than one litre — like dairy products more than one litre — were going to cost 40 cents, and then how could we possibly be putting that on? I explained that, from my interpretation of what the consultation said, that was going to be at the 15 cents. His assertion was that we should just triple everything on liquor bottles and let that cover everything else, which is definitely an opinion.

I'm glad to know that the minister and the department have been hearing some of those concerns. I think the population as a whole would be supportive of the changes toward what he just mentioned before.

It's really exciting to see the electronic products included in the consultation. He and I have had conversations with the EPR — I believe that is the abbreviation — but we talked about how that could change the packaging. I think it's really important that we move toward the pre-pay on the recycling fee — maybe if the minister just wants to expand and tell us more about this, and how he hopes to see it work in the future.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member is asking about whether or not we are going toward extended producer responsibility. What we are doing with these changes is extending, or changing, our current stewardship model, rather than going to a pure extended producer responsibility model. We chose that because we thought it would be an easier transition from our current system. It is indeed possible and, as of the spring of this year, it is now legally possible for there to be an extended producer responsibility model in Yukon. Previously there had been a legislative prohibition to that. I imagine it was unintended, but there was in fact a legislative issue that prevented there from being an EPR system in Yukon.

This is an expansion of our current stewardship program. We thought it was a reasonable next step for our recycling regime. There are some — as I'm sure the members have encountered on the doorstep and otherwise — who believe we should have gone further and added more materials. There are some who believe that we have gone too far and too fast. We are trying to find a balance and we think we have, but that's why we consult publicly and that's why we reach out to Yukoners to hear what their thoughts and what their opinions are about these changes.

The member is quite right that the dairy issue is one that is always brought up as being of particular interest. That's why we chose the proposed change of including all dairy products under the lower threshold, regardless of their size. A four-litre container of milk would be classified under the below-1,000-millilitre threshold, despite its size.

There would be a limited impact on the cost of dairy, especially for those Yukon communities that are more remote for Whitehorse and face higher grocery prices than in Whitehorse.

We're not moving to EPR now. We may in the future. At this point we're extending our stewardship program to include additional products and that's where we are.

Ms. White: I apologize. I didn't make myself very clear before — understanding that this has nothing to do with the extended producer responsibilities but we've talked about it previously before this consultation was mentioned that it was coming forward.

When the consultation is done, how long does the department expect to see the regulations in place that will have these stewardship programs and the costs at the till for the recycling happen? When does he imagine that will be an over-the-till event.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Once the consultation concludes, there is a process by which we review what we heard. We typically release the *What We Heard* document or create a *What We Heard* document and release it. I anticipate we will probably do something like that with this consultation.

Following that, there is a normal process for regulation development that includes the drafting of regulations, their submission through the Cabinet process, and ultimately their approval and publication for the availability of Yukoners. That process usually takes some amount of time. I'm not at

liberty at this point to guess how long it will take, but it usually doesn't take too, too long.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for his patience today and, again, the officials for flipping through the binder furiously to find out the questions I have just decided I was going to ask. I have just one last question before I pass it to my colleague from Klondike — and just to follow up, mostly just because I'm so excited about your answer.

What needs to be done to encourage the department to ask for testing of the piscine re-ovirus, or the infectious salmon anemia? Are there things that locally can be done? What can we do to help that decision be made to test our salmon?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: That would be a responsibility of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, so I will consult with department officials to determine whether or not, and how, we would convey that sentiment to DFO.

Ms. White: I'm just going to keep going with this one, just so I'm clear.

I do realize that it's the Department of Fisheries and Oceans that has to do the testing, but it's the Department of Environment that has to request that it be tested. What can we do to encourage the department to ask for that testing?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: What I'll do is consult with officials and determine whether or not, and how, we would make that request to DFO.

Mr. Silver: Thank you to the officials from the department for their time today. I don't have very many more questions after my colleague from the NDP, but I do have a few issues that weren't touched upon that, hopefully, we can get some comments on here today.

I'm going to start with the hunting licences. This summer, the Ross River Dena Council filed a statement of claim, seeking declaration that the Yukon government has a duty to consult and accommodate RRDC when it comes to hunting licences and tags.

The last that we heard, this was going to court and we are just wondering if there is a status update from the minister? I only have one other question on that — maybe I will wait and see what the response is from the minister first.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member is correct and I am sure he has seen my statement on that issue. Since then, all that I can report is that Yukon government's statement of defence was filed on September 2 and a case management conference held on October 2. The Yukon Fish and Game Association is seeking to intervene and that application will be heard by the court on December 3. That information may not be completely up to date, so I will confirm it in the days to come, but the most recent information I have right now is that the application will be heard on December 3. Document disclosure was due on October 24 and a further case management conference is set for December 15. The Ross River area referenced in the July 31, 2014 statement of claim corresponds to the same boundaries as the Ross River class one notification area identified under the *Quartz Mining Act*.

That is the most recent information I have. Officials have indicated that may have changed very recently, but that is the most recent information I have at this time.

Mr. Silver: I thank the minister for that answer. It does beg the question about outfitters and their trips. A lot of times outfitters will book their trips years in advance and this is big business in the Yukon.

What concerns does the minister have here? What is his department doing to quell the potential drop in outfitters' trips over the next few years in light of this claim? Is that a conversation that he and his department officials are having? If so, are there any plans to help in that regard?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As I indicated in my statement on that issue, we are hoping that there will be no immediate impact on resident, non-resident or First Nation hunters, so for those non-resident hunters who are guided through outfitting, we don't anticipate any change on it at this time. Obviously the outcomes of the case could change that.

So we are not doing anything different. At this point, we have told resident hunters and non-resident hunters alike that they should continue as normal, and if there is any change necessary, we will communicate that when we become aware of it.

Mr. Silver: It's kind of a good segue, I guess. I have a couple of questions from some constituents having concerns about hunting quotas in concessions. Are there some areas of concessions where there are no quotas for sheep, for example? In other words, can an outfitter shoot an unlimited number of a particular animal in a particular concession?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I believe only one concession in the territory has quotas for sheep. I believe it is concession 17 — concession 17 is the only concession that has quotas for sheep.

Mr. Silver: To confirm, an outfitter can shoot an unlimited number of a particular animal in a particular concession.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: There are quotas for a number of different species. The member asked about an unlimited number of animals. The quotas for various species are determined through the quota process. In some cases, an outfitter can harvest a variety of animals, but in most cases there are quotas for moose, caribou and others. I would note that if an outfitter was to wipe out the population of their concession, it wouldn't be very good business for them and would probably be a negative aspect to their business carrying forward. The quota-setting process is pretty well-publicized and it is available on our website.

Mr. Silver: Is there a quota system in place for most or all animals? The minister mentioned how the public can find out more information. Would his government website provide for the public how many animals are harvested by an outfitter?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, I believe there are quotas for most animals, to answer the member's question. If any individual has an interest in the number of animals harvested anywhere in the Yukon, they can contact the Department of Environment to get that data.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate the answers from the minister. I'm going to turn to the Watson Lake district office. I asked about this in Question Period in the spring, but I would like to get back to this again. If the minister can give me an update, what is the expected final cost of the project and when will it be completed?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that staff has now moved into the building so it is completed. There are a few other small issues that are being dealt with but my understanding is that the project is completed. Of course, the actual construction of the project was managed by Highways and Public Works, so the data about that is available in that department. I am given to understand that the project came in with the anticipated budget and on time and that the building is actually quite nice and I look forward to visiting it myself.

Mr. Silver: I have one more topic left and that's the Atlin Lake campground. The money for the Atlin Lake campground project has been moved to next year. Is the campground going to be built next year? Also, after a few delays, the *Environment Act* audit report was finally released earlier this fall. What actions will the department be taking now, based on the report?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With regard to the Atlin Lake campground, in this budget that is before us now, we are elapsing \$1.4 million.

We did spend \$70,000 on some fish survey work for Atlin Lake, despite the fact that we are not moving forward with the Atlin campground immediately.

As to the member's question of whether or not it will be built next year, I don't know. It's obviously an issue that will have to be resolved through the court case that has been brought forward by the Taku River Tlingit.

With regard to the *Environment Act* audit, yes, it was posted on-line a few weeks ago and it comes up with a number of recommendations for increased collaboration between departments. Obviously, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Community Services and other departments are noted in that audit. A number of actions are planned to respond to those recommendations. Some of the recommendations have been dealt with already; others, like the suggestion that MOUs — sorry, Madam Chair, I was a bit distracted.

Other recommendations like those that indicate that we should enter into, or refresh, memoranda of understanding with other departments we will undertake in due course and look forward to working with other departments to respond to those recommendations.

Ms. White: I thank the Member for Klondike for those questions. I was going to wait for line-by-line, but I will take the opportunity for my last one. Can the minister give us a status update on the Conrad campground and where we're at in the process and what the next steps are?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: YESAB has concluded its assessment and provided us with recommendations for moving forward with that campground. The next step would be to develop a decision document, which would respond to

the recommendations from YESAB. That work is underway right now.

Environment Yukon is the decision body that will issue the decision document, and I hope — well, we have time limits, obviously, to respond to YESAB's recommendations. I believe it is 30 days from the time of the issuance of the recommendations, so we should have that decision document sometime before mid-December.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate? We will proceed to line-by-line debate.

Hold one moment please.

Ms. White: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Deputy Clerk for her assistance.

Madam Chair, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines of Vote 52, Department of Environment, cleared or carried as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 52, Department of Environment, cleared or carried

Chair: Ms. White has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 52, Department of Environment, cleared or carried as required. Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: There is unanimous consent.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$726,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures underexpenditure in the amount of \$426,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$300,000 agreed to Department of Environment agreed to

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I move that you report progress.

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 76, entitled *Act to Amend the Fuel Oil*

Tax Act, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:21 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 173

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, November 19, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME CONSTITUENCY PORTFOLIO

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Vuntut Gwitchin
Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
Patti McLeod	Watson Lake

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New Democratic Party

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

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Doris McLean
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, November 19, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Bullying Awareness Week

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I rise in the House today to recognize Bullying Awareness Week across Canada and to pay tribute to all of the Yukon students and school staff who are committed to eliminating bullying behaviours in our schools. Bullying Awareness Week is a national campaign in Canada conceived by educator and www.bullying.org president, Bill Belsey. The theme this year is “Stand Up! (to bullying)”. The campaign takes place during the third week each November and aims to raise awareness about bullying among students in Canada. It promotes positive relationships and provides youth with real-life solutions to help them deal with bullying behaviours.

Bullying can be physical, sexual, verbal or emotional. School bullying can be defined as unwelcome behaviour among school-age children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour can be repetitive and aggressive and can result in anxiety and depression.

Beginning with Challenge Day in October, Yukon schools integrate and do very well at bullying awareness and education into activities, lessons and events throughout the school year. Yukon’s participation in Bullying Awareness Week culminates in the Sea of Pink Day on Friday when school students and staff alike will wear pink to show their solidarity against bullying.

As many members in this House know, the Sea of Pink owes its origins to a 2007 event at Central Kings Rural High School back in Nova Scotia. Two students bought and distributed 50 pink t-shirts to their peers after a younger male student in grade 9 was bullied for wearing a pink shirt on the first day of school. This gesture went viral and took off from there with pink shirt days being recognized throughout Canada and the world.

While in the Yukon schools celebrate the Sea of Pink in November, there are a number of dates where other jurisdictions encourage students and citizens alike to wear pink to help campaign against bullying. Some of these dates include Anti-Bullying Day in British Columbia at the end of February and the International Day of Pink in early April. Regardless of the day, people organize to wear pink and the message remains the same: bullying is everybody’s problem and it’s a problem that we all have a collective duty to work to bring an end to.

Department of Education is leading an inter-agency working group to coordinate efforts to raise awareness, to prevent and to respond to all forms of bullying in our schools. Through policies such as safe and caring schools and the sexual orientation and gender identity policy, we continue to promote respectful and safe school environments throughout the Yukon.

Participation in self-regulation strategies and participation in programs like MindUP in our classrooms are helping also increase socially appropriate behaviours and are helping to develop our schools’ capacity in this particular area.

Together with the Department of Justice and the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, we’re working to build stronger and safer communities for children and youth in the on-line and the off-line worlds.

This Friday, students, educators and communities across the territory will be wearing pink to show solidarity against bullying behaviours and to support building positive and kind relationships in our schools, workplaces and homes.

Mr. Speaker, you will notice that most of us are wearing some show of pink here today, as we will not be sitting on Friday. It is our opportunity to show our support for anti-bullying.

Before I conclude my remarks, I want to also extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Legislative Assembly to a number of individuals who have joined us here today in the gallery. We have with us: Annie Pellicano, the faculty advisor to the F.H. Collins Gay Straight Alliance; Morgan Yuill, this year’s youth recipient of the Community Safety Award for his work with the Be the Change team; and Nell Roothman, also very active in keeping F.H. Collins a school where students feel safe, cared for and celebrated.

Although not present here today, I would also like to recognize F.H. Collins Vice-Principal Christine Klaassen-St Pierre and her student teams who have and continue to lead the change and the charge in the school’s anti-bullying movement for many years, and for her work in continuing to inspire other schools along the way, and for having earned national recognition last year for having received the Canadian Safe Schools Network/TD Award for Excellence.

It is individuals like Christine, Annie, Morgan and Nell, and initiatives such as Be the Change and Sea of Pink that are paving the way and the change we wish to see in the world today and tomorrow.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition and the Third Party to recognize this 12th National Bullying Awareness Week.

Some have raised concerns that we shouldn’t be using the words “bully” or “bullying” in our schools and our workplaces out of fear that it will encourage some to engage in this harmful behaviour, but you can’t have a national non-smoking week without talking about smoking. When we’re raising awareness about the risks and dangers of smoking, the population isn’t being driven to pick up the habit and the same needs to be said about bullying. So let’s call it what it is.

Barbara Coloroso, author of *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*, has this to say on the matter: “Bullying is not about anger, it is not a conflict to be resolved, it is about contempt — a powerful feeling of dislike toward someone considered to be worthless, inferior and undeserving of respect.” Contempt comes with three apparent psychological advantages that allow kids to harm others without feeling empathy, compassion or shame. These are a sense of entitlement, that they have the right to hurt or control others and intolerance toward differences, and a freedom to exclude, bar, isolate and segregate others.

That sounds bleak, doesn't it, Mr. Speaker? But all hope is not lost. In the last number of years, we have seen incredible change across the country. In Nova Scotia in 2007, high school students — in retaliation to an act of bullying — flooded their school with pink shirts. This action of resistance led to the International Day of Pink, now celebrated in more than 25 countries worldwide with more than eight million participants in 2012.

Communities like Cochrane, Alberta have not only recognized Bullying Awareness Week, but are striving to be bully-free. Other municipalities are following suit and taking the pledge to be bully-free. Closer to home, schools like F.H. Collins have, with open arms, taken up the challenge to end bullying in their ranks. On Friday of this week, the hallways across the territory promise to be flooded with pink, as students and faculty tackle bullying head-on.

If you want to see something truly beautiful, I invite you to join me at F.H. Collins on Friday at 11:15 a.m. to witness the student body stand up against bullying by taking this pledge: Today, I have an obligation. No longer will I be silent if you need help; silence is participation. I refuse to participate in the problem. We're all different but we all deserve respect. If you need me, come to me. If you need help, I'm getting involved. I've got your back.

Mr. Speaker, when we stand together against bullying, we can truly make a difference.

Applause

In recognition of National Restorative Justice Week

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise today in recognition of Restorative Justice Week. This year, it is from November 16 to 23. This annual celebration was started in 1996 by the Correctional Service of Canada and has since expanded globally. Restorative Justice Week offers us the opportunity to reflect on the efforts taken to find alternative methods to address the harmful effects of conflict and crime and to create safer and healthier communities.

This year's theme is “Inspiring Innovation”. The theme reminds us that by working together, we can approach conflict and crime differently and create opportunities for communities to grow. Restorative justice, in its essence, promotes innovative approaches that empower communities to find ways to bring victims, offenders and members of the community together to resolve their issues and ultimately heal. Restorative justice is grounded in values such as respect, inclusion, healing and compassion. It promotes community

accountability and responsibility and responsiveness to unique cultural needs, such as First Nation communities.

Yukon restorative and community-based justice is focused on addressing the needs of our communities on a daily basis through locally developed responses. Community justice workers are customizing services based on the local needs of victims, offenders and communities.

In partnership with First Nations and Justice Canada's Aboriginal Justice Strategy, the Department of Justice supports nine community justice projects in communities such as Old Crow, Dawson City, Ross River, Haines Junction, Teslin, Carcross, Whitehorse and Watson Lake. These community justice projects are facilitating healing and accountability through a wide range of programs, such as by offering alternative justice system approaches like circle sentencing, conferencing and elders boards, opportunities for healing and repairing relationships and support tailored to child and youth needs. Also, the programs are providing consideration for cultural, spiritual and traditional values and mental, emotional and physical needs of victims, offenders and community members.

As a government, we are so very proud to be working with partners to offer restorative justice processes that are positive and impactful.

In closing, I would like to sincerely thank members of community justice committees, community justice coordinators, RCMP, governments and First Nation officials, families, elders and youth — among others — for their hard work and dedication to finding local solutions to resolve conflict and crime.

In recognition of Restorative Justice Week, I encourage us all to ask ourselves how we can inspire and integrate innovative restorative justice approaches in our lives and in our communities. It can be hard work, but the results are clear.

When we integrate restorative respectful and collaborative practices, we create healthier relationships, which in turn can create stronger and safer communities.

I would ask all members to join me in welcoming some folks to the gallery. We have with us Corporal Dwayne Latham, Constable Walter Wallingham, and the manager of Offender Supervision and Services, Leah White.

Applause

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to National Restorative Justice Week, held the third week in November.

The 2014 National Restorative Justice Symposium program in Banff this year reported that it has been 40 years since Mark Yantzi and Dave Worth inaugurated the contemporary restorative justice movement by co-facilitating the first victim offender mediation in Elmira, Ontario. Since then, restorative justice has spread around the globe and evolved in many countries.

Restorative justice practitioners provide services that meet the dynamic needs of people in order to acknowledge harm, to meet the needs of those affected, to provide

meaningful opportunities for accountability and to provide a means for reparation and healing. This holistic approach promotes dialogue, justice, fairness, truth and safety and continues to inspire innovation in schools, communities, families, government the criminal system and so much more.

Small actions can result in significant transformation and innovations in restorative justice can lead to huge impacts in peoples' lives and in their communities. Restorative justice promotes understanding and cultural wellness. Restorative justice includes conflict resolution and peace-building — good skills for youth and adults to develop.

Restorative Justice Week is acknowledged at colleges, schools, prisons, churches and in legislatures. Thinking broadly, restorative justice practices could include residential school curriculum in our schools and art therapy programs in correctional facilities.

In Montreal, a unique restorative justice activity is “Art for Freedom: Life After Crime”. Artworks created by victims of criminal acts are put on display and help to raise public awareness. It's important to bring to the conversation about restorative justice that victim/offender mediation needs to be safe for victims and it is not appropriate for serious and violent crimes or crimes of violence against women without safeguards for victims.

Restorative Justice Week is a time when we can think about ways to create a peaceful community. As part of Restorative Justice Week, we should ask ourselves how we can advocate for social justice for all members of society, youth in care, missing and murdered aboriginal women, incarcerated people and those who struggle with housing and meeting their basic needs.

I want to thank and acknowledge all of those who incorporate restorative justice practices in their work — NGOs like the Elizabeth Fry Society Yukon and Second Opinion Society, government workers such as those in the Department of Justice, Victim Services unit.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Opposition would like to thank the RCMP for restorative justice approaches they undertake and all of those who contribute to nine Yukon restorative projects in partnership with Justice Canada, Yukon government and First Nations: the Kwanlin Dun Justice department; Carcross-Tagish First Nation Community Justice; Teslin Tlingit Council Peacemaker Court; Haines Junction Community Justice Committee, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; Vuntut Gwitchin Community Justice Committee in Old Crow; Ross River Justice Committee, Ross River Dena Council; Dena Keh Justice, Liard First Nation in Watson Lake; Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Community Justice in Dawson City; and Tān Sakwāthān youth diversion program at Skookum Jim Friendship Centre.

In recognition of Lung Cancer Awareness Month and Radon Awareness Month

Hon. Mr. Graham: I rise in the House today to speak to Lung Cancer Awareness Month and Radon Awareness Month.

The Canadian Cancer Society estimates that there will be over 26,000 new cases of lung cancer in 2014, and approximately 20,000 deaths. The five-year survival rates for men and women are 14 percent and 20 percent respectively.

While more than 85 percent of the total new lung cancer cases in Canada are related to smoking, about 16 percent of lung cancer deaths are related to radon exposure. This year, the Canadian Cancer Society is making a point of focusing attention on radon as a leading cause of lung cancer. Part of the reason for this is that cancer due to radon exposure is completely preventable.

Radon is a colourless, odourless, radioactive gas that occurs naturally in the environment. It comes from the natural breakdown of uranium in soils and rocks. Radon gas becomes a health risk if it accumulates to high levels in closed spaces within inadequate ventilation in homes or buildings where people spend a significant amount of time.

According to Health Canada's recent cross-Canada survey of radon concentration in homes, which was published in 2012, Yukon, along with Manitoba, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan, are reported to have the highest percentages of participant homes testing above the radon guidelines. Of the 200 participating homes in Yukon, one in five had radon levels above what is considered a safe level. Fortunately, there are ways of reducing and mitigating exposure to radon gas, and I encourage everyone to visit the Yukon Housing Corporation website for excellent, Yukon-specific information on identified radon sites and how to test their homes for radon gas.

Unfortunately, the risk of developing lung cancer due to radon exposure increases significantly if the resident is also a cigarette smoker. The radon can be addressed by identifying exposure and mitigating it if needed. The smoking is more difficult — I agree — but the Department of Health and Social Services offers free programs to help Yukoners quit. I encourage all Yukoners who smoke to contact Health and Social Services or visit www.quitpath.ca to find the help they need. Lung cancer remains one of the deadliest yet most preventable forms of cancer. Let's all do whatever we can to ensure that we keep our lungs healthy.

In recognition of International Education Week

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I rise in the Assembly today on behalf of all members of the Assembly to tribute International Education Week. This year's theme is “Celebrating Canada's Engagement with the World.” This week recognizes the opportunities for Yukoners and Canadians to study and serve abroad through a number of exchange programs.

Living and learning overseas helps to prepare young people from Yukon and other regions of our country to become responsible global citizens. Providing students with opportunities for immersion in different countries, languages and cultures offers deep and rich experiential learning. Pursuing education through travel offers students unique insights into how people live around the world and the values they hold near and dear. It gives students new perspectives to

consider, as well as developing the competencies of communication, thinking and personal and social skills.

Yukon students and schools have various opportunities to very much get involved in international education through school trips, on-line opportunities and student exchanges. Students — for example from Porter Creek Secondary School — just recently travelled to Germany last spring to explore historical sites in Berlin. Students from Dawson City were able to also travel to France. The grade 5 class at Robert Service School participated in an on-line global exchange visit with students from Sierra Leone and Nunavut last spring with storytelling, songs and discussions.

Schools welcome and host exchange students as well from countries like Japan and Ukraine, providing student visitors with an immersive Yukon cultural learning experience and offering students the opportunity to make new friends from around the world. As Mary Ritter Beard once said: “Certainly, travel is more than the seeing of sights; it is a change that goes on, deep and permanent, in the ideas of living.”

This week also honours and welcomes international students from kindergarten to post-secondary institutions in our schools, colleges, universities and other institutes of education as they continue their pursuit of learning here in Canada.

The Department of Education, along with its federal partner, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, is proud to support the Multicultural Centre of the Yukon, and L’Association franco-yukonnaise.

The Multicultural Centre of the Yukon provides direct services to immigrants to Canada, such as information, referrals, translation, counselling, job searches, and so forth as well as free English language learning classes and access to a language lab where students can learn English at a self-directed pace on computer software.

L’Association franco-yukonnaise offers similar information and referral services in French for French-speaking immigrants to Yukon as well as a strong support network through Yukon’s francophone community. Through these centres, newcomers to Yukon are able to access the assistance and the training they need to succeed in their home communities in our region. International Education Week also encourages reflection on our duty to act as citizens of Yukon and of the globe, to seek out new perspectives and new ideas, to understand other cultures and languages and to welcome newcomers to this special corner of the world.

International education is all about promoting understanding, unity and community in the midst of diversity. I urge everyone in the territory and certainly in the Assembly and all lifelong learners here in our territory to pursue opportunities in international education and overseas experiences and to very much welcome and support new Yukoners as they build their new lives here in our communities in this country.

In recognition of National Adoption Awareness Month

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise today on behalf of all members to recognize that people across Canada and in Yukon are observing National Adoption Awareness Month. Adoption is a complex process that involves the transfer of parental rights over children; however, most importantly, adoption allows for the possibility that every child will have a family to call their own.

A number of laws have been developed to support the protection and promotion of children’s rights, particularly after 1991 when the United Nations ratified its *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. I found it fitting to provide the tribute to National Adoption Awareness Month for the Minister of Health and Social Services today.

Shortly after I was born in the summer of 1969, my biological mother placed me up for adoption. After a few months living with a foster family, I was adopted by my amazing and very loving parents, Jack and Vonda Nixon. I don’t ever recall being told for the first time that I was adopted. It was important to my parents that I was raised always knowing. I also respect the strength it took for my biological mother — and thousands of other mothers for that matter — to make that important and courageous decision to place their child for adoption.

When I was 18 years old, I researched and located my biological mother. I felt it was necessary to meet her to collect some background health information on the family and tell her that I respected her decision, just in case she had a doubt. I will also note that my government caucus colleague, the MLA for Riverdale North, and his wife Amanda recently adopted a little boy into their family. I commend my colleague and his wife for taking on this wonderful responsibility and for giving Eli a meaningful life with loving parents.

Here in Yukon, our *Child and Family Services Act* came into force in April 2010. This act allows for the adoption of children in permanent care that honours the customs of a child’s and families’ First Nation. We have learned from the past and all those who have been affected by adoption that our families and communities benefit when adoption is a transparent and open process.

To support this, our act also promotes the idea of openness in adoption among birth families and adoptive families that directs the Department of Health and Social Services to facilitate these processes. These changes have made it easier for birth parents and people who were adopted to find each other and has allowed for better access to adoption records.

In closing, I want to acknowledge all Yukon adoptive families, birth families and adoptees, and all those whose lives are touched through adoption today.

In recognition of World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day

Mr. Hassard: It is an honour to rise to speak on behalf of all members to recognize today as World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day, more commonly known

as COPD. World COPD Day is organized by the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease. It is an effort to raise awareness about COPD in our communities and around the world. The continuing theme is “It’s not too late.”

A 2010 Statistics Canada report states that, at 15.5 percent, Yukon has the highest prevalence of COPD for people over 65. This is compared to the national average of 7.3 percent. In 2013, 954 Yukoners were identified as having COPD, which is a steady rise from the 440 Yukoners identified in 2004. We know that it is the fourth leading cause of death in Canada, and we know that COPD is under-diagnosed.

Two of the most common conditions identified with COPD include chronic bronchitis and emphysema. The early signs of COPD are sometimes subtle and can masquerade as a smoker’s cough, a decline in fitness, or even aging. The Canadian Lung Association states that if you are over 40 and currently smoke cigarettes or have smoked in the past, you may be at risk of developing COPD.

There is a quick test called the Canadian lung health test which we can take to identify if we are at risk of having or developing COPD. We can find it on the Yukon Health and Social Services website at www.hss.gov.yk.ca. It takes less than a minute and it can help us gain valuable information about the state of our lungs’ health.

The Health Promotion unit, in partnership with the chronic conditions supports programs, has organized a free one-hour presentation and discussion tonight at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre starting at 6:30 p.m. It’s a good opportunity to find out more about COPD, including ways to improve how to live with it and the services available to help people quit smoking. It’s never too late to find out more.

In recognition of Crohn’s and Colitis Awareness Month

Mr. Elias: I rise in the House today to recognize November as Crohn’s and Colitis Awareness Month.

As you are aware, most people can eat and drink most ingredients without experiencing many side effects. Some of our citizens, however, experience painful, debilitating side effects from one of two inflammatory bowel diseases: Crohn’s disease which affects the entire digestive system, or ulcerative colitis which affects locations of the inner bowel lining.

I raise awareness of Crohn’s and colitis, since younger people and citizens living in northern regions are often diagnosed with one of these bowel diseases. The further from the equator, the higher the incidence of these diseases is.

Canadians have more reasons to be concerned about Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis than anyone else in the world. One in every 150 Canadians is living with Crohn’s or colitis, at a rate that ranks the highest in the world. Furthermore, families new to Canada are developing Crohn’s and colitis for the first time, often within the first generation.

There are around 800 people living with these conditions in the territories and 250,000 across all of Canada. Alarming, the fastest growing age of incidence is 10 and

under. The number of new cases of Crohn’s disease in Canadian children has almost doubled since 1995.

The medical community does not know the cause of these chronic diseases, yet they primarily point to environmental factors and family history and they have no recognized cures. People with Crohn’s and colitis can only do their best to manage their disease through early detection, medication and managing associated risks, particularly since they also have an increased change of developing colorectal cancer.

The national organization, Crohn’s and Colitis Canada wants to reduce patient isolation. It also funds medical research across Canada and provides education, advocacy and patient services such as on-line support services. It will soon be launching a peer-to-peer mentoring program on-line and expanding its on-line services to help those in rural communities.

Recognizing Crohn’s and colitis in November will help Crohn’s and Colitis Canada to raise awareness about these misrepresented and underfunded diseases. As such, we were asked to let the public know these serious conditions are in need of more support. Let’s help improve the lives of those living with Crohn’s and colitis by being more informed, and donating to Crohn’s and Colitis Canada.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I have for tabling the Yukon Arts Centre 2013/14 Annual Report and interestingly enough, there is an insert in the document, entitled “Jim Robb’s Yukon”.

I also have for tabling Yukon Geographical Place Names Board 2013-14 annual report.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Pursuant to the *Education Labour Relations Act*, I have for tabling the *Yukon Teachers Labour Relations Board Annual Report 2013-14*.

I also have, pursuant to the *Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Act*, the *Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Board Annual Report 2013-2014*.

As Minister of Environment, I have for tabling the *Yukon Environment Act* final audit report for the fiscal year 2012-13.

Ms. Hanson: I have for tabling today two documents related to the debate this afternoon: Designated Office Evaluation Process and Executive Committee Screening Process from YESAB.

Speaker: Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 18 — response

Hon. Mr. Kent: I rise today to respond to Petition No. 18, which was presented to this House on November 4, 2014.

Petition No. 18 asks the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Yukon to ban hydraulic fracturing in Yukon Territory.

I would certainly like to thank the citizens of Mayo for bringing their views to the Legislative Assembly in this manner. This government — and indeed this Legislative Assembly — has taken a clear, concerted approach to the subject of hydraulic fracturing with the establishment of an all-party Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing in May 2013, which has a mandate to gain science-based understanding of the technical, environmental, economic and regulatory aspects of hydraulic fracturing.

The committee, which is comprised of three members of the opposition and three members from the government benches, is tasked with considering the potential risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing if it were used in Yukon, as well as whether hydraulic fracturing can be done safely if properly regulated.

Following extensive public hearings as well as a number of site visits that I believe the committee undertook, they are currently preparing the final report with recommendations for the Legislative Assembly. It is due before the rising of this House in the current sitting.

It is important that we engage with several different information sources, groups and the Yukon public in developing legislation and regulations that are sound and relevant to the oil and gas industry. While the committee gathered information and is compiling the recommendations, no hydraulic fracturing has been permitted in the territory. In fact, Mr. Speaker, hydraulic fracturing has never been permitted in the Yukon.

I wish to assure all of those concerned that any final decision on the matter will have considered all of their perspectives.

Speaker: Are there any petitions to be presented?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government and the Town of Watson Lake to work together to upgrade Watson Lake's drinking water system, using the \$5 million that has been allocated for this project by the Yukon government.

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

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to subsection 7(1) of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, recommends that the Commissioner in Executive Council appoint Andrew Nieman as the acting Child and Youth Advocate, effective December 16, 2014.

Mr. Silver: I rise to give notice of the following motion:
THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:
(1) stop blaming Dawson residents for their request to have a mechanical sewage system;

(2) admit the final decision to go with a mechanical system was made by the Yukon Party government of the day;

(3) admit the final decision on what type of mechanical system to use was made by the Yukon Party government of the day; and

(4) focus its energy on ensuring the \$25-million plant actually works properly.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to release estimates for the annual operation and maintenance costs of the Dawson City waste-water treatment facility.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: YESAA process

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has indicated that if there is a conflict between the changes to YESAA contained in Bill S-6 and the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, the UFA would supersede these changes.

Yukon First Nations have stated on numerous occasions that they believe many of the proposed amendments to YESAA contained in Bill S-6 will be inconsistent with the UFA. A simple question — and Yukoners deserve a clear answer: How does the Premier think Yukon First Nations can go about proving whether or not the changes to YESAA contained in Bill S-6 contradict the UFA?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: What we all see is really a developing trend and really, Yukoners have two choices: the Yukon Party or an NDP/Liberal coalition opposing development in the Yukon.

The NDP and the Liberals continue to claim that they support development and then oppose and obstruct any initiative that is taken to promote it here in Yukon. As a government that represents all Yukoners and are committed to a strong economy in Yukon, we see these amendments as a necessary step forward for the territory.

Yukon First Nations have an obligation to represent their members and their interests and we encourage them to continue to raise their concerns. This government will meet its obligations under the UFA and will work with Yukon First Nation governments in the interests of all Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: Except for First Nation citizens apparently. You know the answer is a simple one — First Nations have no option but to challenge Bill S-6 in the courts. The fact is that this government's preferred way of interacting with Yukon First Nations is through the courts.

Earlier this year, the Premier said that courts create certainty. Lawsuits do not bring certainty to mining companies looking to raise capital; they bring risk — and capital is by nature risk-averse.

The reality is that Bill S-6 may not be challenged in the courts directly. Instead they will be challenged when a developer goes to assessment. So when the Premier is inviting outside companies to invest in Yukon, he is also inviting them

to be his guinea pigs to test flawed legislation. When will the Premier realize that providing a competitive business environment is not about gutting environmental assessments and alienating First Nations, but about creating partnership —

Speaker: Order please. The member's time has elapsed.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This Liberal-NDP coalition — or another way to maybe put it is the NDP-NDP light coalition — opposing development really should try to get their facts straight before they spend thousands of dollars to go to Ottawa. They don't understand the implications of these amendments and continue to be obstructionist when it comes to moving the economy forward here in the Yukon.

YESAA applies to every single project in this territory, whether it is resource extraction, whether it is building wind farms or whether it is clearing trees from your property. Any Yukoner wanting to work in this territory wants certainty and consistency in the assessment regime. The Yukon Party continues to be the only choice for Yukoners who want to see a strong economy and opportunities for Yukon families to prosper.

Ms. Hanson: Yukon citizens and Yukon First Nations deserve better than to be mocked. All that this government's blind devotion to the federal Conservatives will get them is more legal fees on the taxpayers' dime. With this government's blatant disregard for the UFA, lawsuits are inevitable. Lawsuits create uncertainty and no one, except the Premier, disputes this. Uncertainty impacts investment and hurts the economy. No one disputes that either. The Premier has repeatedly stated that he supports Bill S-6 because it benefits Yukon families, but lawsuits, uncertainty and less investment in Yukon will not benefit Yukon families.

When will the Premier recognize he simply got it wrong on the YESAA amendments and actually represent Yukon's interest in Ottawa rather than representing Ottawa in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Again, I have to say to the members opposite that the process of coming out with these amendments occurred during almost seven years of consultation.

There were thousands of hours of consultation, both during the five-year review, and then the subsequent two years, where there was consultation that was consistent with Canada's action plan to improve northern regulatory regimes, and which also is supported in the northern strategy of the federal government. It's also supported by the northern vision that's put forward by the three territorial governments.

These amendments increase environmental protection and provide certainty and clarity for industry. What that does is create more opportunities for Yukon to be competitive, which creates jobs and prosperity for Yukoners.

Question re: Special needs education programming

Mr. Tredger: Parents are telling us that an increasing number of decisions about Yukon students with special education needs are being made at the Department of Education and not at the school administration level. The

Education Act is very clear on the matter of who has jurisdiction in this matter. It is the school administration — in consultation with professional staff and parents — that is responsible for determining which students have special needs.

Have there been changes to the *Education Act* that centralize the decision-making on which students qualify for special needs programming?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Of course we are very much committed to providing the necessary supports and programs in each of our classrooms to ensure that students thrive and succeed in our learning environments in all of our 28 schools in the Yukon.

As the member opposite should know full well, we confide with schools with respect to the allocation of educational assistants and paraprofessional supports in each of our classrooms, each and every year. We do that according to individual student needs and of course we provide that according to the allocations for the number of enrolled students, the achievements of the students in the school, the rural equity adjustments according to our formulas, and overall student learning profiles.

In fact, we do have a base allocation of staffing allotted for all schools each and every year and in fact that allocation has indeed risen substantially over the past decade.

Mr. Tredger: This digression from the *Education Act* isn't the only question parents have been raising. The act also says that students demonstrating special needs are issued an individualized education plan — an IEP — to help them grow and learn, but an increasing number of students are instead being given learning plans. These are not mentioned in the section of the *Education Act* pertaining to special education. Often, parents are not involved in developing learning plans.

Why are an increasing number of special needs students being given less-structured learning plans instead of individual education plans, as called for in the *Education Act*?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, what I can in fact say — again — with respect to this matter, is that we work with a whole host of various stakeholders, including our school councils and including our school administrations for each of our 28 schools. We work with the Yukon Teachers Association and of course we work within the department itself through Student Support Services in determining allocations of resources pertinent to individual student needs and based on each of our respective school-based allocations.

As I said, those resources have, in fact, risen over the past decade, and we have almost 187 positions, as I understand, for this particular school year. It is the same as it was last year but has risen substantially over the past decade. That does not include, of course, other available supports, including counsellors, classroom teachers, school administrators, our own specific consultants, our support workers and community education liaison consultants. Again, based on the specific needs, we are in fact working with individual students.

Mr. Tredger: Parents of a child requiring special education must be involved in the IEP planning process. No one knows the sometimes complex needs of the student better

than their parents. Many of these parents do not know that they have certain rights under the *Education Act* — like the right to appeal decisions to not implement an IEP or significant changes to the education, health or safety of their children, the right to participate in school-based teams, and the right to consultation in the development of specialized education programs prepared for their children.

Yukon parents are not given the information they need to be effective advocates for the needs of their children. What is being done to ensure that Yukon parents have the information they need and can engage in a meaningful way in decision-making processes, including their right to appeal?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: What this government will continue to do is provide the resources necessary to ensure that our students have a very successful and thriving environment to learn in and to very much rise up to the occasion, on par with the rest of the student population.

As I tried to articulate for the member opposite, we do provide resources from individual supports to more intensive supports to more generic supports in the classroom. We apply that with respect to individual paraprofessionals in the classrooms. This year alone, we have some 76 students who are supported with intensive paraprofessionals for student support. We provide some 16 students who share intensive supports with paraprofessionals. We have a number of students who are enrolled in shared-resource programs — and that is in addition to other resources that we provide in the classrooms as a whole, as well as school-based allocations.

Our government is very much committed to providing the necessary support. We are very proud of the level of support and we continue to work effectively with all stakeholders, including parents, school councils, administration and so forth.

Question re: Dawson City recreation centre

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, before the sitting began, the Premier told Yukoners that the government had fulfilled many of its commitments during its last election. It certainly left the impression that the government thinks that its work is done and is trying to decide what it should do next. Well, here's a suggestion.

Before the 2011 election, the Yukon Party candidate in the Klondike held a sod-turning ceremony with the former Yukon Party Minister of Community Services to begin construction of a new recreation centre in Dawson. Three years into the government's mandate, the long-standing Yukon Party commitment to build that rec centre has fallen off the table.

This year's budget contains no funding, and nothing is mentioned in the long-term plan either. Has the government broken this promise to my community?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It would take quite awhile, actually, to talk about the investments this government has made in the member opposite's riding, specifically within the City of Dawson City — just coming in, in terms of the investment that's being made at the airport. If we look at the brand-new hospital — which, for the record, we know the

Leader of the Liberal Party, the Member for Klondike, opposed that hospital. He also opposed the new McDonald Lodge nursing home that we're building — the waste treatment plant that we've invested in and are continuing to work with the city on — even providing special asphalt that came all the way from France. It was shipped here to be used on Front Street to minimize the impacts and ensure the integrity of the historical value of that community. We continue to invest significantly in that community.

I also want to note that there is ongoing financial support for the rec centre, and we continue to work with the mayor and council on their priorities for their community.

Mr. Silver: The Premier makes it sound like the communities need an allowance that's out of his own purse. This is taxpayers' money, Mr. Speaker. He can avoid the question if he wants, but one of the myths that this government tries to keep alive is that it's making promises and delivering on them. In the case of the new recreation centre, which he avoids answering, that promise has been broken.

The Yukon Party candidate for the Klondike, during the 2011 election campaign, told voters that a newly elected Yukon Party government would build a new rec centre. People expected the government to live up to that commitment, and they did not. Days after our House rose in the spring, Dawson City released a report on the condition of the existing rec centre.

That report recommended extensive repairs with a price tag of approximately \$12.5 million. The government's public response on this report has been silence.

Is the government going to pay for at least part of this upgrade or do we have to beg for that as well?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I would note to the member is that, in fact, we have money that has been identified and committed to Dawson for supporting upgrades to their existing recreational centre. That is based on the results of discussions by me and my predecessor as Minister of Community Services, as well as officials with the City of Dawson, and working with them to discuss options for going forward.

I would point out that what the member is referring to is a commitment made by a previous MLA of something he would work for, but it is also not something that is part of a platform commitment. For the member to suggest that we're not keeping our commitments, the member is absolutely wrong. What we are doing is continuing to work with the City of Dawson. Fortunately, we have a good relationship with the City of Dawson because what we hear from the Member for Klondike is not very useful or very productive.

Mr. Silver: What we saw in the newspaper was a sod-turning ceremony with the Minister of Community Services and also the candidate for Klondike. If that's not a campaign commitment, well I don't know what is.

Let's recap. The Yukon Party candidate in Dawson — he ran a platform on building a new recreation centre. He lost and the government now is refusing to honour that commitment. The government has a report that provided a permanent fix for the current facility, and has sat on it for close to a year

refusing to say whether or not it would fund the much-needed repairs.

The report recommends demolishing the current rink and replacing it. It recommends a new ice plant and several renovations to the ice rink. It recommends a new ice plant and several renovations to the ice rink. It also pegs the cost at about \$12.5 million. Is the government going to proceed with these renovations, or do residents of Dawson have to wait for the next government to get the job done?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The first question that member opposite brought up was recognizing the work of the former MLA and that is exactly what I would like to do. I never in my response acknowledged the hard work of the Yukon Party former MLA for Klondike and the work that he did in delivering the hospital, in delivering the waste-water treatment plant, in delivering the special asphalt for Front Street, and such facilities as SOVA as well. I want to thank the former minister and MLA for Klondike for the hard work and what he delivered for his constituents during his representation of that riding.

Question re: Yukon nominee program

Ms. White: Two days ago it was announced that wages for Yukon nominee program employees in the food sector would be going up to \$15 an hour based the government calculation of the median wage in Yukon. Yesterday, the Minister of Education said that she would be travelling to Ottawa and would raise concerns about the wage hike for Yukon nominee program workers.

Will the minister be lobbying the federal government to decrease the wages of the Yukon nominee program employees in the food sector?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Actually, I will be travelling to Toronto tonight on the red-eye flight and I will be convening a meeting of all of my provincial/territorial counterparts on the labour market file. With respect to the Yukon nominee program, the median wage rate increase was brought to our attention by the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, who had sought our assistance to help facilitate a meeting with the federal government, who is responsible for ensuring — and certainly setting — the overall prevailing wage rates when it comes to Yukon nominees.

We have, in fact, engaged with officials from ESDC, the Government of Canada. We are working with industry stakeholders to arrange that meeting and we are looking to have that at the end of November.

Ms. White: The Yukon Nominee program policy statement says that the wage must match the median wage set by the new wage structure established by Employment and Social Development Canada.

So, why would the minister think that this tool that has been successfully used for years would suddenly be off? Until recently, nominee program employees working full-time at the median Yukon wage would have to spend more than half of that income just to pay the \$900 Whitehorse median rent.

No one who works full-time should be living below the poverty line, so is it this minister's intention to try to argue

with the federal government to bring down the wages of some of the lowest-paid employees in Yukon?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: No, Mr. Speaker, this minister is actually listening to the Chamber of Commerce, who has asked for the Government of Yukon's assistance in helping facilitate a meeting of the federal government and the Yukon government to bring the Yukon Bureau of Statistics together with industry stakeholders. That would include the Federation of Labour. That would include the chamber and other industry stakeholders in a full and wholesome discussion on prevailing wage rates for nominees and other related issues.

What in fact has prevailed on the national stage over the last year, under my tenure — and certainly under the tenure of Minister Kenney and the federal government — is to ensure that we work more closely with provinces and territories, including NDP governments in the country, to ensure that the labour market information that we use accurately reflects local labour market information.

We have indeed agreed to facilitate a meeting. That in fact is taking place at the end of the month and in fact is a decision ultimately up to the federal government.

Question re: Youth issues

Ms. Stick: Raising healthy and happy children is the most effective and least expensive way to promote a healthy society, but the chief medical officer of Health Yukon says, "Not all Yukon children and youth are doing well". The 2013 Health and Social Services background paper, *Pathways to Wellness — Our Children and Families*, states: "More adolescents in Yukon smoke cigarettes, binge drink and use cannabis than in other parts of Canada." It also notes that our youth underestimate health risks of substance use compared with their Canadian peers.

In the *Yukon 2012 Health Status Report Focus on Children and Youth*, these alarming trends are even higher among rural students. How will the minister explain why the wellness gap between Yukon youth and their Canadian peers has not been closed with respect to alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and other substance use?

Hon. Mr. Graham: We're aware of the problem. This is why we commission reports. It's why we started the interdepartmental steering committee, which will guide the social inclusion assessment of people in the territory. It's why we believe in the healthy families approach to creating healthy families in the territory. We're attempting, through many of the things that we've done, things like supports for children suffering or youth suffering addictions problems in high schools.

We have ADS workers on call in all three high schools in the City of Whitehorse and available in very many communities in the territory. So we're working on the issues. We realize they're there; it's a long process — the same as many of these processes are — but we will continue working on them and we will continue attempting to channel all people, not only children and youth, but adults as well, into a healthy lifestyle here in the territory.

Ms. Stick: It's true — there are many reports. The department's 2012 *Kids Count — Measuring child and family wellness in Yukon: an indicator framework* states that, in order for people to be able to make healthy lifestyle choices, they must live in an environment that makes those choices easy. According to a 2013 department manual on supporting youth in our communities, youth workers and community members cite lack of access to harm reduction resources and lack of access to mental health facilities, services and diagnoses, as some of the biggest risk to youth growing up healthy in Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, our youth need early intervention support services that meet their needs and focus on equity and social inclusion. Will the minister commit to increasing mental health supports and harm reduction services to Yukon youth in both Whitehorse and the communities?

Hon. Mr. Graham: We've already made that commitment. In fact, we've already attempted to, in many cases, carry out that commitment throughout the territory. We will continue to develop more services in Yukon communities, because mental health is really a priority with this government.

I've stated in previous Question Periods that we will be coming out with a draft mental health strategy in the very near future for various delivery agents around the territory to take a look at it and work with us. We recently completed a needs assessment in Dawson City and Watson Lake for Health and Social Services, which identified the very important role that mental health workers play in the territory. We agree that it's a difficulty. We also are continuing to work on that, but simply throwing money at every problem — which seems to be the model that the NDP espouses — is not something that we totally agree with. We think we have to be more collaborative in our use of resources. We have to make better use of our resources, especially in the communities.

Ms. Stick: The Yukon's chief medical officer called the health situation of Yukon's children and youth as: "A portrait that at times is disturbing ..." It's time to paint a different future for our youth. The *Kids Count — Measuring child and family wellness in Yukon: an indicator framework* was a good first step, but we must develop a comprehensive public health plan as recommended by the Yukon's chief medical officer — a plan that would enable us to set goals and targets and track outcomes of the health and wellness of Yukon youth and children. The minister made a clear commitment to keep the wellness of children on the agenda. It's time to cash in on that commitment to Yukoners.

Will the minister act on the chief medical officer's recommendations and commit to developing a comprehensive public health plan that includes specific goals, targets and outcomes for the health and wellness of children and youth in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with all government departments to try to coordinate an approach to mental health as well as physical health here in the Yukon.

As I said, Alcohol and Drug Services provides youth counselling in three local high schools as well as the student residence. We have youth-specific clinical services through the youth and family services department for alcohol and drug health programs. We run community-based organizations in the communities such as Many Rivers. We have them here in Whitehorse through Skookum Jim Friendship Centre. Enhanced services to youth and families will be available here in the new Sarah Steele Building which is scheduled to be built next year. We are also providing counselling services through a number of psychologists and counsellors for people with mental health difficulties.

So we are progressing. We will continue to work with all departments — the Department of Education, the Department of Justice — in order to further facilitate this planning and coordination of services to youth and children throughout the territory.

Question re: Whitehorse Correctional Centre segregation cell

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, legal and health experts have been raising concerns about the negative impacts — mental and physical — to prisoners who are held in solitary confinement. An editorial published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* highlighted these concerns, stating the profound lack of stimulation and social interaction that occurs in solitary confinement can have negative mental and physical health effects, noting that those in solitary confinement are at an increased risk of self-harm and suicide.

Solitary confinement has a negative impact on people held in corrections and that effect can be amplified for those with pre-existing mental health problems. Will the Minister of Justice commit to amending the *Corrections Act* to end the practice of using solitary confinement for prisoners who suffer from mental illness at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for her question. There are a number of things that we are doing at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre to address this very issue, but we have to keep in mind that there are reasons for separate confinement within a correctional facility.

Before I go into those, I have to thank all the staff and the management of the correctional facility. It's not an easy job they have to do on a daily basis — 24/7 operation. I commend them for the work that they do within our community.

When the staff and management have to make that tough decision — and they don't take it lightly — to put an individual into separate confinement, they need to look at a number of things, like protecting staff and other inmates from situation or chronic violence; they need to protect the inmate from, perhaps, other individuals in the correctional facility; they need to isolate inmates with significant physical or mental health problems that cannot be accommodated in other areas; they need to protect the inmate from self-harm; they need to isolate an inmate who is believed to be concealing drugs or other dangerous contraband; they need to isolate an inmate for the purpose of having his or her mental health condition assessed under the terms of the *Mental Health Act*;

and they need to take into consideration inmates who may be segregated pending the disposition of a disciplinary hearing. So we don't take this lightly.

Ms. Moorcroft: Putting inmates with mental health issues in solitary confinement will only make matters worse. It does not improve the safety of corrections staff or the public when inmates develop further mental health problems.

The minister provided this House with data regarding the use of solitary confinement last sitting. However, when a University of Manitoba law professor doing research on the use of solitary confinement in Canada asked Yukon government for those numbers, she was denied.

Will the minister be publicly accountable for the use of solitary confinement in Yukon's correctional system and provide those statistics to academics conducting research on this important matter?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Also, when the team takes into consideration placing an inmate in separate confinement, they need to look at inmates placed in segregation for disciplinary purposes that are heard before independent adjudicators, as per section 26(1) of the *Corrections Act*.

The vast majority of inmates have never been separately confined for any reason. There were 887 admissions into the Whitehorse Correctional Centre during 2013; 59 of those individuals were separately confined at Whitehorse Correctional Centre during the 2013 calendar year. This equates to just under seven percent of the inmates.

I have read off the list of what the team takes into consideration when they believe somebody may need to be separately confined. I have to take my hat off to the team at the Correctional Centre for taking all of those things into consideration, for not taking separate confinement lightly and using it as it is as last resort.

Ms. Moorcroft: There's a growing recognition in Canada that solitary confinement has a negative effect on prisoners' physical and mental health and, by extension, on the safety of correctional officers.

The correctional investigator appointed as an ombudsman for federal offenders has called for a prohibition on the long-term segregation of mentally ill, self-harming or suicidal inmates. The UN rapporteur of the Human Rights Council has said that solitary confinement for longer than 15 consecutive days is a form of torture and should be banned. We know for a fact that inmates have been held in solitary confinement at Whitehorse Correctional Centre for more than 15 days.

Is the Minister of Justice willing to invite the correctional investigator to conduct an audit on the use of solitary confinement at Whitehorse Correctional Centre?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I believe that I've answered the questions for the member opposite already. The staff and the management take into full consideration a number of separate criteria when they are placing an individual into separate confinement. As I've said in this House before, we are a government that believes in holding offenders accountable, and we're proud of that. We're also a government that feels very strongly about providing services to victims of crime, and we will continue on that path.

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

Clerk: Motion No. 774, standing in the name of Ms. Hanson.

Speaker: It is moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to:

(1) acknowledge the opposition of Yukon First Nation governments and Yukon citizens to changes to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* contained in Bill S-6, *Yukon and Nunavut Regulatory Improvement Act*, that undermine the spirit and intent of Yukon Final Agreements; and

(2) recognize that in a challenging market environment, it is critical to create certainty by preserving Yukon's reputation as a stable jurisdiction that has a well-respected environmental assessment and regulatory regime.

Ms. Hanson: I am pleased to speak this afternoon to this motion. I have a certain sense of déjà vu. I think it would be useful to recap how we got here. I remind members that on November 12, 2014, the Yukon NDP spoke to a motion from the Member for Watson Lake that spoke in general terms to the environmental and regulatory regimes in Yukon without referencing the key piece of legislation undermining Yukon's unique circumstances arising out of the mutually binding *Umbrella Final Agreement* and through it, First Nation final agreements, that commit the Yukon government, Yukon First Nations and Canada. I'm referring, of course, to YESAA, the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, which is, as Senator Dan Lang said at this past weekend's mining investment forum when referring to YESAA — he said — and I quote: "It is basically the foundation of our economy."

It was with that intent that the NDP Official Opposition moved to amend the motion put forward by the MLA for Watson Lake — to have it read:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that Yukon's regulatory regimes are consistent with the spirit and intent of Yukon land claims agreements and competitive with other jurisdictions, while also providing for sustainable and environmentally responsible development of Yukon's resources by urging the federal government to:

(1) reject the unilateral changes to YESAA contained in Bill S-6; and

(2) direct the federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to collaborate with Yukon First Nations and Yukon government to revise YESAA in accordance with the mutually agreed upon provisions in the five-year review.

Mr. Speaker, in the debate that ensued, the facts tabled did nothing to deter the Yukon Party government members from veering from their pre-packaged speaking points, many of them directly from the federal government's website and so the amended motion was defeated.

There's an old saying — and I actually thought it was a proverb because it's one of those ones that has been in the back of my head for so many years, but it's actually from former U.S. President James Garfield. It has guided me for years. It goes: "The truth will set you free, but first it will make you miserable".

Here we are today, speaking truth to power and hoping that in doing so, we can achieve agreement on the motion before us today that is put before this House with a sense of hope and optimism that as legislators, we can rise above partisan differences and act out of our responsibility to Yukon citizens.

My motion says that we're urging the Yukon government to acknowledge the opposition of Yukon First Nation governments and Yukon citizens to changes to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, contained in Bill S-6, entitled *Yukon and Nunavut Regulatory Improvement Act*, that undermine the spirit and intent of Yukon final agreements and, secondly, to recognize that, in a challenging market environment, it is critical to create certainty by preserving Yukon's reputation as a stable jurisdiction that has a well-respected environmental assessment and regulatory regime.

Members may note that the motion I originally tabled with respect to this matter also included the following — a third clause — that urged the federal government to withdraw Bill S-6 until the conclusion of a comprehensive consultation with Yukon First Nations and the Yukon public on the amendments to YESAA introduced after the completion of the five-year review process. However, after the bill was tabled, I was informed that this part was procedurally incorrect, but I am confident that all members present will join me in agreeing that the only way to achieve the objectives of the first two parts of this motion is to effectively and collectively demonstrate to the federal government that the late-in-the-game unilaterally imposed changes to YESAA that are reflected in Bill S-6 are not acceptable and have the potential to do real and lasting damage to Yukon, to our intergovernmental relationships and to our economy.

In the days following our November 12 debate, there have been a number of events that focused attention on the importance of maintaining the integrity of our made-in-Yukon YESAA — our own environmental and socio-economic assessment process.

On November 13, an overflowing crowd of Yukoners, First Nation and non-First Nation, crowded into the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre to hear first-hand from the Council of Yukon First Nations and First Nation leaders, have them outline for them their concerns with the approach taken by the federal and Yukon governments in their efforts to push through Bill S-6. What was truly inspiring was the number of non-First Nation Yukon citizens who rose to talk about the

importance of Yukon land claims agreements as "our agreements". They get that these agreements are between us all. They are not First Nation agreements alone. They are not First Nation agreements with First Nations, but they are solemn undertakings by our respective governments that set out the basis for a new relationship that is not rooted in the past, but premised on the promise of the future.

Yukon citizens see the actions by the federal and Yukon government on Bill S-6 as not just a threat to Yukon First Nations, but to all Yukon citizens. Yukon citizens have increasingly realized that they do have a voice and that democracy is not just about the ballot box; it is about trust and respect. When citizens feel their government no longer respects them or the institutions like YESAA that protect their interests, then trust in government is eroded.

It is an old but true saying that trust must be earned; it cannot be assumed. When, in this past weekend, I had an opportunity, along with my colleague, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, to attend the 2014 Yukon Geoscience Forum, it was a fascinating weekend.

On Saturday, the focus was on investment. On Sunday, the theme was seeking certainty through progressive partnerships. I give credit to the Yukon Chamber of Mines for hosting this and for inviting a very diverse array of speakers who challenged those present to think through the consequences of decisions taken in the short term. My colleague, the MLA for Mayo-Tatchun, and I were there for the entire two days and, as I said, there were some very interesting and thought-provoking presentations. I could not help but think that if only the Premier or the Minister of Economic Development or the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources had stuck it out and been present throughout the two days, they might not take so cavalier an approach to their expressed support for Bill S-6.

Mr. Speaker, that forum on Saturday on investment started with a speech by Senator Dan Lang, who kicked it off with his emphatic endorsement of Bill S-6 and quoted the Premier's unequivocal support for Bill S-6. The senator was very clear and stressed that he wants to see this bill passed quickly. I don't know how many times he said that. Not surprisingly, Senator Lang's speaking notes and those we have heard and will hear today, no doubt, mirror those used by the Yukon Party.

What struck me was this statement by the Yukon senator: "It is important for the federal government to take responsibility in this area," he said, "because they do own the resources." That may be technically true. It is the second time I have heard the senator say this. He said it in front of the Arctic Council in September. It is true that, with the exception of the 16,000 square miles owned by Yukon First Nations retaining aboriginal title to that 16,000 square miles, the underlying title to Yukon, since we are not a province, does rest with Canada. Seriously, Mr. Speaker? It does beg the question: What does devolution mean? Are we simply the caretakers for the federal government? We have now the responsibility for management of lands and resources, but we will just follow whatever the direction they want to give us?

That is certainly not how the Yukon Party has billed devolution to Yukon citizens. It is a pretty sad day when we are prepared to have a federal senator stand in a public forum and basically undermine the devolution transfer agreement.

Here we have, and have had over the last month or so, a Yukon Party Premier endorsing an unelected senator who has convinced a committee of unelected Conservative and Liberal senators to support a bill that reverses Yukon autonomy achieved through devolution in our rush to accede to the federal Conservative government's vision on northern resource extraction.

Yukon may find that, in the rush to be competitive, the nightmare that is Faro will be ours — all ours — just with a different name.

Senator Lang, just as the Premier has demonstrated, did not like to be questioned about Bill S-6. Nor did he appreciate the reiteration by Teslin Tlingit Council Chief Sidney that passage of Bill S-6 will bring, in quotes, “investor uncertainty”. But the speaker immediately after Senator Lang was Randal van Eijnsbergen — and I will spell it, Mr. Speaker, because if I try to pronounce it, the folks in Hansard may find it difficult — E-I-J-N-S-B-E-R-G-E-N — who spoke about the world commodity situation from a focus of wealth investment. His remarks, before he got into his presentation, were that the debate, the questions that had ensued pursuant to Senator Lang's speech — he said, from his perspective, that is what investors look at. He said, around the world, cooperation is what is necessary. Cooperation is what is sought, and he said it's important that you cross that bridge, because it makes it more attractive from an investment point of view.

It was Mr. van Eijnsbergen who had used the phrase to describe what Yukon — those people who are interested and involved in the mineral extraction industry, what they're facing, he said — and I quote: “a challenging market environment.” He went on to say in simple plain words, it's not pretty. He pointed out that the junior miners index is down 84 percent since 2011, the TSX venture index down 69 percent since 2011, and he said, if you could extract just mining, it would be down even more. He described the cycle of marketing emotion — and I'm sure many others in this room have seen this depiction before, but it very aptly captures the sentiment of the markets right now — and it's described as the vomiting camel. He said — and it was pretty straightforward — it's a pretty despondent picture.

So you would think, when we're dealing with challenging world economies that have direct implications for the Yukon — and you would think that, as a government, we would be trying to find ways to ensure that we do not destabilize a stable environmental and regulatory regime that we have touted — that I have heard members opposite tout, that I have heard industry leaders tout — in terms of their support for YESAA.

It strikes me that, in a current economic situation, the Yukon should be celebrating the diverse elements of our economy and bolstering the emerging economic engines that

are really epitomized by First Nation development corporations.

In the debate on November 12, I spoke to the testimony at the Senate committee of the chair of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Dakwakada Development Corporation. I just wanted to reiterate that what that chair had said was that, he said — and I quote: “I believe that the YESAA process is very much an economic engine for the Yukon. It's functioning effectively and ensuring that the relationship between First Nations and various other governments are working effectively, and that is critical, in our view as a company, to the success of Yukon's economy.”

The Dakwakada Development Corporation is just one example of a number of development corporations. I could use it as a classic example of the opportunities that are going to be squelched by this government's determination to turn its back on — not just to turn its back on, but to provoke First Nation governments, through its pursuit of Bill S-6.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Government House Leader on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, the latest remarks from the Leader of the Official Opposition would appear to me to be in contravention of Standing Order 19(g), imputing false or unavowed motives to another member. She is, in my opinion, clearly imputing motive to the government that is not only incorrect, but is contrary to what we have publicly stated and what we are doing.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: There is no point of order. It is a dispute between members.

Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms. Hanson: As I was saying, the Dakwakada Development Corporation is one of a number of development corporations established by self-governing First Nations that have, in fact, over the last number of years, become incredibly important drivers in Yukon's economy.

I just wanted to highlight some of the contributions that the Dakwakada Development Corporation has — the economic impact of this organization. They have a combined staff of 194. These are private sector jobs created by a First Nation development corporation. Multiply this by 11, Mr. Speaker — this is pretty significant. They have combined salaries and benefits of \$14,073,000; combined revenue — this is one development corporation — \$56,316,000. Their contributions to the economy are also bolstered by their contributions to the local economy where they support — wherever they can — buying from local companies and supporting local businesses. Their sponsorships include everything from — the Dakwakada Development Corporation — everything from the Geoscience Forum, the Klwane Chilkat bike relay, just about every single minor hockey association, swim team, dustball, broomball, Sourdough Rendezvous.

These are responsible businesses that have a significant contribution and they do play it and take it seriously. We should not underestimate the power of Yukon First Nation businesses and governments in this territory, and it is why I cannot understand why this government chooses to turn its back on our real partners, which are our fellow Yukon citizens, through the Yukon First Nation development corporations and First Nations.

At the conference on the Sunday morning, after the Premier left, when the Grand Chief spoke to the delegates, she said that First Nations do focus on economic development and resource development.

We have, she said, good working relationships with the resource development sector, and that was repeated several times during the day. We spoke about seeking certainty through progressive partnerships. She did say, "However, Yukon First Nations face another challenge, Bill S-6." She said — and I quote: "Proposed amendments will affect everyone, including your industry." The Grand Chief went on to say — and I quote: "We will seek your support, industry, to correct the dilemma."

Mr. Speaker, this is not simply a situation where we should be seeing the territorial government echoing what the federal government, or certain elements of the federal government, intend to do in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. This is a situation where we should be seeing a territorial premier who understands his unique role and his unique responsibilities in working with and honouring the commitments that Yukon government has made in terms of working with Yukon First Nations.

I've heard repeatedly that these are necessary because the mining sector thinks that this is really important. I remind you, Mr. Speaker, that YESAA, as it was developed over the years, was developed in collaboration, in a collegial manner, involving everybody, including the resource sector. I've spoken with, over the course of this weekend, many people who were involved and who said to me that YESAA is fundamentally good. My question to them is, so why take a sledgehammer to something that is fundamentally good, when perhaps a scalpel was more appropriate?

As we consider — that's really important, I think. There was a process to talk about what changes after a period of time of working through what YESAA means on the ground — there was a process. We'll come to where that process was betrayed.

In defending Bill S-6, the Premier and government ministers have been quick to use or tweet a few tired lines, but I have for tabling a simple and straightforward information sheet, entitled *Changes to YESAA Threaten Our Environment, Our Economy, Our Yukon*. This information was produced by the Council of Yukon First Nations, and it sets out in clear, plain language, the myths and the realities surrounding the proposed amendments. You will no doubt recognize, as I go through this document, the myths spun by both the federal and Yukon Party governments. I hope by careful consideration of the counters to those myths that we can, as a united body, come to a realization that, in its present form, Bill S-6 does

not assist Yukon in preserving our reputation as a stable jurisdiction that has a well-respected environmental assessment and regulatory regime.

Mr. Speaker, the Council of Yukon First Nations thought — I really do think that they thought that there would be an opportunity to find common ground with the federal government and the territorial government, because that is how we have done it in the past. We have sat down and we have worked it out but, when push comes to shove, sometimes you just have to say that these are the facts. Let's go through them, Mr. Speaker.

Myths and realities — and I am quoting from the document that I have just circulated: "There are a lot of misunderstandings and incorrect statements being made about the proposed amendments to YESAA, and Yukon First Nations issues with these amendments. This *"Myths and Realities"* document is aimed at correcting some of the more common myths and twisting of the facts and issues."

"Myth: There have been thousands of hours of consultation with First Nations on changes to YESAA over the past 7 years.

"Reality: The Parties discussed the YESAA process for many hours between 2008 and 2011, as part of the YESAA five-year review. It was a review required under the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA). The Parties to the UFA, the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN), Canada and Yukon agreed to work together to improve the YESAA process through shared decision-making and by consensus, when possible."

"The amendments to YESAA under Bill S-6 that are of concern were never discussed and were never raised by Canada during the five-year review. The amendments of concern include: giving binding policy direction to the Board; handing over powers to Yukon; imposing maximum timelines for assessments; and not requiring assessments when a project is renewing or being amended. These new amendments were introduced with little opportunity to ensure adequate consultation and accommodation."

"On February 26, 2014, Canada arrived at a meeting and provided paper copies of these amendments and refused to provide electronic versions to the First Nations that were on the phone for the meeting. This stopped them from being able to participate in a meaningful way."

"Yukon First Nations had less than two months to review and respond to the changes proposed by Canada. That is not enough time to review important changes to the YESAA law. Consultation means providing the necessary information to the parties. Canada didn't do that step. Canada failed to meet the test of its treaty and common law duty to consult and accommodate."

"Myth: The amendments in Bill S-6 come from the YESAA Five-Year Review.

"Reality: Bill S-6 has 40 clauses for amending the YESAA. Over 75 percent of these proposed amendments have nothing to do with the YESAA five-year review. All of the amendments that are of concern were not part of the five-year review."

“Myth: The Parties agreed on 73 of the 76 recommendations from the Five-Year Review.

“Reality: This statement has been used to suggest that the changes under Bill S-6 are reasonable and speak to the majority of First Nations’ concerns. It is wrong to view the level of agreement from the Five-Year Review like a score sheet for consultation and accommodation of First Nations concerns over the proposed amendments in Bill S-6.

“The majority of the recommendations in the Five-Year Review had to do with changing policies and procedures, or starting new work to support the YESAA process and nothing to do with changes to the law.

“Myth: ‘Beginning-to-End’ time limits for assessments will provide predictability for proponents, and, in turn, promote economic certainty and investor confidence.

“Reality: The YESAA process already includes time lines for each specific step in the process. The YESA Board and Designated Offices have mostly met these timelines.

“Often, the delays in assessments are associated with the time required for proponents to prepare responses to information requests. Projects that have taken the longest in assessment processes are those that didn’t have enough information. Establishing ‘beginning-to-end’ time lines may speed these projects through the assessment process, but this will result in rushed assessments that will not fully address potential environmental or socio-economic impacts. It may also result in a greater number of rejections of project proposals or referral to a Panel of the Board if assessors cannot determine the significance of possible impacts. This will not promote economic certainty and investor confidence.

“Approval of large projects often requires a water license. The Water Board process and other regulatory review and approvals occur after the YESAA review has been done and adds to the total time of assessments. The amendments Canada proposes will not change this added time and will not address the bigger issue of coordination between YESAA process and water licensing.

“Myth: The handing over of power under Bill S-6 should not be a problem since Yukon First Nations have already agreed to Devolution, and Canada has no immediate plans to hand over powers.

“Reality: The Yukon Devolution Transfer Agreement (YDTA) was carefully negotiated and crafted to deal with specific matters and does not address environmental review matters and does not deal with the operation of the YESAA.

“To be consistent with the treaties and devolution arrangements, Yukon First Nations must be equal partners with Canada and Yukon in decisions concerning delegation of authority. Having no plans to delegate is little comfort.

“Myth: First Nations should not worry about these changes as a violation of the Treaties, since the YESA Act already has a clause stating: ‘In any event of an inconsistency or conflict between a final agreement and this Act, the agreement prevails to the extent of the inconsistency or conflict (section 4, YESAA).’

“Although the reference to the clause is accurate, and the Final Agreement shall prevail in any inconsistency or conflict,

the only way to resolve this when it arises would be to take the matter to the courts. If proposed amendments have been clearly identified as being inconsistent with the Treaty, Canada should be taking the utmost caution in pursuing these sorts of amendments to their conclusion.”

It’s pretty serious stuff, and it’s not just Yukon First Nations who warn of the negative implications of forcing First Nations to go to court to defend their, or our, rights. As I mentioned, the investment forum this past weekend underscored the importance of certainty. On Sunday, November 16, I mentioned that the Chamber of Mines sponsored a session entitled “Seeking Certainty Through Progressive Partnerships”. In addition to having speakers from the Ta’an Kwäch’an Council and the Council of Yukon First Nations, and briefly the Premier of Yukon, there were presentations from Rodney Thomas, who is president of the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada. There was a presentation on finding support from aboriginal Canadians. There was also a presentation on exploration mining and aboriginal peoples and lessons learned.

One of the more provocative speakers of the weekend was a lawyer, author, negotiator who has been involved in major resource developments across this country, including Voisey’s Bay. He was invited by the Chamber of Mines to speak to this conference. He’s an author of the book called *Resource Rulers*. He took the audience on what he called a “tour down Evidence Road”. He clearly outlined how, over the past very few years, First Nations have rejected the status quo. They are not prepared to have governments say, “Don’t worry. Be happy.” They are actually believing that they have a right to exercise their rights. He said — and I quote: “Unsurprisingly, their legal winning streak coincides with the long list of lost resource project opportunities, and the toll on Canada’s economy has been enormous.”

I think Mr. Gallagher compellingly showed that legal precedents are causing considerable uncertainty in the business community. He places a high level of risk for the whole resource extraction industry in this country.

First Nations have been forced to turn to courts because they have had their constitutionally protected rights — and we should never, ever underestimate the fact that First Nation final agreements are constitutionally protected. It became very clear that, to First Nations — it didn’t take long for them to realize that taking their chances in court was preferable to lobbying governments for incremental, often piecemeal, changes that seemingly led nowhere. So we are facing a situation here where First Nations have demonstrated, time and time and time again, their absolute willingness — not just by words, Mr. Speaker, but by action — to work with the development companies, with resource extraction companies throughout this territory, historically and in the current times.

Despite that — and despite what I’ve talked about and what they’ve demonstrated through their investments in this territory through their development corporations — we have a Yukon Party government that is prepared to say, “Too bad. It’s much more important for us to align with the federal

government because they are our masters.” That’s a sad, sad commentary.

Mr. Gallagher described the First Nations’ legal wins across the country —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: That would appear to me to be a contravention of Standing Order 19(g), and I believe there have also been previous rulings by Speakers that it’s out of order to make such accusations to other members. The member — I think that she should be — I would encourage you to ask her to retract that and apologize for that, her last statement.

Speaker: What was it in her last statement that you found offensive, sir?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The accusation that government is taking direction from Ottawa, and referring to the federal government as the masters of the Yukon government is highly offensive and, I believe, in contravention of the Standing Orders.

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

Ms. Stick: I heard my colleague state an opinion of what she believes to be true, and I believe this would be actually a conflict between members.

Speaker’s statement

Speaker: If memory serves, the statement that the opposition leader made has been used several times in the past here in this House and was not deemed at that time to be offensive, but now it seems to be. I’m going to have a look at the Blues and take a careful review of it and, if needed, I will give a ruling at that time.

Leader of the Official Opposition, please.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, the track record of court cases wherein First Nations across this country have won, the achievements are, at the last count — there are 196 legal wins that have radically transformed the corporate government First Nation relationships across this country.

One should be mindful that these are not just court challenges against provincial and territorial governments — and this territorial government is all too familiar with the track record there — but as well against the federal government. There were, I think, 12 cases in British Columbia alone last year of which First Nations won 10.

The score is not that good for governments challenging aboriginal rights. Why would we? Why would we challenge something that we committed to when we entered into these agreements with First Nation governments?

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gallagher, during this talk on the weekend, described the legal wins for First Nations being like a popcorn popper reaching full tilt. It’s coming faster and

faster. The Yukon — the Yukon economy, Yukon citizens, and the relationship with Yukon First Nations — does not need to be thrown into that popper. We have a tried and true process in this territory. We talk with each other. That’s how YESAA has evolved over the years. Taking a sledgehammer to a process that has served us so well, even at the height of all the economic exploration and activity over the last couple of years, is so counterintuitive.

I am looking forward to hearing the Premier explain how those four amendments that were never discussed with Yukon First Nations — were never part of the five-year review — will contribute to the economic certainty of this territory, because I would like him to lay it out in this people’s Chamber for the elected members of this territory to hear before he sends the lawyers to court to make this argument. As the elected members of all Yukon people, including Yukon First Nation citizens, we have an obligation to ensure that we uphold the commitments we made as the Government of Yukon to work with Yukon First Nations and to ensure that the institutions like YESAA, which we committed to establish and to make whole and to make effective, are not undermined by some vague notion, absolutely evidence-less — no evidence proven for it, absolutely no evidence. That’s the irony of it. This is ideologically driven, and this is a sad, sad commentary.

Today it’s our opportunity to demonstrate our support for the relationship and the ever-expanding opportunities associated with giving life to and respect for our Yukon agreements. Yukon citizens expect us to act, as you said again in our daily prayer, with dignity and honour. I urge my colleagues in this Assembly to support the motion as tabled this afternoon.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I rise today in debate of motion day today of Motion No. 774. I would like to begin by again reiterating the Yukon government’s support for the comprehensive and objective assessment processes established in the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* — or YESAA — and the opportunities that it provides for First Nation and public participation.

The Yukon government is pleased that Canada is amending YESAA and we support the amendments, as proposed in Bill S-6, which has now passed the Senate unanimously, including all those Liberal senators, and is now, I believe, in second reading in the House of Commons.

We believe that the proposed act changes align with Yukon’s focus on cost-effectiveness, value and timeliness of processes and ensuring the Yukon assessment regime is competitive and responsive. The Yukon government also supports the upcoming regulatory review that is being proposed by Canada. We believe that having an assessment process that is consistent with other jurisdictions, including the territorial neighbours to our east — Northwest Territories and Nunavut — can ensure that we remain competitive and provides certainty — certainty for local businesses, certainty for exploration companies that are looking to come to Yukon to do work, certainty for miners as well, and certainty for

people who are willing to invest. Right now, I am talking about mining, but of course I will also spend some time to also ensure that people understand that YESAA is not just about resource extraction. YESAA is, in fact, about all development projects that exist here in Yukon.

Most of the amendments that exist in Bill S-6 are really administrative. Most of the amendments, in fact, came through a process that was the five-year review that began in 2008 and continued through until October 2012, when Yukon First Nations, CYFN, and Yukon government received notification from the Government of Canada that the five-year review was ending and that there were 76 recommendations as a result of that review. Seventy-three of those recommendations received unanimous support of all parties, which is outstanding. There was nothing stipulated within YESAA or the final agreements that stipulated that there had to be unanimous support on all recommendations; however, 73 out of 76 was quite outstanding.

What the federal government also stated at that time was that they wanted to continue to proceed with consultation with Yukon First Nations, CYFN, and with Yukon government on Canada's action plan to improve the northern regulatory regimes, and that it was also consistent with the Government of Canada's northern strategy. As I have also mentioned earlier, these amendments really are supported by the pan-territorial governments and northern vision document that was just, in fact, updated this fall.

When it comes to the actual amendments, there were, as I mentioned, mostly administrative amendments, but there some key proposed act amendments and I would like to spend a few minutes talking about those. One of them was the policy direction — the ability for the federal minister to issue direction to YESAB. This policy direction really ensures common understanding between government and the board to help reduce uncertainty and delays. Any policy direction must be consistent with the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*; it must be consistent with the *Umbrella Final Agreement*; it must be consistent with individual land claims; and it must be consistent with other Yukon legislation. Policy direction is common in other jurisdictions across this country and, in fact, the Yukon government has the ability to provide policy direction to the Water Board through the *Yukon Waters Act*. Policy direction must pertain to the exercise or performance of board powers, duties and/or functions. Policy direction cannot change the assessment process itself. Policy direction cannot expand or restrict powers of the board. Policy direction cannot interfere with active or completed reviews.

I look to our neighbours to the east — I believe policy direction has been applied but only three times since 2003 — where this power, as I have said, already exists.

I believe what we are hearing from, really, the NDP-Liberal coalition are statements that are not reflective of what is actually being presented by the Government of Canada in its proposed amendments through Bill S-6. The NDP-Liberal coalition — or I think my other description was NDP and NDP light.

The next key proposed act amendment would be on delegation. This is the ability for the federal minister to delegate authorities under YESAA to the territorial minister. This is really a permissive amendment, and I would like to again say that the federal minister and I have both stated numerous times that no delegation is contemplated at this time. Delegation allows for administrative efficiencies and those authorities are quite limited. For example, the regulations cannot be delegated, and that is essentially the largest piece. For example, there are things such as activity thresholds that exist within the regulations. The federal government cannot delegate the regulations.

YESAA will remain a co-managed process and First Nation participation continues to be guaranteed. There are seven members to the YESAA board — three members are on the executive committee, one nominated by Yukon First Nations, one nominated by Government of Canada, one nominated by Yukon government. There are four other board members. Two of them are nominated by Council of Yukon First Nations, one by Yukon government and one by Canada. Adding that up, that means that Yukon First Nations have three out of seven board members guaranteed participation within the YESAA process.

It is also interesting to listen to the opposition on this topic, because they are opposed to direction or leadership from the federal government through policy direction, but they're also opposed to delegation of authority. So they're opposed no matter which way you look at it, and I think that's a great example of exactly what we hear from the Liberals and the NDP.

We believe that, while there is no contemplation of delegation, delegation has been a pretty good thing for Yukon since the devolution of the responsibility for the management of the land, water and resources. I think the performance history — that the numbers show that, since Yukon Party government has come into power, and along with self-government agreements that have been reached with 11 of the 14 First Nations, and devolution, there has been a tremendous growth in this territory — over a 20-percent increase in population — consistent growth in an economy that has outpaced the rest of the country. I look back at 2009, when the whole world's economy contracted. Everybody in Canada had contraction in their economy, except for PEI, which was flat at zero. I believe in 2009, Yukon's economy that year — GDP — increased by 7.7 percent.

We believe that delegation and the assumption of powers closer to the people allows better decisions to be made and is very positive, but we do have the opposition, who are opposed to seeing clarity to the board to ensure consistency between the board and the government. They're opposed to that, but they are also opposed to seeing more powers devolved to the territorial government.

Again I will just mention that, really, devolution, if it was to be enacted, would certainly be restricted to mostly administrative roles, that the regulations could never be devolved. I know that if, in fact, this was to occur in the future, before such a delegation would ever occur, that there

would be engagement with the Yukon First Nations before such a thing would happen. I'm sure the government of the day would be very willing and responsive and note that as being something that should be necessary as well.

The next proposed act amendment is around the renewals or the amendment clause, clarification that an amendment or a renewal to an authorization does not in itself require an assessment. This act amendment clarifies that a decision body determines if a project requires a new assessment, after having considered whether there is significant change to the project and whether that change triggers an assessment under YESAA. This is a clarification clause. This clarifies that any time there is an amendment or renewal, that in itself isn't going to trigger a YESAA assessment. There are many projects that continue on, come to the end of their renewal and haven't changed anything, yet they have to go through this process again — a process that, depending on the size of the project, can have a substantial financial implication. It takes up a lot of time and money of the proponent, as well as the assets of YESAB, where they could be working on other projects. It, quite honestly, makes no sense, if there is no change or changes that are not significant, that they should have to go through another assessment simply because they need a renewal or an amendment.

Such things also create a lot of uncertainty, not only for the proponent, but for all those people who work at that project, and also all the suppliers as well. There is very strong agreement, I believe, by whomever you talk to, to say that it doesn't make sense to have to trigger another assessment just simply because you need a renewal or an amendment to the licence. As I said, there are a lot of projects that need to be looked at and, if we are spending our time doing that, it doesn't really make any sense at all.

This also stipulates who decides this — if it isn't automatically triggered by a renewal or amendment, that it's the decision body. So on settlement land means it's the First Nation that would decide whether or not that project needs to have another assessment. If it's on Crown land, it would be the Yukon government that would decide whether or not. It really clarifies that and it's really interesting because the Leader of the NDP stood up here and was wondering how could we ever not accept all the recommendations that come out of a YESA board project analysis? We do find that very interesting because we're pretty sure that if we asked the First Nations, they'll be adamant that it's they as the landowner on settlement land who have the ability to accept, modify or reject the recommendations of a board of unelected, accountable-to-nobody board. It is the elected officials who have the weight of that responsibility, not the YESA board.

We know — she was quite clear in her assertions. We know that the First Nations will be interested to hear what the position of the NDP is on that.

Ensuring that we don't have to put projects unnecessarily through another assessment process does create that certainty for families, employees, project suppliers and indirect businesses who support those projects and, as well, the international investment community — looking at where is the

best place to put their money. Significant time and cost goes into doing those reassessments and we believe that the decision body should decide whether or not it needs to happen and it shouldn't be an automatic trigger.

On timelines — another key proposed act amendment — so legislative timeline limits that include the adequacy stage for designated office evaluations — nine months. Executive committee screenings — 16 months and panel views — three months to develop terms of reference plus 15 months. There is no change in those timelines. These timelines were in the board rules. They are now put into the legislation. What that does is create certainty by having them be part of the legislation. Certainty is something that we know — and I talk about industry; I talk about businesses — but I also know that First Nations want certainty as well.

These timelines, of course, do not include the time a proponent has to answer information requests. When the assessment process requests information from the proponent, the clock stops until they submit that information, at which time the clock starts again.

So really, when you look at it, successful completion of assessments really require timely action by not only the assessors, but also the proponents as well to ensure that we can get through this process in a timely manner.

CEAA — the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* — is being removed from application and this is essentially a clarification or housekeeping item. This is another request that was made by First Nations through the consultation as well.

As I have mentioned, there are some enhancements to the environmental assessment process and I believe that this was articulated in the Senate hearings by everybody — the acknowledgement that the assessment process in itself is remaining essentially unchanged, except it is getting a little bit better. So it's better — I won't say it is unchanged; it is better. What it allows for is for the potential effects of likely future projects to be considered in the assessment. It also ensures that cumulative effects can also be considered in an assessment.

For people to imply that these amendments are bad for the environment is simply wrong. What has occurred here has enhanced environmental protection. Most of these amendments have essentially nothing to do with the assessment process, but the one that does, makes that assessment process even better.

As I mentioned, YESAA is not just about resource extraction. It is about all kinds of projects — roads, new bridges, energy. You know, there was the LNG plant for backup power that of course had to go through YESAA. Fibre optics, water stations, waste water, clearing trees on your property, power poles, culverts — everything is impacted through this process.

There were a number of people — or organizations I guess — in attendance with the Senate hearings in Ottawa who were supportive of these amendments. Of course the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada was supportive, of course. The record states that the Government of Yukon as well has been supportive of these

changes. Also represented was the Yukon Energy Corporation by the former CEO of Yukon Energy who was there and supportive; the Klondike Placer Miners' Association, Yukon Chambers of Mines, Alexco Resource Corporation — these are some of the people who addressed the Senate committee and were there in support of these amendments.

It is a bit disconcerting, as I said, that when we see the NDP and the Liberals stand up and consistently say that they support the economy; they support development — they say that — but then every time they turn around they continue to be obstructionist and ensure that things don't go forward.

That is just how it is. That's why really I think we refer to them as the NDP-Liberal coalition, because they're both having that approach where they'll stand up proudly and say we support things — we support economic development — then turn around and find an excuse always to be in the way, to further delay, to restrict and to throw water on the fire of economic development. Quite frankly, they don't understand the implications of these amendments. They continue to be obstructionist when it comes to moving any economic development forward in the territory and the record of voting will stand for itself.

I stood up here today and thanked the former member who represented Klondike who delivered many, many projects for that community and the benefits of those projects and that investment continues to live on today. Sadly, the current member has voted opposed to every project and every investment that we have attempted or we have delivered in that community. But I'm sure he goes to his community and tells everybody how he delivered it.

YESAA applies to every project. Yukoners want certainty and they want consistency in their assessment regime, because that will allow for more opportunities to exist.

First Nations have an obligation to represent their members and their interests and we have certainly encouraged them to do that and to raise their concerns. It is very important that they do. My responsibility and this government's responsibility are to support and look after all citizens of this territory. We believe that the amendments to this legislation are good for the territory, but we also acknowledge that this is a federal process. We stand here to support a process that is really being driven by the federal government. Yes, it did start in the Senate. There are many pieces of legislation that start in the Senate, but all of us in this House know that all of that legislation must travel through both Houses. It has gone through the Senate unanimously. All senators supported this amendment, Bill S-6. They supported it without making any amendments to the bill that was put in front of them. Again I will say that it was all senators, including the Liberal senators as well.

It is now sitting in the House of Commons for second reading. It will also go to Committee as well and we look forward to the travel of that bill through the House and having it be proclaimed. We also look forward to the engagement that will occur — that has already begun to occur with respect to the regulations that the federal government has committed to moving forward with.

The motion that we have in front of us today — I will move an amendment to the motion.

Amendment proposed

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move:

THAT Motion No. 774 be amended by deleting clause (1), and the number “(2)”.

Speaker: The amendment is in order.

It has been moved by the Hon. Premier:

THAT Motion No. 774 be amended by deleting clause (1), and the number “(2)”.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: With the proposed amendment, members of the Legislative Assembly will see a motion in front of them that is, in fact, very similar to a motion that was debated in this House very recently, and that was Motion No. 756, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake.

It read: “THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that Yukon's regulatory regimes are clear, consistent and competitive with other jurisdictions, while also providing for sustainable and environmentally responsible development of Yukon's resources.”

This motion passed this House, sadly without the support — in fact, both the NDP and the Liberals — we have a theme here — voted against this motion, a motion ensuring that the government have a regulatory system that's clear, consistent and competitive with other jurisdictions in this country but, while doing so, providing for sustainable and environmentally responsible development of Yukon's resources.

I could not believe that the opposition could vote against such a strong and responsible motion in this House. I know that members in the private sector are keen to know yet again, as I have stated, that while those parties talk about promoting an economy, they find every reason to obstruct moving forward with a growing economy in this territory.

With that motion, what we have now proposed is that this House urges the Government of Yukon to “recognize that in a challenging market environment, it is critical to create certainty by preserving Yukon's reputation as a stable jurisdiction that has a well-respected environmental assessment and regulatory regime”.

That is exactly what this government's goal is and, as I mentioned, it really fits in strongly with the motion that was debated in the past in this House very recently. It's sad to see that the Liberals and the NDP have voted against that motion, but they also vote against all of our investments in infrastructure, which is another component of what this government is doing as part of our responsibility toward ensuring the greatest opportunity for strong economic growth and opportunity for Yukon families — by investing in roads; investing in bridges; investing in power and new telecommunications; investing and supporting work in the ice-free deep-water ports that we have access to; investing in training, such as the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining and the mobile trades training trailer — and also taking the time and making those amendments — working with First Nations, working with industry to look at our regulatory

processes, as well as the assessment process, to ensure that we can have that clear, transparent consistency that everybody is looking for — and that's just not industry. I talk to many First Nation chiefs who say the very same thing. We need to get rid of duplication. We need to make the processes clear because, when projects come in, they are looking at the project as a whole. From there, we fractionate it.

What we need to do is, we need to ensure that, through the assessment and regulatory permitting processes, that we find the best path forward. That is one of the things that this government has been working on and we will continue to work on.

With this friendly amendment to this motion, we feel that the motion then really reflects where this government stands. Of course, we are very supportive of the amendment that was passed just last week.

Ms. Hanson: I'm not surprised — disappointed yet again — at, I guess, how occasionally obtuse the arguments get in this room. You won't be able to find insult in that, Mr. Speaker.

The difficulty that is presented by the Yukon Party again tabling this motion, which is essentially, as the Premier said a replicate of what was tabled on November 12 by the Member for Watson Lake.

I will remind the Premier that, when I rose this afternoon, I said that my concern that I had expressed with respect to the motion that the Member for Watson Lake, in tabling that motion — there were a number of issues that were embedded in that. It's like there is an assertion or a mindset that assumes that, if you just repeat something over and over and over again, people are going to believe you even when there is no basis for that belief.

It's telling that nowhere in what the Premier just tabled is there anything that would indicate that he acknowledges that we have a relationship with Yukon First Nations. We would have expected that, at minimum, he could have taken something with respect to the spirit and intent of the agreements that we have negotiated with Yukon First Nations. He has made it clear that he doesn't think that he has a relationship as the Premier of this territory. He doesn't think he has an obligation to fulfill the obligations and the commitments set out in those agreements.

It's more than disappointing. I think that the motion that was put forward totally undermines and, as was intended, contradicts the intention of the motion that we had put forward as the Official Opposition, which really was to reassert the importance of that relationship.

In putting forward this motion — excuse me, Mr. Speaker. I am just looking for my scribbled notes to myself as the speaker was going on here because it sort of took me aback that he would be as audacious as that to turn his back on these First Nation relationships. It rattles me because I can't understand how a Premier of this territory could be forcing us into this situation. When we had this debate two weeks ago and we attempted to get this government to recognize — and you will recall that we

proposed an amendment that talked about ensuring that Yukon's regulatory regimes are consistent with the spirit and intent of Yukon land claims agreement, and this government voted against that.

We asked this government to support Yukon First Nation governments and Yukon citizens to reject the unilateral changes to the YESAA contained in Bill S-6. It was telling that the Premier repeated the same speaking points off of the federal website that he tweeted yesterday and then retracted. Surely to heavens, if there are reasons why he thinks or his government thinks that the amendments to Bill S-6 that did not emanate from the five-year review — then he would be able to explain them. He has not. He has simply reiterated the federal speaking points. That is not leadership.

It is incredibly disappointing that they have put forward yet again a motion that does not reflect that what we're talking about when we talk about a sound and a stable regulatory regime in this territory is one that is YESAA. That's what it's about. That's the foundation. That foundation was developed by us all. It took a long time. What the actions of this government are doing is threatening to tear it apart and to throw it to the courts and to have the courts drag this out.

One would have thought, if there was thought put into it — this is not an evidence-based government. It makes a decision and then tries to prop it up with whatever sources they can find. The courts across this country, up to and including the Supreme Court of Canada, have made it very clear that when you have constitutionally protected rights, do not trifle with them. Do not try to trample them.

What the government is doing here is putting forward a motion that, on one hand, recognizes what the experts are telling us — as I said in my speaking points, recognizing that we are in a challenging market environment and they are inviting it. They are saying, "Come on, come on, let's have more challenges." Not only is it hard for companies, for individuals, for businesses to attract investment, we're just saying, "Guess what — we want to up the ante. We want to make it more difficult." Those are the messages the businesses are hearing.

I say go for it. Pass another Yukon-Party-dominated motion that is ultimately rendered meaningless because you have refused to include any reference to what it refers to, which is all about our relationship with Yukon First Nation governments. Fill your boots. It's your job, you can do it.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise to speak against the amendment introduced by the Premier. The reason that I'm speaking against this amendment is that it guts the intent of the very good motion that was presented by the Leader of the Official Opposition, which calls on this Assembly to urge the Yukon government to acknowledge the opposition of Yukon First Nation governments and Yukon citizens to changes to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* contained in Bill S-6, *Yukon and Nunavut Regulatory Improvement Act*, that undermine the spirit and intent of Yukon final agreements.

Mr. Speaker, that is so relevant to the issue before us. The amendment would fail to acknowledge the decades of hard work done by Yukon First Nation citizens and leaders in asserting their rights to their land and sovereignty and the work by former political leaders for First Nations, Yukon and Canadian governments, and their officials.

As a result of that work, we have in the Yukon land claims and self-government rights that this amendment does not want to acknowledge. These treaty negotiations were slow but, during the course of the negotiations, people developed relationships of trust and goodwill. The land claims agreements resulted in the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, a development assessment process built over years of collaboration between governments. I believe collaboration between individuals and between governments is possible.

YESAB is a demonstration of that collaboration between aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities. The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board is an independent, neutral, arm's-length body responsible for the administration of the assessment responsibilities under the *Yukon Environmental Socio-economic Assessment Act*.

I would like to contrast that collaborative approach with the Harper Conservative government in Ottawa, which has denied the legacy of colonialism. Let me briefly outline some of the evidence of colonialism that all of us must by now be aware of in Canada. Colonialism is about stealing land and resources from indigenous peoples for the economic and political benefit of — in Canada's case — the white settler society, leaving First Nation communities to struggle against systemic racism. Examples of systemic racism are: poor educational outcomes of First Nation students; housing shortages; higher unemployment rates; over-incarceration; extremely high rates of violence against women and missing and murdered aboriginal women; addictions; and social alienation.

Generations of Yukon First Nation students have survived residential school and still today we see high numbers of First Nation children in government care. These are harsh realities to speak about, but they are facts affecting the lives of First Nation people today. Notwithstanding colonialism and racism, during and following 40 years of negotiations for their rights, Yukon First Nations remain strong in their culture and their traditional knowledge. This summer, I witnessed that at the Moosehide Gathering and at the totem-pole raising ceremony in Carcross.

Elders provide a link to the stories of the past and to the traditional economy of Yukon Indian people. First Nation people's special relationship to the wilderness environment encompasses spiritual, physical and heritage values. First Nations have a deep connection to the land and the water and give respect to all life — people, and also plants, animals, birds and fish. First Nations believe that societies and economies can be sustained for the future, only if we protect the environmental quality of life for future generations.

YESAA was a success because it was achieved through collaboration and includes First Nations at the decision-

making table. YESAA is a balanced approach to assessing projects and, of significant importance, YESAA is a regime that gives certainty to all parties. YESAA is good for industry, for investment and for solid working relationships between parties.

The objectives for a development assessment process are set out in the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. It provides for consideration of the traditional economy of Yukon Indian people and their special relationship with the wilderness environment; guaranteed participation by Yukon Indian people in the development assessment process and it protects and maintains the well-being of all Yukon residents and the protection of environmental quality and of heritage resources.

A recent AR association surveyed rural First Nation people about mining because they tend to live closer to mining projects and are more likely to be affected. The survey revealed that only 38 percent of aboriginal Canadians have a positive perception of the mining industry. The survey identified that industry needs to improve things like honesty and trust as well as how their work impacts the environment, and then how good a job they are doing with providing opportunities to, and working with, aboriginal communities.

Yukon First Nations have indicated they can support and work with industry. The Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief Ruth Massie spoke at the recent Geoscience Forum about First Nation focus on economic development, but that focus on economic development relies on YESAA, which this amendment would remove from discussion in our motion debate today.

Yukon First Nations community members do want to get training to participate in the resource sector economy. We see this with First Nation graduates of on-the-land training that incorporates elders' traditional knowledge and First Nation students' successes at the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining. That success relies on *Umbrella Final Agreement* and YESAB, which provide for participation of First Nation people in the development assessment process and in economic benefits of projects undertaken consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

In Yukon, YESAA process contributes to trust between the parties. CYFN and its member First Nations have clearly said Bill S-6 is a challenge for industry, because the amendments defy those agreements and that will end up in court, as First Nations have warned us.

Recently, Teslin Tlingit Council citizens located hazardous materials in the bush — more of the dirty garbage left behind during the construction of the Alaska Highway during World War II — a project long before YESAA was in place. So it's not hard to understand why Yukon First Nation leaders today want to ensure the specific objectives of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, signed in 1993, are met and that YESAA continues to respect the *Umbrella Final Agreement*.

YESAA was seen as benchmark environmental legislation when it came into law in 2005. Almost a decade later, the Harper Conservative approach to YESAA amendments is an arbitrary and colonial approach to law reform. The federal Conservatives chose to introduce Bill S-6

YESAA amendments in the unelected Senate, with Yukon Senator Dan Lang leading the current charge against land claims agreements, just as he and his territorial counterparts were staunchly and vocally opposed to land claims while they were being negotiated.

After conducting a five-year review, which discussed how well YESAA was achieving the objectives set out in the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, the federal government released a revised draft report without the consent of the Yukon government and Yukon First Nation governments. The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board's submission to the Senate committee stated that several proposed changes to YESAA contained in Bill S-6 extend beyond the scope of the five-year review.

It is deplorable that the Premier and his government are stepping backward from self-government principles by supporting the Harper Conservative agenda that would establish the right of the federal government to impose binding policy direction on YESAA. I guess that's why the Premier has tabled his amendment to remove from discussion the opposition of Yukon First Nation governments and citizens to these unilateral and arbitrary changes to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*. To be consistent with the treaties and devolution arrangements, Yukon First Nations must be equal partners in decisions concerning delegation of authority.

MLAs in this Assembly should recognize First Nation rights, and this amendment removes all discussion of that. But those First Nation rights are legal rights. The Yukon government is obliged to respect constitutionally protected Yukon land claims and self-government agreements, agreements that led to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*. I would add that Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board share concerns about the federal government imposing an arbitrary 16-month time frame into the YESAA process.

I would like to share with this Assembly something I've learned living and working in the Yukon. Working together requires us to listen to others. It requires us to allow for debate on important matters, even when we may disagree with one another. We have a duty to be responsible legislators. I've talked about some of the ways that hasn't been done well in the past and some notable successes: land claims agreements that create certainty and benefit all Yukon people and, for that matter, the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* — also a notable success.

What we can do today, the responsible thing to do today is to vote against the amendment before us, because it takes the Yukon down a road of division and uncertainty.

The motion as presented by my colleague, the Member for Whitehorse Centre, would urge this Yukon government to acknowledge the opposition of Yukon First Nation governments and the opposition of Yukon citizens to changes to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* found in the bill in the Senate — Bill S-6, the *Yukon and Nunavut Regulatory Improvement Act* — because it does

undermine the spirit and the intent of Yukon final agreements. First Nations have been organizing and publishing information about how these changes to YESAA threaten our environment, our economy and our Yukon. I would urge members to defeat the amendment before us.

Mr. Silver: I'm hearing a lot of that "coalition" word today. It's quite interesting. It's kind of interesting because what I see in the opposition right now is two different and very distinct parties working and listening to First Nation governments. I have been communicating with several different chiefs in the last couple of days. It's interesting to hear the Premier defending Harper on the changes based upon Ottawa when, really, this comes down to a very, very simple concept. There are a couple of amendments that came out of the blue — no consultation. That's the crux of what we're talking about here. It's not about anything else past the fact that 2012 or therein somewhere, the wheels fell off of consultation. Now you have two parties that are willing to work together to support another level of government in the Yukon and say to Ottawa, "You don't have the facts straight." Whether those senators are Liberal or not, we'll disagree with that concept until the cows come home. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. The next steps forward on this in Ottawa are going to get a lot more rocky.

We have discussed many, many times in this House that one of the defining characteristics of this government is its inability to forge partnerships with the First Nation governments and here we go again. As we speak, taxpayers are on the hook for hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees because this government would rather litigate than negotiate.

The government's secretive approach to the changes in YESAA is just one of the most recent examples. In January, I issued a press release calling on the Premier to go public with these secret negotiations that he was conducting with the Government of Canada for the changes to YESAA. He ignored the suggestion at that time. Then I raised it again in the spring in the Legislature. In April, I predicted that the government's my-way-or-the-highway approach would once again strain relationships between the public and the First Nation governments and here we are.

The Premier had a choice: Allow Yukoners to have some input into his government's submissions or keep it secret as instructed by Ottawa — and we know which side he picked. I spoke to a chief this morning who said 74 of these recommendations — we consulted on it. We're not necessarily 100-percent in agreement with all of these, but we worked together on these. That's not the issue here, Mr. Speaker. I don't think it does a very good service to this whole debate to cloud that. There are a few amendments that were secretive. Those few amendments — well, they make this one of the legacies of this Yukon Party government. We'll see what happens.

This spring, I asked the Premier — and I quote: "Why has the Government of Yukon decided to go alone instead of

working with Yukon First Nation governments to come up with a united position to present to Ottawa?"

The Premier was interviewed recently on this issue and he said this: "I can't really comment on the level of consultation that occurred between the federal government and the Yukon First Nations". How many times have we discussed in this Chamber how important the Yukon Forum is for these conversations? How many times has that forum met since this incarnation 2.0 of Yukon Party government?

As I said last week in the Member for Watson Lake's motion, the Yukon Liberal Party is in favour of a clear and consistent regulatory regime and there are definitely areas where things can be streamlined and can make permitting more effective. But ultimately, it's the approach. The approach of this government is going to create uncertainty for the mining industry and it will not improve the process.

I recognize that there are issues in terms of mining regulation here in the territory — absolutely. Mining companies are experiencing extended timelines and the duplication of data collection and analysis. Many of these delays and added expenses — they have slowed, they have halted and they have even scared away responsible resource development in the Yukon.

Although the changes to YESAA may address some of these problems, it's the way that the Yukon Party government has approached the changes that will lead to even bigger issues for mining in the long run. Now we have a difference of opinion on this, clearly. Time will tell.

Yukon's mining industry has seen a decline in the last year — in the last two — resulting in our GDP dropping. We're the worst economy in Canada right now. There has been one party at the helm since the devolution transfer has started, since hundreds of millions of dollars have been coming from Canadian taxpayer's hard-earned money to this government and, over a decade later, we're the worst economy in Canada.

Private sector investment is drying up, forcing the minister to inject more government money into exploration. Mining incentive money — it's great, absolutely. But what the industry needs and what they really want is their projects not to get locked up in lengthy legal battles, which is what will happen because of this government's approach to the changes to YESAA.

We've heard from Yukon First Nations that they will take the government to court over this. In speaking to several chiefs about the changes, I know that they are not opposed to mining in the territory. That's the good news. It can be a very strong economic driver for many of Yukon's rural communities, including mine. They also have no problem, like I said, with over 70 of these amendments that they've had a chance to actually debate on. But First Nations are not going to allow the federal government to make amendments — changing the legislation — that so blatantly fly in the face of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*; amendments that they were not consulted on.

Further eroding the relationship between Yukon First Nations and the Yukon government is not a solution to what is

ailing the mining industry. Yukon's mining industry will never succeed in an environment where we pit it against Yukon First Nation interests and their legal rights under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. The minister talks about regulatory certainty for all Yukoners. He's forgetting Yukon First Nations in that suggestion.

The Yukon Party spent seven years, we are told, consulting with Yukoners, but ultimately they ignored their own process. The mining industry needs market certainty and Bill S-6 will not create that.

It is very disappointing to watch this government blindly defend Ottawa when it hurts Yukon. Yesterday, the Premier took to his Twitter account and tweeted out a series of federal government talking points. We also saw this Yukon Party government take the same approach with the Parks Canada cuts when they shortened the season for visitation to Dawson. Only last week did the federal government recognize what a mistake that was by holding a press conference to celebrate undoing their own bad decisions.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon government is supposed to represent Yukoners, not Stephen Harper. We only have to look at the lengthy list of tributes to recognize that this government does not want to see this discussion about YESAA on air on the cable channel stations. Tributes and table documents that could be spread over the week and months all conveniently scheduled on opposition private members' day.

It is abundantly clear that Yukon First Nations are opposed to these changes — not all of them, but the important ones that they weren't consulted on and that they will have to defend their rights on this matter by legal means. Vocal and legally-binding opposition to these changes will not help streamline mining processes. It will create uncertainty for the industry and drive away investors. Yukoners also have a right to comment on Bill S-6 and should be allowed that opportunity.

I guess we are here seeing some amendments basically gutting the intent of the original motion. I applaud my colleagues — not my coalition, sir, but my colleagues in the NDP — for bringing forth this motion and helping to support other levels of government, where this Yukon Party government has decided not to. I look forward to working with other parties, either across the floor or on the same side as the opposition, because that is what we do in the Liberal Party. We work forward on good ideas.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not be supporting this amendment.

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard on the amendment?

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. Stick: Disagree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Mr. Tredger: Disagree.

Mr. Barr: Disagree.

Mr. Silver: 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. 774 agreed to

Speaker: Is there any further discussion on the motion as amended?

Ms. Stick: Now the motion reads: “THAT this House urges the Yukon government to recognize that in a challenging market environment, it is critical to create certainty by preserving Yukon’s reputation as a stable jurisdiction that has a well-respected environmental assessment and regulatory regime.”

The members opposite might be surprised to find out that we will support this motion because it talks and speaks to what we have, recognizing that we are in a challenging market environment. As my colleague from the Third Party mentioned, though, we are the worst right now in terms of GDP — from across Canada. So this is a challenging market environment, and it is critical that we need to create certainty by preserving Yukon’s reputation as a stable jurisdiction. Well, we support that, Mr. Speaker. We do need to support the reputation we’ve had up to this point as a stable jurisdiction.

In the last number of weeks, there has been a growing groundswell of support of citizens, Yukoners and First Nations who want to see that we have a well-respected environmental assessment and regulatory regime. Unfortunately, in the House of Commons right now is Bill S-6, which will throw everything in this motion, actually, into chaos. We will not maintain that certainty. It will not be well-respected because it will end up in court over and over.

I have listened to Yukoners. I have spoken to representatives of many Yukon First Nations about their concerns about what happens if Bill S-6 is proclaimed without the changes or without the consultation that Yukoners and First Nations and CYFN are looking for. This bill is flawed. It’s flawed in the process of how it went forward.

We’ve heard the talking points. We have heard the myths — 73 out of 76. Yes, we understand that, but it’s the four areas that are of concern to the First Nations and that really will undermine the spirit and the intent of Yukon final agreements. They’re not the Yukon First Nation final agreements. They’re the Yukon final agreements. We are all participants in that. We are all beneficiaries of that because it was a document signed, not just by First Nations, but by the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon. It involves all of us.

It was very interesting to read through the presentations made before the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources. First Nation representatives who went to Ottawa and were part of this many-year assessment process, and who had many, many concerns with what is in Bill S-6, were given one hour. It’s notable that they shared that time. I would like to acknowledge that there was the Grand Chief Ruth Massie of the Council of Yukon First Nations. There was: Chief Eric Fairclough of the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation; Councillor Mary Jane Jim of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; Daryn Leas, legal counsel for the Council of Yukon First Nations; Brian MacDonald, legal counsel for the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; and Roger Brown, manager of environment and natural resources for the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

In the end, they actually went over that hour, to one hour and 19 minutes. This government was given an hour to do their presentation. Mr. Morrison, past president, was given 38 minutes. Yukon Chamber of Mines and the Klondike Placer Miners’ Association — one hour and 10 minutes. Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers was given 42 minutes. Alexco — I’m not sure how much they were given, but they were on the agenda. Besides the First Nations, these other groups were in support, but the First Nations were not and they were very, very clear about the difficulties they had with Bill S-6. I think we need to hear again what those concerns are because it impacts all Yukoners — not just First Nations.

Grand Chief Ruth Massie spoke first and some of her concerns — I’ll just quote a few. This one, I thought, was a major one: “The proposed amendments in front of the Senate today were not discussed in the five-year review process with Canada and the Yukon government.”

There is support for parts of Bill S-6, but not for what they were never consulted on.

Chief Eric Fairclough of the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation was clear. There were four specific amendments that were deeply concerning — policy direction — and he stated that they “oppose any amendments that provide authority to the federal first minister to issue binding policy direction to the board with respect to any of the board’s powers, duties and functions”. Chief Fairclough went on to describe how the independence of the board and designated offices in conducting assessments is paramount. Giving one party authority to direct the board would be contrary to the whole intent of YESAA and the provisions in the final agreement.

Also one of his concerns he spoke to was the ability of the federal minister to designate this power to the Yukon government territorial minister. One of the senators responded and tried to clarify a little more the concerns of Chief Fairclough and he said that well, it's never happened — so why the concern? Well, if it has never happened and they are not concerned, why would it be in there? It was one of those — trust us, it won't happen — and First Nations aren't buying it. One of the speakers there suggested that if the federal government is so concerned and wants to be able to designate powers, why only the Yukon territorial minister, why not First Nation governments? They are equal partners at this table.

Another concern of Chief Fairclough's was that, under Bill S-6, this would create “a bilateral federal-territorial process that would be inconsistent with the intent of the final agreements” — another quote from him.

Another concern was exemptions for renewals and amendments. He wanted to remind people that the *Umbrella Final Agreement* was signed by three parties: Canada, Yukon and Yukon First Nations. That was a monumental day. The committee heard from Mary Jane Jim, who was then a councillor for Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. She no longer is, but she was there representing chief and council and the First Nations, which were going through an election process at that time. She was concerned about the federal government wanting to unilaterally make additional amendments to the YESAA and did not request the amendments. The Champagne and Aishihik did not request these amendments and stated that they do not support them. She felt that the federal government had not demonstrated any mandate or interest in meaningful consultation or negotiations with the Council of Yukon First Nations and Yukon First Nations to address the substantive issues and interests concerning Bill S-6.”

She was clear that First Nations are not against all of Bill S-6, but they believe they have not had the opportunity to be heard and they are looking for amendments to that. They were looking for an opportunity to come back together and discuss and negotiate in a meaningful way those substantive issues and interests, and that has not happened. They do not want to follow down the trail that they see in the Northwest Territories with devolution that has led to litigation, but they made it clear that they will take the steps necessary to protect the integrity of the final agreements.

There was some discussion — there wasn't a lot; an hour and 20 minutes — that the First Nations refer to YESAA as made in the Yukon — a negotiated coming-together of three parties in agreement. They don't necessarily want to be the same as Nunavut or Northwest Territories. We have YESAA. It's made in the Yukon and people are happy with that.

Brian MacDonald, legal counsel for Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, said — and I quote: “... I believe that the YESAA process is very much an economic engine ... for the Yukon.” Mr. MacDonald is legal counsel, but he also participates in the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations' Dakwakada Development Corporation. They are a big economic driver and he said that we need to have certainty as

a company to protect the shareholder interests in the various investments that we do. My colleague gave a few examples of some of the things that they do, but he described their investment portfolio that has grown to almost \$30 million in actual value, revenues over \$65 million, and close to 200 employees. They do have a vested economic interest in what happens and they do want to have a stable jurisdiction, because it is a challenging market environment. So they're looking for that certainty too, but they do not see it. They do not see this government coming forward and protecting their interests and speaking for them — for all Yukoners.

Many First Nations have development corporations that are big economic drivers in our communities across the Yukon. They contribute to the economy, they hire northerners and they invest in our communities. They want the same certainty, but they do not feel that the passing of Bill S-6 will give them that. What it will give them is litigation.

Mr. MacDonald again spoke and said — and I quote: “... primarily focused on what we believe are the unilateral amendments that kind of went in parallel with our process.” He went on, “Yes, First Nations didn't get everything that they hoped for, but they believe in compromise and recognize that everybody has to have something out of these processes.” But to be left out, to be handed something as completed — this is it, there is no consultation, there is no time — is not fair play. We did not have that opportunity to put forward in that process and to do the review that was requested.

My favorite line was one from, I believe, Chief Fairclough: “If the intent of these amendments before us today is to bring them up to date, modernize them, then fine, focus on that. But don't kick the legs out of our environmental process and our First Nation agreements in doing so.”

So we will support this motion because it recognizes that we do not have right now a well-respected — well, we have a well-respected environmental assessment. But that's why I spoke to Bill S-6 because without amendments or without this being pulled back to the table for negotiations, we'll not only be in a challenging market environment, it will be much worse and we'll be in court. First Nations do not want to litigate. They want to negotiate. They want to be at the table, not denied their access to it.

We will be supporting the motion we put forward without the first bit that speaks to Bill S-6, the *Yukon and Nunavut Regulatory Improvement Act*, but it is there. It's by recognizing the challenging market environment — it's critical to create certainty by preserving Yukon's reputation. If we allow Bill S-6 to go forward, we will not be preserving our reputation. We will be in court. We will not be a stable jurisdiction. We will be in court.

This is something for all Yukoners. It's not just about First Nations. It's not just about the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. It's about doing what's best for all Yukoners, so we will be supporting this.

Motion No. 774, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 729

Clerk: Motion No. 729, standing in the name of Mr. Silver.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to make the temporary two-year tourism marketing funds announced this summer a permanent part of the Department of Tourism and Culture's marketing budget.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, as we have discussed in previous private members' days, the value of tourism marketing is incredible. I am tabling this motion because I believe the temporary tourism marketing money should be a permanent budget line item. I am sure that everyone in this House will agree that our tourism assets are absolutely impressive, so let's ensure that the rest of the world knows this as well.

I would like to once again congratulate the Tourism Industry Association for their lobbying efforts on the new tourism marketing funds that appear in this budget. The government was a little bit reluctant to come on-board on the proposal but, in the end, we did see a commitment from the territorial government to make this a part of the department's budget, but we would like to see the government make this a permanent part of the department's core budget, and not just a one-off in the next few years as a run-up to an election. This is too important to be handled on an application-to-application basis with Ottawa.

The Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon and the Yukon Chamber of Commerce both expressed strong support for the funding initiative. We have heard from TIA Yukon that, for every tourism marketing dollar spent \$28 returns to the territory in visitor spending. That's a huge return on investment, which ultimately creates more jobs and builds the GDP. As I am sure the minister will speak to later, it is great that the \$590,000 has been added to the Tourism budget for spending in overseas marketing money, but this is making up for the loss of CanNor money that the department was already receiving. A similar problem will no doubt occur two years from now. We will begin to see an increase in the target markets visiting the territory from Yukon.

It is important to recognize that we do not have the budget to compete on the same level that many other provincial jurisdictions have and that being creative with our limited resources is an important part to this. To date, the efforts with *The Amazing Race Canada* — they have done that. An increase in the budget would help our marketing efforts maintain competitiveness in a world where we increasingly move away from traditional print advertising.

We have all seen the fantastic Newfoundland and Labrador television ads. A permanent increase in the tourism marketing budget would allow for Yukon to also showcase the beautiful scenery and the rich cultural resources that we have here. Another prong of this strategy is that it can help Yukon weather bad economic forecasts. In 2009, when most of the country saw a downturn in tourism visitation, Newfoundland

saw continued growth — primarily associated with their continued aggressive approach to television marketing.

Yukon has an industry that is affected by market pricing. Insulating tourism would be a huge advantage to our economy. There are a number of great businesses, groups and NGOs that help create a strong industry in the Yukon. Our cultural sector, specifically, should be noted — all the museums, First Nation cultural centres, theatre groups — that all tell the Yukon stories. A long-term increase in marketing budget will allow us to better showcase these special places to the rest of the world.

I want to acknowledge some of the great news that has sprung up recently that would benefit greatly from increased marketing money. We have had two culinary festivals in the last two years, a big part of which is the innovation of the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon. It is also great to see Yukon's fantastic food getting the much-needed attention that they so much deserve.

I would also like to pay a compliment for the innovation and creativity of the organizers of the first-ever Yukon Beer Festival. I had the privilege to take part as a celebrity bartender this year. I was accused of over-pouring — I don't know if they'll have me back again next year. It was a wonderful festival and it was a lot of fun to participate in. Hopefully we will be seeing some of these micro-brewers show up at the liquor store here in town.

This summer, we also saw the first-ever YukomiCon, an event that I would never have dreamed that would have happened in the Yukon, when I first came here. May it live long and prosper.

Yukon has also had a number of very special and unique events that represent our great spirit — classic festivals like the Dawson City Music Festival, of course, and the Adäka Cultural Festival. We have also had important winter festivals, such as the Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous and Yukon Quest, which help bolster tourism effects outside of the primary summer season. These events are great because they encourage the community and would not be possible without the hard work put in by volunteers.

I know that we are running low on time here, so I am going to keep my comments brief and I will get right to my conclusion.

The tourism industry continues to be a gem in our economy, absolutely, and it remains the largest private sector employer in the territory. It is important that the government helps the many businesses that survive off tourism dollars by continuing to bolster the tourism marketing dollars. A two-year campaign will only begin to scratch the surface. Now, if the plan is to wait and see results based upon the two years of funding — well, I think this is a little bit short-sighted. We won't be able to see the results of the funding by the time that this money has dried up.

If we want to be serious about getting into the television marketing game, longer-term planning will be needed.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the time here today, and I look forward to hearing from other MLAs on this important conversation.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for bringing this motion forward. The member opposite really has no idea of just how proud I am to talk about Yukon's tourism marketing initiatives. Given the tremendous amount of good news that we have to share, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this motion and other motions that we've debated on the floor of this Legislature.

By way of background, I would like to talk a little bit about some of our marketing efforts and the results of those marketing efforts to date. I think we need to ask ourselves what the evidence shows. The year 2013 was a record-breaking year for border crossings and border-crossing statistics, with an eight-percent increase in the number of private vehicles and motorcoaches crossing the border into Yukon. The stats show a seven-percent increase in the number of visitors from the United States and a 17-percent increase in Canadians as well as an eight-percent increase in the overseas markets.

Year-to-date in 2014 — and the period that we're looking at is January to September — Yukon's tourism industry continues to benefit from a three-percent increase in total arrivals and a 21-percent increase — 21-percent increase — in international arrivals at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport.

Dawson City has also benefited from a 21-percent increase in the number of combined travellers entering through the Little Gold border crossing and via international arrivals at the Dawson City airport, thanks to Holland America's 2014 tour programs, in partnership with Air North, Yukon's airline. I hope to talk a little bit more about Air North in a few minutes.

In 2012, it was estimated that tourism generated approximately \$200 million in gross revenue for Yukon businesses. Last year, in 2013, that estimate was adjusted and it was expected that tourism generated approximately \$250 million in gross revenue for Yukon businesses. Thirty-nine percent of the total revenues of the accommodation and food service sector is attributable to tourism and more than four percent of Yukon's GDP is attributable to tourism. From January to September of 2014, overseas visitation grew by nine percent and air arrivals at Erik Nielsen International Airport grew by three percent.

Whitehorse is the smallest city in North America with direct flights to Germany. Condor brought over 4,000 visitors to Yukon in 2014, contributing \$8 million to \$10 million to our Yukon economy. Once tourists are here, we offer additional marketing support by making information available in our visitor information centres. As you know, Mr. Speaker, we have six in Yukon communities that provide travel information and visitor services to over 209,584 visitors, through until the end of August of 2014.

Many visitors come for our culture. To that end, Yukon government provides \$1.5 million in funding support to 12 museums, seven First Nation cultural or heritage centres and one umbrella organization.

In comparison, in 2002, when the Yukon Party took government after a failed Liberal attempt at government,

museums were receiving about \$175,000 per year in funding. It's interesting to see that the Liberal leader voted against the museums funding of \$1.5 million in the spring budget. It's disappointing to see the Liberal leader stand on his feet in this Assembly, pleading for more money — or an extension of money — for domestic marketing, but when we continue to make strategic investments in marketing, he votes against it at budget time. In fact, the Member for Klondike — the Liberal leader — even votes against highway maintenance that our tourists need to travel through our territory.

As you're aware, the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre, which is owned and operated by the department, is Canada's only museum dedicated to telling the story of our ice age past. Yukon government and the Beringia Interpretive Centre, in partnership with the Yukon Arts Centre, celebrated the arrival of an ice age mammals travelling exhibition. The unique collaboration with national museums has been seen by nearly one million people across North America.

Just yesterday, we announced that The Old Log Church and Rectory in Whitehorse was officially designated a Yukon historic site. The designation helps to protect and promote Yukon's unique heritage. I look forward to spring, when the weather is a little nicer and we can get together with our partners from the city and really have a true celebration for The Old Log Church and Rectory.

As you will recall, last spring, the Watson Lake Sign Post Forest received official historic site designation under the territory's *Historic Resources Act*. The Watson Lake Sign Post Forest was nominated for designation by the Watson Lake Historical Society. The nomination was evaluated and recommended for designation by the Heritage Resources Board and supported by the Department of Tourism and Culture.

The *A.J. Goddard* shipwreck was commemorated as a Yukon historic site in a plaque-unveiling ceremony at Lake Laberge in August of 2013. The existing marketing dollars and the Yukon Now initiative will drive more visitors to sites such as The Old Log Church, the Watson Lake Sign Post Forest and perhaps, for the adventuresome, a dive to see the *A.J. Goddard* shipwreck.

The Yukon government has installed interpretive signage panels at over 180 sites on scenic routes and points of interest throughout our territory. The department co-owns and co-manages three historic sites with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Selkirk First Nation. Nine locations across Yukon have been designated and protected as territorial historic sites under the *Historic Resources Act*.

I found it particularly interesting that the staff at Yukon Archives provided service to 1,500 researchers and retrieved over 7,500 archival records last year alone.

The work that is being done at Archives is fascinating and I would encourage my colleagues, if you haven't done so already, to spend some time at Archives learning about our history and our culture.

My colleagues on this side of the House will recall that last February a Tourism Yukon delegation attended Canada Corroboree, Canada's premier travel trade event held in

Australia each year. The delegation signed cooperative marketing agreements. We discussed marketing opportunities with Australia travel trade and we met with the Consulate General of Canada.

Australia is Yukon's second largest overseas market. I had the pleasure of conducting several media interviews with Australian media while in Sydney. I can only imagine the reach that those articles would have and the interest in Yukon that they would spark.

Part of the Yukon Now money that we're talking about on the floor of this Legislature this afternoon will be used for both the U.S. market and for the overseas market. However, the bulk of the investment — and I'll talk about it later — will be used for the domestic market here in Canada.

When we were in Australia, I found it particularly interesting to find Holland America's Norwegian cruise ship moored in Sydney Harbour. In fact we boarded the ship to sign a cooperative marketing agreement with Holland America. For those who are not aware, the Norwegian sails the west coast of North America during the summer. You can often see it moored in Skagway. Once fall arrives, that ship offers travelers a 130-day world cruise. I understand the cost of that is about a quarter of a million dollars. It was wonderful to meet the ship and some of its crew and passengers in the Sydney Harbour. We certainly appreciate the good working relationship that we have with Holland America.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall during Winterlude in Ottawa last February Yukon hosted and supported several events to promote Yukon as a travel destination and to introduce Air North's new Ottawa service.

Now we also look at the Asian market. It's another example of collaboration and a strategic approach. The government led a delegation of 15 tourism-related businesses to Vancouver to attend the first-ever Yukon-Japan tourism marketplace last January. In fact it was January 28. Japan is Yukon's fastest growing international market. This market in particular has incredible potential for our territory and it's one that we will continue to work at growing.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that Yukon hosted the Yukon tourism ministers meetings last September in 2013. The meeting was focused on Canadian tourism competitiveness. In a few minutes, I will provide you a bit of a comparison between Newfoundland, as the member opposite has spoken to, and Yukon. But we're faced with increasing competition, with huge markets like Ontario for example that, dollar for dollar, make it very difficult for a smaller jurisdiction with smaller budgets like ours to have a meaningful impact.

During our meetings we also discussed improving visitor access, marketing and tourism attraction development. I can tell you that my colleagues from across Canada and the federal government are impressed that Yukon is punching well above its weight when it comes to tourism marketing.

Mr. Speaker, you'll recall that Premier Pasloski, 16 Yukon tourism industry representatives and I travelled to Germany and England in the first-ever Premier-led tourism trade delegation from a Canadian province or territory. The Premier's European tourism trade mission resulted in an

accord between Yukon government, Air North and Condor to bring more European travellers to our great territory. The accord supports an air travel agreement that will allow seamless travel from Europe to Air North's entire flight network, providing increased travel options for European tourists and Yukoners.

When I was over in Germany this fall, I don't think I have ever been so surprised in my life, coming home to see the Member for Watson Lake sitting in the airport in Frankfurt.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall the Premier and European partners signed several marketing agreements with German tour operators. The resulting marketing efforts targeted over three million people in German-speaking Europe alone, and I commend the Premier for his leadership on this tourism file.

The Government of Yukon and City of Whitehorse signed a first formal collaboration on tourism marketing promotion and visitor services MOU. The MOU outlines a range of partnership initiatives, including joint work on fam tours, sharing of tourism inquiries and joint management of the visitor parking passes. I was delighted to share The Old Log Church and Rectory historical designation announcement with the Mayor of Whitehorse.

The Government of Yukon and the State of Alaska renewed an agreement to market both regions as a tourism destination. The joint Yukon and Alaska cooperative marketing partnership began in 1989, delivering Canadian and American advertising campaigns to increase highway travel and promote summer adventure experiences in Alaska and Yukon. If I am not mistaken, I understand that this agreement is one of the longest standing tourism agreements between a U.S. state and a Canadian territory or province.

The Member for Klondike will recall that Yukon was designated by *Lonely Planet* as a top 10 must-visit travel destination for 2013. Subsequent global media coverage generated tremendous exposure for Yukon and expanded awareness of Yukon as a premiere outdoor travel destination. We will all recall that the Member for Klondike wrote *Lonely Planet*, basically pleading that they may be mistaken.

I want to mention some of the other initiatives we have in support of marketing Yukon to visitors already in Yukon. Improvements to the Whitehorse visitor information centre include a brand new relevant painting of the entire centre, updated equipment to improve the audio-visual experience in the theatre, new hanging banners, wall-mounted televisions to present Tourism Yukon photos and videos — it also has iPads connected to wi-fi so visitors coming in who want to book tours in Klondike or in Haines Junction or in Old Crow or Watson Lake can do so, right from the visitor information centre.

Mr. Speaker, to further develop Yukon's shoulder tourism season, and in response to requests from European tour operators, the season for visitor information centres and key campgrounds has been extended for the tourism shoulder seasons. The visitor information centres in Beaver Creek, Carcross, Dawson City, Haines Junction, Watson Lake and at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport will now be open from May 1 to September 30. The change allows

Yukoners to visit Yukon campgrounds into the fall and aligns visitor services with industry and transportation schedules. I have to thank the Minister of Environment for his collaborative work on this file and being able to unveil the extended season of both the campgrounds and the visitor information centres all at once.

I could go on all day about our productive partnerships with First Nations, but let me mention two that relate to marketing information services in our territory. The Yukon government entered into a two-year lease with the Carcross Tagish Management Corporation on behalf of the Carcross-Tagish Limited Partnership and Northern Vision Development Limited Partnership to provide visitor services in Carcross. That opened last year, as you are well aware.

A celebration of the grand opening of the Da Ku Cultural Centre took place in Haines Junction on June 1, 2013, with representatives from governments of Canada, Yukon, and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, or CAFN, all in attendance. The Department of Tourism and Culture contributed \$1.4 million through long-term lease agreements.

You are also well aware of the First Nation tourism and cultural organization that is working in partnership with the Adäka Cultural Festival. I don't know if you have had a chance to attend the Adäka festival, but it is very clear, when you are at that festival, that people are so very proud of their culture and so very proud of showcasing their culture to Yukoners and to visitors alike. We continue to support the Adäka festival and look forward to the 2015 season, which I believe will be held in June, if I'm not mistaken.

Participating in tourism open houses in the Whitehorse, Kluane, Dawson and Watson Lake regions has certainly helped to identify new opportunities for tourism growth and to really work together with communities to adapt to changes to tour patterns across our territory.

Tourism Yukon's annual open house brings together businesses, tourism operators and cultural organizations, and front-line staff, and they do this every fall. The event includes information sessions on funding opportunities, new trends and marketing, and one-on-one meetings with Tourism branch staff. I have attended all of these open houses and have been very pleased with the dialogue that I have had with Yukon stakeholders who are providing the tourism product in the territory that will directly benefit from the increased marketing through CanNor, which we announced just a few months ago. I was very pleased to announce that funding increase with our MP, Ryan Leef.

I would also like to mention a little bit about what some people refer to as MICE tourism, which is meetings, incentives, conferences and events. This is put on through the Yukon Convention Bureau. I understand that they are having their annual red carpet tour on November 26. I'm looking forward to perhaps even participating in the tour. We always are pleasantly surprised by the good work at the Yukon Convention Bureau.

We also recently introduced a new Canadian event fund, which was announced in March of 2013. Three organizations have accessed this —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Leader of the Third Party, on a point of order.

Mr. Silver: Although we all very much enjoy the Minister of Tourism reading his briefing notes in this Legislative Assembly, we've heard it many times already this session. I'm going to go with Standing Order 19(b)(i): "speaks to matters other than the question under discussion".

If the minister could wrap up his comments and get back to the motion, that would be great. Thanks.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: There is no point of order. The motion in front of us speaks to Tourism and Culture, and I believe that is what the minister is addressing.

Minister of Tourism and Culture, please.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As I was mentioning to the members on this side and that side of the Legislature, the Yukon Convention Bureau is conducting their red carpet tour on November 26. Anyone who is interested in participating, I would encourage them to contact the Convention Bureau.

Before the member opposite stood, I was talking about the new Canadian fund that was announced in March of 2013. We do know that three organizations have accessed the funds to host cultural events that really help promote multiculturalism and diversity in the territory. It is this multiculturalism and diversity that tourists coming to the territory are really, I guess, acquiring a taste for. Certainly I know, when I have spent time in Germany in a number of different markets, the Germans certainly appreciate First Nation culture and art forms that they see when they do visit here. In fact, I believe it was Keith Wolfe Smarch who joined us at the Hanover Zoo in 2012, and he had been commissioned to make two small carvings to present to the zoo when we were over there. I know that both Keith and his wife, Donna, were so very proud to see their product in a market other than Yukon — or Canada, for that matter.

The Yukon government and the visual arts and craft sector partnered to develop a visual arts and craft strategy to grow and expand this industry. I didn't realize that this industry was so vibrant in Yukon, prior to becoming minister, but it's something that, just last week, we saw a number of individuals at the craft fair up at the Canada Games Centre, selling and displaying their art forms. You will know, Mr. Speaker, that every year, through the Department of Tourism and Culture, we promote the "shop local" campaign, and that's something that all members in this Legislature should really pay attention to when they're shopping for Christmas or other holidays or birthdays — that they're purchasing gifts that are made locally here by local Yukoners.

An exhibition called *YT in 3D*, highlighting 3D historical photographs from Yukon Archives using contemporary digital technology, opened at the Hougen Heritage Gallery in Arts

Underground. This exhibit was a collaboration between Yukon Archives and the Friends of Yukon Archives Society.

I know I have been down to Arts Underground a number of times, and quite often — speaking about shopping locally — we see tourists coming off the street and going down to the gallery and having the ability to purchase locally created gifts to take home to wherever they might be from.

Supported by a \$200,000 contribution from the department, 80 Yukon performing, visual, literary, culinary, and fashion arts were showcased at Northern Scene, a 10-day festival in Ottawa featuring established and emerging artists from the north.

The department also provides \$345,000 annually to the Northern Cultural Expressions Society in funding to support its carving program that helps emerging artists develop the artistic, social and business skills required for personal success. I have had a number of opportunities to visit Northern Cultural Expressions, and there is another perfect example of people being very proud of the products that they are making for both Yukoners and visitors alike.

Mr. Speaker, you'll know that Yukon has been actively marketing in Europe since the early 1990s. Germany, Switzerland and Austria form Yukon's largest overseas market and the third-largest market overall with 8,740 visitors crossing our border in 2013. This market contributes \$9.3 million annually into Yukon's economy through direct spending.

Yukon has been targeting the United Kingdom market for several years now. This is a secondary market for Yukon, and it represents the third-largest overseas market with 4,176 visitors crossing our border in 2013. I found it very interesting — as I have had the opportunity to travel in the U.K. speaking to tour operators, and also travel to Australia speaking to tour operators — that those two jurisdictions specifically are very competitive with one another. When the U.K. found out that it was the third-largest overseas market — that Australia had just passed it — I think that challenged them to perhaps increase visitation from that jurisdiction to Yukon — so an interesting bit.

Tourism from the United Kingdom contributes approximately \$3 million annually to Yukon's economy through direct spending. Emerging markets include France as well as Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, collectively referred to as Benelux. Together these markets account for over 2,000 visitors to Yukon each year and provide further growth opportunities for our industry.

Part of our success in Europe is the strong international connections that Yukon enjoys for European travellers. Whether it with Condor on their direct flight, non-stop weekly charter flight, or through connections provided by Air North, Yukon's Airline, or Air Canada or WestJet via our gateway cities in southern Canada — that would be Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton — Yukon is easier to get to from Europe than ever before. I know the Member for Whitehorse Centre may not have known that fact, but now she has that information.

The European market contributes significantly to Yukon's overall visitation. In 2013, 17,870 European travellers visited Yukon, representing a three-percent increase in visitation over the previous year.

This fall, I led a successful tourism trade mission to Europe that resulted in three new cooperative marketing agreements with German tourism operators and its new ties with the Netherlands market.

I met with many leading tour operators at a function hosted by the Canadian Ambassador where I heard directly about the potential Yukon holds as a travel destination for the Dutch. Now, here is a fact for you, Mr. Speaker: German and British travellers contributed \$12.3 million to the Yukon economy in 2013 through direct, out-of-pocket expenditures.

I will be leading a mission of tourism businesses to Japan from February 22 to about February 27, 2015. This will be followed by meetings in China during the first week of March. The objective of the Asia mission is to increase Japanese visitors to Yukon and to explore opportunities for both group and independent travel from China.

What the Member for Whitehorse Centre may not know is that this mission will demonstrate our commitment and our support for Japanese and Chinese tour operators and facilitate long-term investment in Yukon's tourism industry from these markets. China is the fastest growing international market for Canada, growing 30 percent so far in 2014. China is now Canada's third-largest overseas market behind the United Kingdom and France.

Of course, the U.S. is our largest visitor market with more than 230,000 visitors in 2013, representing 67 percent of Yukon's total visitors and a seven-percent increase overall in 2012. Through August 2014, the U.S. visitation is down slightly — about four percent — due in large part to travel interruptions on the south Klondike Highway and issues with the Skagway dock.

Yukon invests more than \$500,000 annually in marketing the U.S. through consumer trade and media relation channels. In 2014 and 2015, an additional \$50,000 a year will be invested in U.S. marketing through Yukon Now.

Yukon's investments and consumer marketing in the U.S. are conducted in partnership with the State of Alaska, leveraging high awareness of the Alaska tourism brand in the U.S. Yukon leverages the Alaska tourism brand in all of its consumer and trade marketing initiatives in the United States. The \$177,000 joint Yukon-Alaska program is a core component of Yukon's U.S. consumer marketing strategy delivered in partnership with the State of Alaska.

Yukon invests \$122,000 in the Tourism North marketing program, which is a joint initiative with Alaska, B.C. and Alberta that targets highway travellers. Yukon conducts trade marketing activities with the U.S. tour operators including the \$50,000 cooperative marketing program each year with Holland America Line.

Yukon attends key trade marketplaces in the U.S., including the United States Tour Operators Association, or USTOA, and the National Tour Association, NTA,

marketplaces to maintain and grow U.S.-based tour operator listings of Yukon products and experiences.

Yukon participates in Canada Media Marketplace and the Alaska Media Road Show to recruit high-profile U.S. travel writers to our territory. It's with these travel writers that the department markets very strategically, because we know that when we're setting up agreements with these travel writers or bringing them on fam tours, we have an understanding of their marketing base, or their reach per se.

There is one other item I would like to mention here, and that's the Yukon government and the support that it provided to *The Amazing Race Canada* with its 2014 episode in Yukon. The impact of the show was significant in raising profile of Destination: Yukon. We had our Twitter handle, which was @TravelYukon, receive the most mention of any tourism organization, and the Yukon episode was the second-most tweeted in season 2. That was in the summer 2014. We're grateful for our relationship with *The Amazing Race*. We now know that they've been to Yukon twice. The first time was kind of a pan-territorial approach where the contestants stopped in Nunavut and Northwest Territories as well as Yukon. We were very fortunate to have an exclusive relationship with *The Amazing Race Canada* where Yukon was featured by itself.

Our government utilizes cooperative marketing initiatives to attract investment from its travel trade partners, Yukon tourism operators, tourism organizations and other stakeholders that increase its marketing reach and its impact.

Each year Yukon government attracts more than \$1.8 million in private sector investment through cooperative marketing initiatives as private sector partners match government's contributions.

The tourism cooperative marketing fund provides \$700,000 in matching funds to Yukon's industry each year in support of their marketing investments, which is fully subscribed to every year.

Tourism Yukon develops cooperative marketing initiatives in four areas: travel trade marketing, partnership marketing, support for Yukon marketing organizations and, lastly, tourism cooperative marketing projects.

Cooperative marketing investments in 2013-2014 totalled more than \$1.8 million and Tourism Yukon expects it to attract a similar level of investment in the 2014-15 calendar year.

\$534,000 is budgeted in 2014-15 for travel trade marketing with tour operators and tour wholesalers in Canada, the United States and overseas. Travel trade initiatives promote Yukon products and experiences through advertising campaigns, sales initiatives, promotions and public relations events. The 2014-15 partnership marketing budget of \$611,000 includes agreements with the Wilderness Tourism Association of Yukon for \$264,000, the Yukon Convention Bureau for \$200,000 — it's YCB that puts on that MICE and the red carpet tour that I was speaking to earlier as well as the Canadian Tourism Commission.

The cooperative marketing fund provides 50-percent funding to marketing by Yukon operators, businesses and

partners. A diverse range of applicants have received funding, including Air North, Yukon's airline, and the Klondike Visitors Association. As of September 30, 2014 — and this might surprise you, Mr. Speaker — the tourism cooperative marketing fund — or TCMF, as it's more commonly referred to — has received 93 applications for attendance at consumer and trade shows and for marketing activities, totalling \$661,000. The Department of Tourism and Culture received an additional \$186,000 from a revote, making this fiscal year's TCMF allocation \$876,000. Over the past three years, the tourism cooperative marketing fund program has been fully subscribed to, but each year, after all the recipients and reports have been received, the fund has actually reported a free balance of between \$20,000 and \$70,000. Every dollar provided by the tourism cooperative marketing fund is matched dollar-by-dollar from industry applicants for marketing initiatives.

In the Yukon Now marketing initiative, one of the requests from the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon and the Yukon Chamber of Commerce included a use-of-television component. Tourism Yukon has made investments in television advertising since the late 1990s. These investments have included leveraging and integrating Yukon TV commercials through partnership initiatives with television networks. It has also included marketing and partnership with Northwest Territories and Nunavut, supported by the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency or CanNor. Commercials associated with hosting of TV programs include *Canada AM*, *Gold Rush*, and several overseas productions. It has also included the development and airing of commercials integrated with the hosting of *The Amazing Race Canada* and, through the Yukon Now marketing program, the development and airing of direct purpose-shot Yukon TV commercials.

Given the high cost of TV advertising, the approach Tourism Yukon has taken has been to leverage partnerships to create a strategic, effective and affordable presence in the television market. Generally this is accompanied by developing a marketing campaign in partnership with a media partner.

Value is provided through contests, hosting TV programs — for example, *Canada AM* — and contributing to the development of broadcast content to appeal to existing audiences and to attract new visitors. Tourism Yukon has partnered with Global TV, CTV and TSN in this manner.

In 2007, Yukon, Nunavut and N.W.T. — as I mentioned earlier — were successful in securing four-year funding from CanNor in support of a domestic marketing campaign that included TV as a core component. We are always grateful to have these types of relationships with our northern partners. Working as a consortium with the support of CanNor made TV marketing possible and delivered a good return on investment in terms of raising awareness of Canada and Canada's north as a travel destination. This campaign resulted in TV commercials launched in advance of and during Yukon's hosting of the 2007 Canada Winter Games. Now, subsequent to the 2007 games, the pan-north partners

continued the TV marketing effort — again with the support of CanNor — that leveraged the 2010 Olympics as the campaign anchor.

In 2011 — and I know the Member for Whitehorse Centre will find this interesting — the pan-north partners received \$3.4 million from CanNor in support of a four-year marketing program that again focused on that TV and digital broadcast. A key activity in the pan-north marketing program in 2013 was investing in the first-ever *The Amazing Race Canada*, with each northern jurisdiction hosting an episode.

I can hear the Member for Whitehorse Centre heckling; I will carry on with my remarks regardless. The pan-north TV commercials were produced by CTV and were fully integrated into *The Amazing Race Canada*. In fact, Jon Montgomery, the show's host, was a celebrity in the pan-north commercials.

In 2014, Tourism Yukon went it alone and was the exclusive investor for hosting of *The Amazing Race Canada* 2014, and 3.18 million people saw the Yukon episode of *The Amazing Race Canada*. Our commercials reached over 8.65 million people during that season.

Also in 2014, as part of the 2014 Destination: Yukon summer campaign, Yukoners saw Yukon commercials placed on Global, HGTV, History, Showcase, National Geographic Canada and National Geographic Wild domestic channels during Yukon-themed shows like *Yukon Gold* and *Dr. Oakley, Yukon Vet*.

The recently announced \$3.6-million Yukon Now program includes a significant investment in the development and airing of new Yukon TV commercials over the next two years. This will be the first investment of its kind by Tourism Yukon. More than \$1 million has been committed to produce a series of winter and summer television commercials, with a further \$1 million plus to be invested in the purchase of media to air the commercials.

The Member for Klondike made a reference to Newfoundland's campaign. That campaign was actually called "Find Yourself Here" marketing campaign. The new Newfoundland tourism marketing campaign was launched in 2006 with a budget of \$6 million per year. This was subsequently increased to \$13 million per year before being reduced to \$9 million for the 2013-14 calendar year. As of early 2013, Newfoundland had spent a total of \$94 million on their campaign. Yukon is much smaller than Newfoundland, yet Yukon compares favourably with Newfoundland on a number of tourism-related metrics. At 526,000, Newfoundland's population is over 14 times that of Yukon, and the Newfoundland government's annual budget is roughly six times greater than Yukon's. However, when it comes to tourism marketing expenditures, Newfoundland's tourism marketing budget in 2014-15 is \$3.4 million, 1.7 times larger than Yukon's marketing budget of \$7.6 million. So, in terms of visitation, Yukon again holds up well.

Newfoundland had 497,933 visitors in 2013, compared to Yukon's 442,200. The source of that is the Yukon visitor tracking program estimated total visitation from June 12 to May 13. Yukon Now is a joint Yukon-Canada investment of \$3.6 million over two years to increase our marketing efforts

and draw more visitors from Canada and from around the world. The largest share of the investment will be made in the domestic market, as I indicated earlier, which has experienced significant growth in the past four years and continues to show potential for incremental growth. The budget will break down as follows: 86 percent of the program will target the Canadian market; 11 percent will focus on the overseas market; and three percent will focus on the U.S. market. This new marketing initiative will involve an integrated approach utilizing many marketing tools, including new Yukon television commercials to be broadcast strategically in the domestic market.

We look forward to working with our partners in government and in the tourism industry to maximize opportunities for a prosperous future for all Yukoners.

Tourism Yukon has partnered with the federal CanNor program to make the largest ever new investment in tourism marketing in Yukon government's history with this \$3.6-million Yukon Now marketing program. This investment responds to calls from industry for additional marketing expenditures. As well, the findings of Tourism Yukon's marketing program assessment support increased investment in the domestic market.

The Yukon Now program will incorporate strategic marketing activities in Canada, the U.S. and key overseas target markets that have demonstrated great potential for growth. The program includes new investments in television commercials. It is also includes an initiative targeting the French-speaking market in Quebec, a public relations project in Vancouver, trade missions and events in Germany and Japan, an industry forum in Yukon on the Chinese market, and pre- and post-campaign awareness research.

Yukon Now will provide new opportunities for Yukon and for Yukon tourism operators. The new television and on-line footage produced as part of Yukon Now program will be used to create a new show for the Whitehorse visitor information centre.

Mr. Speaker, you might be asking yourself, why are we marketing? The Yukon government uses two key surveys to assess the economic impact of tourism in Yukon. The Yukon visitor tracking program, conducted by the Department of Tourism and Culture and the Yukon business survey conducted by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics — The Yukon visitor tracking program provides detailed information on visitors to Yukon, including volume, trip characteristics, travel behaviours and expenditure information. The 2012 Yukon visitor tracking program estimates that annual expenditures by visitors to Yukon are about \$180.5 million. The Yukon business survey provides information on Yukon businesses, including revenue levels, employee hiring, expected growth and so on. Now the 2013 Yukon business survey indicated that Yukon businesses attributed approximately \$250 million of their gross revenue in 2012 to tourism and that the tourism gross domestic product accounted for 4.3 percent.

The Yukon visitor tracking program is one of five major visitor studies the department has conducted over the past 27 years. Similar to past visitor exit surveys, the department first

began implementing major visitor studies in 1987. These major visitor studies provide the base for demand-side estimates of visitor volume and spending in Yukon because they survey visitors directly. Surveys like the Yukon Bureau of Statistics' Yukon business survey provide the base for supply-side estimates of revenue attributable to tourism because they survey Yukon businesses that sell products and services to our visitors.

Combined, major visitor studies and the Yukon business survey provide a general understanding of the impact that tourism has on Yukon's economy at a specific point in time. Nationally, Statistics Canada relies on the Travel Survey of Residents of Canada, also known as the TSRC, and the International Travel Survey, or ITS, to track tourism performance and measurement of the industry. These surveys help to inform the Canadian Tourism Satellite Account, TSA, and the National Tourism Indicators, NTI, which provide tourism GDP and employment nationally.

I have often thought about the role of mining in Yukon's tourism industry and I hear the members opposite pay lip service to mining, but it seems pretty clear that they view resource extraction as an archaic and irrelevant career choice. I believe that it is possible for mining and tourism to complement each other as they do in other jurisdictions.

Yukon's tourism sector has benefited from mining in many, many ways. When I talk to tourists, many of them tell me about their desire to visit places associated with the Klondike Gold Rush, including a number of sites in and around Dawson City.

Two weeks ago, the members opposite brought forward a motion on a UNESCO World Heritage Site — a site that is defined by the Klondike Gold Rush. The Member for Klondike has questioned me in the past about efforts to ensure that Dredge No. 4 remained open to visitors.

I know the Member for Klondike is from the east coast of Canada. That is a long way away from Yukon, but he should know by now that the dredge is a mining tool — a massive, impressive and amazing monument for ingenious ways to move, mill and process incredible volumes of dirt in the pursuit of gold. Without mining, we wouldn't have Dredge No. 4. Without tourism, we wouldn't be able to create public sector opportunities for tours of that dredge. It was this Yukon Party government that had the confidence in the public sector to step up to the plate when Parks Canada was scaling back tours. The Liberal leader didn't have the confidence in the good people of his own riding to take on that task.

I want to acknowledge the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon and the Yukon Chamber of Commerce for making a solid business case for this additional funding. This collaboration is just one example of the importance of our strong working relationships with our tourism partners and the business community. One of the things that TIAY and the Yukon chamber called for was an increased focus on television marketing in the domestic market, and that will be one of the key takeaways from the new marketing campaign, called Yukon Now.

The marketing program strives to put Yukon on the map like never before. As details are unveiled to the public — as they were at the Tourism open house — I am confident that you and other Yukoners will share in my enthusiasm and my excitement for this new direction. Yukon Now is both exciting and promising, but there is more that must be done to ensure the future sustainability of Yukon's tourism industry.

I applaud the discussions started by industry on Destination —

Speaker: Order please. The time being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m., Monday, November 24, 2014.

Debate on Motion No. 729 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following Sessional Papers were tabled on November 19, 2014:

33-1- 131

Yukon Arts Centre 2013/14 Annual Report (including Jim Robb's Yukon) (Nixon)

33-1-132

Yukon Teachers Labour Relations Board Annual Report 2013-14 (Dixon)

33-1-133

Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Board Annual Report 2013-2014 (Dixon)

33-1- 134

Yukon Environment Act Final Audit Report Fiscal Year 2012/13 (Dixon)

The following document was filed on November 19, 2014:

33-1-94

Yukon Geographical Places Names Board Annual Report 2013-2014 (Nixon)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 174

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Monday, November 24, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

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Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Education; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Community Services; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation; Yukon Lottery Commission Government House Leader
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Yukon Energy Corporation; Yukon Development Corporation
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Environment; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Highways and Public Works
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Justice; Tourism and Culture

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Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
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Jim Tredger	Mayo-Tatchun
Kate White	Takhini-Kopper King

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, November 24, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Canadian Tourism Awards finalists

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise on behalf of the Legislative Assembly today to pay tribute to the Yukon finalists of the Canadian Tourism Awards presented by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada. The Canadian Tourism Awards recognize the best tourism products, services and experiences in Canada and commend success, leadership and innovation in Canada's tourism industry. I'm proud that Yukon is represented with four finalists that demonstrate these traits and accomplishments: Holland America Line in Dawson City; the Dakhká Khwáan Dancers; Jill Pangman and her company Sila Sojourns; and the Pan North Consortium.

These four finalists represent a cross-section of excellence in Yukon's tourism sectors — whether a small or large business, cultural performance group or a team dedicated to promoting this region. Each represents Yukon with pride.

Holland America Line in Dawson is nominated for the Brewster Travel Canada Innovator of the Year Award. As many Yukoners know, Holland America brings economic benefits to the territory through visitor spending and employment for Yukoners, as well as marketing and business support. The company operations contribute between \$50- and \$60 million annually to our Yukon economy, helping us to continue building tourism as a sustainable industry.

Holland America is also the largest tourism operator in the territory and is among the largest private sector employers. Recently, changes to Holland America's Yukon tours now see jet service in the summer months into Dawson from Fairbanks in partnership with Air North. The Yukon government continues to work with Holland America as the business continues to grow and increases tourism revenues to our territory.

Along with our tourism operators, it is also vital for the tourism destinations to have something unique to offer visitors and to have a strong connection to heritage, culture and the arts. The Dakhká Khwáan Dancers are finalists for the national cultural tourism award presented by the federal-provincial-territorial culture heritage and tourism initiative.

The Dakhká Khwáan Dancers continue to build the public's awareness of the rich First Nation culture in the territory. This group has grown over the years to include 25 members representing three Yukon First Nations: Carcross-

Tagish, Kwanlin Dun and the Teslin Tlingit Council. These dancers connect with their audience with their Inland Tlingit ancestry through traditional singing, dancing and drumming.

Of course, when we talk about a tourism industry, that also means promoting sustainable activities, which is exactly what Jill Pangman and her company, Sila Sojourns, are recognized for achieving with the Transat sustainable tourism award. They aim to minimize the impact on wild areas that it travels to, while providing unique activities to visitors, whether by water or land, in summer or in winter. Ms. Pangman's passion for Yukon's natural areas, combined with her decades of experience as a wilderness guide, come through in her company's visitor offerings.

Finally, the pan-northern marketing campaign Look Up North brought the three territories together to create a northern brand that would appeal to a full range of visitors.

In 2010, the group launched Canada's Northern House, which was set up during the Winter Olympics and captured the attention of visitors from within Canada and elsewhere around the world. This project is nominated for the Fairmount Hotels and Resorts marketing campaign of the year award. The joint marketing campaigns and the pan-north consortium demonstrate our good working relationship across the north, which unifies us and helps us to build a stronger tourism brand.

All of these finalists demonstrate the dedication and professionalism that makes Yukon's tourism industry a robust industry that contributes to the social and economic fabric of Yukon. I would like to congratulate all of them on their nominations for these tourism awards and thank them for representing Yukon so very well.

As finalists for these awards, they have already done Yukon very proud, but I wish each of them the best of luck when the award winners are announced in Ottawa this Wednesday, November 26.

In recognition of National Child Day and Universal Children's Day

Hon. Mr. Graham: This month we celebrated National Child Day and I want to ask all colleagues in the House today to join me in celebrating children.

Originally established in 1993, the aim of National Child Day is to promote awareness of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. This convention was historical because it was the first time that children were recognized as rights-holders in an international treaty. This marked the transition from addressing children's immediate needs through charity alone to galvanizing the movement toward advocacy that would bring about systemic change for the realization of children's rights.

The UN convention spells out the basic rights to which every child is entitled, no matter where they live or what they do — rights that are based on basic principles that a child's best interest should be the first consideration in any action that affects him or her; that all children have the right to life, survival and development; that all children have the right to

participate; and that all rights belong to all children. These basic principles inform children's rights to special protection, to special education and care, to play and rest, to a voice and to health.

Here in Yukon, we believe that government has a role to play in supporting parents and families in their efforts to raise children in a safe and secure environment. We do this in many ways. We provide childcare subsidies for parents who must work and need to leave their children in care. To ensure that care is of good quality, we provide subsidies for licensed care and we fund many other childcare initiatives. We fund Food for Learning to support nutrition programs in schools throughout the Yukon to ensure that no child has to go to class hungry. We support the Imagination Library so that all children under five develop literacy skills and a love of learning. We recently announced the expansion of our healthy families support program to three Yukon rural communities.

We remain focused on ways to improve the health and well-being of our children and youth. We will continue our efforts, not simply because we understand that children are the future of the Yukon, but because they deserve to be safe, fed, educated and happy. Children deserve the best efforts of everyone at all times. I would also like to take the opportunity, if I may, to congratulate the Child Development Centre on its 35th anniversary. The Child Development Centre also plays an important role in supporting children and families in the Yukon. We are very fortunate to have this centre and its services available to so many. I can personally attest to that. On Thursday morning, I was at an arts and crafts day at the Child Development Centre and then spent an hour on my hands and knees, playing with a variety of children, learning as I went. I can attest to the services available there at the Child Development Centre.

It has been a real pleasure for me to witness this organization growing from a handful of families — from a small trailer in Riverdale — to now being an established Yukon-wide service helping children in every community. I think, Mr. Speaker, we have you to thank for some portion of that as well, as you spent many years with the Child Development Centre and we appreciate your efforts as well.

Ms. Stick: I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition. I want to start with this quote: "The one thing all children have in common is their rights. Every child has the right to survive and thrive, to be educated, to be free from violence and abuse, to participate and to be heard." That was a quote by the U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Mr. Speaker, November 20 was Universal Children's Day. Nearly 25 years ago, the world made a promise to children that we would do everything in our power to protect and promote their rights to survive and thrive, to learn and grow, to make their voices heard and to reach their full potential. Yet old challenges have combined with new problems to deprive many children in our world of their rights and the benefits of development. Ongoing conflicts in the world have placed more children in harm's way — many have

died, many have been rendered homeless without education, and, in too many instances, orphaned with no families.

It was also 25 years ago today that the Canadian Parliament unanimously passed a motion by then NDP leader Ed Broadbent to eliminate child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. Unfortunately, we're not close.

I tie these two together, Mr. Speaker, because the child in poverty in Canada, the child in war-torn countries, the child in refugee camps — all are having their rights promised to them by the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child* compromised. Too many are hungry, homeless and not receiving the education they need and deserve. To bring it closer to home, it is estimated that 22.7 percent of Yukon children were identified as being food-insecure. The Yukon Food for Learning Association reported serving 16,385 servings between the 27 schools, or 5,000 students in the Yukon.

We have the food bank providing food to families — and these are families with children — numbers that include children and it impacts their rights to survive and thrive. Protecting the rights of the child, eliminating poverty — these are some things that all governments should be concerned about and striving toward. Over and over we hear of the consequences of social determinants and downstream health outcomes. What that means is that the more we do to support, to feed, to house and to educate children from birth, the greater positive benefits in terms of overall health, mental health, education and employment and children's rights.

We can do better and we must do better to recognize the rights of the child and recognize that these rights include all children in our community, our country and around the world.

Mr. Silver: I rise on behalf of the Liberal Party to also pay tribute to National Child Day, which takes place on November 20 of each year.

National Child Day is a day to recognize and to celebrate the rights of children in Canada. The day marks the anniversary of the United Nations *Declaration of the Rights of the Child*, signed on November 20, 1959. As the Minister of Health and Social Services pointed out, this year also marks the 25th anniversary of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1989. Canada ratified that agreement in 1991, further recognizing our country's commitment to human rights.

The United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* is an important milestone in human rights. The convention recognizes that children have political, civil, economic, health and cultural rights. Currently there are 194 countries that have ratified the agreement and it is bound by international law. In conclusion, the Government of Canada does have a number of resources available at www.childday.gc.ca for parents to use in order to help teach their children that they do have rights under the law, just like adults.

In recognition of National Housing Day

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition to recognize the 22nd of November as National

Housing Day. In the dictionary, “home” is defined as a house, apartment or other shelter that is the usual residence of a person, family or household. It is the place in which one’s domestic affections are centred.

Outside the dictionary pages, it is much harder to define “home”. We hope that home is a place of safety and security, a place where we are free to lower our defences and just be. It is critical when we discuss the issue of housing that we recognize housing as a human right. Today, from coast to coast to coast, there are hundreds of thousands of Canadians who are homeless and millions more who are living in inadequate and unaffordable housing. These numbers represent faces in every community across this country.

Homelessness in Canada continues to remain at crisis levels with very few changes to this reality in sight. Our continued failure to respond to this crisis is not only in violation of our international commitments, including the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, it also violates our own *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* — specifically section 7, which guarantees the right of life, liberty and security of person. How is it possible that in a country as wealthy as Canada, we remain the only major industrialized country without a national housing strategy?

Last Friday, a new housing project was unveiled on the front step of this very building. It is a village made of cardboard boxes. This project mirrored efforts across the country to raise the profile of our continued local and national housing crisis. These cardboard houses were constructed to raise awareness, shed light and encourage a local dialogue on housing issues. Winter is here once again and Yukoners are still facing difficult housing choices.

There is hope that all levels of government will diligently work to improve accessibility to housing, and that together, we can work on the development of a national housing strategy that will see that there is a home for everyone.

We look forward to the day when homelessness is a thing of the past.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I rise today to pay tribute to Canada’s National Housing Day. A profound amount of work is being undertaken to improve the housing situation in all parts of Canada, with provincial and territorial housing agencies working cooperatively with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and other community partners in addressing needs across the housing continuum.

Yukon Housing Corporation plays a key role in providing affordable social housing for low-income Yukoners and seniors who wish to live independently. The Yukon government has a good working relationship with the federal government and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, through which we have been able to create new social housing projects that address some of Yukon’s housing issues.

Last July, Yukon entered into a new investment in affordable housing agreement that will see a combined investment of some \$16 million over the next five years. For those households whose needs cannot be met in the

marketplace, governments, community organizations, non-profit and cooperative groups and the private sector are working together to provide affordable housing solutions.

With the financial support of Canada and the Yukon governments, the social housing projects completed in recent years have contributed greatly to providing lower-income Yukoners and independent seniors with affordable, safe and comfortable places to live across the territory.

Looking back into recent history, federal funding through Canada’s economic action plan in the amount of \$51,290,000 was announced in May 2009, and through the addition of Yukon’s \$2,186,000 contribution, the total economic stimulus program saw \$53,477,000 in investments across the Yukon.

Federal investments are made to assist low-income households and people with distinct housing needs, and assistance is provided across a broad continuum of housing, from temporary shelter assistance to transitional and supportive housing to help people live more independently, to assisted housing for low-income houses. Beginning in 2009, the Yukon Housing Corporation enhanced and improved its social housing stock and 133 new social housing units were constructed since that time, as well as a further 10 units that were added in special needs housing, which is specifically the children’s receiving home.

We also worked with Canada to find a solution for the housing needs of Options for Independence and their clientele’s accommodation and, of course, through investment in Betty’s Haven, which created second-stage housing for women fleeing abusive situations.

Just last week, we officially opened the new 34-unit Alexander Street seniors residence, and Yukon Housing Corporation now has a total of 652 safe, comfortable and affordable social housing units throughout the territory, with more under construction. A new 48-unit seniors residence is being constructed in Whitehorse right now, as well as a new 16-unit seniors facility in the Village of Mayo.

Nearly every Yukon community had new additions or improvements made to their social housing stock in recent years and, in many cases, the usable life of the existing housing units was greatly extended so that the housing inventory will remain viable in the community for years to come.

Over 350 social housing units throughout Yukon were repaired and upgraded using Canada’s economic action plan funding. Our partnership with Canada on these housing projects demonstrated how success can be achieved by working together to improve the housing situation. In recent years, over \$100 million has been invested throughout the Yukon under Yukon Housing Corporation in building new seniors and social housing units. Successful housing development approaches can become best practices for others to emulate in their local areas and some can go on to become models that can be applied in other areas across the world.

Building on this unprecedented level of investment by the territorial government and the federal government, we are continuing to work with partners through the housing action plan, which has engaged NGOs, other levels of government

and various stakeholders to work together to find solutions to address the existing housing challenges and build on the good work that has been done in recent years.

Through this diligent work that is ongoing by levels of government, advocacy groups, charitable organizations and the board of Yukon Housing Corporation, we are continuing to work to find housing solutions that help Yukoners find safe, comfortable and affordable solutions to their particular housing needs.

Mr. Silver: I rise on behalf of the Liberal Party to pay tribute to National Housing Day, which takes place on November 22 of each year.

The date was chosen to commemorate the 1998 declaration by the mayors of Canadian major cities to declare homelessness a national disaster and call on the federal and provincial governments to take action. Homelessness is as much a problem in the Yukon as it is in these major centres like Vancouver and Toronto.

Whitehorse has over 100 homeless people, many of whom rely on the Salvation Army for meals and for shelter. It is suspected that in Canada, as many as 300,000 Canadians are visibly homeless and as many as 900,000 are members of the hidden homeless community. Unfortunately, there are a number of causes that make it such a challenging problem for governments to tackle and, too often, homelessness is a result of mental illness.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the hard work of Habitat for Humanity Yukon in helping to provide a hand up to Yukon families. This week, they will be holding a dedication ceremony for their new families, and also celebrating their 10th anniversary in the Yukon.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to undertake a tourism trade mission to Asia in order to realize the significant potential of Asian markets to Yukon's tourism industry and facilitate partnerships between government and industry that will benefit Yukon's tourism industry.

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

THAT this House mark the 25th anniversary of the unanimous resolution of the federal House of Commons to eliminate poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000 by committing to eliminating poverty among Yukon children.

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

THAT this House urge the Government of Yukon to:

(1) consider the findings of the report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on solitary confinement, and its harmful effects;

(2) invite the federal Office of the Correctional Investigator to audit Whitehorse Correctional Centre, including a review of the use of solitary confinement at WCC;

(3) assess the impact of the use of solitary confinement on the physical and mental health of people in custody at WCC; and

(4) provide recommendations based on the outcomes of the investigations.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work in collaboration with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation government to provide support to the community of Old Crow to ensure that affordable and healthy food is available to residents during the construction of the new food co-op.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explore a community contribution company model similar to what is available in British Columbia, to:

(1) bridge the gap between for-profit businesses and not-for-profit sector;

(2) encourage private investment into social enterprise; and

(3) reduce demand for government contribution agreements.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explain how holding a sod-turning event before an election campaign does not qualify as an election promise.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Child poverty elimination

Ms. Hanson: As we have noted, today marks the 25th anniversary of unanimous support by all members of Parliament for a motion by then NDP Leader Ed Broadbent to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. Twenty-five years later, it is disturbing to note that one in seven Canadian children live in poverty and, worse still, that this rate climbs to four in ten for aboriginal children.

Research has shown that the national child benefit supplement lowers child poverty rates but here in Yukon, this benefit is clawed back from families who rely on social assistance. Instead of safeguarding low-income families at

risk, this government is putting more pressure on low-income families.

Will the Premier, as Finance minister, eliminate the clawback of the national child benefit, a clawback that deepens income inequality and child poverty for families relying on social assistance?

Hon. Mr. Graham: This is one of the issues that we are looking at currently in the Department of Health and Social Services, and we'll soon be bringing forward a proposal to the government to address this issue.

But I think that there are other things that have to be acknowledged here in the Yukon — that we have taken serious steps to address the issue of children living in poverty. We have introduced the Yukon child tax benefit, which is \$57.50 a month per child if a family's income is less than \$30,000. In fact, if the family's income is over \$30,000, they are still eligible for a portion of that tax benefit. That is handled through the federal government's Canada child tax benefit as well.

We also have made strides with the children's drug and optical program to ensure that children in low-income families also have those services available to them to ensure that some additional health needs are provided. We are making progress in the territory on a daily basis.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but the clawback remains. Eradicating child poverty and the social exclusion that comes with poverty requires targeting the root causes of poverty and income inequality. To do this, we must be able to track our progress in order to focus resources and improve performance. In 2010, this government outlined a social inclusion and poverty reduction indicator framework for the well-being of Yukoners, but it is a framework in name only. No data has been collected or tracked to gauge what, if any, progress has been made on reducing child poverty. Governments measure and report on everything, from jobs to bison. Surely we can agree that reducing the number of Yukon children living in poverty is worthy of the same focused attention.

Will the minister finally put some meat on the bones of his social inclusion and poverty reduction strategy and report on key indicators of child poverty, including affordable housing, food security and high-quality, affordable childcare?

Hon. Mr. Graham: As I have indicated earlier in this session or perhaps the last session, part of the work done in the social inclusion policy was to set benchmarks. Once those benchmarks are all set — and we are in the process of doing that right now — we will then provide a report on how the Yukon as a whole has done in meeting those benchmarks in the longer term. Information received during the preparation of the plan was that these benchmarks should not be really looked at for at least three to five years.

Given those parameters, I can answer the member opposite in a very positive way. We are in the process of setting those benchmarks and we will be reporting on those benchmarks in the longer term. I must say also that, through the wellness plan for Yukon's children and family, we have already set out three pathways for achieving wellness and

preventing illnesses — those who are getting a good start in life, raising children who flourish — and healthy living for all. We are rolling those things out. We have made that an integral part of planning for this government's future.

Ms. Hanson: Child poverty is not inevitable. It is the end result of government policy decisions made — or not made — over time. This government does know this. One objective of its social inclusion and poverty reduction strategy is to: "Provide supports for families with children to break the cycle of poverty."

But now the minister is telling us that, four years later, he is still setting benchmarks. This strategy does not have an implementation plan to show how it is going to achieve their objectives. Other Canadian jurisdictions have implemented poverty reduction strategies through legislation and dedicated funding. For the sake of our children, it is time for Yukon to take action, not just talk about it.

So will this government fulfill its commitment to break the cycle of poverty — child poverty — by actively implementing its social inclusion and poverty reduction strategy and will it set clear, measurable timelines and targets?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I want to thank the Minister of Health and Social Services for answering the questions of the member opposite. This government continues to invest across the board, essentially in all departments, to address this very important topic. Certainly within the Department of Education, with the new blended learning that is occurring — it started in Watson Lake and now is essentially the talk of the whole country, which is eager to learn from what we are doing here — and some of the exciting things that we are doing partnering with First Nations, such as the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, as part of their self-government agreement. As their partner in education, certainly we have talked — and this month is financial literacy — ensuring that there's a focus on children understanding financial literacy, which will help them throughout their lives and, essentially, help all our economy.

We also invest not only in early stages, but for young adults through the mobile trades training trailer. What I'm talking about is that this government is also focused on the economy. This government is focused on creating jobs, creating wealth and prosperity for Yukoners — that in itself will help to eliminate some of the issues that have been identified by the member opposite, and we will continue to ensure that our focus is on Yukon families.

Question re: Yukon nominee program

Ms. White: The *Whitehorse Star* reported last Friday about recurring problems with an employer in the nominee program. We have copies of letters an employer sent to its employees, requiring them to speak to the media and write a letter to local newspapers about their experience with that employer.

There were other requirements outlined in the letter that the employee would have to fulfill for continued support in the nominee program from that employer. These kinds of

requests are against the policies of the nominee program and against basic workers' rights.

What measures have been taken to address this specific situation?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: The Yukon nominee program is but one of many different programs in support of Yukoners and in support of the labour market conditions, as we know them today. I know that in Advanced Education we take care to ensure integrity and to protect the integrity of the nominee program and all its programs. Each of our staff is trained to verify information and to ensure that all applications adhere to policy.

Every individual employer and employee, as well as the Department of Education, is compelled to be able to sign a tripartite agreement with the respective government and all parties, which outlines every party's rights and obligations under that particular program — again, the roles and responsibilities.

So without speaking to specific individual cases, which I am not able to do on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, I can say that we do ensure the integrity of the program. We will undertake investigations, when required, and we will continue to work with all parties, whether that be Immigration Canada, the RCMP or any other party.

Ms. White: Yukon nominee employees are among the most vulnerable, as their access to permanent residency is directly linked to their employer. Even in cases where an employer wrongfully terminates a nominee employee, the worker must restart the two-year process from the very beginning with a new employer.

In this context, sitting back and waiting for a nominee worker to complain is just not good enough.

Will the minister commit to taking immediate measures to ensure nominee employee rights are respected, or will the minister leave it up to these vulnerable workers to stand up for their own rights?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As I just mentioned, the Department of Education, on behalf of the Government of Canada, takes care to protect the integrity of the nominee program. We ensure that any and all areas that require investigation are investigated with credence.

As I mentioned before, we have implemented measures beyond the federal requirements and beyond those that are currently in place with provinces and territories — which again speaks to the tripartite agreement with the Yukon government as well as the nominees themselves or the temporary foreign workers, and, of course, when it comes to the employers themselves — which requires all of those individuals to go through their respective roles, responsibilities and obligations under those respective programs.

This is but one program that is delivered by Advanced Education in support of Yukon's labour market. It is to fulfill a gap when, in fact, Canadians are not able to provide that measure. It comprises about less than one percent of our overall labour market force in any given year, and any and all cases that require investigations are carried out accordingly.

Ms. White: This one program is responsible for the health and well-being of nominee employers. Upon completion of their work term under the Yukon nominee program, these workers rightfully expect to gain Canadian residency. There have been documented abuses in the past of some nominees by their employers. Of course, there are only a few bad apples, but they have given a bad name to the whole program.

The nominee program helps employers find the labour force that they need and gives workers a path to Canadian residency, but the power imbalance between employer and employee in this situation requires government action to protect the employees.

How does government make sure that a nominee is not enduring abuse as they work hard to become permanent residents of Canada?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As I just mentioned, in among the many measures that are in place and are delivered by the Department of Education which speak to the tripartite agreement that is signed off — that is certainly in the hands of the employer, the employee and the Department of Education. Again, that goes through the specific roles and responsibilities of every respective party when it comes to the nominee program.

Parties are invited to submit any concerns, any questions or any ideas throughout the period of employment and can do so either by picking up the phone or by issuing them electronically. Any and all concerns are reviewed. They are certainly followed up on by individual staff persons. Our staff continue to be available at any time to answer those questions, to provide clarity or to provide information to approved employers and nominees at any time.

If there is any wrongdoing or any alleged wrongdoing, those cases will be specifically investigated and directed accordingly. It could be directed to within the Department of Education. It could be directed to Immigration Canada, which oversees work permit and also issues overseas work student visas or it could be issued to the RCMP. We take these matters very seriously and will continue to issue them with integrity.

Speaker: The member's time has elapsed.

Question re: Ketz River mine project

Mr. Silver: Earlier this summer, a company named Veris Gold filed for bankruptcy protection. A subsidiary of Veris Gold owns the Ketz River mine project near Ross River. On October 3, the company issued a news release saying that it would be cooperating with the Yukon government to address certain maintenance and remedial work required at the Ketz River project. This news release was not announced by this government.

The work includes maintenance work on access road bridges and will be funded from a \$3-million security fund that the company had established for reclamation. It appears that the government is using the reclamation fund to pay for maintenance at this mine site. Can the minister explain to us why?

Hon. Mr. Kent: There were a number of steps that were taken by Compliance Monitoring and Inspections branch with respect to the Ketzia mine, and accessing the security that the member opposite mentioned was of course one of the last steps that we took. He is indeed correct — there was slightly over \$3 million in that fund that was accessed in October of this year. We've retained the services of a consulting firm to manage the project. It is more than just simple maintenance, as the member opposite alluded to in his initial question. There are a number of aspects of that project that require this and again we are using a consulting firm to manage the project so that we can bring that site back into compliance.

Mr. Silver: The government's decision to spend reclamation dollars on the road and bridge maintenance begs the question: Who will be paying for the actual reclamation?

The October 3 news release goes on to say that the Government of Yukon will undertake the contracting of the required work. Can the minister tell Yukoners if Veris is in fact still owning the company and also how much of the \$3 million will be spent?

Hon. Mr. Kent: These dollars are being utilized to bring the property back into compliance. As mentioned, there is work on the access road and bridges. There is also work with respect to the tailing facility on-site. As mentioned, the Yukon government was named as the beneficiary of the commercial letter of credit in the amount of \$3,087,600.

While we are not managing the project, we have enlisted the services of a consulting firm to manage the project. The contractor has been instructed to demonstrate best efforts to employ qualified local individuals and businesses wherever possible, and there are a number of tight controls within that contract with the consultant to ensure that it doesn't go over the amount of money that we have for the project itself.

Mr. Silver: So the minister says that the reclamation money is being used to bring this project into compliance. This situation raises a couple of questions. I think the government is setting a precedent when it is using money intended for reclamation instead on upgrading the Ketzia mine and bridges. If the government wants to do that, they should maybe find money from Highways and Public Works instead of out of the reclamation bond. That is money that's actually set aside to be used when a mine is permanently closed.

What is the status of this property? Is it closed temporarily or, now that the owner has gone bankrupt, will it be closed permanently? Is there even a water licence in place to do some of the work that the minister has outlined? Finally, is \$3 million sufficient to clean up this site?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, as I mentioned, we've accessed the security bond to assist us in bringing the site back into compliance. As mentioned, we've retained the services of a local consultant to do so. There were a number of steps, as I mentioned, that led up to this point. Compliance Monitoring and Inspections branch worked with the company to try to bring it back into compliance.

Again, the company still owns the project. We have no interest in owning the project. We just want to make sure that we safeguard the environment and human health and safety,

so that's what we're doing by accessing these funds to bring that property back into compliance, not only with respect to the road and the bridges in there, but also water treatment, the tailings facilities — those types of issues, as well — that have the potential to have long-term environmental effects.

Again, that's what we're doing with the Ketzia River mine. We have consultants and people on-site right now working.

Question re: Contract registry

Ms. Stick: In the Health and Social Services budget debate earlier in this sitting, I asked a number of questions with regard to physician cost increases. I noted current contracts in place with the department that are available on the Yukon public contract registry. Last week and again this morning, I returned to the public contract registry to verify some earlier information. Shockingly, 104 contracts, totalling over \$8.2 million in awarded funding, have been removed from the government's contract registry.

The contract registry is an essential component of government accountability and transparency. Can the minister explain why 104 contracts, totalling over \$8.2 million, have been removed from the Yukon public contract registry?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'm good — I admit it — but I'm not that good. I have no idea why 104 contracts, totalling \$8.2 million, were removed from the website, but I will endeavour to find out and return to the Legislature with an answer.

Ms. Stick: I don't know and I'll get back to you is not good enough. This is \$8.2 million out of one government department — one.

The government's public contract registry is about being accountable. This is particularly important: most of the 104 contracts removed were sole sourced. The contracts have been removed and cannot be found, but they were not random. Specifically, they were contracts for doctors' visits to the communities and specialists' visits that have disappeared. Mr. Speaker, either this government cancelled \$8.2 million in health contracts, or they believe Yukoners do not have the right to know who received government contracts.

Why would this government remove contracts for all community visits by doctors and most of the contracts for specialists from the Yukon public contract registry?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I am certain that the member opposite doesn't think through these questions when she asks them.

If I could possibly know what happened to 104 contracts totalling \$8.2 million in a budget that is nearing \$350 million, I believe, where physicians' fees in the territory in total amount to approximately \$35 million — how could I possibly be expected to know what is being taken on and off of a government registry on a day-to-day basis?

I will get back to the member in due course with this information.

Ms. Stick: It is just not good enough. There were obvious patterns, when looking at these contracts. For example, one contract was awarded to a medical clinic for rental space of over \$300,000. That was removed and I cannot

retrieve that contract. Similarly, another contract — same clinic, same services — for \$28,000 remains.

Yukoners know that this government does not have a good track record when it comes to transparency and accountability, but removing information from the public contract is out of the ordinary, even for them. Will the minister show a commitment to open and accountable government and commit to correcting the contract registry so Yukoners can know where their money is being spent?

Hon. Mr. Graham: What we have here is a conspiracy theory imagined by the member opposite somewhere.

As soon as she mentioned a couple of these items, I'm sure that we have absolutely nothing to hide. I know that when we lease space in the territory, it's for a very good reason, such as —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Graham: The member opposite obviously knows more about the Health and Social Services budget than I do, or at least she thinks she does.

It is for very clear reasons, such as the women's clinic that was recently established. It is the clinic for homeless people and people with difficulty accessing medical services in the Yukon. I'm sure that is what it will turn out to be, but I know the conspiracy theory will continue in the member's mind for months to come.

Question re: Affordable housing

Ms. White: As winter sets in and the temperature drops, it is important that we have a real conversation about precarious housing in the Yukon. At about this time last year, I asked the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation about the number of homeless or precariously housed people in the Yukon, and he either couldn't or wouldn't answer my question. Last year, there were about 50 Yukoners being lodged in hotels at nearly \$1,000 a month for the entire winter. Not only is this a bad fit for tenants, it doesn't make fiscal sense.

A year has passed. How many tenants is the government housing in local hotels and at what cost?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I will have to get back to the member on the cost. I know that during the winter months, we have at times housed between 40 and 80 people in local hotels. I don't have a number as of this date, because it changes from month to month, but I will get back to the member opposite with respect to an exact number. As for the cost of those spaces, many times what happens is that the people living in those hotels receive funding from social assistance to pay for their hotel rooms. I will endeavour to bring back as much information as I possibly can.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for his answer and his promise to bring forward those numbers.

Most hotel rooms don't have kitchens. Having to buy meals every day without access to basic cooking resources is not food security, and it is actually far more expensive for those living under these conditions. The waiting list for affordable housing is growing, and the turnover is slow. People start to notice when affordable housing units sit empty

for months on end because they are waiting on renovations by this government before they can take on a new tenant.

How many Yukoners are on the waiting list for the 652 units the minister mentioned in his tribute, and how many of those units are unoccupied because they are awaiting renovations?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I would remind the member is that Yukon Housing Corporation is a corporation that operates under a governing board of directors. As minister responsible, I am not involved in the day-to-day operations. I don't assess clients. I don't determine who gets housing units. I do have confidence in the staff who do that good work. I would again remind the member of the fact that if units are left vacant and there are people on the waiting list, staff endeavour to ensure that those units are only vacant for as long as they need to be to enable whatever repairs are required after a previous tenant has left. In fact, they do an excellent job. I remind the member that the NDP likes to be very preachy on this subject, but in fact it is the Yukon Party that has done more to invest in social housing than any previous government.

Ms. White: I always appreciate the minister's reminders. Let me remind him that tenants in hotel rooms without kitchens and social housing units without tenants just do not make any sense. We have seen what this government does when it's faced with an affordable housing crisis. It drags its heels on spending federal money earmarked since 2006. It promises new units and then cancels a project, not just once, but twice. Meanwhile, social housing units are sitting empty because the government isn't making the renovations a priority so they can accommodate new tenants. There continues to be an affordable housing crisis in the territory and this government is sleeping at the wheel.

How can Yukoners trust this government to provide affordable housing for Yukoners in need when they keep relying on hotel rooms to deal with social housing needs?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I know we hear a lot of very impassioned rhetoric from the member, but I would encourage the member to actually look at the facts. We have taken — again, since 2007 — over \$100 million in investments across this territory, including \$53

I would remind the member that we are continuing to invest in housing. A 48-unit seniors complex is being built as we speak, building on the recent 34-unit construction of 207 Alexander Street. There is investment in the Mayo sixplex that is being built right now and seniors units that have been built in Yukon communities — something the NDP never did when in office. We have again put more investment in social housing than the NDP. We just aren't nearly as preachy about it but we actually put our money where our mouth is.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Commissioner: Please be seated.

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

Clerk: *Domestic Water Well Program Amendments Act; Court Security Act.*

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

Before I leave here today, I just want to remind all members of the House of an extremely important event taking place on Wednesday evening and that's the Commissioner's Youth Showcase concert. It is Wednesday evening from 6:30 p.m. to about 7:30 p.m. There are about a dozen young people who are going to perform that evening at the Old Fire Hall.

I am really pleased to say that we had over 100 young, talented Yukoners perform at the various events that I have hosted over the past four years. The scope of the talent is incredible. If you haven't been to see some of these young kids perform, I urge you to come out on Wednesday night and watch the performances. I look forward to seeing some of you there.

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker: Please be seated. I will now call the House to order.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. The matter before the committee is Vote 8, Department of Justice, in Bill No. 15, *Second Appropriation Act 2014-15*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 15: *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 8, Department of Justice, in Bill No. 15, *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Department of Justice

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise today to speak to the Department of Justice 2014-15 supplementary budget no. 1, but before we get into some more of the debate, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation for the support of the department officials back at the Department of Justice who are assisting and listening to the debate today, as well as my deputy minister, Tom Ullyett, and acting director of Finance, Jeston Innes, for joining and providing support to me on the floor of the Legislature today.

This supplementary budget continues the work presented in earlier budgets and funds important projects that are improving our justice programs and services. We remain steadfast in our commitment to provide an accessible, high-quality and cost-effective justice system in the territory. We also continue to work collaboratively with both governmental and non-governmental partners to make our communities safer. Members will see that the budget reflects this.

The supplementary budget before us today outlines funding that the department is using to grow and diversify programs and services in order to meet the unique needs of Yukoners navigating the justice system, as well as to modernize our operations and upgrade our infrastructure and pay for compensation, training and workspace needs.

The department remains committed to provide services for victims of crime. In 2013-14 alone, Victim Services provided support for more than 1,000 clients. A victim or a witness of crime often has many questions and concerns: Am I safe? Where do I go for help? Do I have to lay a charge? What comes next?

Victims of crime have the right to have their views considered at all stages of the justice process, and therefore, Victim Services works to make sure that the victim's voice is heard. Victim Services helps victims in time of crisis with counselling and support. They help victims understand their rights and options within the criminal justice system and how they can participate in the court process.

Victim Services helps clients develop safety plans, apply for protective court orders and prepare victim impact statements. They help clients apply for practical emergency support for things like cellphones and accommodation, and they refer them to other agencies as needed.

This work, which has been guided from 2009-14 by the *Victims of Crime Strategy* — now in the evaluation phase — is very important because we know that persons affected by crime all have a unique experience and they all have different needs. The needs of individuals, families and communities

vary, and Victim Services is helping victims navigate the justice system and connect them to the right service providers. Victim Services works collaboratively with community organizations, First Nations, transition homes, the RCMP and other health and justice system partners to facilitate the integration of services so they are tailored to the needs of the victim or the witness of crime.

A good example of this is project Lynx, which is a new partnership model for coordinating support services for children and youth victims or witnesses of crime. This model ensures that these support services are culturally and developmentally suitable and protects clients from additional traumas that could be caused by their experience of having to go through the justice system.

In this supplementary budget before you today, an increase of \$10,000 has been allocated to Victim Services' budget in order to grow the services available to our neighbours and communities of Good Hope Lake, Lower Post and Atlin, B.C.

The funding is 100-percent recoverable from the Government of British Columbia under an MOU with the Ministry of Justice and it will be used for services and supports for victims of spousal assault, sexual assault, homicide and other crimes.

This relationship with B.C. is important, as B.C. provides unlimited access for all Yukoners to VictimLINK, which is a toll-free, 24/7 information support and crisis line which can connect Yukon victims to local services, such as Kaushee's crisis line, or refer them to Victim Services.

This budget also designates \$8,000 for office renovations at the Watson Lake Victim Services office. These renovations are accommodating an additional full-time victim services worker in Watson Lake and creating a space separate from the clients of offender supervision services or adult probation.

As part of Yukon's partnership agreement with the federal government, the department continues to work with the RCMP to deliver policing in our great territory. Yukoners place a high priority on living safe and living in a secure society. They look to government, to the RCMP and to organizations at all levels to develop programs and policies that reduce crime, and when crime does happen, that effective and efficient investigations ensue.

The policing priorities for 2014-15 were developed with community input via the Police Council and they focus on: preventing and decreasing the victimization of children and youth; improving the response to sexualized assault and family violence; identifying and addressing with the public and service providers community safety issues; building and fostering constructive, respectful relationships with First Nations; and improving the police response to vulnerable populations.

To jointly manage policing infrastructure and service throughout the territory, the department has made a one-time increase of \$220,000 for RCMP needs. Firstly, this includes an additional \$20,000 to cover RCMP salary increases. RCMP salaries were capped at 1.5 percent annually, from 2011 to 2014, as part of the deficit reduction action plan affecting the

federal public service. However, the RCMP recently received a two-percent pay increase, retroactive to January 1 of this year.

Secondly, this includes \$177,000 to improve the mobile radio system, which is this year's allocation — as part of the Highways and Public Works' four-year plan — to update the needed infrastructure in and around Whitehorse.

Thirdly, \$23,000 has been assigned to increase the budget for the renewal of the biological casework agreement with Public Safety Canada and the RCMP. This funding is for the national DNA labs and biological casework analysis. As partners, the department and the RCMP are delivering innovative and responsive services.

A good example of this collaboration is the opening of the arrest processing unit this spring. The secure 24-hour support centre is ensuring the highest standard of care and protection for all persons taken into the custody of the RCMP, including those who are acutely intoxicated. The arrest processing unit — as I have mentioned before — is an outcome from the *Sharing Common Ground* recommendations.

I would like to recognize the achievements of those involved with the implementation of the *Sharing Common Ground* recommendations including, but not limited to, the Northern Institute of Social Justice, Kwanlin Dun First Nation, the women's coalition and the Department of Justice team — who recently received the Premier's Award of Excellence. This work collectively transformed our relationships with Yukon's police force and I thank all of those involved for their contributions. I look forward to hearing about the projects that will continue as a result of this project.

The demolition of the old Whitehorse Correctional Centre has been completed. Members will remember that studies indicated that tearing down the building was more beneficial and economical than trying to refurbish it. During the demolition work, it became apparent to contractors that more work was needed to remove toxic materials, such as asbestos and lead paint, and to remediate the site. Therefore, this supplementary budget notes a \$270,000 increase for the additional costs to remove and dispose of these toxic materials.

I would like to take an opportunity to provide a couple more updates. I recently attended the Justice federal-provincial-territorial ministers meetings and was pleased to talk about the progress of Yukon's FASD prevalence study and to hear that ministers across our country are in support of more research that helps us better understand FASD issues. Assessments are underway at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and the study team is working diligently on executing the study's mandate to collect data that will help us understand the prevalence of FASD, mental health and substance abuse problems in Yukon corrections population. We are confident that this research will help us learn more about ways to improve access to justice for individuals with FASD in and out of the corrections system.

I would also like to report that a new funding model has been reached with Yukon Legal Services Society, Yukon's legal aid provider. The department worked with the society this summer to create a model that will ensure legal aid operating costs are fully funded. The department will proactively forecast and address budget needs with the society on an ongoing basis instead of providing one-time funding increases as we have done in the past. We will be working with the society to draw down on any existing accumulated legal aid funding surpluses and then we'll identify required contribution levels, as agreed upon, to meet the legal aid annual operational budget.

The new model will be more responsive to demonstrated costs and will alleviate the pressures of operations. This new arrangement will go a long way to provide low-income, vulnerable — Yukoners who might be considered disadvantaged — with access to quality legal aid services and will increase financial stability for the society itself.

The department continues to work to integrate new technology and systems that will modernize our business practices. The changeover to the justice enterprise information network — otherwise known as JEIN — is advancing. This system, as I've highlighted before, is a software database system that will ensure we are meeting Justice's administrative, informational and management needs for the storage and retrieval of court records. This is a big project and, like many projects of this nature, the team has encountered some delays.

The required business analysis work has been more challenging than anticipated, and it must be completed before moving to the system's development stage of the project. This budget notes an additional \$69,000 for the ongoing work on this JEIN system development.

Other budget items for court technology or court facility improvement include \$90,000, which is 100-percent recoverable from Canada, to administer increased video conferencing capabilities. Video conferencing has been shown to be an effective mechanism to allow victims and witnesses of crime to provide testimony from outside the courtroom. Using video technology is one way to reduce travel costs associated with appearances, but it's also a way to help protect victims of crime from additional trauma that can be caused by being in the courtroom with the accused.

As well, \$10,000 has been designated for courtroom sound system upgrades. This work is making sure that the technical requirements for the digital audio recording system are met and that the PA system's microphones and speakers are compatible and optimized; \$30,000 will be used to improve jury room soundproofing; and \$50,000 has been assigned to replace the inmate holding cell door at the law courts here in Whitehorse.

The department is making good progress on the land titles modernization project. Analysis to appraise current land titles system processes and business requirements is now underway. This budget designates \$200,000 for this business requirements analysis, which will enable the Land Titles

Office to later adopt best practices for digitizing documents and using electronic filing platforms and computer systems.

I am very pleased to share that legislative drafting to update the *Land Titles Act* and the *Condominium Act* is also advancing. Amendments to the respective acts will create a more reliable and client-centered land titles registry and system, and it will create contemporary provisions for condominium development and management.

The government has accepted the 2013 Judicial Compensation Commission — which is the JCC — recommendations. Therefore, the supplementary budget includes the salary increases of the territorial court judges and the justices of the peace. A one-time expenditure in the amount of \$212,000 covers the retroactive payments to April 1, 2013 and ongoing salary increases in 2014-15. A one-time increase of \$200,000 funds the judiciary pension plan adjustments. Other budget items include \$32,000 to enhance the aboriginal courtworker program. The funds will be used to train workers in First Nation communities and intergovernmental agencies about the new national data reporting requirements and *Gladue* processes. These funds are 100-percent recoverable from Canada.

The Government of Yukon is committed to providing a healthy and safe workplace for its employees. As such, this budget identifies funds that have been used to replace the fire-alarm system and for the installation of a new closed-circuit television and panic alarm system.

In closing, I would like to thank and recognize all of the Department of Justice employees for their commitment and for their dedication to delivering our justice programs and our justice services throughout our incredible territory. I would now be happy to answer any questions about the supplementary budget from the members opposite.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would also like to welcome the officials — those who are here in the Legislature with the minister and also those who are tuned in on the radio, who will no doubt be providing answers as I go through the questions I have.

The minister did provide a lot of information in his opening remarks, and I tried to get it down in writing next to the questions that I have for him, but there may be a couple of areas where I ask him to go back and read into the record comments that he has already made.

I want to start out with thanking the minister for making progress on the new funding agreement with the Legal Services Society. The minister indicated that the new model will be better, and we will certainly be keeping an eye on that.

I wanted to ask about witness travel costs, which is one of the items in the O&M expenditures in Court Services in the supplementary budget. This year, the Government of Yukon signed a memorandum of understanding with the federal government for an additional \$92,000 in funding for covering the costs of witness travel and also 50 percent of the salary for a witness coordinator. The federal government used to cover 100 percent of the cost for this program, as I understand it, and now are only covering 50 percent of the cost — although we have certainly heard both the federal government and the

Yukon government speak about the importance of supporting Victim Services.

The minister in his opening remarks referred to the factor that the Victim Services branch has been able to serve over 1,000 clients and helped them navigate the system. There is also the witness coordinator, who works out of the federal public prosecutor's office.

Could the minister tell us what contact the Yukon government had with their federal counterpart regarding this funding scheme where we have now seen the recoverable amount drop from 100 percent to 50 percent?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for her questions. The member opposite made questions to some of the witness costs in court operations and I know we will get to some of those costs when we are in line-by-line debate. Currently, there is a half-time FTE budgeted to provide witness administration. There has been an increased demand relating to the use of video conferencing to eliminate the need for witnesses to travel, and for victim witnesses to provide testimony from a location outside the court room. Demand has necessitated the use of this half-time FTE to 1.0 FTE for the witness administration duties. An unfunded auxiliary-on-call FTE has been engaged to complete the other required workload for this position.

The increase of \$92,000 will fund the additional FTE resources required to facilitate the increased use of video conferencing for witnesses and victim witnesses, as well as to fund 50 percent of expenses toward the court technologist to maintain, set up and test equipment, and to troubleshoot technological issues as they arise. I can note that all those funds are recoverable from Canada.

As far as the relationship that the member opposite asked about, we have a relationship — a memorandum of agreement — with the federal government for funding. That memorandum extends to July 2015. Currently, what we are working on with the federal government are negotiations to extend that MOA.

Ms. Moorcroft: That leaves me with the question unanswered of whether the Yukon Minister of Justice attempted to persuade his federal counterpart to continue to cover 100 percent of those costs of the witness coordinator position.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Those negotiations would certainly happen through the department. It hasn't reached the ministerial level yet.

Ms. Moorcroft: During the minister's opening remarks, toward the end he made a reference to some recoverable funding and to *Gladue* reports. I would like to ask the minister if he could repeat that because I missed what he said.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I was making reference to: "Other budget items include \$32,000 to enhance the aboriginal courtworker program. The funds will be used to train workers in First Nation communities and intergovernmental agencies about the new national data reporting requirements and *Gladue* processes. These funds are 100-percent recoverable from Canada."

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to thank the minister for that.

I have a question relating to policing in communities. The Government of Yukon sets out priorities for the RCMP and recently the parties signed a new 20-year agreement.

This also involves the Government of Canada. But the RCMP still do not have a permanent presence in Burwash. We've heard reports of RCMP response times taking more than two hours for very serious calls. We all recognize the importance of the RCMP and ensuring community safety. The government puts the RCMP in a difficult position when they have to be dispatched from over 120 kilometres away. I'm sure there is a very thorough test to determine whether or not a community deserves a full-time RCMP presence.

What factors does the government take into account to determine whether or not Burwash Landing deserves a full-time police presence? What criteria did the community not meet? If there is no necessity for a police presence in the winter, why is there summertime police presence? Are road infractions caused by increased tourist traffic the only policing problem that afflicts the community of Burwash Landing?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: In 2007-08, the Chief of Kluane First Nation expressed concerns that the lack of a local police presence was problematic, particularly in the summer when there is increased highway traffic and increased outside influence on the community due to the presence of highway construction crews. Kluane First Nation also expressed concern about the slow police response time when an officer has to travel from either Haines Junction or down from Beaver Creek to attend to community policing needs.

In the summer of 2008, RCMP M Division initiated a pilot project to provide retired officers through the RCMP reserve program to focus on policing needs in the Burwash Landing area. The pilot project was staffed by three different retired RCMP members, who each committed to serve as reservists in Yukon for short periods of time. The reservists were obtained through a cooperative agreement or arrangement with the RCMP E Division out of British Columbia. The project has continued each year since 2008 and typically provides two to three months of coverage to the community during the summer months.

During the last two legislative sessions, members opposite have raised concerns over the lack of policing presence in Burwash Landing. As of December 2013, the population of Burwash was 104. The community of Burwash Landing is, as I've mentioned, policed from the Haines Junction detachment, with additional support from the Beaver Creek detachment during the summer. Burwash Landing receives additional support through the RCMP reservist program. As I've mentioned, these reservists are fully trained regular, and perhaps retired, police officers.

I've also mentioned that, since 2008, the Department of Justice has funded the RCMP reservist in Burwash to address the heightened policing needs of the community in those summer months.

The Kluane First Nation, RCMP and the Department of Justice arrived at this solution, based on the community's

policing needs, including an assessment of when calls for service are at their peak. Community members reported that the presence of the RCMP resulted in a reduction of speeding tickets along the highway, as well as drinking and driving.

On another note, Madam Chair, on average, there are approximately 50 calls for service per year from Burwash. The majority of these calls occur during the summer months and they are usually related to impaired driving.

Also, while it is recognized that each community in Yukon has different policing needs, a detachment in all locations certainly isn't something that can be supported. Many small communities across Canada do not have a permanent police presence and receive police services via a hub detachment similar to the RCMP detachment in Haines Junction. I know — in speaking with the Minister of Justice from Nunavut in particular — some of their fly-in communities don't have a police presence so if there is a serious incident, the RCMP from one community would have to fly into the other community to address those issues.

Our officials are open to engaging the RCMP, Kluane First Nation and Burwash Landing in a dialogue on the policing needs of that community but I am happy to see that there has been progress over the last number of years. We do take the policing needs of that community very seriously and we'll continue to have faith in the RCMP to address those very needs.

Ms. Moorcroft: The minister has indicated that Burwash Landing is too small for a police presence full-time but after speaking with the Kluane First Nation and working with the RCMP, the police — supported by the government — are now using an RCMP reservist program. The minister also indicated that there are approximately 50 calls a year, mostly in the summer.

I would like to ask the minister if he can explain — and perhaps I just missed this detail in his answer — when is the RCMP reservist program available? Is that year-round? Is that weekdays only? Does it apply on weekends? How much uptake is there for the use of that program?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As I had indicated, there are approximately 50 calls per year from the Burwash Landing area. The majority of those calls occur during the summer months and they are usually related to impaired driving. The reservist program was built around the policing needs of that community so it's available in the summer months.

Ms. Moorcroft: I was really pleased to see the Yukon Coroners Service brochure that the minister tabled in this Legislature earlier in the sitting. We also really appreciate the fact that the Coroners Service is now posting the judgments of inquiry, so it's on-line. It's great to see that openness and transparency. I understand the independence of the coroner, but I want to ask whether departments report back to the coroner or whether a coroner can ask for updates from departments on recommendations the coroner has made in judgments of inquiry or in a coroner's inquest.

I also want to ask why there is no mention of coroner's inquests in the flowchart or the brochure. We have seen two coroner's inquests being held this year. Has the government

decided that they will no longer allow any coroner's inquests, or are inquests no longer considered a priority because of their expense? Was there political direction to not include the coroner's inquest on the pamphlet? Can the minister say what the justification was for leaving it off?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: First I want to thank our chief coroner for Yukon for independently preparing the pamphlet I tabled in the House. I had a good meeting with the chief coroner and was able to get a better sense of the good work that the chief coroner and the community coroners do for our communities on a regular basis.

We know that, following the meeting and following me attending the coroners' conference — and the great deal that I've learned since then — we learned that the pay they were receiving wasn't reflective of the work that they perhaps were doing, especially when we did a cross-jurisdictional review. So we had committed just recently to increasing their rate of pay from \$150 per call — this is community coroners — to \$300 per call. We included an on-call component of that for Whitehorse coroners who were placed on an on-call basis for the chief coroner of \$75. Prior to that, there was no remuneration unless there was a call or an incident. So it was important that we did a review in this area.

The member opposite was asking about recommendations that are made by the coroner from certain investigations — for example, a coroner's jury on an inquest. The coroner's job is to inform agencies and wouldn't necessarily have jurisdiction to follow up on those recommendations — to inform agencies of the recommendations. As I indicated, the coroner doesn't have the jurisdiction or the power to enforce those recommendations. I should say, while I'm on my feet in this Legislative Assembly, that I am grateful for the opportunity of having a good productive meeting and tour with the chief coroner and sitting in on the coroners conference. I learned a great deal and I have a new respect for the work that they do for Yukoners. It is certainly not something that most of us would embark on doing. So for those who are involved — the chief coroner and acting chief coroners and community coroners — thank you on behalf of this government for the good work that you do in our territory.

Ms. Moorcroft: Before I move on to the *Coroners Act* regulations and the payment of the acting chief coroner that was part of that, which were good changes — I do want to come to that in a moment — I want to return to the question about following up on the recommendations that are made after a coroner's judgment of inquiry or a coroner's inquest.

The minister just indicated that the coroner's responsibility is to inform agencies, but there is no power to enforce. Sometimes the recommendations apply to a department of the Government of Yukon. For instance, there have been recommendations to Health and Social Services, to the Hospital Corporation and to other departments and agencies for which the Government of Yukon is responsible.

Does the minister have an interest in establishing a power to enforce those recommendations or looking at ways of making sure that the recommendations that are made are in fact implemented and followed up on?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for her question. The simple answer is: Of those recommendations that are provided by a jury at an inquest or an inquiry, the agencies that are involved in those recommendations — or the agencies that those recommendations are directed toward — would be responsible for acting on any of those recommendations, if any, at the time that the recommendations are brought forward.

Ms. Moorcroft: I want to move on to the *Coroners Act* regulations. I also would like to thank the chief coroner and all the coroners who provide services throughout the Yukon. No person should be expected to work on-call 24 hours a day for 365 days a year, so there is absolutely a need for there to be acting chief coroners, so that the person in that position doesn't have unrealistic workloads.

The new *Coroners Act* regulations provide for remuneration for coroners and chief coroners and there are some good changes. I am glad to see that there is an on-call payment now available and increases to the payment schedules for coroners will make that remuneration a bit more current than the payment schedule found in the previous regulations. But the department was unable to pay two chief coroners who were appointed in May of 2013 for well over a year. The failure to pay an acting chief coroner for months on end — over a year — does raise a concern about the independence and the impartiality of the office. It took far too long to deal with the problem.

It is also curious that the government stopped corresponding with my constituent about non-payment after I sent a letter to the minister asking about the payment delay on his behalf. I hope that is not a government policy to send a message that people will be punished for speaking to opposition MLAs.

According to the *Financial Administration Act*, ministers are responsible for the management of the financial affairs of their departments under the general direction of the Minister of Finance and Management Board. The minister's officials are responsible for ensuring that departmental activities and expenditures meet legislative, executive, central agency and departmental requirements for financial planning, control and accountability. These requirements are expressed through legislation, regulations, directives, goals, objectives, policies and procedures. They include ensuring that budgets and expenditures are monitored, commitments are recorded and monthly financial reports are reviewed to determine whether transactions have been correctly recorded and activities are proceeding according to operational plans.

Now, I know that, in the past, acting chief coroners were paid, and I fail to understand why the Yukon government took more than a year to figure out a way to issue payment for acting chief coroners. Is the minister not concerned about the extensive delay?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: For the member opposite, I can tell her that this minister is not responsible for bringing HR issues onto the floor of this Legislature. Having said that, I also could add that the Member for Copperbelt South was the

Justice minister for four years and didn't act on this matter either.

On a move-forward basis, the individuals who had acted on behalf of the chief coroner have been paid. With the new regulations — the changes that we have made here on a move-forward basis — anyone acting for the chief coroner will be remunerated according to the regulations of the on-call and the callout.

As far as the member opposite asking if I take it seriously — I take it very seriously, and I think I have proven that. We have put our money where our mouth is and ensured that our coroners — the chief coroner, on-call coroners and community coroners — all feel supported. I think that is important when we are looking at issues such as retention.

I think that answers the member opposite's question.

Ms. Moorcroft: I can assure the minister that acting chief coroners were paid in the past and that the government had the ability to provide payment to acting chief coroners and took some time to do it.

I would like to move on to the *Coroners Act*. We have identified a couple of issues just in the discussion this afternoon to do with, for instance, the power to enforce fulfilling recommendations that may be made in a coroner's inquest. I have been asking this minister now for three years about updating the *Coroners Act*. I would like to ask the minister if he has given direction to his officials — now that they have done some amendments to the regulations — whether they are going to also look at updating the *Coroners Act*.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Changes to the coroner regulations were approved on November 20, 2014. Those are the changes that the member and I had been previously discussing. Before I go on any further, I would like to extend a real heartfelt thanks to my caucus colleagues — Cabinet colleagues — for supporting me as minister to move in a direction where we provide even more support to our coroners in the territory.

Changes to the regulation modernized how coroners are compensated. It improved the ability of the chief coroner to procure services and updated the language to modern legal terminology. All the functions, duties and responsibilities of Yukon Coroners Service related to ensuring that no death in Yukon is overlooked, concealed or ignored continue to be performed.

Since the *Coroners Act* was first established in 1958, four amendments have been made, with the last one in 1994. Yukon Coroners Service boasts the ability to provide coroner services to each and every community, either through a community-based coroner or through Whitehorse, where most of the incidents would occur.

Yukon Coroners Service has modernized the way in which information about investigations, inquests and recommendations are communicated to the public. Yukon Coroners Service is among the leading jurisdictions in Canada to publicly post judgments of inquiry. The increased level of information available to the public is just one way the Yukon Coroners Service is modernizing the transparency and accessibility of the work of the Coroners Service.

Yukon coroners receive training and development that includes monthly training sessions by teleconference, on-scene mentoring in Yukon with B.C. Coroners Service, full-day refresher courses, presentations by outside agencies and officials and an annual Yukon training seminar in Whitehorse, which I had the pleasure of attending just a few short weeks ago.

Yukon Coroners Service actively worked on recruiting coroners who have high-level appropriate skills and building a service that is representative of our communities and demographics.

I know for one, the Coroners Service has just created a travel bag to take to scenes. It has reflective vests, gloves and helmets and all the tools that they need on the side of the road. This is something fairly new within the last little while to the community coroners but it's such an important tool for them to have as they do their good work.

Yukon Coroners Service continues to provide coroner service to all Yukon communities in a manner that ensures that no death, as I mentioned, in Yukon is overlooked, concealed or ignored.

The act, as I had mentioned, was first implemented in 1958. It may be old, but the common law keeps evolving and we follow those changes in coroner's laws. Although we might have an older act, it still serves a purpose and it enables the coroners in Whitehorse and in Yukon communities to do the good work that they do on a daily basis.

Ms. Moorcroft: The Yukon Coroners Service can only modernize to the extent provided for in an outdated act and the Yukon is one of a few jurisdictions that have not looked at its legislation and introduced a bill to be more current. I will just continue to ask the minister to look at that.

I want to move on to the fetal alcohol spectrum disorder prevalence study at Whitehorse Correctional Centre. This government has committed to conducting an FASD prevalence study in the correctional system. The principal investigator was hired in June of 2012 to develop the research methodology. I'm aware that the participation is voluntary.

I would like to ask the minister if the study is now complete. How many inmates participated in the study? How many assessments were done? There was a contract awarded in August of this year for \$50,000 for FASD prevalence study post-study coordinator services. What work is currently being done and what work will be done post-study? Has there been and will there be any education materials developed for correctional officers? Has the minister worked with his colleague in Health and Social Services on a plan for social services support systems to keep people with FASD out of the correctional system?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Again, I thank the member opposite for her question. FASD has certainly remained on the federal, provincial and territorial justice ministers' meetings over the last number of years — in fact, the three years that I've been to those meetings, which I think included four meetings altogether. There's a keen interest from all jurisdictions across Canada on this file, and they're looking for the analysis, in a sense, from this prevalence study.

I know Alberta also did — I don't want to say that it was a similar study, but they did a study — so I'm interested to find out how their study is going. I have to thank the team we've put together. The Department of Justice certainly did a great job at putting the right team together for the job. It has been something that has been ongoing for the department over the last number of years.

After an extensive application process, the University of British Columbia granted the research team ethics approval to begin data collection in early 2014. This past spring, a preliminary pilot project, involving a small number of adult offenders, was launched at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and the offender supervision services office in Whitehorse. The pilot project allowed the research team to evaluate study procedures and protocols, as well as to identify areas for improvement before the official launch.

The official launch took place early this summer, and the project is now fully underway. Currently the research team remains focused on completing FASD assessments, data collection and day-to-day operation of the project. Once this is completed, the focus will return to data input and analysis by the University of B.C. The final research report is expected to be completed in 2016.

Now this process for assessing adults with FASD requires a team of clinical professionals to administer multiple interviews, as well as medical exams and neuro-psychological tests. Regardless of meeting the criteria for an FASD diagnosis or not, each participant receives a personalized report that will explain their cognitive strengths and their cognitive challenges. The report will also provide recommendations to help each of the participants.

The research team will meet with the participants and work with them to help them understand what their results mean. This report is owned by the participant — I think that is key — and they decide whether they are to share that report or not. Each report will be written in such a way as to help inform service providers of where intervention should focus for that individual. After each assessment is complete, participants will be given the opportunity to meet with a post-study coordinator. The post-study coordinator will work with the participants to connect them with Yukon services that may be able to assist that individual. It will be up to each participant whether or not they wish to follow up on these services.

While we are talking about the prevalence study, I know that the Minister of Health and Social Services and his team have been fully aware and are participants in this procedure. I want to thank him for his support on the prevalence study. I certainly thank all my government caucus colleagues and Cabinet colleagues for their support as well.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to thank the minister for that answer. He indicated that in early 2014, the preliminary pilot project was launched and there was some data collection.

Can the minister tell the House how many assessments were completed during the preliminary pilot project? Then I will come back to some of the other unanswered questions.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: For the member opposite and for my caucus colleagues, we were hoping to have upward of 150 participants in the FASD prevalence study. From what I understand, to date we have had somewhere between 20 and 30 participants participate in the prevalence study. The prevalence study continues to be ongoing, so we hope that more individuals — because this is a voluntary service. We aren't going into the correctional facility or the Community Wellness Court and demanding that people take part in this. It is voluntary — just fewer volunteers are coming forward than we had initially anticipated.

Ms. Moorcroft: I thank the minister for that. The minister indicated that the post-study coordinator, which was a contract I had asked about, would be someone who would work with participants who had already taken part in an evaluation. Does the minister anticipate that that post-study coordinator would start working with participants before they come out of the Correctional Centre? Perhaps he could say a bit more about that.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The post-study coordinator will provide those recommendations to the volunteers once the study is completed.

Ms. Moorcroft: So there wouldn't be any services available to the participants who had had an assessment until after the entire project is complete in 2016. Is that what the minister is indicating?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Madam Chair, as you well know, there are plenty of services for individuals with FASD, whether they are in the correctional facility or whether they are individuals living in our community. Those services remain in place, but we need to get through, in this certain circumstance — it doesn't mean that individuals participating in the FASD prevalence study have no services. There are ongoing services, primarily, I would say, through the Department of Health and Social Services and contract positions in the correctional facility, whether it is a psychiatrist, a psychologist, the doctor, the nurse, counselling services and so on. Those services remain; we have never taken those away. But it will be interesting to see, once this prevalence study has been completed, what additional supports or services might come from the study itself.

Ms. Moorcroft: The question I had for the minister was: What work would be done as a result of a \$50,000 contract that was awarded in August and presumably for services through to March of 2015 during the current budget year? The minister said that that post-study coordinator would work with the participants. If they are not working with participants until after the study is completed in 2016, then I would be interested to know what kind of work is covered for that \$50,000 contract.

Moving on to Ryan Leef's FASD bill, the Member of Parliament had said he wanted concrete action for the community, but this bill has been referred to the justice committee and is unlikely to pass in both Parliament and Senate before the next election is called. Has the minister supported the MP's proposed amendments based on the Canadian Bar Association's resolutions about amending the

Criminal Code of Canada to take FASD into account in the sentencing provisions of the act? Has the minister provided any suggestions to the Member of Parliament about what the government's action plan should be to deal with health, social services and other needs of persons with the disability of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder who often end up in conflict with the law?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Before I get into the member's question, I just want to be clear that the post-study coordinator position that we had hired to provide the support during the FASD prevalence study — in fact, they will provide recommendations after the report is done — but they can also provide recommendations while they are doing the work — so now until 2016. I am glad to be able to let everyone know who might be interested in that.

As members of this House are aware, on April 30 of this year, the Yukon Legislative Assembly passed a unanimous motion encouraging the federal government to support Bill C-583 in principle so that it can go to committee for further review and further analysis. When I spoke to the motion, I pointed out that, while Bill C-583 is a good starting point to generate discussion, there was a strong need for greater review of the proposed criminal law reforms, including the need for consultation with provinces and territories and, really, experts who work in this field.

I also indicated that some of the proposed amendments presented significant implications for the provinces and territories, as well as for individuals who live with FASD. While the bill was withdrawn, we are very supportive of the fact that this subject will receive a broad-spectrum review and analysis through the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. This process will allow for the input from a good cross-section of subject experts and the development of recommendations for moving forward. In Yukon, we have been working very hard, as members opposite will know, on the issue of this government's overall response to FASD and, in particular, how we treat persons with FASD when they are offenders, and we will continue to do that good work. We very much look forward to the final report of the committee.

Yukon's leadership role in this area, which I have spoken to a number of times in this Legislature, began with a national conference that Yukon hosted with Justice Canada in September 2008, entitled "The Path to Justice: Access to Justice for Individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder". Officials from the department have been continually working on how to address FASD and the challenges it presents from a policy and program perspective, both internally and collaboratively. The issue remains a priority item for the federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for justice and public safety. This gives us an opportunity to work with our counterparts across the country to develop the most effective responses. The Yukon will continue to bring forward FASD as an access-to-justice issue to the federal, provincial and territorial ministers, as well as deputy ministers and to other agencies, to ensure that work continues on a national level.

The department is working on the development and implementation of the prevalence study of FASD and mental health and substance use issues in the Yukon adult corrections population. We committed over \$600,000 to fund this work so we can have a full understanding of the impact of FASD on the correctional system. This study is a significant undertaking. I am so very pleased that this project is moving forward and we look forward to the results of this prevalence study.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Chair: Mr. Istchenko, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I just want to welcome a friend of mine, Dallas Schaber, a Canadian Ranger, to the House.

Applause

Ms. Moorcroft: People with FASD coming into conflict with the criminal justice system is a very difficult and a very important access-to-justice issue. It does have significant implications in Yukon, and that's part of what we all discussed in this Legislature when we gave unanimous consent to the motion urging the Government of Canada to move forward. So the FASD bill presented by our Member of Parliament has been referred to committee. It's unlikely that will go anywhere before the next election, but we are certainly pleased to hear the minister say he will continue to raise it at the federal, provincial and territorial levels with his counterparts.

This government has attempted to block the Yukon Human Rights Commission from investigating allegations of human rights abuses at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. I would like to ask the minister if the government is still preventing the Yukon Human Rights Commission from investigating at the jail. How does the minister explain the statement from the Yukon Human Rights Commission lawyer that this government is misreading the section of the act dealing with other bodies being able to investigate human rights abuses? What training do the Investigations and Standards Office staff have on investigating allegations of human rights abuses at the Correctional Centre, since the minister has indicated that's the appropriate way to do that?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The Investigations and Standards Office provides investigations within the correctional facility. The member opposite seems to think that we're blocking the Human Rights Commission from coming into the correctional facility and that's very far from being accurate. The ISO does a great job at providing those investigations, Madam Chair. They are an independent office, created out of the *Corrections Act, 2009* and regulations of 2009, and correctional redevelopment. ISO has unrestricted access to inmates, documents and the Correctional Centre, and can compel corrections staff to answer questions and provide information and evidence.

Since 2010, ISO has made over 80 recommendations to the department and corrections management staff related to policy and procedures, decision-making and practices at the

Whitehorse Correctional Centre. Relative to other provincial jurisdictions, Yukon has a robust system of oversight of corrections in the ISO. B.C. is the only other province that has a similarly mandated office, although the B.C. Investigation and Standards Office does not carry out inspections. The other territories don't have a similar office in place.

I can also note that in 2013, a total of 90 complaints were received and 24 inquiries. As of August 2014, there have been 44 complaints and 15 inquiries. The investigations carried out by ISO have examined a wide range of issues, including access to medical care, use of separate confinement in WCC, conduct of staff as well as food.

Now the key responsibilities of the office, as you well know, are inspections of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre on a periodic basis. The second formal inspection of the Correctional Centre was completed in September. ISO made a number of findings and recommendations, reviews of inmate discipline upon appeal, reviews of complaints made by inmates or those on probation as well as other investigations.

The director of ISO may investigate any matter with respect to the administration of the *Corrections Act, 2009* at the request of me, the deputy minister, the assistant deputy minister or on the director's own motion. Similar to the federal correctional investigator, every time ISO makes a recommendation, corrections management, through the deputy minister, must respond and indicate actions taken to address the main issues. These recommendations provide a framework for ISO to revisit them when conducting similar reviews in the future to ensure that, over time, risks are addressed and corrections practice improves.

With respect to the human rights complaints at the Correctional Centre, the commission's authority to investigate human rights complaints is governed by the *Human Rights Act*. The *Human Rights Act* requires that all complaints first exhaust all other review procedures available to them under other acts. This is the usual approach in any legislated complaint procedure in order to avoid duplication and multiple proceedings. Inmates at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre have access to a complaints process through the ISO, set up under Yukon's *Corrections Act, 2009*, and decisions made by ISO may be judicially reviewed by the Yukon Supreme Court.

The *Corrections Act, 2009* sets up the ISO with the authority to deal with complaints of all kinds by inmates, including charter-based and human-rights-based complaints. Section 20 of the *Human Rights Act* limits the ability of the commission to investigate a complaint when the complainant has not exhausted other complaint procedures available, such as the ISO process under the *Corrections Act, 2009*. This government is committed to supporting the important work undertaken by the Human Rights Commission.

Ms. Moorcroft: The minister put on the record the number of complaints and inquiries for the 2013 calendar year and to August of 2014 at Whitehorse Correctional Centre. I want to go back, though, and ask him two specific questions that I didn't hear him respond to.

What training does the ISO staff have in specifically investigating allegations of human rights abuses and how many of the investigations that have been conducted were investigations into complaints of discrimination and violations of human rights?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Certainly the individuals who are working at ISO would be required, under the Public Service Commission, to have certain qualifications in order to do that good work. Many of them are ex-RCMP officers who have spent years, perhaps, investigating different occurrences. A number of individuals in ISO have just recently gone out for specific training regarding investigations, so that training is ongoing. I have full faith and confidence in that office to provide the investigations that they do on a — I don't want to say a regular basis, but when required to do so.

Ms. Moorcroft: Does the minister have the information available on how many complaints and investigations the ISO has done related to allegations of human rights violations and complaints of discrimination?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: In 2012-13, the Yukon Human Rights Commission received 237 inquiries. Forty-eight were referred to other agencies or organizations, and 25 to the Canadian Human Rights Commission. The remainder received confidential advice on options to solve whatever issues they were working on. As far as data specific to complaints coming out of WCC, I do not have that information at my fingertips, but I can certainly look into it.

Ms. Moorcroft: Hospital patients are also held at Whitehorse Correctional Centre under the auspices of it being designated as a hospital. Our offices have heard complaints from family members and from non-government agencies about the lack of services for people with mental health disabilities — particularly for people who have been housed at Whitehorse Correctional Centre in its designation as a hospital.

On how many occasions since the new facility was opened has WCC been used for a hospital placement? What policies are in effect to deal with hospital, designated prisoners regarding access to medical and mental health services, family visits and day leave?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I don't have the specific number of individuals who the member opposite is looking for, but I can say that it is few and far between. There have been a small numbers of individuals who have been held at WCC for those very reasons.

But, like I said, it is not something that happens often. We have certainly seen some cases in the media lately, although I can't speak to them, but it is not something that happens very often.

Ms. Moorcroft: It may be a small number of individuals, but there seem to be no policies in effect at Whitehorse Correctional Centre in relation to its use as a hospital. What can the minister tell us about individuals from the Review Board who are placed at Whitehorse Correctional Centre because of the lack of support in the community and then they are sent out of the territory? The minister said it was a small number of individuals, but does he know how many

referrals there have been from the Yukon Review Board in addition to people who have been placed at Whitehorse Correctional Centre as a result of criminal charges or investigations?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The decision to place an accused person with a mental disorder, or finding them not criminally responsible — or NCR — at the Correctional Centre is made by the courts, pending a Yukon Review Board hearing. The courts may order the detention of a not criminally responsible — NCR — individual at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre to ensure the safety of the client and the appearance by the client in court while awaiting the Yukon Review Board's decision. The Whitehorse Correctional Centre has health services in place that provide access to a psychiatrist, a psychologist, different types of specialists, counsellors and medical staff if an individual that is being held at the correctional facility requires that type of support.

The Correctional Centre physician and case-management staff also work very closely with community resources, Mental Health Services and the Yukon Review Board to secure services and continuity of care to individuals who have a mental illness. It is also important to note that all Corrections branch staff are provided with training with respect to working with individuals that have mental health issues.

Pursuant to section 672.1 of the *Criminal Code*, on October 25, 1993, the Minister of Health and Social Services of the day ordered that the following facilities be designated as hospitals for the custody, treating, or assessment of an accused with respect to whom an order, disposition or placement is made under the *Criminal Code*. Those are: Whitehorse General Hospital, Mental Health Services, Health Canada and the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. It is important to note that under the *Mental Health Act*, Whitehorse Correctional Centre is not considered a hospital. This means that the Correctional Centre cannot force anyone to take medication.

Yukon Review Board clients have access to the same services, programming and recreational opportunities available to other individuals held at the correctional facility. The Correctional Centre has a dedicated nursing staff, a forensic therapist and contracts with local psychiatrists and family physicians who attend the centre once a week.

Counsellors from Offender Services are at the unit on a weekly basis. Individuals who are found not criminally responsible — or NCR — on account of mental illness, may be remanded to the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. They could be given an absolute or conditional discharge; they could be held in custody in a designated hospital or released to their community on very specific conditions.

Both the Whitehorse General Hospital and Whitehorse Correctional Centre are designated hospitals for the custody, treatment or assessment of an accused for whom an assessment order, disposition or placement decision has been made.

Ms. Moorcroft: This government has denied allegations of overuse of segregation on several occasions. A

letter the minister provided to me indicated that one inmate at Whitehorse Correctional Centre had spent 284 days in segregation over 15 separate occasions during an 806-day period. So the inmate spent a third of his time at Whitehorse Correctional Centre in segregation over a two-and-a-half-year period. I'm just using this case as an example and I am not requesting any specifics on personal numbers, so you don't have to tell me that you can't speak to individual cases.

What I want to ask the minister is: Would he agree that an inmate being in segregation for over a third of the time they're at WCC may qualify as overuse of segregation? Does he think that such an extensive use of segregation may indicate a capacity issue at WCC and that this government is not giving corrections officers the tools they need to safely deal with hard-to-handle inmates? Does the minister recognize that such a high use of solitary confinement can have negative effects on prisoners, thereby making them more unstable and a greater threat to corrections officers and to other inmates?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Under the *Corrections Act, 2009* regulations, the term "separate confinement" is used for offender placements for administrative purposes. We know that there are a number of definitions, such as short term, long term and voluntary. The term "segregation" is used when the offender is confined separately pending a disciplinary hearing, or they are sentenced to segregation by the hearing adjudicators.

Whether we're talking about separate confinement or segregation, it is important to distinguish that from solitary confinement or from isolation, which the member opposite often confuses it with. There's no solitary confinement or isolation used at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. These words are being used too loosely and it's very important to make a very clear distinction.

This is not a matter of semantics; there are very significant differences. Solitary confinement, or isolation, is a practice used in some parts of the world where an inmate is detained for long periods of time, often arbitrarily and often in small cells, with little or no human contact. Offenders separately confined under the *Corrections Act, 2009* regulations are not subjected to those conditions.

Separately confined offenders have access to visitors. They have access to legal representation, elders, programming when it's possible, fresh air for at least one hour, telephone calls, and daily visits by nurses who prepare the health care plans. They can see case managers. There are daily visits by senior management and they are closely monitored by staff.

Before I continue to explain this in greater detail, I would remind any interested member of the Legislature or the public that they can take the virtual tour of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre on-line to see the conditions of separate confinement and review the policies pertaining to it.

There has been a great deal of media attention around the use of separate confinement at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre as well as at correctional facilities across Canada and internationally, for that matter. As members of this House are probably aware, a few inmates have also filed complaints with the Human Rights Commission. The *Human Rights Act*

requires that all complainants first exhaust all other review procedures available to them under other acts. The complaints received by the Human Rights Commission did not follow the internal processes at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre or make contact with the Investigations and Standards Office. During the last legislative sitting, the issue of solitary confinement was raised and a report by the UN special rapporteur was also referenced several times. That UN report examined solitary confinement from an international perspective in response to complaints of arbitrary detentions, indefinite detentions, involuntary disappearances and a context of detention in matters of national security. Such practices occur in states such as Mongolia, Nigeria and Indonesia. The report also focuses on the super-maximum security prisons in the United States of America. The examples provided in the report are extreme situations where isolation as punishment is the norm rather than the exception, and people's human rights and health are placed at risk.

To compare those conditions with the Whitehorse Correctional Centre is irresponsible and it is inflammatory. It calls into question the profession and the professional integrity of the staff who work there, Yukoners who are doing some of the most challenging work there is in our justice system. When the new *Corrections Act, 2009* was being developed, the Department of Justice spent 18 months on extensive consultation in every community, with every First Nation. The draft legislation was reviewed on a line-by-line basis with multiple stakeholders and in this Legislature. At no time was the issue of separate confinement or segregation raised as being an inhuman or archaic practice.

I would like to take this opportunity to clarify again what this legislation allows and the protections it provides to inmates under the *Corrections Act, 2009*. There are very strict conditions spelled out in the corrections regulations — specifically under sections 20, 21, 23, 28 and 33 — for the use of separate confinement and segregation.

Section 20, short-term confinement, states that a person in charge may order that an inmate be confined separately from other inmates if there are reasonable grounds that the inmate is endangering themselves or is likely to endanger themselves; if they are endangering another person or likely to endanger another person; if they are jeopardizing the management, operation or security of the Correctional Centre or likely to jeopardize the management, operation or security; if they would be at risk of serious harm or if they are likely to be at risk if not separately confined; also, for medical reasons or if they suffer from a mental illness.

Section 21, longer-term confinement, enables the person in charge to extend the order of short-term confinement if it is determined that the circumstances still exist.

Section 22, voluntary separate confinement, enables the person in charge and the inmate to agree that the inmate be confined separately from other inmates. The inmate may at any time request in writing that the person in charge review the separate confinement. An inmate may also be separately confined involuntarily for periods of time by the person in charge for a variety of reasons.

Section 28, segregation as discipline, is meted out by the independent hearing adjudicators. Segregation is used as a last resort for managing behaviour at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. All separate confinement placements are reviewed by a manager.

The person in charge may order an inmate to be confined in segregation pending the conclusion of a disciplinary hearing for the following reasons, and as I've indicated: whether they are likely to endanger themselves or another person if housed in a cell outside of the segregation unit; if the inmate is likely to jeopardize the management, operation or security of the centre; or if it's necessary to preserve evidence for the disciplinary hearing.

The reasons for separate confinement are given to an inmate in writing within 24 hours of the placement. The inmate has the right to contest this placement to management if they believe the placement is inappropriate or if their circumstances have changed or that an alternate placement could perhaps be considered.

The inmate has access to the ISO, which we have talked about before — an independent body established under the *Corrections Act, 2009* to investigate and make complaints. The *Corrections Act, 2009*, under section 26(1), also establishes a system of independent adjudication to ensure that the rights of inmates are upheld during the disciplinary process.

Section 29 of the regulations, regarding disciplinary hearings, states that disciplinary hearings must be presided over by a hearing adjudicator appointed under section 26(1) of the *Corrections Act, 2009* if the alleged breach is being treated as a serious matter, or a staff member appointed by the person in charge if the alleged breach is being treated as a minor matter.

Section 30 of the regulations involving the conduct of hearings states that a disciplinary hearing must be commenced as soon as practicable and no later than 96 hours from the time of the order to convene a disciplinary hearing.

Hearing adjudicators are selected based on their ability to demonstrate fair, impartial and non-discriminatory decisions, a knowledge of First Nations' culture and issues, critical thinking and problem-solving skills and the ability to make decisions in a stressful environment.

All adjudicators have received training, which includes administrative law, administrative justice, understanding legislation, rules and regulations of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and the philosophy and principles of corrections.

I am very pleased to be able to report that in September of this year, hearing adjudicators attended the Yukon First Nation history and cultures training offered by the Northern Institute of Social Justice at Yukon College.

Section 33 of the corrections regulation outlines that penalties or corrective measures for breach of rules may be imposed by staff members or hearing adjudicators. If an inmate is found to have breached a rule referred to in subsections 25(2) or 25(3), a staff member may impose the following: a warning or a reprimand; a temporary or

permanent restriction on activities or programs; intermittent confinement in a cell other than a cell in the segregation unit for a period not longer than 192 hours; an assignment of extra duties for a period not longer than 12 hours; or a restorative justice process, which may include restitution of part of or all of the costs to repair the damage done by an offender. As well, there is a requirement to participate with the consent of the inmate in a spiritual or ceremonial process or receive elder's teachings or a requirement to participate in or perform duties under a work program.

Under section 33(3), a hearing adjudicator may impose one or more of the following penalties or corrective measures: forfeiture of earned remission or confinement in a cell in the segregation unit. As soon as practicable after the conclusion of the hearing, written reasons must be given to the inmate for the decision and the penalty or corrective measure imposed.

Section 35 of the regulations, which speaks to the review of a decision, allows the inmate, within seven days of a decision, to request in writing that the director of Investigations and Standards review the decision and the penalty or corrective measure imposed.

The director of Investigations and Standards must complete a review as soon as possible to confirm the decision made and substitute any penalty or corrective measure, rescind the decision made and the penalty or corrective measure and direct that the person in charge change the inmate's record to reflect the rescission, or direct that a new disciplinary hearing be conveyed and presided over by a person appointed by the assistant deputy minister.

The ISO is an independent office created out of the *Corrections Act, 2009* and regulation, as we've talked about. They have unrestricted access to inmates, documents and the Correctional Centre and can compel corrections staff to answer questions and provide information and evidence — I have said that before here.

The Department of Justice has been completely transparent about the use of separate confinement and has provided stats for the last calendar year. What they cannot do is provide information about individuals. They are required, just as any government service, to protect privacy under the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Madam Chair, I would like to again repeat some of the figures for 2013. Of 887 admissions to Whitehorse Correctional Centre: 59 people were separately confined for various reasons; 10 were separately confined for medical observation purposes — and this includes people who were involved in self-harming behaviour or detoxing upon admittance; three individuals were placed under separate confinement voluntarily, and 46 individuals were separately confined because of their conduct.

It's also important to note that the majority of inmates are only placed in separate confinement for up to about 72 hours. I would also note that when inmates are separately confined or segregated, case managers work closely with them in an effort to return them to regular living units at their earliest opportunity. Separately confined inmates are seen daily by the nurses and the manager of Corrections.

Senior managers also see these offenders on a regular basis. They are monitored closely and regularly by correctional officers. They have access to elders or other spiritual advisors, mental health or health services when needed, family visits and, when it's safe and feasible to do so, they may be provided with programming.

Offenders may need to be segregated to ensure their personal safety or that of other inmates and staff, but they are not isolated while housed in this manner. The legislation was written to ensure that the rights of inmates subject to this restriction are closely adhered to.

There have been concerns raised in the past that overuse of segregation actually makes the job more difficult for the correctional officers in the long run. To this, I would say that, without knowing the circumstances behind each case or weighing the evidence that is presented to independent adjudicators, it's really impossible to make a claim that separate confinement has been overused.

For example, nearly 25 percent of inmates passing through the federal correctional system spent some time separately confined last year. This compares to five percent of inmates at Whitehorse Correctional Centre. Inmates are involuntarily placed in separate confinement or segregation when they would otherwise present risks to the secure operation of the Correctional Centre, including the staff and other inmates.

The small number of inmates who are separately confined or segregated because of behaviour are not victims of the system — they are victimizers. Madam Chair, allow me to provide some examples of the antisocial and criminal behaviours that were dealt with in this manner — disobeying orders, obstructing officers, threatening and being abusive toward staff, possessing contraband — primarily drugs — inciting or participating in a disturbance, destroying public property and assaulting, threatening and victimizing other inmates.

The Whitehorse Correctional Centre is working within its mandate and in accordance with Yukon legislation. What would make their job nearly impossible would be to curtail separate confinement and segregation as options for dealing with these kinds of inmates and their dangerous behaviours. Without that option, we would have to remove the staff from the living units and return to a setting where the toughest criminals run the unit and victimize their weaker inmates.

Alternatively, the Department of Justice would have to consider reconfiguring and renovating the Correctional Centre to provide protected spaces for staff or adding units that would be subject to controlled movement and contact with other inmates. Without the option of separate confinement, recruitment and retention of staff would be more difficult, if not impossible.

Without the option to segregate violent and disruptive inmates, the Correctional Centre would likely have to engage in more use of force, which would put staff and others significantly more at risk. In fact, there are more safeguards in place under Yukon's legislation than in the majority of jurisdictions across Canada.

Other jurisdictions do not have an independent oversight body, such as the ISO, nor do they have impartial systems of adjudication to hear disciplinary matters. Yukon Corrections has adopted best practices in these matters. I remain confident in Yukon's correctional system. I visit the Correctional Centre frequently and always find that it is clean, well-run, and with a professional team of staff and management who are focused on trying to rehabilitate offenders who want to make a change in their lives. They are doing this through programming, education, counselling, elder visits, spirituality and the provisions of health care, work and recreational activities.

Madam Chair, I am extremely proud of the officials who work at our Correctional Centre, of the quality of service and programs available and of the legislative oversight in place that was developed after extensive consultation with Yukoners and that ensures the safety and security of our staff, other inmates and the facility.

Chair: Before we take another question, would the members like to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order, continuing general debate on Vote 8, Department of Justice.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to continue with my questioning about the use of segregation for persons with mental health issues. Before I do, though, I just want to respond to some of the points.

The minister was quite indignant about the use of the term "solitary confinement", which, I would point out, the UN special rapporteur's report defined as "... the physical and social isolation of individuals who are confined to their cells for 22 to 24 hours a day" — when used (1) as punishment; (2) during pre-trial detention; (3) is definite or prolonged; and (4) on persons with mental disabilities, can amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and even torture.

The special rapporteur refers to this problematic method of incarceration when someone is being held in a cell for 23 hours a day; yet the minister indicated that people are held in the separate confinement and segregation cells for 23 hours a day.

The special rapporteur went on to deal with persons with disabilities because they are sometimes held in solitary as a substitute for proper medical or psychiatric care. Research has shown that — again I quote: "Prisoners with mental health issues deteriorate dramatically in isolation. The adverse effects of solitary confinement are especially significant for persons with serious mental health problems which are usually characterized by psychotic symptoms and/or significant functional impairments."

We do know that people have been held in separate confinement at the Correctional Centre when they have

medical reasons, as well as disciplinary reasons, and those are referred to by the special rapporteur.

The minister indicated that people held in segregation could visit with elders, but I'm wondering if the minister is able to give us an update on how many elders are currently serving on the elders advisory committee. How many elders visit corrections and how often? Are the elders provided with an honorarium? How much are they paid when they go and visit someone who is at the Correctional Centre — or are they expected to come as volunteers?

I would like to close those particular lines of questions related to the use of segregation, and particularly for persons with mental health issues, by asking the minister if he would give any consideration to inviting the federal Office of the Correctional Investigator to do an audit of WCC, as he has done for Baffin Correctional Centre in Nunavut?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'm going to reiterate something that I had said earlier, and that's that inmates are involuntarily placed in separate confinement, or segregation, when they would otherwise present risks to the secure operation of the Correctional Centre, including staff and other inmates. A small number of inmates who are separately confined, or segregated, because of their behaviour are not victims of the system — they are victimizers. These are people who have created acts of crime, and they are at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre because they are being held accountable for that crime.

Madam Chair, again, some examples of the antisocial and criminal behaviours that were dealt with, in order to put somebody in separate confinement: disobeying orders, obstructing officers, threatening and being abusive toward staff, possessing contraband, inciting or participating in a disturbance, destroying public property and assaulting, threatening and victimizing other inmates.

As I've said, the Whitehorse Correctional Centre is working within its mandate and in accordance with Yukon's legislation. This government believes in holding offenders accountable. That is no surprise. We also are great advocates of providing services to victims of crime. We know that we've set up the RCMP specialized response unit, and they are doing good work within our community. Services to victims of crime — we know that through the Department of Justice, from individuals who perhaps participated in accessing services a number of years ago in comparison to the present day — they have indicated that it is the difference of night and day. They feel supported and they feel empowered. We will continue down that path to providing those types of services to victims of crime.

There are a variety of different funding programs for victims of crime. We have certainly seen the *Victims of Crime Strategy*. I've identified services to victims of crime throughout the policing priorities that we've set out. I just spoke earlier about the crisis line, the 24-hour service that is available through the Department of Justice and other contractors. We have also talked about project Lynx. I think it's important to let Yukoners know that if a child is a witness to or a victim of crime, this government has stood up to the

plate and provided supports for that child. When I look at separate confinement at the correctional facility and the criteria that is set in place to place somebody in that, I believe that this government is doing what it is mandated to do, and that is holding the offender accountable for their actions.

I have talked previously about mental health services at the correctional facility. We have contract psychologists and a psychiatrist — counsellors who go in on a regular basis and meet with the individuals staying at the correctional facility. There is counselling available to those individuals as well.

Similarly, when an inmate is no longer in the correctional facility and they are placed back out on the streets under a probation order, some — maybe not all, but some — might participate in the Justice Wellness Centre, especially those who have gone through the Community Wellness Court. There is more good work being done in that area for people who have decided to take that route.

The member opposite asked about the elders advisory committee. That committee was formed in 2007, and it is made up of nine elders from several First Nation communities. I can't recall whether we are at full capacity right now with the nine, but it should be in and around that area. They do provide some great work for the correctional facility to the inmates with regard to providing one-one-one counselling with the offenders, participating in ceremonies, such as solstice and smudging, as well as cooking, talking circles and other spiritual services that might be sought. They also are great at teaching offenders and staff about First Nations' culture as well as liaising with offenders, staff and communities. They are certainly an integral part of the correctional facility. I know the staff, as well as the inmates, look forward to their participation. They certainly have a very calming influence when they are in the correctional facility. The management team and the staff would certainly like them to be there as often as possible.

The member opposite asked about an honorarium. The elders are provided with an honorarium of \$40 per hour for their time, plus travel costs. Again, we thank them for their services at the Correctional Centre.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to thank the minister for his response.

We know that correctional officers do a very difficult job and we thank them for that. I maintain, though, that we need better tools available for corrections officers and for management rather than separate confinement, particularly when people have mental health issues.

It would seem the minister fails to see as a problem that we have over-incarceration of aboriginal people in the correctional system here in the Yukon and in fact, in all of Canada. I would point out for the minister that people are not offenders until they are convicted of a crime and many of the people who are held at Whitehorse Correctional Centre are in pre-trial detention and some of those are acquitted. It would also seem the minister fails to recognize that many of the people at Whitehorse Correctional Centre may be victims themselves — for example, survivors of residential school or people with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

I want to turn to the arrest processing unit, which is part of the new Whitehorse Correctional Centre facility. This was one of the many, in fact, Yukon Party capital projects that went overbudget, seemed rather poorly planned, and was subjected to numerous change orders. The government roared ahead and it built a concrete floor for the arrest processing unit, complete with electrical and in-floor heating capacity, before they found a need to review the scope and design parameters — I think is how the minister phrased it. Then they had to defer the APU project while they tore out what had already been built.

So now that the arrest processing unit is open, what is the total cost of construction for the APU with the \$330,000 supplementary budget amounts?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Before I answer that question, I need to go back to the separate confinement, because the member opposite clearly doesn't have a grasp of the operations of that facility.

We know that without separate confinement, it would make the correctional officers' jobs nearly impossible. Segregation is an option for dealing with the kinds of inmates that I talked about earlier, where people are disobeying orders, obstructing officers, threatening and being abusive toward staff, being abusive, threatening and assaulting toward other inmates, and destroying property.

Without that option of separate confinement, we would have to remove all the staff from the living units and we would have to return to a setting where the toughest criminals ran the unit. The members opposite need to take that into full consideration. Alternatively, the Department of Justice would have to consider reconfiguring and renovating the entire facility to provide protected spaces for staff and rioting units that would be subject to controlled movement and contacts with the other inmates. Without the option of separate confinement, recruitment and retention of staff would be almost impossible.

The members opposite need to fully understand the operations of the correctional facility and take into consideration the safety and the security of the staff who are working there and the other inmates who are living in that correctional facility. There are more safeguards in place under Yukon's legislation than the majority of jurisdictions across our country.

I'm very, very proud with the work that the management and the staff do at the correctional facility on a daily basis. That's a 24/7 operation, and I can remember times when I'm sitting at home on a holiday — we will call it Christmas for an example — Christmas morning — and sending out on Twitter how much I appreciate the staff being there on Christmas morning away from their families, ensuring that that correctional facility is running smoothly and is running safely. That's one reason why we have that separate confinement in place. It is for individuals who are continually disobeying orders, being abusive or possessing contraband.

The member opposite asked about the arrest processing unit — and here is another clear distinction that the member opposite is clearly not paying attention to what's being done,

especially within the Department of Highways and Public Works. The original estimate on the arrest processing unit was just over \$7 million. The final cost of the arrest processing unit was approximately \$5 million, so I don't know where — perhaps that's NDP math again, but we were clearly not overbudget on that project and I thank the Minister of Highways and Public Works for working with me on that file specifically.

The arrest processing unit, for those who are not aware, replaced the RCMP cells that used to be downtown. We have a new model with medical attention for those who are in need of it. We have staff that is specifically trained to work in that APU and I have to thank them. I don't know what job is the toughest up at the correctional facility, but anyone who puts their name forward to work there ought to be commended by this Legislative Assembly for the work that they are doing with the inmates and those who are being held temporarily in the arrest processing unit.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would remind the minister that the replacement Whitehorse Correctional Centre facility started out with a budget of approximately \$35 million, and six years or more later, the budget for Whitehorse Correctional Centre was well over \$70 million. I would call that overbudget. On top of that, the arrest processing unit is more than \$5 million.

I did want to ask the minister about the demolition of the old Whitehorse Correctional Centre. There is \$70,000 in the supplementary budget for that. The minister indicated in his opening remarks this afternoon that the demolition had been completed and that the hazardous materials to be removed included asbestos and lead paint. He also referred to the expenditure as being, in part, for remediating the site.

Could the minister just give us an update on what remediation is left to be done, the total cost for the demolition project and where that's at?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: To address the comments from the member opposite pertaining to the construction — I guess even we can back up from that to the design of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre — the member is absolutely right. A number of years ago, the initial figure to replace the existing Correctional Centre was around the \$30-million mark. When we took into consideration providing better services and a safer environment and then looking at the correctional redevelopment strategy, we soon learned that the \$30-million construction wasn't going to address our needs. It wasn't going to address the needs of the inmates, and it wasn't going to address the needs of the staff. A number of years passed — which we know that construction costs continue to rise, especially here in the north.

We hear the Member for Whitehorse Centre humming and hawing and blowing off steam over there, but again, here is a project that is run under the Department of Highways and Public Works. I think they did a great job. I think the Department of Justice did a great job at providing a much better service and institution for inmates to be held accountable for their actions — as well as staff to work there. Certainly we look at retention of staff and recruitment. This facility — we have seen a number of — I would only guess an

increase of individuals who are now interested in looking at a career in corrections.

Thanks to the Minister of Highways and Public Works for his good work on this — and his department. Thanks to the Department of Justice and, again, thanks to the Minister of Health and Social Services and his department for providing services and advice on mental health services at the correctional facility.

That just sets the record straight for the members opposite. I know they may be interested in that information.

We know now that the demolition of the old correctional facility has been completed. We do know that the costs came in higher as a result of looking at what needed to be taken down. Once you start peeling away the onion, you find all sorts of things. Due to an additional assessment done by the Department of Highways and Public Works, the initial budget from 2013-14 was reallocated to 2014-15, to a total cost of \$1,425,000 for the demolition. During the summer, asbestos was discovered in the building, and an additional \$270,000 was approved by Management Board to complete that project.

An interesting figure — the original correctional facility was built in 1967, and it was purpose-built for 30 inmates. I think when we moved from the old facility to the new facility, there were around 110 — I want to say — inmates in that existing building.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to ask the minister if he is in agreement with having a group home on the compound at the jail, or whether he would support moving the group home downtown, where it would be more appropriate to house people who are group home clients and who have not been convicted of a criminal offence.

I also would like the minister, if he can, to tell us who does the snow clearing for Takhini Haven, which is on the Correctional Centre property. There's flooding into one of the doors where the snow melts. Has the department asked Property Management to fix this? Also, as an interim measure, if the minister is not in support of moving the group home off the jail compound, are they able to take down the fence?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The building that is on the correctional site that was previously used for the women's living unit is now being occupied by Challenge, which is running the group home through the Department of Health and Social Services. I think this question is best directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services.

As far as the snow clearing, again, we're not operating the building itself, so either the Minister of Health and Social Services or the Minister of Highways and Public Works would be better suited to answer that. I'm sure, now that the question has been asked, they could potentially look into an answer for the members opposite.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to ask the minister for an update on the justice information network and the completion of the court registry information system. I know he made some comments during his opening remarks, and I don't recall if he was able to provide detail on when the new court registry information system will be complete and rolled out. That's my

question and I apologize if he has already answered it — could he just give the information again?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The justice enterprise information network — or JEIN, as it is more commonly known — is a software database system for storage and retrieval of court records. The JEIN system is already up and operational for Victim Services and for the Sheriff's department. Right now they are working on the criminal justice component of JEIN. It is a big project. There is a lot of data that needs to be transferred. We expect that that work on the criminal justice component to be ongoing over the next couple of years.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to turn to land titles modernization and ask the minister for an update on the land titles modernization project. When does he anticipate people will be able to use electronic filing and have electronic search capabilities for the Land Titles Office? What progress has been made with working with Yukon First Nations on a way to register settlement lands?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for that question. There has been a lot of good work that has been done over the last couple of years on the land titles modernization project. We have seen a real solid committee working and meeting with the department over the last year and a half and bringing forward — sharing in the discussions on how we move forward with a project of this size and importance. I have had the opportunity to tour the British Columbia system, as well as the Northwest Territories' system — definitely two very different systems being used in those jurisdictions. We have to find the right fit for Yukon.

There are two aspects to the modernization — first, interim solutions to improve efficiency that are being implemented on an ongoing basis, wherever possible. The department has amended the *Land Titles Act* and *Condominium Act* and made improvements to the current computer software and improved the communication between the Land Titles Office and its stakeholders as it carries out statutory functions. Second to that, a multi-phase modernization project is underway that will transform service levels in the Land Titles Office by introducing the new *Land Titles Act*, streamlining business processes and implementing an efficient computer platform.

We know that when this government took office, shortly thereafter, the turnaround time at the Land Titles Office for a certificate of title was upwards of nine to 12 weeks. This government acted quickly and swiftly and worked with the Land Titles Office and stakeholders and we have brought down the turnaround time — the last I understood was about three to five days. On a rare occasion, it may go a little bit longer, but I certainly thank the staff of the Land Titles Office for their hard work, for their patience and for being able to see down the road when a new system and modernization takes place.

We know that modernization is underway and it will proceed in three phases: there is a scoping phase; a development phase, which is currently underway; and then the final phase, which will implement the modernized system and will depend on the nature of the system that the Government

of Yukon chooses and whether the new office processes will be enabled by moving to a digital system in the Land Titles Office.

Right now we're doing a business requirements study, which looks at the office as a whole. They also talk to stakeholders to determine — and this was actually a recommendation of coming out of the N.W.T. Land Titles Office to do this business requirement study up front so we really had a good solid understanding on what we need and how we need to get there — and that speaks to the digitization project that the member opposite has asked about.

Really until we get the business requirement study completed, we're really not in a position to put timelines — but this certainly a living document. The land titles and the condominium modernizations will be living documents. We will look at bringing in the acts on the floor of the Legislature probably within the next year, but even after we make those amendments there will be continual work that will take place on those two pieces of legislation.

The Yukon government has also advised First Nations that it's open to discussing options for registering category A and category B settlement land in the Land Titles Office in a manner that would preserve aboriginal title on that land. Any option would have to address a First Nation's interest in maintaining aboriginal title on its land and Yukon government's interest in maintaining the integrity of the land titles system. Discussions on options that might meet all interests are certainly ongoing.

We know that the *Umbrella Final Agreement* anticipated that First Nations would establish their own registry for settlement lands. Some First Nations are actually taking part in that. A First Nation land registry would be fully receptive to the specific needs and interests in First Nations and settlement land. The best source of information on a First Nations land registry are those Yukon First Nations involved in setting up their own registries.

Ms. Moorcroft: I believe that the consultant's report on the Land Titles Office that identified shortcomings that needed to be addressed was — it was two years ago that it was presented to the government. The minister just stood and indicated that the process of completing the replacement systems at Land Titles would involve scoping, then developing and then implementation.

So in two years they have done some interim improvements, which is great to hear — and I've heard that the community that uses the Land Titles Office is pleased with that — but that falls into the scoping phase. So now we're in the developing phase and there are funds in the supplementary budget that will help with a business requirement study and then the government will make a decision on what system they bring in, and developing it and implementing it.

How much longer does the minister expect that it will take before a new system can in fact be implemented at the Land Titles Office?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The member opposite clearly doesn't have a full appreciation of how enormous modernizing the land titles project is. We heard both from

B.C. and from the Northwest Territories — and I have had discussions with other jurisdictions like Saskatchewan and other ministers across the country — that land titles modernization is really an ongoing process. To put a timeline on a completion date or to even expect — the member opposite was talking about two years — something of this magnitude to be completed within a two-year period is completely unrealistic. We are not purchasing something from a bubble gum machine and expecting it to work in our territory.

We have an enormous project ahead of us that includes the modernization of the *Condominium Act*, and we will take our time. We will conduct the analysis and the processes that we feel are necessary to delivering to Yukoners a final product that will continue to evolve and that they deserve. There has been a tremendous amount of work over the last two years on this, and to make reference to it not having been fast enough — I do take a little bit of offence. We have certainly spoken to many jurisdictions, including bringing in an inspector to look at the Land Titles Office, which took time. We amended the legislation not long ago, which enabled us to follow up on some of the recommendations that the inspector brought forward and that enabled the office to run more smoothly.

I know that we've replaced the computers. We have given the staff two monitors — this is information coming forward from not only stakeholders, but from the staff themselves. They had older computer systems that they would have to wait 10 or 15 minutes to turn them on in the morning and then they only had one monitor. So they would have to write down information and then type it and then go on to another screen and open it up and type it in there, because they could not copy and paste. Now they have two monitors. They have new systems, which save them a lot of time in the course of their business day.

Business requirements study — the department expects to have a report in the coming months. After that, we will look at starting the digitization of all the records, which in and of itself is an enormous project. That is probably a year and a half or a couple of years to take all of the information in the Land Titles Office and digitize it. When we have a system that will accept that data so that it's ready — there is a lot of work that has been done. There is an enormous amount of work that still needs to be done. The department is tasked with this work and I am confident in the department.

I'm pleased to see it moving forward, as it has been.

Ms. Moorcroft: I have a question about Yukon small business owners' access to contract tenders. One of my constituents bid on a court reporting contract with the Department of Justice and lost the bid, even though it was much lower than the bid that was accepted. Apparently this was because the contract was value-driven, rather than price-driven.

During a meeting with Department of Justice officials reviewing the bid, several inconsistencies with the bid process came to light. The bid was scored on things that were not included in the request for proposal — for example, the absence of a reference letter and security evaluations. There

was no evaluation rubric. The evaluators merely discussed the bid and assigned scores.

This calls into question the ability to reliably replicate the process, which is an essential component of fair procurement practices. So these are Justice procurement policies. What is the Minister of Justice doing to ensure fairness in the department's procurement practices? How can a bid be evaluated based on criteria that were not included in the request for proposal? What is the government doing to ensure that Yukon small business can compete in government RFPs?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would ask the member opposite to ask the same question to the Minister of Highways and Public Works. I think he's better suited to answer that particular question.

Ms. Moorcroft: I made it clear in my comments before I came to the question that I was asking the Minister of Justice about a contract that was issued by the Department of Justice. There were inconsistencies with the bid process that came to light on that contract. Can the Minister of Justice explain why there was no evaluation rubric as part of evaluating the bid and assigning scores to the proposals?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I look forward to the response from the Minister of Highways and Public Works.

Mr. Silver: Thank you to the representatives from the department for their time here today.

I just have a few more questions after my colleague from Copperbelt South's questioning. I'll start with a question on the Peel lawsuit. Yukon announced in February that it will be hiring a Vancouver legal firm to defend against a lawsuit launched by First Nations over the new plan for the Peel watershed. Can the minister update us on what the legal costs have been for the Peel case to date?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The outside counsel commitments for 2014-15 thus far are approximately \$570,000. In 2013-14, outside counsel costs were approximately \$590,000. In 2012-13, outside counsel costs were approximately \$1.8 million. All Yukon government outside counsel contracts are established through the Legal Services branch, and most of the contracts are cost-recovered from the requesting departments.

The following costs for the 2014-15 year by the department do not include the Legal Services branch budgeted amount for outside counsel so, department by department: Justice, \$40,000; Community Services, \$5,000; Economic Development, \$50,000; Education, \$175,000; Energy, Mines and Resources, \$169,000; Environment, \$49,000; Highways and Public Works, \$43,000; and Public Service Commission, \$39,000. In 2013-14, the costs for outside counsel per department were as follows: Justice, \$73,000; Community Services, \$148,000; Economic Development, \$54,000; Education, \$13,000; Energy, Mines and Resources, \$209,000; Environment, \$1,600; Health and Social Services, \$9,300; Highways and Public Works, \$64,000; Public Service Commission, \$18,000; and Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, \$800. I don't think I need to go back to 2012-13.

By the *Department of Justice Act*, all legal services to government are provided by lawyers acting as agents for the

Attorney General. The Department of Justice Legal Services branch provides a wide array of legal services to the government, both through an in-house legal team and through outside counsel. Outside counsel is retained by Legal Services in consultation with, and sometimes at the request of, a client department. Outside counsel means private bar lawyers hired on contract by the Department of Justice to provide legal services for government. Usually outside counsel is hired to prepare specific opinion or handle a particular court case. Guidelines for retaining outside counsel are laid out in the Department of Justice outside counsel policy, which came into effect on April 1, 2012.

The typical reasons for retaining outside counsel are as follows: the situation is urgent and the requirements of the legal matter exceed Legal Services resources; the matter is of such magnitude that it would not be possible for Legal Services to provide services while continuing to meet the needs of other clients; the work requires expertise not available within Legal Services; the use of a Legal Services lawyer may cause a conflict of interest; perhaps it is more cost-effective to have outside counsel perform the work than Legal Services; representation of the Yukon government is needed in litigation commenced and conducted outside Yukon; and finally, special circumstances exist that require a particular law firm or particular lawyer.

Mr. Silver: I am not sure if the minister understood my question. I am asking specifically about legal costs for the Peel case.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for his questions. Particular costs of particular cases or specific cases, I don't have with me on the floor of the Legislature today, but I can certainly look at finding those numbers.

Mr. Silver: Then, just for the record, the minister is going to commit to returning to the Legislature with specifically the legal costs for the Peel watershed case.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: No, that's not what I said. I said I would look into those costs.

Mr. Silver: So we have no commitment from the minister to actually explain to Yukoners how much this legal case is going to cost the taxpayer. I think that's what I'm hearing. If that is what I'm hearing I guess I'll just have to move on.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I don't have the costs at my fingertips right now. I have committed to looking into finding out what those costs are.

Mr. Silver: When the minister finds those numbers is he committing to sharing those numbers with the taxpayers of the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I have to collect that information — those costs — on specific cases and then that would be a decision that I would take and discuss with my caucus and Cabinet colleagues as to where that information would go. I can't commit to the member opposite on the floor of the Legislative Assembly at this point in time because I don't know what the numbers are as I haven't discussed this issue with my Cabinet and caucus colleagues.

Mr. Silver: It's kind of astounding that we would have to wait so long to get these numbers. Once again, for those people listening out there, this money isn't necessarily the Yukon Party's money. This is taxpayers' money. I hope that the minister is going to do everything in his power to make sure that those numbers can get broken down per lawsuit. I know there are a few of them, but it would be very important for us to know how money this government is spending on legal battles, per case. I implore the minister responsible for Justice to be able to take this bull by the horns — I guess that's a good way of saying it.

I'm going to move on to the Privacy Commissioner's report. This summer, the Privacy Commissioner issued a warning that hidden surveillance in Whitehorse was becoming invasive, specifically at the Yukon law offices. The Privacy Commissioner had released recommended guidelines for use of video surveillance in public buildings and I'm wondering what the government is doing to ensure that these guidelines are met and that individual privacy rights are not being violated.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The member opposite is correct. We have installed a new security system at the courts and the courts building. Those systems are not — or the video at least — has not been activated because we are awaiting a report back from the Privacy Commissioner. At this point in time, we're still waiting for the report.

Mr. Silver: I will move on from that. Again, it was this summer that the Privacy Commissioner issued the warnings and we were hoping to get an update as far as the government ensuring that these guidelines are met. I guess we will wait and see on that one.

I only have one more question for the minister. This is on the arrest processing unit — a couple questions here. I will just ask all three and we will see if we get an answer.

What was the original budget for the arrest processing unit? What is the final cost of the project? I know that this was touched on earlier. Did a company named Barr Ryder do any work on the project? Also, was the contract for the ARU tendered or sole-sourced?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Madam Chair, I need to step back just to provide some clarity on the Privacy Commissioner. So it is Yukon government providing a report to the Privacy Commissioner and that report is a privacy impact assessment, so that is where we are at with that stage and there is more work to continue.

As for the arrest processing unit — in addressing the Member for Copperbelt South earlier, I had indicated that the initial budget for the arrest processing unit was \$7 million and the completion of that project was finished — these are approximate; I don't have the exact, down-to-the-penny — was about \$5 million. We were able to construct a facility that took over from the RCMP cells and one that is providing great service. Staff is very pleased with the service they are providing and the environment that they are providing that in.

As far as a specific company working on that project, I would have to defer that to the Minister of Highways and Public Works, as they were the project manager on that

project. As well as with tendering — I would only presume that that project was out for tender. I don't believe that that project was sole-sourced.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate? We will proceed then to line-by-line debate.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Management Services

Management Services underexpenditure in the amount of \$1,000 agreed to

On Court Services

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to ask the minister if he can provide us with a breakdown for this additional amount in the supplementary budget?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: There was a one-time increase of \$200,000 for the funding of the judiciary pension plan adjustment for the 2014-15 fiscal year pension expense. That was \$200,000. There was a one-time increase of \$212,000 for the funding of an increase in compensation for the Territorial Court Judges and the justice of the peace, as recommended by the Judicial Compensation Commission. Additional funding from Canada, as part of a MOU with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada — under this MOU, the Government of Canada has agreed to pay 50 percent of all Crown witness costs, including travel, and 50 percent of the salary of a witness coordinator. This MOU will remain in effect until July 31, 2015. That's the one we talked about earlier, where I had indicated we were currently under negotiations to expand upon that MOU or to carry it forward.

There's also a transfer of \$45,000 from Court Services' O&M budget — \$15,000 to Management Services' capital budget to purchase office furniture for a new Territorial Court Judge and \$30,000 to capital budget to purchase new video conferencing equipment.

Court Services in the amount of \$459,000 agreed to

On Legal Services

Ms. Moorcroft: I believe this is the amount that the minister referred to in his opening remarks for enhancing the reporting capacity of the aboriginal courtworker program in order to meet a national requirement. I would like to ask the minister to provide a little bit more detail on what training or resources will be provided to courtworkers in relation to *Gladue* reports.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The aboriginal courtworker program increases to enhance the reporting capacity, as the member had indicated. The additional \$32,000 will be used to support training for the six aboriginal courtworker carriers in the territory around a new national data requirements reporting template for the fiscal year of 2014-15. Training, travel to communities and associated costs will assist in supporting collaboration and consultation for the aboriginal courtworkers and justice workers around a new Yukon *Gladue* initiative — as well, working with First Nation communities as well as intergovernmental agencies to support developing *Gladue* processes. As I had indicated before, these funds are 100-percent recoverable from Canada.

Ms. Moorcroft: Will the funding for the Yukon *Gladue* initiative only be available for aboriginal courtworkers or is

there a broader initiative to look at how the use of *Gladue* reports could be incorporated into other parts of the criminal justice system?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The current funding is only for aboriginal courtworkers.

***Legal Services in the amount of \$32,000 agreed to
On Regulatory Services***

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I think it's important to put on the record that this is a one-time increase of \$200,000 for the funding of a business requirement analysis to support the modernization of the land title system here in our wonderful territory.

Ms. Moorcroft: Can the minister tell the House if the contract has already been awarded for the business requirement analysis or whether that work will be done in-house, and how long he anticipates it taking?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Through the Department of Highways and Public Works, there was an RFP process. Last summer — the summer of 2014 — there was a company that was awarded that bid, or the tender, so they will provide the report sometime in the next few months, I would suspect.

Ms. Moorcroft: This \$200,000 increase for funding the business requirement analysis — is that the total cost or is that added to existing contract dollars that are already available?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: That's the total cost of the contract.

Regulatory Services in the amount of \$200,000 agreed to

On Community Justice and Public Safety Division

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would just like to provide a breakdown on this item — a project funding agreement with the Province of B.C. for \$10,000 to fund victim services to the communities of Good Hope Lake, Lower Post and Atlin, B.C. This is a one-time cost and it's 100-percent recoverable from the Province of B.C. We certainly appreciate the relationship that we have with British Columbia on this file. There's also a one-time increase of \$220,000 for the RCMP, and there's a transfer of \$5,000 from the Community Justice and Public Safety O&M budget to the deputy minister's office O&M budget as a co-sponsor with Northwestel, in order to bring Theo Fleury here to Whitehorse for the Learning to Lead program.

Community Justice and Public Safety Division in the amount of \$225,000 agreed to

On Total of Other Operation and Maintenance

Total of Other Operation and Maintenance in the amount of nil cleared

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$915,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

On Management Services

On Office Furniture and Equipment

Office Furniture and Equipment in the amount of \$21,000 agreed to

On Information Technology Equipment and Systems

Information Technology Equipment and Systems in the amount of \$69,000 agreed to

On Building Maintenance, Renovations and Space
Building Maintenance, Renovations and Space in the amount of \$179,000 agreed to

On Court Services

On Court Services Furniture and Equipment

Court Services Furniture and Equipment in the amount of \$133,000 agreed to

On Community Justice and Public Safety Division

On Arrest Processing Unit

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I just want to put on the record that this is an increase of \$330,000 to complete the construction of the arrest processing unit, \$286,000 as a revote based on the 2013-14 year-end commitment and \$44,000 as a supplemental funding increase.

Ms. Moorcroft: During general debate, both the Member for Klondike and I had asked a number of questions relating to the arrest processing unit, and the minister indicated that this project was underbudget. Given that the project is underbudget, why is there a need for a \$44,000 supplementary funding increase? Did the department anticipate that the project would continue into the next fiscal year? Perhaps the minister could explain that.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I apologize if I wasn't crystal clear. Initial estimates on the arrest processing unit were around the \$7-million mark. The project, as I had indicated, was completed for around \$5-million mark. I have to hand it off to the Minister of Highways and Public Works and his team who worked very diligently, day in and day out, to ensure that these projects are completed in the manner that they are completed in.

Ms. Moorcroft: The minister has just said that the original estimates were in the \$7-million range, and then those estimates were revised and they were in the \$5-million range, and so that is how he has determined that the project has come in underbudget. However, we do have a supplementary amount before us in this budget.

Can the minister tell the House: What was the final estimated cost for the arrest processing unit before construction began?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The final estimated cost of the arrest processing unit was \$5 million.

Ms. Moorcroft: Does the minister know the exact amount that the construction project will cost, with the \$286,000 revote and the \$44,000 supplementary funding increase that is — this line item?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Again, Madam Chair, it's going to be in the \$5 million range — approximate. I can certainly commit to having a discussion with the Minister of Highways and Public Works to see what the final cost of that construction was.

Arrest Processing Unit in the amount of \$330,000 agreed to

On Old Corrections Centre Demolition

Ms. Moorcroft: I understand this line item includes a \$270,000 increase for the demolition of the old Whitehorse Correctional Centre, to ensure the safe removal of hazardous material. Was there a reason that the officials — whether in

Justice or in Highways and Public Works — weren't aware that there would be a need to remove hazardous materials? It's a fairly large increase.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Once we got into that project, the scope of the work that needed to be done expanded, we were aware of certain areas of the old correctional facility that had asbestos in it. Then we had workers on the site starting to remove and go through the building — perhaps with a finer-toothed comb — and it was then that we identified that there was quite a bit more work than was initially needed.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 15, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

Written notice was given of the following motion on November 24, 2014:

Motion No. 791

Re: providing Yukoners with the skills necessary to prepare them for jobs, responsible citizenship and life-long learning (Hassard)