



Yukon Legislative Assembly

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Index to **HANSARD**

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NOTE

The 2015 Spring Sitting of the First Session of the Thirty-Third Legislature occupies two volumes

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Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 190

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, April 2, 2015 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

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

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

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

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, April 2, 2015**

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

Prayers

INTRODUCTION OF PAGES

Speaker: Welcome everyone. As you saw, once again, I'm in a cast. It's dangerous out there. It's thawing and freezing. Be careful on the ice; this is what happens. There are a few others here who have had similar incidents as well.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the following students will be serving the House as legislative pages for the 2015 Spring Sitting: Taylor Jeffery, Morgan Dumkee and Morgan Madden from Porter Creek Secondary School; Solstice Sarin-Toews, Maira Magsi and Ashley Harris — I hope I am pronouncing these right — from F.H. Collins Secondary School; and Clodagh Berg and Naomi Duru from Vanier Catholic Secondary School.

Today with us are Ashley and Morgan. I would like to ask all members to welcome them to the House at this time.

Applause

Speaker: That is what normally happens at the beginning of the first session. There are a number of changes to the Order Paper. You will have to bear with me because today we have quite a large number of changes.

Bills ordered dropped from Order Paper

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes that have been made to the Order Paper. Bill No. 101, *Disclosure Protection Act*, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, has been removed from the Order Paper as it is similar to Bill No. 75, *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*, which was passed by this House and assented to during the 2014 Fall Sitting.

Withdrawal of motions

The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as they also relate to Bill No. 75: Motion No. 29, standing in the name of the Member for Riverdale South and Motion No. 498, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

Motion No. 702, standing in the name of the Member for Riverdale South, has been removed from the Order Paper as it relates to Bill No. 78, *Act to Amend the Marriage Act*, which passed this House and was assented to during the 2014 Fall Sitting.

Motions No. 174 and 520, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, have been removed from the Order Paper as they relate to Bill No. 82, *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act*, which passed this House and was assented to during the 2014 Fall Sitting.

Members will also be aware that on January 16, 2015, the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin was appointed to the Executive

Council. All motions for which the member gave notice as a private member have been removed from the Order Paper. I will not list them. There are 61 of them in total.

The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as they are currently outdated: Motions No. 593 and 613, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin; Motions No. 596 and 620, standing in the name of the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes; Motions No. 598, 605, 608, 610 and 633, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake; Motion No. 628, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt South; Motion No. 635, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun; Motions No. 654 and 816, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike; Motions No. 728 and 871, standing in the name of the Leader of the Official Opposition; and Motions No. 813 and 849, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. We are still not done.

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. 211 and 858, standing in the name of the Minister of Justice; Motion No. 241, standing in the name of the Minister of Community Services; Motion No. 403, standing in the name of the Minister of Health and Social Services; Motions No. 513 and 564, standing in the name of the Member for Mount Lorne Southern Lakes; and Motions No. 730, 743, 776, 794 and 832, standing in name of the Member for Klondike.

The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as they refer to a bill that is no longer before the Parliament of Canada: Motion No. 618, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt South; Motion No. 655, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike; and Motion No. 661, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

Motion for the Production of Papers No. 5, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike, has been removed from the Order Paper as it is outdated.

Finally, Written Question No. 7, standing in the name of the Member for Riverdale South, has been removed from the Order Paper as it is also outdated.

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: Having made it through that, we will now proceed with the Order Paper.

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of World Autism Awareness Day

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise in the House today to ask members to join me in recognizing April 2 as the 8th World Autism Awareness Day, and the theme again this year is Light It Up Blue. The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution in 2007 which declared April 2 as World Autism Awareness Day. It is important to note that the UN resolution for World Autism Awareness Day is one of only three official health-specific UN days. This is significant as it will bring the world's attention to autism.

It is also important to note that the World Autism Awareness Day resolution encourages all member states to take action to educate its citizens about autism and to encourage early diagnosis and early intervention. It is through personal experience that I know that both early diagnosis and early intervention make a world of difference.

When my son was diagnosed with autism over 10 years ago, one in over 300 children was being diagnosed with ASD, or autism spectrum disorder. Now, 10 years later, reports are indicating that one child in 68 is being diagnosed with some degree of autism. Last year when I paid tribute to World Autism Awareness Day, I noted that, overall, boys were almost five times as likely as girls to get such a diagnosis, with rates of one in 54. This year, that number is reported to be one in 42. A year ago, I also noted that the rate of autism in girls was one in 252. More recent reports indicate that that number has changed to one in 189.

The UN resolution also mentions the high rate of autism in children around the world and the consequent developmental challenges. World Autism Awareness Day and the Light It Up Blue campaign draw awareness to autism as a growing global health issue. Activities take place in communities around the world each day to help increase and develop world knowledge of autism.

Mr. Speaker, World Autism Awareness Day celebrates the unique talents and skills of persons with autism, and it's a day when individuals with autism are warmly welcomed and embraced in community events around the globe.

Today, and hopefully each and every day forward, autism organizations all around the world, including our own Autism Yukon, will give a voice to the millions of individuals worldwide who are undiagnosed, misunderstood and looking for help and support.

Autism affects children in many countries, irrespective of gender, race or socio-economic status, and characterized by impairments in social interaction, problems with verbal and non-verbal communication, and restricted, repetitive behaviour, interests and activities.

There are consequent developmental challenges to long-term health care, education, training and intervention programs undertaken by governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, as well as its tremendous impact on children, their families, communities and societies.

On this day — and as a parent of a child with autism and on behalf of Yukon government and my government caucus colleagues — we would also like to recognize the parents, the grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, extended family members and the many caregivers and professionals who have worked so incredibly hard in Yukon to ensure that supports and services are available to families and children who are dealing with autism every day.

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to support the valuable work of Autism Yukon and other non-profit organizations providing support to people with autism and raising awareness. It is with great pleasure that I can recognize a few individuals in the gallery today. Lissa Best, who is the executive director of Autism Yukon, has joined us, as well as Shirley Chua-Tan and

Ernest. Shirley was the Rendezvous Queen for this year and she has a son with autism — if everyone could join me in welcoming them.

Applause

Ms. Stick: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to recognize World Autism Awareness Day. This day was first established in 2007 by the United Nations General Assembly. That was eight years ago, and since that time, I believe that many people across Canada, the Yukon and even the world have in fact become very aware of autism through the hard work of parents, families and organizations like Autism Yukon. Autism Yukon is a non-profit organization that offers support to families and individuals living with autism spectrum disorder throughout the Yukon.

I will not go into the descriptions or explanations about possible causes and impacts of autism, except to say that the supports being offered to families and individuals are important in the day-to-day lives of these individuals. The stats speak for themselves, and they are important when we are planning for providing supports and looking at prevention, but behind each stat are people — individuals and families.

What I would briefly like to comment on is what we as a community can do, and the most important thing, I think, is to listen. I have been looking quite a bit at information available through the Internet, through social media and through organizations that work with individuals and families with autism and see what people are doing on Autism Awareness Day. What stood out in particular when I was researching this was the point being made that people with autism want to be heard. People with autism want to be heard on what they feel, what they want in life and how they want to participate in community.

We do need to provide supports to families and individuals with autism, but we also need to ask what they need and listen to their answers. Often the answers will be the same as anyone else's — even ours — a safe affordable place to live, a job that pays real wages, a chance to participate in community activities and recreation and the opportunity to contribute and belong to community. For these things to be real possibilities it will mean listening and it will mean acceptance of people just as they are. I hope that on this day and every other day we thank those advocating and supporting individuals and families impacted by autism, and we listen carefully to what they want.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: Before I open the floor for introduction of visitors, I would like to introduce a couple of people myself. In the Speaker's gallery we have Mr. Red Grossinger, retired CD with clasp. Mr. Grossinger is well-known in our community. He has worked with the legion and veterans across the Yukon as well as many other things. It is always a pleasure to have him come and join us.

Special today is that we have his son, Jeff Grossinger, who is wearing his uniform today as sergeant with the Royal

Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. He is serving currently in Winnipeg. He is not a veteran as he is still serving. After 25 years, he is continuing on. I am pleased to have with him his daughter, Melissa, who is up here in the Yukon visiting with him. A warm welcome to them and thank you very much for your service — all three of you.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It is my honour to introduce a couple of people in the gallery today. I would like to introduce Mr. Stirling Young and Mrs. Thelma Young — long-time friends who are here joining us today. I would also like to acknowledge Mr. Rick Nielsen, former chief of staff, as well as a constituent of mine and also a reporter, Murray Martin, who is here as well. I would like to ask all members to help me welcome them to the gallery today.

Applause

Mr. Hassard: It would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming Mr. Peter Turner, the president of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce.

Applause

Mr. Silver: I would like to give a warm welcome to a friend of mine, an ex-Dawsonite and a member of the EMS fraternity here in Whitehorse, Mr. Devon Bailey.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Under tabling returns and documents, the Chair has for tabling the *Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Yukon Legislative Assembly — 2015: Corrections in Yukon — Department of Justice*. This report was distributed to members and made public on March 5, 2015.

The Chair also has for tabling the *Final Report of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing*. This report was distributed to members and made public on January 19, 2015.

The Chair also has for tabling a letter from the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin dated January 16, 2015, informing the Speaker of his resignation as Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole.

Finally, the Chair has for tabling the *Report from the Clerk of the Yukon Legislative Assembly on the Absence of Members from Sitzings of the Legislative Assembly and its Committees*, dated April 2, 2015.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Mr. Hassard: I have for presentation the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees. The report was transmitted to members and made public on January 16, 2015.

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. 16: *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 16, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 16, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 16 agreed to

Bill No. 17: *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 17, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 17, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 17 agreed to

Bill No. 18: *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 18 agreed to

Speaker: 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 respect the wishes of Yukon First Nation governments and the Yukon public by banning hydraulic fracturing in Yukon.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to act in the spirit of reconciliation envisioned by Yukon First

Nation final agreements and withdraw the four controversial amendments contained in Bill S-6.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to produce and disclose a revised estimate of the Wolverine project cost of reclamation considering Yukon Zinc Corporation has failed to meet the requirements for temporary closure under the Wolverine mine reclamation and closure plan.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to shelve plans for the proposed 300-bed continuing care institution and undertake comprehensive consultations and a needs analysis with Yukon seniors, elders and health professionals across the territory to determine how best to support Yukoners' right to age in place and thrive in their communities.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to follow through on a commitment to develop a mental health strategy.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Government spending

Ms. Hanson: You know, Mr. Speaker, just as the returning swans announce the arrival of spring, the millions of dollars in Yukon Party promises announces that an election is around the corner — \$330 million for a 300-bed institution for long-term care, millions in planning money for a mega-hydro project that could cost billions of dollars, \$200 million to twin the Alaska Highway in Whitehorse, and \$10 million here, \$20 million there.

Yukoners know the pitfalls of budgeting for election photo ops — projects that don't receive proper scrutiny, aren't well-planned, overwhelm the capacity of local contractors to bid on the jobs and result in massive cost overruns and design errors. The Auditor General has repeatedly taken the Yukon Party government to task on how it spends Yukoners' money. Does the Premier think he can simply spend his way out of this economic downturn with Yukoners' own money?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, because of the strong fiscal management of this government, we are truly in an enviable position during challenging times. Governments right across this country are cutting jobs and raising taxes. We're doing exactly the opposite. We're creating jobs and we're cutting taxes — putting more money into Yukoners' pockets.

Ms. Hanson: You know, Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party playbook is pretty familiar: build a surplus in the early years after an election, then throw a whack of cash at capital

projects in the hope that voters will forget all the trouble this kind of cynical project planning has gotten us into in the past. Successive Yukon Party premiers have followed this plan: build the kitty, ignore the issues and the needs; don't consult in what projects we need; and then, as the election approaches, make a raft of announcements. We've seen it this last two weeks. The goal is simply to get photo ops and shovels in the ground, not to make the best use of the public's dime. This is no way to manage capital projects or the economy.

Does the Premier realize that the Yukon Party approach of making big pre-election spending announcements leaves the Yukon public on the hook for huge cost overruns and poor capital management?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I'll remind the Leader of the Official Opposition that the Yukon Party has had a surplus in 10 of the last 11 years. Mr. Speaker, we have net financial resources, the envy, certainly, of the whole country. We will be putting an additional \$5.5 million back into the pockets of Yukoners in this budget — Yukoners right across the board. You know, I challenge the opposition to tell Yukoners that investments in health care and investment in schools and education are not good investments for Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, decreasing surpluses. Before the last election, the Yukon Party made a lot of big-ticket announcements without proper planning and oversight — for example, Dawson sewage project, Whitehorse Correctional Centre, hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson, F.H. Collins rebuild and Mayo B. Each one of these projects was rushed to get shovels in the ground and there have been major consequences. Capital project spending should be about working with communities and citizens to identify needs. It should be about good projects, built on time and on budget with maximum benefits to the local workforce. Projects should be built in a managed way, not for elections and partisan purposes.

Does the Premier believe making hundreds of millions of dollars in announcements this late in his mandate will distract the public from his continued mismanagement and lack of consultation and planning under his watch?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, Yukoners trust this government to look after their money. Since 2002, Yukon Party governments have never raised their taxes and this year we will be putting money back into Yukoners' pockets to allow them to make the best decisions on what they want to do with their money. We continue to build prosperity by creating jobs and partnering with industry and other governments to continue to ensure that Yukon is the best place to live, play and raise a family.

Question re: Mine closure security

Mr. Tredger: Yukoners know too well the environmental and financial costs of poorly regulated mines like Faro and Mount Nansen, but we were promised a new way of mining that would be done sustainably and to the benefit of all Yukon businesses. With modern mining and regulatory regimes, the Faros were supposed to be a thing of the past, yet here we are with Wolverine, a mine that failed to

pay its securities, a mine that ignored its obligations in the mine closure plan, and a government that failed its responsibilities.

The result for the mining industry: a black eye affecting its image. Those benefits promised for Yukon businesses? That came in the form of \$4.3 million in unpaid bills.

Mr. Speaker, has this government really learned from past mistakes, or will they continue to take Yukon back to the days of wild-west resource extraction?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Of course this government recognizes that mining is the cornerstone of our economy, and we recognize the impacts that this closure is having on Yukoners, both those who worked at the mine as well as the businesses that supplied the mine.

Our government officials in Energy, Mines and Resources have been meeting with the Yukon Zinc Corporation and are closely monitoring the mine site to ensure there's no risk to the environment or the people who work and live in the area. Just this morning, the Minister of Economic Development and I spoke at length with the Chief of the Ross River Dena Council. We've extended offers to that community, as well as the community of Watson Lake, to have officials, and/or myself and the Minister of Economic Development, travel to that community to provide a technical briefing. I would also extend that offer today to members of the Official Opposition, as well as the Member for Klondike and the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. We will have officials sit down. It's a very dynamic situation that changes almost daily sometimes, Mr. Speaker, so I think it's important that all Yukoners are kept abreast of the situation at Wolverine as they go through this temporary closure.

Mr. Tredger: Yukoners thought that they were through having to clean up contaminated and abandoned mine sites with public dollars. On October 31, 2014, Yukon Zinc Corporation missed a \$350,000 payment to Yukon government, but they were allowed to continue their operations until Yukon Zinc closed early in the new year. The last security payment they made was on July 31.

Wolverine operated for nearly three months without paying its security. Mr. Speaker, when Yukoners don't pay rent, or when any other Yukon business doesn't pay its bills, they don't get a free pass. What exact steps were taken by this government when Yukon Zinc failed to meet their October 31 security payment?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I guess the one thing I would like to do to inform the House is that there is \$7.8 million held in security for the temporary closure of the Wolverine mine owned by Yukon Zinc. Of course the member is correct: there was an October 31 payment of \$350,000 that was missed. I guess we could have taken the action of closing down the mine, but instead we wanted to work with the company to ensure that they could keep open for as long as they could. Unfortunately, economics, world commodity prices and a number of other factors have led to the temporary closure of that mine.

Again, I will just extend the offer that I did in my initial answer to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, as well as the

Member for Klondike, to have officials provide a technical briefing on this next week just to ensure that they are up to speed on the actions and what is happening.

As I mentioned, we did talk to the Chief of the Ross River Dena Council this morning and a number of his councillors and officials. We have extended that offer to individuals in Watson Lake — last week, I believe it was — when we did the local technical briefing for the media. As I have mentioned, this situation is very dynamic and is changing quite quickly, so I will extend that offer to members opposite to provide them with a technical briefing at our earliest convenience, perhaps as early as next week.

Mr. Tredger: Now we have a company that is \$647 million in debt. When Yukon Zinc Corporation closed the Wolverine mine in late January, they were required to keep the mine pumped and ventilated according to the temporary closure plan. They didn't and now the mine is flooding. The security fund that was established for the Wolverine mine cleanup was set at \$10 million, not \$7.8 million, on the assumption that the temporary closure plan would be followed. With the company disregarding its closure plan and the costs climbing, Yukoners will be the ones left with the tab.

Mr. Speaker, how much does this government anticipate Yukoners will pay to clean up the Wolverine mine because this government didn't do their due diligence when it came to oversight?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, with respect to the Wolverine mine, the company is in temporary closure right now. They are planning on reopening. That is our understanding and that is what the company has stated publicly.

Of course, they are delinquent on some of the security payments that we have talked about — the member opposite referenced the one from October 31 of \$350,000. Again, the company is in temporary closure. We have taken court action to recover those funds that they are short with respect to the security they owe. But again I will offer a technical briefing to members of the opposition as early as next week, if we can find a time that is mutually acceptable, so that they can get updated from government officials on what exactly is happening at Wolverine mine, what steps we're taking as far as compliance monitoring and inspections to ensure that the environmental integrity is protected there, as well as updates on the temporary closure as we know it in our lengthy discussions with the company.

Question re: Mental health services

Mr. Silver: Let's go back a bit. In 2011, the Premier made a commitment to spend some new federal money on designing a mental health plan. In 2012, a year later, a former Yukon Party health minister told a radio station that the government was planning a mental health strategy. Two years later, 2014, a former minister told this House, and I quote: "We're working on a mental health strategy and when it is available, I will be only too happy to present it in the Legislature."

The clock hits 2015 and Yukon has a new Minister of Health, but still no mental health strategy. We are one of only

two jurisdictions in Canada without a strategy in place and it shows Yukoners where mental health is on this government's priority list. Why is this strategy not in place after four years of promises from this government?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The member opposite may not be aware that the department really provides a range of services and supports to clients with mental illnesses, mental health challenges, concurrent disorders and addictions — and their families.

We see this government standing up to the plate with announcements like the construction of the new Sarah Steele facility that will be — construction will be completed next fall. I've met with the Mental Health Association here in the territory and they're very pleased with the services and infrastructure that this government has invested in over the last number of years and we'll continue down that road.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, the minister gave us a random list of some things that the government is doing to support people with some mental illnesses. Many of them are very good initiatives and we do applaud the government for their initiatives so far, but I would argue that it's not enough. What was promised was an overall strategy, a plan to ensure that programs and initiatives are actually working to provide Yukoners with what they need. The government seemed to think that this was a good idea as well. Every year since the last election, the government promised a mental health strategy and every year, it fails to deliver it.

Mr. Speaker, why is a mental health strategy not a priority for this government?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I think this government has put its money where its mouth is and shown how committed we are to offering services for individuals in the territory experiencing mental health issues, whether it's addictions or other issues. We'll continue the good work.

We just announced the five-plex on Fourth Avenue specifically for individuals who have mental health issues and need transitional-type housing. This government will continue to make investments in mental health and continue to do the good work. Mr. Speaker, I need to make a good point here and extend sincere thanks to the staff — the Yukon government staff and NGOs around the territory that are providing these services — second to none — and I would argue they are some of the best services in Canada.

Mr. Silver: I would like to apologize to those NGOs and staff that we don't have a mental health strategy.

Mr. Speaker, if it were a priority, then it would be in place. We remain one of only two jurisdictions in Canada without a mental health strategy. The endless promises from this government have become pretty tiresome. In 2013, the government released a needs assessment for the newly built hospitals in Watson Lake and in Dawson. The assessment was done after, not before, the buildings were constructed. But the report did say, and I quote: "That the implementation of a territorial mental health prevention and treatment strategy be a priority that includes local support workers who maintain contact with those in need..."

I know from the local mental health community in Dawson that we need a coordinator of services — a full 18 months after receiving the report and the recommendation has not been acted upon.

Why does this government hire experts in the field just to ignore their recommendations?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, this government will continue to stand behind its staff and the NGOs providing services in the territory. These are actions and this government is interested in those types of actions where we can ensure that services are provided to those in need of the five-plex on Fourth Avenue and the need for a new Sarah Steele Building for drug and alcohol treatment. We'll continue to support those organizations like Many Rivers and the excellent work that they do. This government believes that taking those types of actions when it comes to mental health is very important. For the member opposite to indicate that we don't take it seriously is clearly very wrong.

Question re: YESAA process

Ms. Hanson: This week, the Premier had an opportunity to re-establish a positive relationship with Yukon First Nation governments. Unfortunately, the Premier used his presentation to the parliamentary committee on Bill S-6 to restate his support for unilateral amendments to YESAA. To add insult to injury, he suggested he would get together with First Nations after the amendments passed and somehow negotiate a bilateral agreement.

If the Premier had been interested in listening to views other than his own, he would have stayed to hear what First Nation leaders said, and he would have heard a resounding "no" to his insulting proposal. First Nation leaders were clear: They will not negotiate how to implement a bill that undermines their constitutionally protected rights and erodes the independent made-in-Yukon assessment process.

Will the Premier acknowledge that his unwavering support for Bill S-6 will lead to more court battles?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I guess I'll begin by reminding the Leader of the Official Opposition that Bill S-6 is actually federal legislation. It's not territorial legislation. So, through a process that they have gone through, it is moving through the Senate and now into the House of Commons second reading, and to the committee responsible for doing the consultations.

Bill S-6 is good for Yukon. Yes, I have reached out to Yukon First Nations and said that, through a bilateral accord, we can make this work. Yukoners have done it before and we can do it again. I used a couple of examples of the devolution transfer agreement and the Yukon Oil and Gas Accord, where the federal government provided legislation and then Yukoners, leaders, Premier and chiefs got together and found a path forward.

I believe that if we sit down we can find a way to implement these amendments on the ground for the benefit of all Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: The Premier conveniently forgets important aspects of Yukon history. What the Premier's ignoring, when he talks about the Oil and Gas Accord and the

devolution transfer agreement, is that the Yukon NDP government of the day, and First Nation governments, agreed on the principles of the legislation before the legislation was passed, not after.

The Premier, on the other hand, is asking Yukon First Nation governments to ignore the fact that they did not agree to the four unilateral amendments contained in Bill S-6 and the Premier was outed by his own federal counterpart that he introduced two of those on his own. Now he somehow expects Yukon First Nation governments to want to talk about implementing legislation that changes the fundamental relationship in our agreements.

Why does the Premier think that First Nation governments will enter into a bilateral agreement after he has sold out their rights?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This government will not comment on the consultation that occurred or did not occur between the federal government and Yukon First Nations. That would be disrespectful. Yukon First Nations can and will speak for themselves but, when it comes to Yukon government, we believe that we were consulted and that the federal government did consider the recommendations and comments that we did make before they tabled the legislation that we now know as Bill S-6.

I continue to say that Bill S-6 is good for Yukon. There is an opportunity now that the federal government — as they have in the past — will move forward with legislation to be able to sit down and find the path forward to implement the amendments that are before us. We owe that to Yukoners, for our leaders to be able to find a path forward. We've done it before; we can do it again.

Ms. Hanson: Talking about disrespect — at some point the Premier's going to have to realize that his disrespectful attitude toward Yukon First Nation governments —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Elias: To me, it's a clear contravention of the Standing Orders — using abusive or insulting language referring to the honourable member as Premier in the sentence that she just used. I believe there is a point of order warranted here.

Speaker: Official Opposition House Leader, on the point of order.

Ms. Stick: I didn't hear a point of order in my colleague's comments and would suggest that this is merely a dispute between members.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: This time I'm going to say there is not a point of order but I'm going to caution members on the use of language. Inflammatory language will cause problems and it will come back to haunt you. We've done this before and I would prefer if we did not have to go there again.

Ms. Hanson: At Monday's hearings, mining leaders were asked about the impacts of a court battle over the four controversial amendments to YESAA. Their answers should cause this Premier to question his stubborn adherence to his narrative.

Kaminak Gold said that they would not be able to develop their Coffee gold project under the threat of litigation. Capstone, the only operating mine in Yukon, said — and I quote — “layoffs and the end of mining in the Yukon”. How can this Yukon Party government continue their narrative that Bill S-6 will lead to economic certainty when the evidence presented by industry and First Nation leaders is that it will devastate Yukon's mining industry and our economy?

Hon. Mr. Kent: This gives me an opportunity to remind all members of the House that the YESAA process is about much more than just mining. When I look at the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources — everything from energy projects to oil and gas projects, land acquisitions, agriculture, forestry, any types of projects like that — anything that requires a permit or a licence has to go through the YESAA process, but when it comes to the mining sector — I'll refer to the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board report that I tabled last May in this House for members to look at and in that — I'll quote: “In 2013... YMAB chose to focus on what industry has determined is the key issue negatively impacting the industry; the deterioration in the efficiency and reliability of the assessment and licensing of mining projects in the territory.”

It goes on to say that, “The system has become more costly, cumbersome and protracted and the Yukon's mineral industry is developing an increasingly negative image as an attractive investment destination... There is a clear urgency for the Government of Yukon to act.”

Of course, when it comes to the mining industry, we believe that these amendments that are proposed in S-6 are good for the industry. They are good for projects that are assessed in other industries as well.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite failed to mention that the Yukon Chamber of Mines, the Klondike Placer Miners' Association, the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board, among others, are supporting the amendments contained in S-6.

Question re: Hydraulic fracturing

Ms. White: Two weeks ago this government accidentally leaked their strategy for selling fracking to Yukoners. This strategy is an insult to the First Nation governments and the thousands of Yukoners who are opposed to fracking. It also flies in the face of the concerns of the scientific community who say that it is not proven to be safe. This confirmed the suspicions of many Yukoners that the select committee process was merely a formality for this government and that this government never had any intention of listening to the thousands of Yukoners who oppose opening up the Yukon to fracking.

After the strategy was leaked, the minister backpedaled saying that no decision had been made, but Yukoners — we want a straight answer.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier listen to the will of First Nation governments, Yukoners and the concerns of scientists, or will he plow ahead at all costs with his agenda to open Yukon to fracking?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I would just like to take this opportunity to thank the three government members and the three opposition members who participated on the select committee. I know it was a very long process and I thank them for their work. That work, of course, was delivered to this Legislature — or to you as Speaker, I believe — in the form of a report that contained a number of recommendations. The draft document that the member opposite is referring to was a response to those recommendations contained in that report.

We are not going to rush into this. We are not going to panic. We are not going to spread false information. We are not going to make an ill-informed decision. Members know there is currently no activity of this type taking place in the Yukon, nor are there any applications in the queue for this type of activity to take place. We are going to take a zero-tolerance approach to misinformation, Mr. Speaker, and we are giving full and fair consideration to the facts and the science, as well as to the concerns of Yukoners. This is an important issue and I will commit to legislators on both sides of this House that I will table a response to the select committee during this sitting so that we can have full and fair debate on the response provided by the government.

Ms. White: We look forward to that response.

We would be hard pressed to find a Yukoner who believes that this government doesn't have an agenda to open up the Yukon to fracking. This government created a strategy to sell to Yukoners something that they didn't want, and when it was leaked prematurely, they ran for cover. In typical Yukon Party fashion, they put the public servants in front of the controversy.

Mr. Speaker, Yukoners will not be fooled. They know that the department did not come up with the strategy on its own. They know that this government has had its eye on developing fracking in Yukon ever since it announced oil and gas as a key pillar of its economic vision.

What direction did the Premier and his Cabinet give the department in developing a response to the select committee report?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Once the select committee report was delivered, I instructed the department to come up with a response to the 21 recommendations, and that was what was contained in the draft document that was accidentally sent by one of my officials to a member of the local media.

Again, when it comes to fracking, I have mentioned that I will be coming forward on behalf of the government, my Cabinet and caucus colleagues, with a response to the report that was prepared by three members of the government side and three members of the opposition side. Again, I would like to thank them for the work that they put into that report and commit that before the midway point of this current legislative sitting, I will table a response to the report so that we can give full and fair consideration during this spring legislative sitting

to what the government's response is to the select committee report on hydraulic fracturing.

Question re: Continuing care facilities

Ms. Stick: This spring, my colleagues and I visited 17 communities and spoke with Yukoners about their priorities and their concerns. What we heard, loud and clear, was that Yukoners want their seniors and elders to remain part of their community for as long as possible. Rural Yukoners are worried. Sending these community members to Whitehorse will remove them from their valued roles as community leaders. What we heard reflects what is being said across Canada. Ninety-six percent of all Canadians agree. It is important to be able to age at home, with access to health care in a home setting. Did the minister hold any public consultations with Yukon seniors and elders across the territory before announcing the government's intention to build a 300-bed continuing care institution in Whitehorse?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: In fact, there were two needs assessments completed and a business case conducted for government and the current patterns of usage for long-term care.

We hear about the need for this facility on a daily basis from Yukoners, from our conversations with Yukoners. Designing a single facility that is a home — that is sense of community — for seniors who require that level of care is an important component to Whitehorse. It is an important component for those living in rural communities who can no longer care for themselves and who require a higher level of care.

This government has committed to building a 150-bed facility as we see in the budget in front of us. This government is also planning ahead. I know the members opposite are not familiar with that concept, but we understand that there may be a need for future beds and we are building a facility that has that option in mind for a future government to make that decision.

Ms. Stick: The minister talks in the media about helping seniors stay in their communities as long as possible, but it doesn't match the government's track record, especially given this plan for a 300-bed institution in Whitehorse. The Canadian Association of Retired Persons, the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Nurses Association all agree that institutional care is neither affordable nor the best means of care for most people. It is anticipated that this institution will cost \$330 million for 300 beds, and that is before the cost overruns Yukoners expect.

Did the minister hold consultations with Yukon health care professionals across the territory to determine how to provide the best support for our seniors and elders to age in place?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: We need to set the record straight here. The member opposite continues to talk about the seniors long-term care facility as an institution when we are modelling the Copper Ridge Place model that is very community-oriented. In fact, I just conducted a tour of that facility just a number of weeks ago, and when I left it

surprised me that there were 96 individuals living in that facility, but it didn't seem like there were any more than 10 people walking around throughout, not including staff or course. The staff of the long-term care facility in Copper Ridge does an exceptional job, and we are certainly grateful each and every day for the care that they give to our seniors who are unable to stay at home. This facility — Copper Ridge — and the new facility in Whistle Bend are not just for seniors. They are for individuals who are living with very complex needs who are unable to stay in their home even with family and friends' support.

We are very proud of this facility moving forward. I look forward to shovels in the ground and design. This facility will be very well-received by individuals and families who have loved ones who are unable to stay in their homes any longer.

Ms. Stick: Copper Ridge with 96 beds is not comparable to a three-story, 300-bed facility that this government is talking about with zero consultation with Yukoners or health care professionals in the Yukon.

The minister says data and the rationale for the proposed 300 beds were provided to the public, and it was. There is a case plan there, but let's be clear, that is not consultation. Yukoners see the pattern. The Yukon Party government makes a decision without talking to Yukoners. Then they try to sell it, just like community hospitals, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister confirm that history is indeed repeating itself, as this government plows ahead with no concrete evidence that their proposed \$300-million facility is the most effective and affordable option Yukoners have?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I certainly enjoy the comment the member opposite just made about community hospitals. I question the comments that are coming, not just from this opposition party, but the other opposition party too, because as we know, and is clearly shown in the record, both those parties voted strongly against those community hospitals. They voted against the Watson Lake hospital; they voted against the Dawson City hospital; they voted against seniors housing; they voted against health care — a 350-percent increase in funding for home care. McDonald Lodge, Mr. Speaker — the Member for Klondike voted against that.

We continue to invest in doctors; we continue to invest in health care workers; we continue to invest in clinics — and now the announcement of an expansion of the new hospital. These parties are out of touch. They talk and they speak about what they would like to do, but then, of course, like everything else, as we move forward with plans to move Yukon forward on a path to ensure that our health and social services are there and that we build a strong economy, those parties vote against it.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would like to rise and ask members to join me in welcoming two former members of the Legislative Assembly to the gallery, the former member for

Riverdale, Mr. Ted Staffen, and former Member for Klondike Mr. Dave Millar.

Applause

Government House Leader's report on length of sitting

Mr. Elias: 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 for the current sitting. The House leaders have unanimously agreed that the current sitting should be a maximum of 31 sitting days, with the 31st sitting day being Thursday, May 28, 2015.

Speaker: Accordingly, I declare the current sitting shall be a maximum of 31 sitting days, with the 31st sitting day being Thursday, May 28, 2015.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 18: *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 18, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now read a second time. Hon. Premier, the floor is yours.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, honourable members and guests, it is my honour and privilege today to table the 2015-16 budget, the fourth budget of the 33rd Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Before I get started, I would like to acknowledge the people whom I represent in the riding of Mountainview — Granger, McIntyre, Hillcrest and Valleyview. It continues to be an honour and a privilege to serve all those good people and residents within the riding.

Mr. Speaker, the official purpose of the budget is to inform the House and to inform Yukoners how we are managing the territory's finances. As Premier and as Minister of Finance, I consider this one of my most important tasks.

The Government of Yukon's budget for 2015-16 is \$1,367,070,000. The operation and maintenance budget totals \$1.054 billion, of which \$111,537,000 is recoverable. The capital budget is \$312.8 million, of which \$46.9 million is recoverable.

The 2015-16 budget has a healthy \$23.2 million surplus. This budget is all about putting Yukoners to work. For that reason, as Minister of Finance, I have purchased a new pair of construction boots instead of a new pair of shoes. Our government will stimulate the private sector economy by reducing taxes and putting more money into the pockets of Yukoners, and we will continue implementing, budget-by-budget, our government's vision of prosperity for the territory

by making Yukon the best place in Canada to live, work, play and raise a family.

That vision is the focus of this budget speech. Sir John A. Macdonald once said: "A set definite objective must be established if we are to accomplish anything in a big way." In other words, vision is a prerequisite of achievement. Since this Yukon Party team was elected in 2011, our aim has been clear: to move forward together on a path toward a stronger and more prosperous Yukon. It is our belief that this aim is inseparable from our goal of making Yukon a net contributor to Canada. Why is this important? It's important because economic self-sufficiency is the best path to economic strength, and economic strength is necessary to build a Yukon that we all want. As long as we rely on the federal transfer payments and as long as we rely on other hard-working Canadians, we will not be economically secure — and it's not a matter of economics. We have a moral obligation to take economic responsibility for ourselves. That is why a core principle guiding this Yukon Party government since its election has been to develop Yukon's economic strengths so that our economy can stand on its own and eventually contribute to the general wealth of this great nation.

Mr. Speaker, what defines political parties is fundamental principles. An example is that the Yukon Party believes that the private sector is the engine that drives economic growth. If the private sector is the engine, we want to be the transmission that will enable the engine to power forward.

We want to put that transmission in drive. Some members of this House want to put the transmission in park. They want to park the Yukon economy. They are opposed to the free-entry system for mining. They are opposed to the use of LNG. They are opposed to hydro development, and they are opposed to oil and gas development. They are opposed to all of these positive initiatives in this budget. In the same breath, they say they support economic diversification when they have ruled out the majority of Yukon's economic mainstays. Being opposed to everything doesn't prepare you for governing.

We believe it is possible to have the best of both worlds: responsible development and a healthy environment. It is not a choice of either/or. In 2011 we told Yukoners where we stand in the Yukon Party platform and we have been delivering on these commitments year by year, budget by budget.

We know there are some challenging economic times ahead as a consequence of the downturn in the metal markets. This challenge can become an opportunity. We have an opportunity to make some bold strides forward by investing in infrastructure and programs and services on behalf of all Yukoners. That is precisely what this budget aims to do. We are very proud to have a record capital investment that will put Yukoners to work and create a legacy that will benefit the whole community for years to come. That capital investment is only possible because of the fiscal leadership of this government. We believe in managing finances in a way that ensures we have money when we need it most. Yukoners are tightening their belts this year, which is why we are making these investments and providing tax relief. That is what our fiscal management over the past decade allows us to do.

I want Yukoners to know that we are committed to continuing with reliable, responsible fiscal management. Over the coming years we expect that growth in our territorial formula financing to slow over previous years. While we won't face the same challenges that other jurisdictions are facing around cuts and reductions, we are facing a period when restraint and responsible investment are required. Yukoners can trust this government to manage finances in the good times and the lean times, something the other parties cannot say.

Our focus has been and will always be and continue to be on Yukoners. We are committed to making Yukon the best place to live in Canada. Our first step in this regard is to further reduce the tax burden on Yukoners.

Our government will be amending the Yukon *Income Tax Act* and regulations. A few of the key amendments will include revising the personal income tax rate structure, significantly increasing the Yukon child benefit, increasing the political contribution tax credit to match on an ongoing basis the federal political contribution tax credit, and aligning the Yukon children's fitness tax credit with the federal children's fitness tax credit.

In addition, we are working in consultation with First Nations to undertake two major initiatives to improve the territory's regulatory and permitting regimes. One is the mine licensing improvement initiative, which will clarify the roles of regulatory agencies and make sure that the many levels of our regulatory system work well together. In no way will this lessen environmental protection or oversight of mining activity.

The second major initiative is the mineral development strategy to be completed in a year, which covers business climate, infrastructure, First Nation engagement, environmental stewardship and workforce training.

Underlying all of our initiatives with regard to making Yukon the best place to live is our commitment to strengthening our partnership with Yukon First Nations. Yukon has just less than half of the modern comprehensive land claim agreements in Canada. Yukon self-government agreements are unique in Canada, if not the world. It is in everyone's best interest for Yukon government and Yukon First Nation governments to work together for the betterment of all Yukoners, and we are committed to doing just that.

While our government believes that comprehensive land claims and self-government agreements through the *Umbrella Final Agreement* are the best path to follow, we are prepared to negotiate reconciliation agreements with the three non-settled First Nations. We have already entered into negotiations with the White River First Nation, the Kaska Dena Council, the Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council to negotiate non-treaty reconciliation agreements. While the opposition parties focus on issues where Yukon government and First Nation governments disagree, there are far more areas where First Nation governments and Yukon government agree and work collaboratively together. Even on matters such as YESAA, where we disagree on a few issues,

there is agreement on the majority of recommendations — 72 versus four.

My message to Yukon First Nations on Bill S-6 is to let it pass through the federal process as is, and then let's sit down and resolve any difficulties with its implementation through the negotiation of a bilateral accord. Yukon government and Yukon First Nations have demonstrated in the past that we can resolve any differences that we may have between our respective governments. We have done it before and we can do it again.

Equally important is our relationship with the Government of Canada, our sister territories and the provinces. Canada is a federation founded in cooperation and partnerships. Canada's relationship with the three northern territories is especially important because, unlike the provinces, Canada owns all the land and the resources north of 60. What this means is that Canada will be the major beneficiary of resource development in the north. Under the current revenue arrangement, Yukon would be able to retain just over \$50 million. Our vision of building a prosperous Yukon and becoming a net contributor to Canada could happen very quickly. This is why our government continues to urge Ottawa to partner with us by investing in major infrastructure projects to help develop our vast resources. We need more and better roads to access our resources. We need more reliable and redundant telecommunications infrastructure to drive the expansion of our IT sector, and we need an abundant and affordable supply of clean power to ensure that, as we grow, we grow responsibly.

We are moving forward on all of these fronts. We took a major step in November 2013, when our government directed the Yukon Development Corporation to plan a new large-scale hydro dam to power our future. It will be another 10 or 15 years before this project is completed, but we need to be proactive about strategic infrastructure development and our action now will be rewarded in the future.

Mr. Speaker, infrastructure projects like these have long horizons, but we are undertaking many other initiatives whose impacts can already be felt.

For instance, we're dedicating significant resources to making land available to Yukoners. In rural Yukon, we've signed a memorandum of understanding with seven municipalities to work toward providing land for potential territorial, municipal and private development. In Whitehorse, we'll be allocating \$7.7 million for the start of phase 3 of Whistle Bend. Ownership of phases 1 and 2 was already transferred to the City of Whitehorse in 2014.

In order for Yukon to be the best place to live we need healthy citizens and safe communities. This government has a strong track record of investing in infrastructure and programming to support healthy, active lifestyles and to enhance community safety. I could talk at length about the many initiatives we're undertaking to this end, but I'll just point out a few of the highlights.

Recently the Government of Yukon and the Government of Canada signed a new five-year Northern Wellness

Approach agreement worth over \$2 million to promote healthy living and build capacity at the community level.

We've also extended the popular municipal domestic well water program, which will allow eligible property owners in participating municipalities to apply for a low-interest loan to develop domestic wells. In Ross River, we are committing \$250,000 toward the purchase of a new water delivery truck.

This budget also commits significant funds toward addressing community safety issues like wildfires, emergency services and flooding. To mitigate the risk of wildfires, we will provide \$850,000 to fund FireSmart projects across the territory over the next year. To improve emergency services, we will make basic 911 available to all Yukon communities and we will continue to invest in modernizing our emergency fleet vehicles and infrastructure, including the construction of a new \$3.8 million fire hall in Carcross this year. To manage the risk of flooding, we will allocate over \$1.5 million in this budget for flood and erosion control projects in Carcross, Mayo and the Liard River.

There is no way I could talk about Yukon as the best place to live without reference to our beautiful, clean environment. Yukon government is doing its part to ensure it stays that way. That's why we're investing more than \$5 million for remediation work at contaminated sites to minimize the risk to human health and the environment. One the legacies left to us to clean up is the Marwell tar pit, the largest hydrocarbon contaminated site in Yukon. We are in year five of a 10-year project to remediate the site with a cost of up to \$2.5 million in 2015-16 and we will invest up to that same amount in remediating other contaminated sites that we own across the territory.

Another significant initiative we are undertaking to protect our environment is the *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan*. The importance of water to our livelihood and to our identity cannot be overstated. We are a territory of rivers, lakes, streams and glaciers. As part of this action plan, we will further develop a groundwater program, expand our water monitoring network and improve access to drinking water to ensure that future generations continue to enjoy the abundance of clean water that we have been so fortunate to experience.

Making Yukon the best place to work is what the 2015-16 budget is all about. This is the largest capital budget in Yukon's history. Our government has heard loud and clear that Yukon's private sector is facing economic challenges and it's time for government to invest in public infrastructure. Highways, resource roads, bridges, airports and aerodromes are integral to our development and high on the list of priorities that create jobs for Yukoners.

Over the coming year, Yukoners will be doing work on the Campbell Highway. Yukoners will be doing work on the Dempster Highway. Yukoners will be doing work on the Klondike Highway. While funding for the Shakwak agreement to improve the Alaska Highway and the Haines Road remains in limbo, we will use the remaining funds — some \$10 million — to put Yukoners to work rehabilitating sections of it. Yukoners will also be doing work on bridges — specifically, Partridge Creek bridge, the Nares River bridge

and the Tatchun Creek bridge — and on airports and aerodromes, ensuring that our entire transportation network is in top condition. Specifically, Yukoners will be put to work providing almost \$5 million of upgrades to community aerodromes. In Whitehorse, Yukoners will be put to work providing pavement overlays to the parallel runway and taxi A and E and developing 20 lease lots on the south side of apron 2 to address the demand for small lots at the Whitehorse airport.

Mr. Speaker, this budget also includes funds of \$13.5 million to provide for the government's building infrastructure, plus an additional \$1.4 million to maintain Yukon Housing Corporation's stock. But we're not just investing in reroofing, painting and energy upgrades; we're investing over \$11 million in tech infrastructure, of which \$4.8 million is allocated for e-health and there is an additional \$2.1 million for school-based IT. Among other things, our tech investments include a platform to enable on-line permitting and licensing for fishing, camping, hunting, transport and trades. I'm sure I'm not the only one in this room who is very much looking forward to the convenience of getting my camping permit on-line when my family and I decide to go away for a weekend at the last minute.

Mr. Speaker, Yukon is steadily becoming the tech hub north of 60. The Technology and Telecommunications Development Directorate of the Department of Economic Development is receiving over \$800,000 to extend beyond its two-year mandate in order to advance the technology and communications sector. This extension will support the business development phase of the diverse fibre project with the goal of building a second fibre optic link into Yukon. Alaska Power and Telephone plans to lay down a marine fibre optic link in the Lynn Canal, linking Skagway, Haines and Juneau, which will make a fibre optic link through Skagway a promising option for the future. We are examining the possible link in collaboration with the Northwest Territories, utilizing the Mackenzie Valley and the Dempster Highway.

In addition to facilitating work through public infrastructure investment, Yukon government also has four dedicated funds that allow enterprising Yukoners to pursue the economic opportunities that they want. One of the most popular is the community development fund. Over the past year, our government approved almost \$3 million in funding of 82 projects throughout the territory in areas from tourism to sports to First Nation culture. Over the past year, 56 projects were approved for the enterprise trade fund, totalling over \$200,000. Twenty-seven projects from Yukon communities for things like strategic planning, land development and bioenergy were approved under the regional economic development fund for a total of over \$300,000. Sixteen projects were approved under the strategic industries development fund for a total of over \$800,000. One of these projects was a collaboration between Vuntut Gwitchin Development Corporation and Northern Cross (Yukon) to examine the possibility of building and operating a petroleum refinery in the Eagle Plains area. Many Yukoners were put to work by these funds and more jobs will be created in 2015-16.

Tourism is one of Yukon's economic mainstays that employs many Yukoners — the more tourists who travel and visit Yukon the more Yukoners who are employed. Yukon is always looking to expand its markets. The Minister of Tourism and Culture and 12 tourism-industry delegates recently returned from the first-ever minister-led tourism mission to Asia in late February as part of the Yukon Now marketing program. Accomplishments included: the launch of Tourism Yukon's first-ever Chinese website, www.travel yukon.cn; the signing of Yukon's largest-ever partner agreement between Yukon government and the Canadian Tourism Commission in Japan for our marketing campaign and commitments by Japanese and Chinese tour operators to enter into cooperative marketing agreements to market travel packages reflecting Yukon as a year-round travel destination.

The Yukon Now campaign has been a very successful one so far, and I encourage everyone to visit Tourism and Culture's website to have a look at the many resources there, including the digital storytelling project and the user-generated platform that allows Yukoners and visitors to post pictures, videos and other content to tell the world about what makes Yukon the best place to visit and to live.

Tourism and arts and culture fit together hand-in-glove. Our museums and First Nation cultural centres play a critical role in promoting and preserving Yukon's heritage and culture. Yukon government provides operational funding to 11 museums and seven First Nation cultural centres, and we will be increasing this funding by 20 percent over the next two fiscal years from around \$1.5 million in 2014-15 to almost \$2 million in 2016-17.

We are also moving forward with a detailed design phase of the Yukon Archives vault expansion project at a cost of \$629,000 to ensure the Archives continues to preserve our rich documentary heritage as the existing space reaches capacity.

I have spoken quite a bit about encouraging visitors to come and experience all Yukon has to offer, but Yukoners need no invitation to take advantage of our territory's tremendous recreational opportunities. Yukoners love to play and we especially love to play outside. We love hunting; we love fishing; we love camping. Expanding access to Yukon's wilderness is a priority for us. We are working with several Yukon First Nations to make some lakefront cottage lots available to Yukoners at various lakes throughout the territory, and we are moving forward with the expansion of our territory's campgrounds. Specifically, we are working with the Carcross-Tagish Development Corporation to clear the site for the new Conrad campground on Tagish Lake's Windy Arm, which will open in 2016. The bulk of that work on this 35-site campground will take place this year with an allocation of \$500,000. We are working carefully to ensure that the development of the campground is consistent with the objectives of the adjacent Conrad historic site, where the small town of Conrad supported the Venus silver mine in the early 1900s.

This year, for the first time, we are committing \$76,000 to allow 10 campgrounds to open on May 8, weather permitting,

rather than the May long weekend. We do not just play outdoors. We love arts festivals, music festivals, theatrical plays, cultural festivals, Thaw di Gras, Sourdough Rendezvous, the Arctic Winter Games and the Yukon Quest. We love participating in a whole variety of different sports involving all age groups, from the very young to the very old.

The government will continue to support this healthy, active lifestyle through sponsorships, funding arrangements and direct investment in leisure facilities.

To that end, we're investing \$400,000 in preliminary work on a new soccer and running track complex to be built in the Whistle Bend subdivision in Whitehorse. We recently announced a \$400,000 increase in the community recreation assistance grant funding for unincorporated Yukon communities.

In addition, we'll allocate \$1 million to support the 2016 Arctic Winter Games in Nuuk, Greenland, and \$100,000 to support the Arctic X Games, an alternate event hosted in Yukon that provides a competitive opportunity for participants of those sports not included in the Arctic Winter Games.

If Yukon is the best place to live, work and play, it's a natural outcome that it's the best place to raise a family. On the health, social and education side of the ledger, Yukon has an array of facilities, programs and services second to none in Canada, and we are constantly striving to make them even better. We took a big step in this direction with the official opening of the MRI facility at Whitehorse General Hospital late last February. It's now fully operational. This is Canada's first MRI north of 60. It will both reduce the cost of Yukon's medical travel program and spare MRI patients from having to travel and bear travel-related costs.

Health is an area in which we partner closely with Canada. After the territorial health system sustainability initiative, or THSSI, ended in March of 2014, our government put a number of formerly federally funded THSSI programs into our base budget, including palliative care, public health and prevention, rural mental health services and chronic conditions management programs, at a cost of \$2.4 million.

This year, the new territorial health investment fund, or THIF — don't get me started on acronyms — will be allocated to chronic disease management, mental health initiatives, e-mental health supports and medical travel. E-health is the transfer of health resources and health care by electronic means and currently has three components: a client registry, a drug information system and a lab information system. These systems will be implemented over the next two years, with more than half of almost a \$10-million capital cost recoverable from Canada Health Infoway, and will further bolster our already-expanding e-health service systems.

As a small jurisdiction, it's not possible for us to be leaders in all areas of health but, in contending with FASD, Yukon is at the vanguard. This government is committed to keeping us there. We are establishing a local adult diagnostic clinic to replace the current itinerant model. We are training physicians and psychologists to better respond to individuals with FASD, and we're investing in the completion of the FASD prevalence study to look at the incidence of FASD,

substance abuse and mental health issues in the adult corrections population.

Our government is also working hard to find more long-term care spaces for Yukoners to free up acute care hospital beds. We recently purchased the Oblate Centre on Sixth Avenue in Whitehorse and will be converting it into a small 10-bed continuing care facility to be opened late this fall, at a cost of almost \$2 million.

On a larger scale, we'll be proceeding with the construction of the 150-bed Whistle Bend care facility in January of 2016, with an initial allocation of \$26 million. We will design the facility to allow for potential future expansion.

Dawson City will also see enhanced continuing care services when the new 15-bed McDonald Lodge opens in 2016, another facility that will have an option to expand. \$7.8 million will be allocated from this budget to the completion of that project.

An important area of health that has not always had the attention it deserves because of a lack of understanding or because of social stigma is mental health. This government is committed to changing that. This budget allocates funding to several mental health initiatives. To help persons with mental health conditions develop their independence, we will provide transitional housing for a period of two months to two years. To provide a safe and supportive group home for Yukoners who suffer from cognitive disabilities, we will be rebuilding the St. Elias adult group home and we've already set aside \$4 million for its design and construction. This new building will increase capacity from five to 10 spaces and will be constructed by the Kwanlin Dun First Nation.

To support Yukoners with enhanced alcohol and drug detoxification services, we'll be beginning construction of the new Sarah Steele Building this spring for a total target cost of \$21 million. The new complex is a much needed replacement of the old Sarah Steele Building and will have enhanced medically supported detox, a separate youth detox unit, concurrent inpatient treatment for males and females and continuous intake.

Two days ago our government also had the pleasure of jointly announcing the contribution of over \$13 million to the construction of the new Salvation Army centre that will provide improved and expanded services for some of our more vulnerable Yukon citizens. Our partnership with the Salvation Army is a strong foundation upon which to build hope for those most in need.

It's easy to see that, with the construction of all these facilities, Yukon's private sector is going to be very busy this construction season. This work will be spread throughout the territory. In Faro, our budget includes \$3.5 million to begin construction of a replacement for the RCMP detachment in Faro. In keeping with our justice initiatives, we're happy to report that we'll be dedicating \$500,000 annually to extend the Community Wellness Court pilot program for an additional three years.

We're also taking steps to address women's issues in the territory. A new women's legal advocate will support women navigating legal and social systems and will provide training

for front-line workers throughout the territory. This coming October the Women's Directorate will also launch an interactive website showcasing a current profile of women's equality in Yukon based on indicators like health, education, economic security, leadership, childcare safety, arts and athletics.

Housing is a Yukon government priority. Northern housing trust funding of \$1.395 million has been provided to support affordable rental units of which \$1.16 million is for the units in Carmacks and \$235,226 is for the units in Carcross.

The remaining balance of \$6.83 million in the northern housing trust will be allocated to the following initiatives: \$3.5 million for the municipal rental construction program to partner with municipalities to increase the supply of rental housing in Yukon communities; \$1 million for the rental housing allowance for families to enable low- and moderate-income families to access rental housing in the private market with a direct subsidy aimed at reducing incidences of core needs; \$800,000 for rental quality enhancement grants to increase the quality of rental housing stock in Yukon to meet or exceed minimum rental standards; \$800,000 for accessibility enhancement grants to increase accessibility of housing stock for homeowners and landlords; \$480,000 for housing action plan implementation to provide contracting resources to implement the housing action plan; and \$250,000 for a public/private partnership plan for Fifth and Rogers designed to increase the supply of affordable rental housing as well as meet other needs. This plan will maximize private sector investment and involve the City of Whitehorse. In addition, the CMHC — the Canadian Mortgage Housing Corporation — and the Yukon government, under the investment and affordable housing agreement, have agreed to match contributions of over \$1.5 million per year over five years to fund affordable housing projects. A portion of this funding must be targeted for victims of violence.

Also, a new 48-unit seniors housing building on Front Street in Whitehorse is being constructed with funding of \$13.5 million over two years, and a six-unit seniors building in Mayo is scheduled to be completed later this summer.

Our government is investing a further \$7.5 million to complete the construction of the new F.H. Collins school this fall. Once the school has been completed, there will be a procurement allocation of almost \$3 million to provide furniture and equipment for the new school and an additional \$3 million to upgrade the current technical education wing at F.H. Collins school.

Our government is investing heavily in improving all facets of Yukon's education system. To address fundamental life skills, we are continuing work toward Yukon literacy strategy, and to address the needs of our post-secondary learners, we will be reviewing the *Students Financial Assistance Act* as well as the Yukon apprenticeship training and tradesperson certificate program to ensure that both programs are modernized and synchronized with similar programs across Canada.

Another priority for all of us is closing the outcome gap between rural and urban students and between First Nation and non-First Nation students. To this end, we will work closely with communities, with the Council of Yukon First Nations and with individual First Nations themselves.

We are currently working with CYFN on a joint education action plan that focuses on the priorities of culture and language, authority and responsibility, sustainability supports and success, and student achievement. We have developed the rural equity action plan to promote distance learning and collaboration opportunities for students in our communities. A similar initiative is currently underway in Watson Lake, where the secondary school has piloted a new approach to education that blends on-line instruction with classroom instruction to provide more educational options.

As well, a new residential schools curriculum is now part of the grade 10 social studies in three schools: Robert Service School in Dawson, Tantalus School in Carmacks, and Vanier Catholic Secondary School in Whitehorse. Both the blended learning approach and the residential schools curriculum will be expanded to other communities in the future.

Mr. Speaker, we have conducted a number of important agreements to expand our research and post-secondary offerings. We have just approved over \$6 million in funding for the Yukon Research Centre over the next five fiscal years. We have entered into a five-and-a-half year funding agreement with Yukon College to support the ongoing operation of the Northern Institute of Social Justice.

We will also be receiving funding from the federal government under the Canada-Yukon job fund agreement, which was launched on September 4, 2014. Over the next six years, Canada will provide Yukon with almost \$6 million to encourage greater employer involvement in training and to enable Yukoners to develop the skills that they need to find and maintain employment.

In addition, we have partnered with Canada on the labour market agreement for persons with disabilities, which was signed last February. Over the next four years, Canada will allocate \$5 million to provide labour market supports specifically to persons with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of exciting initiatives in this budget and I've only touched on the highlights here. Suffice it to say that I am confident that our commitment to being proactive, taking steps now that will pay off immediately and well into the future, will continue to advance our vision of making Yukon the best place to live, work, play and raise a family.

In closing, I want to return to education for a moment. It has been said that education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world. Just ask anyone and they'll tell you that they agree with that statement. But when the economy is struggling and when jobs are being lost, education is often shifted to the back seat as an important policy focus but not demanding immediate attention. This Yukon Party government has never stopped working to improve Yukon's education system, but it's time to give education a permanent front seat spot.

Our most important job as leaders today is to prepare the leaders of tomorrow. Education is not an alternative to investing in our economy; it is an investment in our economy. There are many economic factors that we can't control. We can't control mineral prices; we can't control oil prices; we can't control economic developments in other provinces and other countries, but we can ensure that our kids get the best education possible so that whatever unexpected challenges arise in the future, they are ready to face them. Over the coming months, we will be rolling out a new vision for education in Yukon. We will be taking a comprehensive look at Yukon's education system, to assess what's working, what's not working and how we can make it better.

Let me be clear that this is not just a thought exercise. This is not just about gathering our educational partners and stakeholders to produce a set of recommendations that will be filed away somewhere, never to be realized. It's time for action. It starts with curriculum. Mr. Speaker, Yukon is currently tied to British Columbia's curriculum. In the *Education Act*, there is a provision for some local content, but it's not enough. Our social and economic realities are not the same as B.C.'s. One size does not fit all. We need to ensure that our curriculum reflects the different aspirations of our diverse student body. Not all of our students have the same aspirations. Some want to attend university; some want to start their own business; some want to enter the trades; some want to start working as soon as possible. We want them to have the competencies and skills that they need to follow the path — any path — that they choose. Yet despite this, we still offer only one standard — one educational stream through which all students must pass. It's time to change that. We need to offer education options that set students up for employment opportunities in all fields. Our goal is an education system that is engaging and relevant for all of our students. Not only will it make for more satisfied students; I believe it will improve our labour market. Young Yukoners with jobs are more likely to become Yukoners raising families.

This alone will go a long way toward improving our education system, but education is not just about curriculum. It's more than academics. We used to talk a lot in education about pedagogy. Pedagogy literally means guiding a child. We need to bring this idea back into education. Education needs to be a team effort among parents, educators, communities, our partners and all other stakeholders that guide each child toward adulthood.

In part, yes, this means academic guidance, but it also means emotional support and personal guidance, focusing on the individual needs of our students. A child who feels insecure, stressed, angry or threatened will struggle to learn and will struggle to fully develop as an individual. School will never be a replacement for a healthy home, but if the fundamental promise of our education system is to develop the whole child, then we cannot ignore students' non-academic needs in school. To that end, we will be focusing specifically on assessing what resources our schools and our educators require to ensure that those needs can be met.

These changes will take time to develop, but it will be time well-spent, and it won't just take time, it'll take partnerships. We all know the old saying that it takes a whole village to raise a child. Well, it also takes a whole community to educate one. So this initiative will depend, in large part, on bringing the community back into education. We need parents to get more involved in their children's education, both at home and at school. We need educators and administrators to provide their professional input. We need all departments that deal with youth, such as Justice and Health and Social Services, to share their corporate knowledge, and we need First Nations to be partners in building a system that reflects their aims.

Improving outcomes for First Nation students has been a long-standing goal of the Yukon government and of Yukon First Nations, and it will be a major focus of this initiative. We need to have an honest and open conversation about how to improve First Nation students' outcomes. All of us involved want the very best for each of our students, and we are committed to moving forward together with First Nations to find practical solutions to these challenges.

Mr. Speaker, in government, many of the decisions we make are based on economics, and an investment in education will pay dividends in the future. We're not just doing this because it makes economic sense. Many of us in this room are parents. All of us have been students. I believe we can all see the value in investing in our kids, and I am hopeful that this will be an opportunity for us to unify around a common objective, without letting politics and partisanship get in the way. This is too important for that. Our kids deserve better than that.

Achieving this vision won't be easy or quick, but I have confidence that we will make it happen. More details will be rolled out in the coming months but, for now, let me reiterate that this initiative will depend on all of us working together. It will involve everyone who has a stake in our educational system: students, their parents, Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Teachers Association, expert educators, Yukon College, representatives from business and industry and all those who want to be involved.

As I said at the beginning of this speech, vision is a prerequisite of achievement. We have the vision, now let's achieve it.

This brings me to the conclusion of the Budget Address. I'm proud of the work this Yukon Party government has done since taking office, and I look forward to the work that lies ahead.

This 2015-16 budget will put Yukoners to work and continues the pathway to prosperity that we set out in our 2011 election platform, "Moving Forward Together". It is designed to advance our government's vision of prosperity for the territory by making Yukon the best place in Canada to live, work, play and raise a family. Budget-by-budget, we are achieving that goal.

May divine providence guide our deliberations. I commend the 2015-16 budget to all Members of this House.

May God bless Yukon, may God bless Canada and God save the Queen.

Motion to adjourn debate

Ms. Hanson: I move that debate be now adjourned.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition that debate be now adjourned.

Motion to adjourn debate on second reading of Bill No. 18 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker: Enjoy your Easter weekend.

This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7, 2015.

The House adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled April 2, 2015:

33-1-150

Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Yukon Legislative Assembly — 2015: Corrections in Yukon — Department of Justice (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-151

Final Report of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-152

Letter from the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin informing the Speaker of his resignation as Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole (January 16, 2015) (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-153

Report from the Clerk of the Yukon Legislative Assembly on the Absence of Members from Sitzings of the Legislative Assembly and its Committees (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-154

Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees Fourteen Report (January 16, 2015) (Hassard)

Written notice was given of the following motions April 2, 2015:

Motion No. 894

Re: urging the Government of Yukon to use the 2015-16 budget to make Yukon the best place to live, work and raise a family (Elias)

Motion No. 895

Re: urging the Government of Yukon to transfer the animal protection program to the Department of Environment (Elias)

Motion No. 896

Re: urging the Government of Yukon to examine options to provide Yukoners with taxation relief (McLeod)

Motion No. 897

Re: urging the Government of Yukon to transfer the special waste program to the Department of Community Services (McLeod)

Motion No. 898

Re: urging the Government of Yukon to extend the exemption from compliance with the new energy efficiency standards of the National Building Code (McLeod)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 191

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, April 7, 2015 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Government House Leader Vuntut Gwitchin
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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Sergeant-at-Arms	Rudy Couture
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Doris McLean
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, April 7, 2015 — 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: To start, the Chair wishes to inform the House of a change which has been made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 888, standing in the name of the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, has been removed from the Order Paper as it is outdated.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Yukon First Nation final and self-government agreements

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, two years ago, in the presence of many past and present First Nation leaders, I rose in the Legislature to acknowledge the signing of the first four of Yukon's final agreements and self-government agreements. Today I rise to pay tribute to the 20th anniversary of the coming into effect of these agreements.

On February 14, 1995, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Teslin Tlingit Council, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Na Cho Nyäk Dun led the way to a new, modern era of governance in the Yukon.

When Chief Elijah Smith and Yukon aboriginal leaders travelled to Ottawa more than 40 years ago to negotiate with the federal government, they saw a settled land claims as the only way to regain the pride, self-respect and economic independence that was lost over the previous 100 years.

This road to self-governance was long and challenging at times. It involved 20 years of difficult negotiation, hard work and commitment by leaders who were indeed visionaries. This led to the first four groundbreaking final and self-government agreements. Today these agreements are the foundation of how we organize ourselves politically, how we do business and how we manage Yukon's natural and cultural resources.

Today Yukon is at the forefront of aboriginal land claims and self-government in Canada. The 11 self-governing First Nations represent almost half of such agreements in Canada. Yukon First Nations and the Yukon government can continue to play an important leadership role as aboriginal peoples across Canada work toward self-determination.

The positive impacts of these agreements can be seen and felt across the territory. The return to community-level decision-making, the priority placed on health and education and increased economic opportunities are just some of the visible indicators.

First Nation youth who are growing up today have a future that is full of opportunities. They are empowered to make decisions about their future and about the future of their communities. They have a renewed sense of pride in their rich and diverse culture and heritage.

These agreements have brought many benefits to Yukon, for First Nation citizens and for all Yukoners. The agreements provide a foundation on which to work together to build capacity, strengthen our economy and find innovative solutions to shared issues.

As governments, we share common interests and responsibilities. We want to ensure that Yukon continues to prosper and we want to build healthy and sustainable communities. I am confident that together we are moving toward successful outcomes and we are making positive strides forward.

To Chief Smith and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, to Chief Sidney and the Teslin Tlingit Council, to Chief Kyikavichik and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, and Chief Simon Mervyn and the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, may the future continue to bring you and your citizens prosperity, strength and happiness.

I look forward to the next 20 years, as our communities thrive and prosper and as these agreements continue to bring lasting benefits for all Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: I am honoured, on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party, to recognize the 20th anniversary of the February 14, 1995 coming into effect of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and those first four final and self-government agreements. The public celebration of the 20th anniversary was on March 19 at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre. It was an evening marked by joy and shared pride, of humour and music, from the youngest jigger from Old Crow to the ever-popular Klukshu Flats Boogie Band.

The evening was jam-packed with conversation and with recognition of the achievements by the men and women who dedicated their lives to fulfilling the commitment to negotiate just agreements — agreements that will stand the test of time and will serve the interest of all of our children, now and into the future.

The words that come to mind, as we reflect on the achievement of Yukon First Nation peoples and as we collectively celebrate the new relationships forged by land claims and self-government agreements, are perseverance and patience — perseverance in the determination that justice would and will prevail, patience rooted in the deep knowledge that they are helping to create a Yukon society made up of peoples who have chosen freely to live and work together in a new relationship based on trust and respect. There have been many milestones along the path toward the coming into effect of Yukon land claims and self-government agreements — and many roadblocks.

History does not cast a soft light on the treatment of Yukon First Nation peoples by the thousands of gold seekers who came north in the Klondike Gold Rush. There were no socio-economic benefits or environmental impact assessments

in those days. History tells a grim tale of how Yukon Indian people were treated and ignored. Chief Jim Boss from the Lake Laberge area put it very straight. He said, "Tell the King very hard we want something for our Indians, because they take our land and our game." That message not only went ignored, Canada actually made it illegal for First Nations to raise issues related to treaty or land claims.

In retrospect, it's no surprise that when the Supreme Court of Canada issued its January 31, 1973 decision on the *Nisga'a* case, Yukon's First Nation leadership was quick to act. Under the leadership of Elijah Smith, they flew to Ottawa and presented *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* on February 14, 1973, to Prime Minister Trudeau.

Mr. Speaker, there is no version of Yukon land claims history that speaks to it being an easy road. There were numerous setbacks in negotiations — a failed ratification in 1994; subsequent changes to federal policy that included recognition and negotiation for the first time in Canada of self-government as an integral part of a land claims agreement. Yukon First Nations' patience began to be rewarded. The May 29, 1993 signing ceremony for the UFA and the first four First Nation final and self-government agreements was followed by months of hard work by representatives on all sides as the legislation necessary to give effect to the negotiated agreements was drafted. It took over a year. The June 1994 Parliamentary Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs — the hearings on Bill C-33 and Bill C-34, which were the self-government land claims pieces of legislation — were a disappointing experience for many, as the opposition, Reform and Conservative members of the committee, made no secret of their disapproval of the notion of aboriginal self-government. It was an opposition that seems not to have dissipated 20 years on. After an overnight filibuster of the bills in committee, they were voted on by Parliament on June 22, 1994. The *Yukon First Nations Land Claims Settlement Act* and the *Yukon First Nations Self-Government Act* received royal assent on July 7, 1994.

The February 14, 1995 effective date for the first four agreements was chosen by Yukon First Nations to mark the historic significance of Elijah Smith's and the Yukon First Nation leaderships' tabling of that historic document *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* on that date, 22 years previous — 22 years, Mr. Speaker.

Looking back on what was actually said in *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* gives a sense of the persistence and the patience that drove Yukon First Nations.

They said that with a just settlement of our claims, we feel we can participate as equals and then we will be able to live together as neighbours. As respected Tlingit elder and former Speaker of this Assembly Sam Johnston put it, we want the rest of Yukon to know that we didn't trigger land claims so that we could take over. The real thing was that we wanted to become involved so that our young people, both native and non-native, could all work together.

As Dave Joe from Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, one of the first four — also one of the Yukon First Nations' legal architects and negotiators — said when he

described the *Umbrella Final Agreement* as a partnership, he said it was an attempt to rationalize how we share lawmaking in Yukon. He went on to say that we can celebrate these agreements that were premised upon partnerships and our common understanding to do good for all people.

The 20th anniversary of the coming into effect of the first four — the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, the Teslin Tlingit Council and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — is an opportunity to recognize — and I quote: "... the signed agreements crystallized a moment in Yukon's history when Yukon First Nations and non-First Nation citizens joined in a shared vision of a future of Yukon where the institutions of public government would be open and inclusive and would incorporate Yukon First Nation interests and participation directly in governing the territory."

It comes as no surprise that many Yukoners think we have fallen short in realizing the great opportunity presented to Yukon by the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, the final agreements and the self-government agreements. The current debate over proposed changes to YESAA demonstrate how important it is to reinvigorate and empower public involvement in government decision-making, using the framework established by the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and Yukon First Nation final and self-government agreements.

I noted earlier that Yukon First Nation people are patient and they have persevered. First Nations have worked hard to establish new governments and to live up to the terms of a new relationship that is signified by the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and, through it, the First Nation final and self-government agreements. Canada and Yukon are also signatories to these agreements. Now we must collectively honour and give effect to this new relationship.

Mr. Silver: It's with great pleasure that I also rise on behalf of the Yukon Liberal Party to pay tribute to the 20th anniversary of recognized First Nation self-government in Yukon.

On February 14, 1995, the first self-government agreements were signed by the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Teslin Tlingit Council and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. The date also coincided with the anniversary of the 1973 presentation of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, a foundation document for today's self-government agreements.

I had the honour and privilege to attend the celebration event on March 19, 2015 at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre. The tone that night was both celebratory but also a reminder of the work that still needs to be done. Even still within governments, there are those who do not recognize the legitimacy of Yukon First Nations' ability to govern. Just last year the federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs told Yukon First Nation chiefs that they were not governments.

The Yukon First Nation governments should be saluted for all they have accomplished. Other governments and we ourselves need to understand that we either need to make relationships and partnerships or get out of the way, as I am

certain that the next 20 years will be even more fruitful than the last 20 years.

Yukon First Nations have been leaders in implementing self-government agreements. Today, 11 of Yukon's First Nations have signed self-government agreements. These will form the cornerstone of our economic and societal development for generations to come. These monumental agreements have benefited all Yukoners by providing a voice through boards and committees and councils, thus increasing communication among all levels of government.

In closing, I would like to congratulate all Yukon First Nations on what they have achieved and I look forward to what you will achieve next. In closing, I would just like to say that self-government is leading the way.

In recognition of World Health Day

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise on behalf of my government caucus colleagues to tribute April 7 as World Health Day, a date chosen to mark the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization in 1948.

This year the focus of the World Health Day is on food safety. Every human being should be provided food that is free from chemicals, microbes and viruses. This does not even address the availability of food — only the safety of food we consume.

The reality is that over 200 diseases are caused by bacteria, parasites, viruses and chemical substances that make their way into food all over the world. The World Health Organization estimates that over two million people die every year from contaminated food or drinking water. The WHO works in various countries on projects that teach people how to grow food, cook it and keep it safely.

Canada has a strong tradition of legislation, industry education and public awareness campaigns that aim at keeping our food safe from field to plate. In Yukon, the government's Environmental Health Services program protects Yukoners thanks to regulations and the inspectors who enforce them.

Environmental Health Services helped protect our food and water through licensing, inspection and enforcement, not to mention public education. Thanks to the work of the staff of EHS, we know that restaurants are inspected, that temporary food permits ensure that food will be served safe and that sewage disposal systems are not at risk of contaminating drinking water. We know which foods are safe to donate to charitable organizations. We know why it's so important to wash our hands often when dealing with food. We know the best ways of washing dishes in public food establishments.

Keeping our food safe from microbes, parasites and chemicals does not happen by itself. It takes the concerted effort of individuals, inspection agencies and government regulations to ensure that the food we eat is healthy and it is safe.

I encourage all members of this House to educate themselves about food safety. The Government of Yukon's Environmental Health Services website is a great place to start.

Mr. Tredger: I rise today on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to World Health Day. The theme for 2015 is "From Farm to Plate, Make Food Safe." I would like to begin by acknowledging our Yukon food producers — our farmers — the Environmental Health Services, the inspectors and the Department of Agriculture for working together to ensure safe, healthy, local foods. Especially, I would like to thank the food inspectors for working with our restaurants, our retailers, our institutions and our local suppliers and producers to ensure safe secure food for all Yukoners.

We know that the Yukon is particularly vulnerable, as the majority of our food consumption is reliant on an international global network, transportation system and supply chain. Every day, people all over the world get sick from the food they eat. The sickness is often referred to as food-borne disease and is caused by micro-organisms and/or toxic chemicals. Most food-borne disease is preventable with proper food preparation and handling.

Food-borne disease is a problem in both developing and developed countries. It is a strain on our health care system and disproportionately affects infants, young children, the elderly, the sick and the vulnerable. Food-borne disease hurts the national economy and the development of international trade. The other aspect of food-borne disease is around food security. Our food security does equal health. Food security is an essential social determinant of health; among the top four as identified by the Canadian Medical Association earlier this year. It is estimated that about 1.1 million households in Canada experience food insecurity. According to a Canadian community health survey in 2011, 16.8 percent of Yukon households identified as being food insecure. A further 22.7 percent of Yukon children were identified as being food insecure.

Heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, stress and food allergies are more common among families unable to ensure a stable food supply. Improving socio-economic factors from poverty to housing to food security will have a positive impact on lifestyle choices, health outcomes and community development and well-being. The more people have to struggle to obtain their food, the less likely they are able to ensure the safety and the quality of that food. For those Yukon citizens who are food insecure, especially the children and the seniors, their health is already compromised and they are especially vulnerable to chronic disease caused by poor nutrition. As well, they are more susceptible to food-borne illnesses.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Whitehorse Food Bank and the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition for the work they are doing to ensure all Yukon citizens have access to safe and reliable food. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Yukon College research centre for northern innovation for the research and pilot projects around growing and producing food in the north. At the same time, I would acknowledge the Department of Agriculture, local farmers and producers, local community markets and co-ops for working together to ensure a growing food supply that is

locally affordable, healthy and reliable. The more we are able to produce and support locally grown food, the less we are dependent on global supply chains and the more control local consumers have over the safety, quality, freshness and reliability of our food.

I would urge all of us to be mindful of the food we are eating, where it is coming from, and most importantly, to support local food producers and retailers. We must work together to ensure all Yukon citizens have secure access to safe, healthy food. Thank you.

In recognition of Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I rise today to ask members of this House to join me in recognizing Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month and in paying tribute to its many organizers. Biodiversity Awareness Month takes place throughout the month of April and incorporates the Celebration of Swans, National Wildlife Week and International Mother Earth Day among other observances.

Biodiversity is the variety of life on this planet, from the tiniest soil organism to the biggest mammal. This includes ecosystems, genetic and species variations, as well as how they all interact with each other. Earth's ecosystems require many different kinds of plants and animals to remain healthy here in the Yukon. Our biodiversity includes, believe it or not, four amphibian species, 38 fish species, 71 mammal species, 249 bird species, over 450 types of lichen and fungi, more than 2,000 plant species and well over 6,000 insect species. The Government of Yukon recognizes the importance of maintaining biodiversity, both here and around the world.

We are committed to ensuring that the territory's natural environment is protected, maintained and secured for the sustainable use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Protecting key habitats is one approach.

A highlight of the Yukon's Biodiversity Awareness Month is the Celebration of Swans. This premier bird festival, arriving on the wings of the trumpeter swans, brings residents and visitors alike to the great viewing areas to welcome spring to the north. I just want to put a big thank you out to Scott Cameron and Carrie McClelland, who are our wildlife viewing folks at the Department of Environment. Listening to Scott on the radio this morning, I think the trumpeter swans are early and there are about 1,200 of them, so residents will flock to this event around the southern Yukon.

Approximately 10 percent of Yukoners join in activities or visit the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre each year. This makes the Celebration of Swans the largest birding event in the territory. By now, every home has received a copy of the 2015 spring events calendar. This guide, which is also available on the Department of Environment's website, outlines the many activities taking place around the territory. These activities aim to help foster an appreciation for wildlife and habitat.

I would like to close my remarks by recognizing some of the many who make Yukon's Biodiversity Awareness Month possible by hosting or promoting or coordinating activities big

and small. Some of these are: l'Association franco-yukonnaise, Carcross-Tagish First Nation, City of Whitehorse, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Environment Canada, Girl Guides of Canada, Kluane First Nation, Marsh Lake Community Society, Society of the Yukon Bird Observatories, Town of Faro, *What's Up Yukon*, Whitehorse United Church, our wildlife viewing program that I spoke of earlier at the Department of Environment, Yukon College, Yukon Energy and the Yukon Wildlife Preserve and, of course, the Yukon Fish and Game Association.

I invite all members to take the time to enjoy some of the events taking place this month. I had the opportunity to spend some time on the land and enjoy it over the Easter weekend.

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to celebrate the beauty and fragility of biodiversity. The Earth is a fragile and intricate place. Everything is interconnected. What affects one thing will inevitably affect another.

Biodiversity encompasses ecosystems, genetic and cultural diversity, and the connections between all species on Earth. Imagine a woven carpet. When you pull on a loose thread, it might only affect that thread or those threads closest to it, but maybe if you pull a little harder, it can unravel the whole, entire carpet. Here's the problem: We've pulled on far too many threads. Our planet is facing a biodiversity crisis.

We know that human impacts from ongoing development, deforestation, pollution and climate change are destroying the homes and habitat of wildlife around the world. At least 16,000 species across the globe are currently threatened with extinction. This includes 12 percent of all birds, 23 percent of all mammals and 32 percent of all amphibians. It doesn't have to be this way. Knowing how we harm biodiversity will help us make better decisions in the future.

We have been able to reverse this trend of destruction. There was a time when populations of the great whales, bald eagles and whooping cranes were in rapid decline, but strong legislation, habitat protection and international agreements have helped these populations bounce back. In Canada alone, despite our extraordinary legacy of animals and plants, we have more than 500 species that are either extinct or at risk of extinction.

In 1996, the federal government and our provinces and territories signed an *Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk*. We each made a commitment to establish compatible legislation that, together, protects species at risk in Canada. That means that each province and territory has its own obligations to protect wildlife. Sadly, in Yukon, we've been told that we don't need our own species-at-risk legislation because we can depend upon the national *Species at Risk Act*. That very same act abandons much of Canada's iconic wildlife, such as the polar bear or the Atlantic salmon, leaving them off the very list that's designed to protect them.

For the majority of species that are lucky enough to make that list, the federal government has chronically failed to identify and then protect the habitats that they need to survive

and recover. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the day that the Yukon government fulfills its commitment to creating stand-alone species-at-risk legislation that will help protect the valuable biodiversity of the territory and of the planet.

Speaker: Are there any visitors to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would like to acknowledge and ask members to join me in welcoming to the gallery today some of the stakeholders who participated in the stakeholder advisory committee that led to the development of the *Condominium Act*, which I will be tabling shortly. If members will join me in acknowledging in the gallery Pat Ross from the City of Whitehorse, Rick Karp for the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, Sonny Gray from the Yukon Condominium Owners Association and Serge Lamarche from the real estate portion of the legal community. I would like to thank others who participated who are not present here today as well as also welcoming to the gallery the assistant deputy minister for Courts and Regulatory Services, Lesley McCullough. I would like to thank her and her staff and all in the Department of Justice who worked on this substantial piece of legislation, for their excellent work in developing this.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: It's my pleasure to introduce to the House today Éline Michaud, Member of Parliament for Portneuf - Jacques-Cartier and I invite everybody to welcome Éline to the Yukon.

Applause

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Under tabling returns and documents, the Chair has for tabling the *2014 Annual Report of the Yukon Ombudsman*, which is tabled pursuant to subsection 31(1) of the *Ombudsman Act*.

The Chair also has for tabling the *2014 Annual Report of the Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner*, which is tabled pursuant to subsection 47(2) of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Are there any further 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. 85: *Condominium Act, 2015* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I move that Bill No. 85, entitled *Condominium Act, 2015*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 85, entitled *Condominium Act, 2015*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 85 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills for introduction? 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 professional staff of the art curators and the director and the chief executive officer of the National Gallery of Canada to give favorable consideration to include in the National Gallery's collection the work of an iconic and important figure in Yukon and Canadian art, the late Ted Harrison.

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

THAT, in light of provisions that force Canadians to choose between security and our civil rights, this House calls on the Government of Canada to withdraw House of Commons Bill C-51.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to extend the consultation period beyond the May 15, 2015 deadline for the \$202-million Alaska Highway corridor project in order to give Yukon residents and businesses more time to scrutinize the plan and its supporting documents and provide their feedback.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to release the Stantec Architecture report and the Ernst & Young report on a second fibre optic link.

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 made his annual Budget Address, and what a difference a couple of years makes. In his 2012-13 budget speech, the Premier's take on Yukon's environmental assessment process and its contribution to the success of Yukon's mining industry was in stark contrast to his current publically stated views.

He quoted the Yukon Chamber of Mines saying — and I quote: “the establishment of a single assessment authority on behalf of all responsible authorities has greatly simplified the assessment process and provides for more certainty and transparency”.

Then, out of nowhere, YESAA became a burdensome assessment process that was holding Yukon back. Four amendments were unilaterally added to Bill S-6, two of which

were proposed by this government. This Premier made a complete 180 on YESAA in just two years.

So, Mr. Speaker, what changed his mind? Why the switch? Who is really calling the shots when it comes to running this territory?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I have stated, Mr. Speaker, Bill S-6 is good for Yukon and, through a bilateral accord, we can find a way to make this work. Not only is this good for Yukon's economy, but it will strengthen Yukon's environmental, social and economic assessment system. We stand by that.

As I have stated in this House earlier, we believe that we can find a way through this with First Nations. It has happened in the past and, as leaders, I believe that we can sit down and find a way to move forward to find an agreement on how we can implement these amendments on the ground to work for all Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: The Premier seems to forget that these emanate from Yukon land claims agreements that he was touting earlier today. The only person who still believes that Bill S-6 is good for the Yukon is the Premier. First Nation governments, industry and the Yukon public can all see the writing on the wall. At no point has the Premier offered any coherent argument to Yukon First Nation governments for why the four contentious amendments to YESAA are necessary. He simply says, "Let it pass."

Now the Premier is asking Yukon First Nation governments to trust him, to accept his offer of a bilateral agreement and allow a bill to pass that they have clearly stated they cannot and will not support. For some reason, the Premier sold out Yukon First Nations and created this problem. Now he is asking them to come to the table and fix it for him.

Why does the Premier think that Yukon First Nation governments would want to help solve the Premier's problems by throwing away the hard-won compromises that created independent, arm's-length bodies like YESAA?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: There is broad support for the amendments. Clearly we heard that at the recent hearings of the House of Commons committee here in Whitehorse, where the Chamber of Mines spoke up quite clearly. The Klondike Placer Miners' Association as well spoke up very clearly. Let's also remember that these amendments are not about the resource industry alone. These amendments affect projects right across this territory, whether it's municipal projects or whether it's someone who simply wants to see if they can have a power pole put in on their property. These amendments will ensure that our environmental assessment process is consistent with other jurisdictions. That allows us to remain competitive to allow us a great opportunity to attract investment that creates great jobs and great futures for Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: The Premier popped the idea of a bilateral accord at the parliamentary committee hearings. He apparently realized that he had been caught out and was trying to divert attention away from the fact that it is his government that is undermining YESAA. He is also belatedly recognizing

that if he doesn't do something, Yukon's economy will implode because of his actions. The Premier's proposed bilateral accord is like the emperor's new clothes — there is nothing there.

He is asking First Nation governments for a blank cheque. The Premier has eroded any basis for trust between Yukon government and First Nation governments and now he is asking them to come to the table and make more compromises. This government has shown no willingness to give, when it comes to their relationship with Yukon First Nation governments. Mr. Speaker, First Nation governments are right to be skeptical of the Premier's offer.

Can the Premier explain exactly what he is offering to First Nation governments in this proposed bilateral accord?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, we all know this in this House — at least I thought that the member opposite and the Leader of the Official Opposition knew this — but Bill S-6 is federal legislation. This has gone through the Senate. It was passed unanimously by all members of the Senate. It's now sitting at the committee stage in the House of Commons.

What we can do — as I have spoken to First Nation leadership — is control what we can control, and I have offered out to First Nation leaders the ability to sit down. Let's sit down and find a path forward that works for everybody. We have done it in the past with the devolution transfer agreement. We've done it in the past with oil and gas agreements. Leaders can step forward. Together we can find a way to implement these amendments here on the ground that will work for everybody.

Question re: Hydraulic fracturing

Ms. White: Last month, Yukoners were presented with more proof that this government will spare no effort to sell fracking to the territory. There was barely enough time for the ink to dry on Yukon's select committee report on fracking before the Yukon Party government proceeded to develop a plan to push forward fracking in the territory. People know where the Yukon NDP stands on fracking. We're on the side of First Nation governments, on the side of the science and the vast majority of Yukoners who say that fracking threatens our land and our water and doesn't belong in Yukon.

Just last week, the Energy, Mines and Resources minister refused to come clean and tell Yukoners where the Yukon Party stands on fracking. Mr. Speaker, who gave policy direction to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to proceed with the leaked document's position on fracking?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the document that was mistakenly sent to a member of the local media by an official at Energy, Mines and Resources, that document was meant to formulate a caucus presentation with respect to a response to the select committee. The select committee included three members of the government side and three members of the opposition side. I'll repeat what I did last Thursday and thank the committee for their work. I recognize the amount of time and effort and resources that the committee put into the work that they did and respect that.

Of course, the day that the committee report came out, the NDP already had their position; the Liberals had their position with respect to the report. In government, we have to take time. We have to do the work necessary to respond to those 21 recommendations and that's what we're doing. Mr. Speaker, that's what that document was meant to formulate the position on. As I've mentioned, I'll be bringing forward a response to the select committee during this current sitting of the Legislative Assembly, at which time I'm sure that we'll be entering into further debate with respect to hydraulic fracturing.

Again, Mr. Speaker, what we are going to do is take a zero-tolerance approach to misinformation, giving full and fair consideration to the facts and to the science, as well as to the concerns of Yukoners.

Ms. White: Yukoners have a zero-tolerance policy for government spin on fracking and ministerial secrecy. The minister ignores this at his peril. The government documents that were accidentally leaked to the media show how the Yukon Party government can proceed with fracking. It's pretty detailed planning for only a month's work. The documents describe how the Yukon government can sell fracking to Yukoners regardless of the clear opposition from Yukon First Nation governments and the public throughout the select committee process. The documents are clear and they say — I am quoting: "...it is recommended that YG focus on: multi-stage horizontal fracking".

Mr. Speaker, my question is simple: Does the Energy, Mines and Resources minister intend to focus on multi-stage horizontal fracking? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The immediate thing that we're focused on is providing a response to the 21 recommendations that were brought forward by the select committee.

One of those recommendations was to continue public dialogue with respect to this practice, and that is something I know Yukoners are interested in. They are certainly interested in knowing the facts.

Again, we will not tolerate any misinformation with respect to fracking. We're going to give full and fair consideration to the facts and to the science. We're going to cut Hollywood out of this picture, whether it's *GasLand* or *FrackNation*, or whatever program you choose to watch with respect to this practice. We're going to focus on the science, the facts, and how this industry is perceived and regulated in other jurisdictions.

Most jurisdictions around the Yukon, including Alaska, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, Alberta and Saskatchewan, all currently have active hydraulic fracturing projects underway in their jurisdictions. Again, there are none in the Yukon. There are none in the queue to be done here, but the immediate focus will be responding to the committee report, and that's the work that's underway right now by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources — of course, coming forward to my caucus and Cabinet colleagues and to this Legislature during this Spring Sitting.

Ms. White: I would feel better about the minister's dismissive tone were it not for the troubling news that the

government is planning a pilot project in the Kotaneelee gas fields. An e-mail that appears to be from the Deputy Minister of EMR clearly indicates the minister's intention to go ahead with it — I'm quoting: "... a pilot fracking/science project in the Liard Basin with EFLO ..."

The minister has told us that there aren't any applications to frack, but why won't he tell us that he is pushing a fracking pilot project behind the backs of Yukoners? Despite leaked documents and tightly scripted talking points, the Yukon Party is determined to force fracking onto a community that has clearly said no.

Mr. Speaker, is the Yukon Party government planning to implement a pilot project to introduce fracking to the Yukon? When were they planning on making that announcement public?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Fracking is an important issue for Yukoners and for our government, and we're working diligently and carefully on our response to the committee report. We're not going to rush; we're not going to panic; we're not going to spread false information. We're not going to make ill-informed decisions.

We are taking a zero-tolerance approach to misinformation, giving full and fair consideration to the facts and to the science, as well as to the economic benefits that this industry has contributed to the Yukon over its existence here and that it could potentially contribute in the future.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there are concerns of Yukoners with respect to this practice. They can expect to hear our response to the select committee during the current sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

Question re: Mental health services

Mr. Silver: I've already noted in this sitting the fact that Yukon is one of only two jurisdictions in Canada without a mental health strategy. Just over a year ago, the Department of Health and Social Services released a report called *A Clinical Services Plan for Yukon Territory*. One of the key findings of the report was quite blunt, Mr. Speaker — and I quote: "Mental health services are in a significant deficit outside of Whitehorse ..."

Mr. Speaker, what has the government done in the year since it received the \$200,000 report to address this lack of mental health services in rural Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for his question. Of course, this government has invested heavily in mental health services over the last decade. We only need to look at programs, such as what we're doing in the area of FASD, the investments that we're making in this budget for the St. Elias group home and the investments in the Salvation Army with the facility that was just announced a short time ago.

We will continue on with these investments. There is lots of work to be done in this area. We are certainly working with the local mental health association and the good work that they do. I would certainly recognize the hard work from people in the NGO community and government community

around the territory, both in Whitehorse and rural communities.

Mr. Silver: I can see it is hard for the minister to list some of the rural strategies because there really aren't a lot. Let's go back to the government's own report. This is what it heard from its own employees about mental health services — and I quote: "The input from health centres also provided insight into care gaps of concern: Mental health and addiction services are not well resourced in communities." It went on to warn — and I quote again: "Not addressing ADS and mental health services in Yukon Territory risks failure for a clinical services plan. Central to a clinical services plan of value to the residents of Yukon Territory is the expanded resourcing of ADS and mental health services, especially in the communities. There is no greater need."

I will ask again: What action has the government taken on this issue in rural Yukon since it received the report more than a year ago?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: What we clearly have here is a failure of the member opposite to really pay attention to what this government has been working on over the last decade. We have two hospitals, one in Watson Lake and one in Dawson City, with services for people with mental health issues, both of which the member opposite has voted against. We have money in the budget and have had money in the budget for Many Rivers to provide services within Yukon communities, expenditures the member opposite has voted against each and every time.

We will continue that good work. Again I thank the department and the NGOs for reaching out to the communities. The member opposite mentioned alcohol and drug services and those services, which, with the expansion of the Sarah Steele Building, will continue to be provided in Yukon communities — again, another project and services that the member opposite has voted against each and every time.

Mr. Silver: It is very unfortunate that clearly the failure here is the minister's inability to comprehend the actual problem. The overwhelming message from the government's own report is that things need to change. Yet the minister stands in this House and continues to defend the status quo. "We are doing a good job," he says, and refuses to acknowledge that more needs to be done.

Let's go back to the report — and I quote: "No provider or service interview conducted during the study was silent on the enormity of the problem with, and impact of, the management and challenges of mental health services in the Yukon Territory. The full spectrum of mental health issues is prevalent and generates a huge burden on available resources and family members." It continues: "...not a single interview during this study was silent on the critical need for expanded and re-tooled MHS to be central in service planning."

Mr. Speaker, I will try again. How does this government plan to address these shortcomings?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Clearly, what we have here is the inability for the member opposite to really understand what the facts are and understand what the services in the territory

are. The member opposite should be ashamed of himself for voting against a budget, and previous budgets, that provided mental health services within all of the communities through the Sarah Steele Building, through Drug and Alcohol Services and through Many Rivers.

The member opposite should be ashamed, and I look forward to the member opposite voting in favour of this 2015-16 budget with expanded services for mental health in all Yukon communities.

Question re: RCMP body-mounted cameras

Ms. Moorcroft: Recently a British Columbia legislative committee recommended that the provincial government aggressively pursue providing police with body-mounted cameras. The committee was unanimous in their recommendations, noting that other jurisdictions in Canada had implemented body-worn video cameras because their use — and I quote — "benefit law-enforcement and citizens alike."

Police body-worn cameras have not been adopted in Yukon. However, when *Sharing Common Ground*, a comprehensive report on policing in Yukon, was completed, it recommended RCMP look into the potential use of police body cameras in Yukon.

Is the minister familiar with the 2010 *Sharing Common Ground — Review of Yukon's Police Force* and does he support the recommendations that Yukon consider implementing body cameras for RCMP use?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I thank the member for the question. As I think the member is well aware, the *Sharing Common Ground* work that was done involved many stakeholders. It involved leadership from the Department of Justice, as well as input from First Nation governments, from the community, from women's groups and many, many other stakeholders who came together to try to modernize and strengthen the relationship between Yukon's police force and the community. There has been a significant amount of work done since that time, including, most recently, the joint announcement by me and the Minister of the Women's Directorate of the implementation of the funding for a women's legal advocate position, which was another of the recommendations out of *Sharing Common Ground*. Most of the recommendations of *Sharing Common Ground* have in fact been implemented, but there are others where work is ongoing.

In answer to the member's specific question about cameras, there are some issues around the storage of that information that need to be addressed and that the RCMP is working on at a national level. We look forward to continuing to work with them on assessing when we can implement body cameras and what needs to be done to address privacy concerns around that.

Ms. Moorcroft: The use of body-worn video cameras has been successful across Canada and the United States. It has been shown to make interactions between police and the public safer for all parties involved. More than 20 police forces across Canada have done pilot projects and some have

implemented more permanent policies on body camera use, so the issue of security is being addressed. The 2012 year 1 progress report of *Sharing Common Ground* tells us that the RCMP national pilot project is ongoing and that the Yukon division is monitoring the use of personal video devices.

Are Yukon RCMP officers taking part in the national pilot project and, if so, how many body cameras are being used in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As I believe the member is aware, while the Minister of Justice, based in part on the advice of the Yukon Police Council — another important action item out of *Sharing Common Ground* that was implemented — does provide very high level strategic direction to the RCMP about the policing priorities for each year, the specifics of the operations of the RCMP are matters that the Minister of Justice cannot get involved in.

In answer to the member's question about the nature of participation in the national work, I will have to look into that and get back to the member. I don't have the information to answer her specific question at this point in time.

Ms. Moorcroft: I thank the minister for that. The Yukon government, along with the RCMP is, however, responsible for implementing the recommendations of the *Sharing Common Ground* report.

The police are on board when it comes to using body cameras. It protects them from frivolous complaints and it makes prosecution easier as there is video evidence. It also protects the public from abuse for the same reason. It helps remove the "he said-she said" problem that so often occurs from police public interactions. This is a great opportunity for the government to show leadership and work with community partners and develop a plan that benefits law enforcement officers and the people they interact with.

Will the minister partner with Yukon's M Division, which hopes to use body cameras in the future, and figure out how to make this happen?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: As the member opposite has just articulated, there were a series of over 30 recommendations out of the *Sharing Common Ground* report, which really started back in 2010 at a comprehensive policing review, first of its kind, and this government takes very seriously implementing each of those respective recommendations. I'm very pleased to report that the majority have in fact been implemented and others require further consideration.

In terms of implementation — specialized response unit, of course, working with service providers, key stakeholders for enhanced interagency collaboration when it comes to addressing violence against women and children. There have been changes to their domestic violence policy with the support and input from all of our community partners when it comes to the RCMP.

Additionally, through the Northern Institute of Social Justice — and the RCMP have received specialized training in terms of First Nation history and culture focused on the unique history of First Nations along with cultural protocols and, of course, Together for Justice, a justice initiative through the collaboration with Liard Aboriginal Women's Society.

So, Mr. Speaker, again just to articulate, we are very serious about implementing each and every recommendation and we look forward to the further collaboration with the RCMP.

Question re: Recycling services

Mr. Barr: Recycling services in this territory are reaching a critical point. Anyone who has been to the Whitehorse landfill has seen the overflowing recycling bins. Yukoners want to recycle but the government's ham-fisted approach caused Raven Recycling to shut their public drop-off. Meanwhile the last recycler standing is buckling at the knees to meet the increased demand on its services.

We know that the government is increasing diversion credits this year, but this isn't a sustainable situation. There is no long-term commitment to finance recycling in Yukon. Pardon the pun, but this issue has reached a tipping point.

When will the government provide sustainable and predictable funding to recycling services in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I have to disagree with the member opposite's characterization of the events that have occurred with regard to recycling over the past few years. I disagree with his synopsis of the current situation, both with regard to the closure of Raven's public drop-off as well as the characterization that the other recycler is buckling at the knees. I will be happy to inform the recyclers that he has such a low opinion of them.

Mr. Speaker, what we've done thus far is provide precisely what was asked of us by the recycling processors. Over a year ago, we provided diversion credits to both processors at the amount they requested. Now just last week, we announced that we would be providing an enhanced diversion credit to meet the needs of those processors as well. We don't know ultimately if this will mean that Raven will reopen their public drop-off; that's a decision that their board will have to make. My understanding is that they'll make that decision later this month.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to invest in recycling throughout the Yukon. We continue to invest in community infrastructure to provide solid-waste services in all Yukon communities, making sure that Yukoners understand the importance of recycling. We've been making these investments and the NDP has been voting against them.

Mr. Barr: The Community Services minister has a lot to say about his one-year plan, but it's time to look a little further down the road. Again, Yukoners want to recycle, but this government just doesn't seem to think it's a priority. I would like to remind everyone that, last year, there was sustained open-pit burning in one of our community landfills. It's 2015, Mr. Speaker, and this government needs to get with the times and develop a long-term recycling strategy for Yukon.

Will the minister take a departure from his predecessors' inaction and show us how he is going to make recycling accessible in Yukon for the next generation?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, what we've done over the past number of years is make considerable investments in

infrastructure throughout Yukon to provide solid-waste services in all Yukon communities. We invested in community landfills and transfer stations throughout the territory. We've enhanced the ability of Yukon's processors to do the work that they need to do by providing these enhanced diversion credits.

Again, I should point out that each one of these investments and each one of these actions that we've taken over the past number of years have been voted against by both the NDP and the Liberals, so of course one has to question their commitment to this issue when they not only fail to bring forward their own plan or alternative, but they vote against the measures taken by this government.

We will continue to do what we've been doing, which is making our recycling system more financially sustainable. We are making changes to the beverage container regulation and designated material regulation to ensure the long-term fiscal sustainability of the recycling industry. We'll continue to provide those enhanced diversion credits throughout this year to bridge the gap that exists for the long-term financial sustainability of the recycling industry in Yukon.

Mr. Barr: The Yukon Party government is short-sighted; it's long-term vision that we're speaking of. It has missed its own goal of diverting half of the Yukon's waste by 2015. That was a Yukon Party election promise that has been thrown to the curb like so many others. This broken promise conveniently coincides with a slew of pre-election spending that kicks the discarded can down the road, and one year of recycling funding is no exception.

Mr. Speaker, other such services have the luxury of three- or five-year plans to offer stability. Why not the Yukon's recyclers? With 2015's 50-percent waste diversion target out of reach and no long-term recycling funding in place, when is the minister planning to reach this modest goal?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the bravado and sort of self-righteous indignation that the member brings to the floor.

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 was disrespectful, in my opinion.

Speaker: Government House Leader, on the point of order.

Mr. Elias: I don't have a dictionary in front of me, but I'm pretty sure the remarks from the honourable minister weren't disrespectful at all and I believe this is a dispute among members. Thank you.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: On our first sitting day, we had a similar point of order and I ruled that it was not a point of order, but I did try to caution members — all of you — that the use of words like this in this context will lead to discord, and individual uses will come back to you.

Once again, I caution you on the use of your words. Be careful what you say. I can guarantee that it will come back to you and, as you push the line, one of you will step over it and that person will pay. Pay attention.

Minister of Community Services, please finish your statement.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it goes without saying that the comments that have been made are certainly hyperbolic and not reflective of the current state of affairs.

We brought forward exactly what has been asked of us by recycling processors in Yukon, which is for an enhanced diversion credit that is based on the type of material and tonnage of material. We've done exactly what was asked of us. Now what we're doing is turning our attention to a longer term, financially sustainable model for Yukon recyclers, which includes the changes that we're bringing forward to the beverage container regulation and includes changes that we're bringing forward to the designated material regulation that will enhance the BCR rate and will also add products to the designated material list.

This is a step forward for Yukon's recycling industry, it's a step forward for Yukon solid-waste management, and I'm looking forward to bringing forward the budget that includes significant investments in solid waste and recycling throughout the territory.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of government private members' business

Mr. Elias: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of government private members to be called on Wednesday, April 8, 2015. They are Motion No. 896, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake, and Motion No. 894, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 18: First Appropriation Act, 2015-16 — Second Reading — adjourned debate

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 18, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski; adjourned debate, Ms. Hanson.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; I was just taken aback.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: Absolutely, and I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased also to be standing in this House today as the leader of the Yukon's Official Opposition, the

New Democratic Party, here initially on behalf of my constituents, to respond to the 2015-16 budget.

I also speak as Leader of the Official Opposition on behalf of many Yukoners throughout this territory. As the Official Opposition, we take seriously the responsibilities entrusted to us by the citizens of Yukon to hold the government to account and to work with the government to ensure that there is true accountability for the resources entrusted to this Legislative Assembly.

As part of holding government to account for the expenditures contained in the budget, it is important to have open and transparent access to the process of public policy decision-making with respect to decisions taken or not taken that have an impact on the land, resources and citizens of Yukon.

So Mr. Speaker, my focus today is a response to choices made by this government through its Budget Address, delivered on April 2. However, before I do so, I would like to extend my thanks to the citizens of Whitehorse Centre, the riding I've had the privilege of representing since December 2010 in the by-election of that time.

Living and working in my riding, I am at times taken aback by how much actually goes on in this relatively small corner of our vast territory. Unlike the huge, spread-out ridings of so many of my colleagues in this House, Whitehorse Centre is geographically concentrated, flowing as it does from the south access along the Yukon River to the Marwell area.

Whitehorse Centre, to quote the *Vinyl Cafe* owner, is small but big — big in terms of the people who live and work here, and big in terms of the scope of activities carried out here. Whitehorse Centre is home to some of the richest and poorest citizens. It is the seat of government for the Yukon government, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the City of Whitehorse. Whitehorse Centre is also home to at least half a dozen and counting First Nation development corporations, the Yukon and Whitehorse chambers of commerce, along with the Yukon Chamber of Mines, the francophone association of Yukon, l'AFY, the Canadian Filipino Association of Yukon, seven banks, numerous construction companies, technology firms and other small businesses in all sectors of our economy.

The Tourism Industry Association of Yukon along with the Yukon Outfitters Association are located here, as are the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Yukon Land Use Planning Council, to name a few of the entities that arose from land claims agreements.

There are the Yukon Federation of Labour, the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, the Yukon Employees Union, and Public Service Alliance too. Many NGOs serving a broad range of community needs, from the Yukon Council on Aging to Blood Ties Four Directions to Kaushee's Place to Music Yukon to the Boys and Girls Club, call Whitehorse Centre their home. The ongoing collaborative efforts among the City of Whitehorse, Yukon government and Kwanlin Dun First Nation to develop the Yukon River waterfront in a way that both respects the history of that area

and invites people to celebrate it as a gathering spot have seen festivals like Adäka grow in prominence and promise.

Whether it is noodles, nails or tattoos, Whitehorse Centre has it all. As you can see, I am proud to serve such a diverse riding. With diversity, though, comes challenge, which makes serving its citizens and interests an ongoing learning experience. I thank them for the privilege they have granted me to serve them.

In preparing to review the 2015-16 Yukon budget, I took some time to go back and review the previous three budgets tabled by the Finance minister. By doing so, I was able to crystalize the differences that distinguish the Yukon NDP from the Yukon Party. As the years have worn on, those differences become ever more clear. They can be summarized in fairly simple form. On one hand, we have the Yukon Party, which goes with the headline "government approach". If it's flashy, that's it. With the New Democratic Party, it's solid and sustained leadership.

The Yukon Party takes an antagonistic stance against Yukon First Nation governments. The NDP has been involved with Yukon First Nation governments in developing and working toward reconciliation, knowing that that is ultimately the outcome of agreements that we negotiated on behalf of all Yukon First Nations.

The Yukon Party government can be characterized by an ad hoc, quick fix — some would call it the "squirrel approach", jumping to the next thing after the next thing — as opposed to a sustained and responsible approach to governance.

A recent community tour throughout the territory — our third tour as the Official Opposition caucus — has reinforced for the opposition that the Yukon Party government has become increasingly out of touch and that the community-driven approach that was the hallmark, and is the hallmark, of the New Democratic Party is what Yukon citizens are striving and reaching for.

The Yukon Party government has demonstrated over the last 12 years increased unaccountability. The importance of accountable, responsive government is so important and has been reinforced to us as the opposition as we talk with Yukoners, not to them — the importance of an equitable approach involving all Yukon in decisions, avoiding the perception that has tainted the Yukon Party increasingly over the last few years about an old-boys club that makes the decisions.

To provide a sense of the inconsistencies that mark this Premier and his government's ad hoc approach to governance, just let me highlight a couple of areas. In each budget, the Finance minister, since 2012-13, has boasted a surplus.

In 2013, he had a \$72 million surplus. Surprisingly, each year it's been \$72 million, \$72 million. In fact, at the end of last year — 2014-15 — although he said it was \$72 million, it was actually \$49 million. And then this year, we're down to \$23.2 million. The Finance minister has not even tried to hide the fact that he is spending down the surplus as fast as he can — so much for the prudent stewardship of Yukon's rainy day fund.

In 2012-13, the Budget Address was highlighted by the Premier's boisterous claim, "So goes mining, so goes the Yukon." With rose-coloured glasses firmly in place, the Premier touted the 107 active mining companies in Yukon, three operating mines and six more in the queue. Fast-forward to 2015-16 — one operating mine — and fears that the Yukon government's threat to pass Bill S-6 threatens that mine. One mine recently closed, leaving behind as-yet-unknown environmental liabilities.

Yukoners can only hope that the much-touted Yukon-Shaanxi sister-province agreement, signed by the Premier in September 2012, will give him the opportunity to call upon the state parents to Yukon Zinc to do the right thing. I remind the Premier that he said of the Yukon-Shaanxi sister-province agreement, when he signed it on September 18, 2012, that it provides an opportunity to take our relationship to the next level. Well, Mr. Speaker, Yukoners are looking for that next level.

Let's look at what the Premier said in 2012-13 in his Budget Address, when he was talking about YESAA. He quoted and he said — and I'll read this from the Budget Address of 2012-13. The Finance minister said, "The Yukon Chamber of Mines attributes the success of the mining industry in Yukon today to three key factors: (1) the devolution of land and resource management to the Government of Yukon by the Government of Canada in 2003; (2) the comprehensive land claims agreements reached with 11 of 14 Yukon First Nations; and (3) the establishment of a single assessment authority on behalf of all responsible authorities — that's Yukon, Canada and First Nations — that has greatly simplified the assessment process and provides more certainty and transparency in all the permitting processes."

Or we could look to the announcements made in 2012-13 and 2013-14, in which the Premier said that they would be adding more money to home care. Both budgets, 2012-13 and 2013-14 — and I quote: "So that Yukoners can remain in their homes longer and to reduce or replace the need for expensive acute or long-term residential care."

Funny how that policy direction morphed into a decision in 2014-15 to begin work on a 300-bed continuing care facility — rather contradictory, don't you think?

These are but a few examples. No doubt we will come back to these and to others as we delve into the budget documents.

Mr. Speaker, we've talked a lot over the last couple of years about the importance of strong relationships. It is the foundation of government and intergovernmental relationships are incredibly important. Today, we paid tribute to the fact that 20 years have passed since the four First Nation final and self-government agreements came into effect. With effective and respectful relationships, these 20 years represent an enormous opportunity. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this Yukon Party government and the Premier have needlessly pitted themselves against Yukon First Nation governments time and time again to the detriment of all Yukoners. The Yukon Party government continues to alienate First Nation

governments with their paternalistic and colonial approach to government-to-government relationships.

Starting again, let's look back to 2012-13 in the Budget Address when the Premier began the process of dismissing arrangements established under land claims agreements. He began then to make it clear — despite the fact that they had not disclosed to Yukoners their true position on the Peel watershed land use plan. He began to lay it out his rationale.

The next year, the Premier invoked his inner Joe Oliver and used the Budget Address as a platform to attack the integrity of Yukoners who support the Peel planning process, as well as those who express concern for environmental issues. When the Peel Watershed Planning Commission presented its final recommended plan, the Premier and the Yukon Party had the opportunity to accept the plan the vast majority of Yukon citizens agreed upon. Instead, he chose to go down the path of confrontation and litigation — an antagonistic approach — as opposed to building strong relationships.

First Nations had already made a compromise from their original position on the Peel and, just like Bill S-6, were forced to go to the courts to protect their rights. Then in the 2014-15 Budget Address the Premier noted, without details, the idea of amendments to YESAA. Ominously, he also noted a desire to make changes to the Water Board. This year, when speaking about the four unilateral amendments to YESAA — two of which, I remind the Premier, were proposed by this government and so fundamentally undermine Yukon First Nation governments' rights that they will be forced into costly litigation that will create economic and political uncertainty — the Premier simply said to the First Nations, "Let the bill pass. Let it pass".

Then he has added insult to injury by suggesting that he will offer a bilateral arrangement of some sort to work out the details of implementing the unacceptable amendments. It is difficult to overstate how out of touch with reality this approach is. First Nation governments have made it clear that in raising objections to the four proposed Yukon and federal amendments, they do this on behalf of all Yukoners. Yukoners and the courts are on their side. The Yukon Party government's "my way or the highway" approach to Bill S-6 is hurting our relationship with First Nation governments.

The Official Opposition is officially on the record as being concerned that, if not corrected, this will have a long lasting negative impact.

The negative impacts will be felt throughout the economy. The Finance minister is correct when he said YESAA does not deal solely with mining. Unfortunately, the direction with respect to the contentious amendments was clearly made by the Premier and by the conservative members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, and those contentious amendments had in fact arisen from the mining industry through YMAB, the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board.

It became clear that the leadership of the mining sector in this territory — those based in the Yukon and those based elsewhere — have realized that upon reflection and upon

seeing the deep, deep concerns expressed by Yukon First Nation governments about the fundamental shifting of the structure of YESAA and the fundamental shifting of the understanding of how the public government bodies in this territory would work. They have had the grace and the leadership to say to the Yukon government and the federal government, hold off and let's take some time here.

We've heard two of the representatives last week — one who is very concerned that the active and positive working relationship that they've established with the community of Dawson City and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation is in jeopardy. The potential contribution to the Yukon economy by Kaminak, seen by many as an excellent corporate citizen, is in jeopardy because of these proposed changes. They will not be able to develop that mining operation.

We heard from the only operating mine, Capstone Minto mine. When asked what the implications would be for his mine should Bill S-6 proceed and should there be litigation, he was unequivocal, Mr. Speaker. He said that it's not just the end of mining for Capstone, he said it is the end of mining for Yukon. That's a serious legacy. I'm not sure that the Finance minister, the Premier of the Yukon Territory — that's the legacy he wants to leave here. He's heading that way.

Those two companies are not alone. There is correspondence to the Premier and to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs from other mining sectors, other mining companies.

In contrast, I just want to be clear that the NDP supports government-to-government relationships based on reconciliation. We will work with First Nation governments as equals and respect the spirit of reconciliation in the long-term relationship building envisioned in the First Nations final agreements.

The court cases that are being launched by First Nations over Bill S-6 and the Peel are not occurring because they did not get what they wanted. They are occurring because this government's actions are fundamentally undermining the rights that they worked so hard to win through the final agreements, and they undermine the shared vision of a Yukon where institutions of public government would be open and inclusive.

Mr. Speaker, it's hard enough to envision a government that would choose to take on First Nation governments. We also have a government that appears to view Yukon's municipalities as an inferior form of government. Somehow the Yukon Party has determined that the relationship that exists between the two governments is a mere formality with Yukon always having the deciding voice.

Let's look at a couple of examples. The City of Whitehorse spent several years consulting and planning to create an official community plan, including plans for the new Whistle Bend subdivision. Out of the blue, the Yukon government announced its plans to build two megaprojects in the subdivision that are contrary to the plan: the 300-bed care facility and the outdoor sports complex. The consultation with the City of Whitehorse was minimal, as the city's key role is zoning. Their concerns were about the appropriateness of

either project and those concerns were overruled by the territory. They have been forced into rezoning their OCP to allow for Yukon government's projects. They rezoned the areas identified in the OCP, Mr. Speaker.

Each of these projects raises significant issues. On the one hand, when we look at the sudden emergence of the proposal to build the artificial-turf soccer field and track and field facility, what evidence was gathered to determine that the building of this was warranted at this time? Where is the business case? Has the Yukon government, through this, set a new benchmark for support to NGOs for O&M?

My colleague, the MLA for Riverdale South, will no doubt raise many questions about the 300-bed facility. Ironically — it's interesting the little mantra here, Mr. Speaker. I guess they can't read their own press releases that speak to a 300-bed facility with the initial phase being 150 immediately followed by another 150. I add 150 and 150 and I get 300. What do you get, Mr. Speaker? Does that come to 300 for you?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order please. I would remind the member not to try to drag the Speaker into the debate. Thank you.

Ms. Hanson: So, ironically — and I said it before — despite the fact that the Premier in his Budget Address of 2013-14 said that the Yukon government would be increasing home care to allow residents to remain in their home to avoid long-term residential care, you have a flip-flop. This is a government that goes flip-flop. We're just there — we don't believe in home care anymore. We're going to put it into big institutions.

There has been no public debate, consultation or even public information centres on the need for a 300-bed continuing care facility and this is suddenly a new priority for this government.

As we know all too well, this is a government that makes decisions and then tries to build evidence to support that decision. The Auditor General of Canada has pointed this out time and time again over the last 12 to 13 years. When you consider that, in light of the plans for Whistle Bend, the decision to place this major, three-storey institution in an as-yet-to-be-completed new subdivision not only requires rezoning, it really begs the question of what kind of vision there is for dealing with and recognizing the rights of individuals to choose where they live.

How about another example in terms of how the territorial government has worked with or directed its municipal partners? Members will recall last fall when documents came out that the Yukon Party government had purchased land that it already owned from the Mountainview Golf Course to cover their debt load and the government tried to pass the buck to the City of Whitehorse. The Yukon Party said that the land purchase was motivated by the City of Whitehorse's request for additional land for the Whistle Bend subdivision. However, on the contrary, City of Whitehorse officials had told the Yukon government several times that

they had no interest in the land because it did not fit into the OCP for that area. The Yukon government tried to shield itself with the City of Whitehorse when it was caught in a scandal.

The 2014-15 Budget Address committed to bringing forward amendments to the *Municipal Act* in the spring of 2015. I have no idea whether this will happen. However, we do know that over the course of several years of discussion about the *Municipal Act*, it has all been internal to government, internal to government with municipal governments, with the Association of Yukon Communities. There has been only one public consultation session. I know that because I attended it at the MacBride Museum. The *Municipal Act* is a fundamental piece of citizen engagement. It also fundamentally reflects democracy at the grassroots.

The Yukon *Municipal Act* of 1998 was a model of citizen participation, and we will be watching to ensure that the principles enshrined in that act are maintained as the review goes forward. We will be calling upon the minister to ensure that there is broad public consultation before the bill is tabled.

On a broader scale, the Yukon government continues to ignore the implications of trade deals such as CETA. As many municipal governments have pointed out, if this agreement is ratified, municipal spending decisions will be constrained by the procurement rules contained in it —

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: The minister is incorrect.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: Right.

One of the things that is really important is the notion of respect for other levels of government as partners in Yukon's future. The Yukon NDP has demonstrated this in the past, and has worked respectfully alongside Yukon municipalities to achieve goals for the future. We need to do that. We need to focus on that in a more proactive relationship that engages and plans and implements strategies with municipalities, not over top of them.

Time and time again as we went across the territory and around to communities, Mr. Speaker, the concern was being expressed that local governments are being told what was good for them, or what was coming to them, as opposed to being engaged in respectful conversation about how we could jointly work together to achieve objectives.

I think I've made it clear over the last few years that we fundamentally believe that municipal governments, as well as First Nation and territorial governments, should not lose the power to use our local spending to encourage social and economic development. Positive procurement criteria on infrastructure projects, such as local content requirements and job training, are important local economic drivers. There may be a blind adherence to these investor-state agreements on the other side, Mr. Speaker, but there is not on this side.

The importance of working effectively with local businesses cannot be overstated. Actions speak louder than words. The Yukon Party government says they are pro-business, but they have repeatedly and aggressively acted to undermine Yukon industry and business. Bill S-6 may prove to be the starkest example, and the Premier is true to his word.

He's right — it does not just affect the mining sector; it affects all sectors of our Yukon economy.

The result is a broken relationship with a Yukon Party government that has relied on direct awards, cronyism and overseeing gross mismanagement of every phase of public procurement and supply chain management. The Yukon Party government approach to dealing with Yukon business is often seen, and reported to us, as being unilateral and devoid of meaningful communication or partnership.

We've just witnessed the unveiling of the largest capital budget in Yukon's history. Yukon businesses — from the construction sector to labour, suppliers, et cetera — face an onslaught of simultaneous major project rollouts. The Yukon Party has not demonstrated if it has worked with local industry, suppliers and contractors, or coordinated with the City of Whitehorse, to ensure that local capacity and benefits are maximized over the medium to long term.

More local businesses are being precluded from bidding on any of the numerous capital works projects — including the pet \$330-million, 300-bed, long-term care institution — and left to wonder who this budget is intended to benefit. If history has any say in the matter, it will be largely Outside businesses, industry and employees.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister had made comments about reviewing and upgrading the *Agreement on Internal Trade*, but it's important to recognize that to date there have been no formal consultations with local industry, business or other local associations.

The AIT is not just freedom of movement of persons, goods and services and investment; it's about ensuring Yukoners can compete on a level playing field. It's a question of equity for Yukon businesses.

For a jurisdiction of 36,000, competing against much bigger jurisdictions such as B.C. or Alberta needs to be taken into consideration. Yukon NDP believes the Yukon Party failed to work with industry and business to ensure that Yukon interests were protected in those discussions. On the contrary, we know that we must value our relationship with small businesses. They are the backbone of our economy. That's why an NDP government introduced the small business tax credit and why the NDP continues to place small businesses at the centre of our economic strategy. By working with Yukon small businesses, among the most talented, innovated and creative in the country, and maintaining open and respectful dialogue, the Yukon NDP continues to support Yukon-based businesses to survive and thrive.

There is a whole other area that is affected by the 2015-16 budget, and given passing reference — the whole area of our relationship with non-government organizations. Unfortunately we see again this dichotomy — a difference of approach depending on who you are and which side you're on, I guess.

I use the example — when we look back and we see that when Mount Sima was in financial trouble, the Yukon government and the City of Whitehorse required them to open their books to the public and argue their case for further funding. Similarly, when Raven Recycling was in need of

funding, Yukon stated that they needed to provide a comprehensive business plan to carry on the services they provide.

Now contrast that with the outdoor sports complex being pushed by the Yukon Outdoor Sports Complex Association and the Yukon Party. This organization, a newly formed society, has not provided any business plan but the Yukon government has indicated it will appropriate in excess of \$7 million for the complex. Furthermore, the sports complex has removed several lots from the City of Whitehorse's tax base, but apparently the Yukon government is going to promise to cover those costs. As well, the Yukon government has promised the City of Whitehorse that they will underwrite the association if they fail to have an adequate O&M budget. That's certainly a different treatment for one class of NGO over another.

What we've seen over the last few years is that the government has increasingly off-loaded the delivery of essential services on to our NGO community, often with little support.

We seem to be content — the Government of Yukon seems to be content — to let the NGOs take on complex socio-economic projects that actually fall under the purview of the government — an example might be A Safe Place at the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre. But then the government is forcing these NGOs to fight over every single dollar and insisting that projects only get funding on a pilot-project basis — so no sustained funding, but pilot project by pilot project by pilot project. So what we are seeing is a myriad of innovative community-based and locally responsive projects being terminated by one organization and then being revived by another at a later date. This does a lot of things, not the least of which is being unsustainable. What it does effectively do is prevent NGOs from coordinating their services with one another.

When the Yukon Party government decides an already off-loaded service is no longer needed, or could be housed elsewhere, they unilaterally yank the funding with little or no notice to the organizations themselves — a curiously hostile tactic that they would never dream of pulling with their business or industry partners. Certainly they didn't do it with Yukon Zinc.

The NDP believes that we have to have a fair and level playing field in funding NGOs in our community. Many of the NGOs' staff and volunteers are experts, as I said, in complex socio-economic issues in community capacity building and development, and in the research that they have done over the years on social determinants of health and environmental management. We recognize their essential role in program and service delivery in the Yukon and when we sit down with these groups, we recognize them as incredibly valuable and talented partners, not as a group to simply trot out for public consultation brownie points, all the while disrespecting their time and resource power by baulking and rejecting mutually agreed upon projects — for example, the mental health transitional housing project — at the last minute.

The last 10 years — we step back 10 to 12 years of this Yukon Party government — have been marked by wasted opportunities to build and grow a sustainable and prosperous local economy. Contrary to what the Finance minister would have Yukoners believe, Yukon is farther from becoming a net contributor to the Canadian economy than we were before the Yukon Party came into power. In fact, dependence on federal transfers has grown under the Yukon Party's direction. It has increased more than threefold over the past 15 years. It has increased 1.3 times since 2011.

It's a fact that our own-source revenues have decreased as a proportion of the total revenues over the same period. It is a sad commentary that our own-source revenues have decreased by one-third compared to 15 years ago — 21 percent in 2000; 14 percent in 2014. Put differently, own-source revenues is only two-thirds of what it was 15 years ago, kind of a contrary picture to what the Finance minister has painted.

Meanwhile, the Yukon Party government's failure to support a strong diversified economy leaves the territory in an increasingly precarious position with little-to-no safety net as we ride the "bust" slope of the boom-and-bust mining cycle. What we have experienced is that the real GDP growth rate has declined steadily over the course of the Premier's tenure — year over year, a decrease in real GDP growth rates since 2008. The Conference Board of Canada's provincial and territorial ranking of the GDP growth said — and I quote: "...dependence on mining is precarious for two reasons: it is often difficult to obtain financing to develop new mines and prices fluctuate sharply due to the changing conditions in the global economy. This is apparent from the volatility in the grades earned on GDP growth for the territories over the past few decades. Grades of 'A' followed by abrupt changes to 'D's are common, and this unpredictability is attributable to the ups and down of economies depending on the mining industry for much of their GDP growth. In this sense, the territories face similar challenges to many emerging markets and other resource-dependent regions, where a heavy reliance on natural resources for wealth and employment creation leaves the economy susceptible to swings in commodity prices". A singular focus on a singular pillar of the economy leaves the economy susceptible to swings in commodity prices.

You know, Mr. Speaker, if we look at the government's own *Yukon Economic Outlook* for 2015, you'll see that it says — and I quote: "Unlike recent years, the mining sector will not be an economic growth driver in 2014." While remaining a significant component of what is Yukon's overall GDP, this sector is anticipated to decline.

They further go on to say that projected or higher growth in 2015-16 is contingent on expectations of increased mineral production and higher development activity related to the mining sector and, Mr. Speaker, we have seen the evidence over the last couple of years and the projected implications and impact of litigation on that one-out for this economy, if we're relying on the mining sector only — contingent on expectations of increased mineral production and higher development activity related to the mining sector. The

message has been delivered loud and clear to the Yukon Party by this mining sector. Not just in the Yukon, but across this country, there is no money to invest in a jurisdiction that cannot get its own house in order; that creates uncertainty, political and economic; that creates friction and that forces litigation.

As I noted, our annual surplus, or what the Yukon is saving, has started to fall off. In 2011-12, the annual surplus was \$71,348,000. In 2015-16, the annual surplus is projected to be just \$23,242,000. The annual surplus has fallen to a third of what it was when the Premier took office. At this rate, the Yukon Party will have spent the surplus at a time when, in the Premier's own words, finances are getting tight.

Successive NDP governments operated in the black with substantially smaller federal transfers and with significant planned investments in community infrastructure. After 10 years of Yukon Party leadership, despite a record level of federal transfers and despite the opportunities presented during the mining exploration boom, Yukon's economy is not as sustainable or prosperous as it could or should be.

The Yukon economy is stagnating in the absence of a coherent economic strategy. The Yukon Party was either blind or did not see the writing on the wall of the boom-bust resource economy. The pre-election announcements that we have been subjected to over the last number of weeks of \$312.8 million in capital spending displaces one boom-bust economy for another. This ad hoc response confuses spending money with having a plan.

Large capital projects can be good stimulants for economic growth and job creation when they are phased in, in a managed way, to maximize local capacity, local benefits and local economic development. Headline government with little or not focus on strategic planning or responsible government does not achieve maximized local benefits or opportunities.

The Yukon Party government's roll-out of capital projects will outpace the capacity of Yukon — and I emphasize "Yukon" — enterprises to benefit and the availability of local people to take jobs. It amounts to stealing profits and jobs from Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, 25 percent of the territorial budget is procurement spending. That is 25 cents for every territorial dollar. Public sector purchase of goods and services has a significant opportunity, and it has a responsibility as a publicly funded entity — we have a responsibility to support local enterprises, societal interests and local economic development.

The Yukon NDP supports capital project planning that maximizes local capacity and benefits over the medium to long term and prioritizes Yukon businesses, industries and workers. Support for small businesses can help build a strong economic base to support and anchor other local enterprises.

There are multiple independent and international analyses that confirm our long-held position that there is a real economic advantage when the public sector purchases from local suppliers. This is because local companies hire more local labour, buy more goods and services from local suppliers, recirculate more of their profits locally and give

more to local charities. Local suppliers do the same and a virtual cycle is born. This is the premise of the economic multiplier effect.

When a business is owned locally, profits and earnings stay local and are more likely to recirculate and to grow. One Canadian study that examined the economic impacts of government procurement found that there was a 77- to 100-percent economic advantage from buying local and an 80- to 100-percent increase in jobs per million spent.

The Yukon NDP supports and will defend Yukon-based policies that will empower and enable local businesses to capture a bigger share of the regional market and provide more significant benefits to the Yukon economy. It's time for a government that understands a capital works budget to be part of a long-term economic development plan that will better allocate public money to support local businesses, local economic growth and employment.

Mr. Speaker, absent, in terms of the overall economic — well, I guess this is no strategy, so it's spending — is any reference to date, except in passing, I guess, by the Finance minister to the tremendous impact on Yukon's economy of First Nation development corporations.

First Nation development corporations are involved in companies that employ hundreds of Yukoners. It's generally thought that the combined revenues of the businesses that the various First Nation development corporations participate in could be as high as, or exceed, \$500 million a year. They are involved in all sectors of our economy, from the resource industry to hospitality, retail, tourism, real estate and more. First Nation development corporations also have a significant investment capital that needs to be attracted to and retained in the Yukon, yet this government has not seized this opportunity to work in collaboration and strengthen our economy. You know, Mr. Speaker, First Nation development corporations are becoming a significant player in all sectors of our economy, yet they're not a focus for this government. For instance, I don't think I can think of any of the government's trade missions that First Nation development corporations have been a party to. Have they been partners? I'll look to the Finance minister to answer that one. Have they been invited?

You know, Mr. Speaker, Outside investors want an understanding of First Nation communities and business environment to the Yukon. When we're doing these international trade missions, you would think that you would want to have the people who could speak to that most directly, first-hand, and that would be the development corporations.

First Nation development corporations can play a key role in showcasing the benefits of investing in the Yukon, but they need to be invited to the table by this government.

In 2013-14, the Yukon Party government begrudgingly began to acknowledge the importance of the tourism industry to the territory's economy. The 2013 Yukon business survey indicated that Yukon businesses attributed approximately \$250 million of their gross revenue to tourism in 2012. That's about four percent of our GDP in 2012 — of the total 2012 GDP.

Imagine what that could be if we do invest in it properly, because the reality is that the Yukon Party has underinvested in opportunities to build a sustainable and prosperous mainstay of our economy. I only use the example because it comes to mind based on the release this year of a portion of the domestic marketing program.

You'll recall that several years ago the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon asked the Yukon government for \$5 million over two years, subject to review, to develop a domestic marketing program. This was in lieu of the fact that the federal government had abdicated the field. Elsewhere in the world people are trying to market — to tell people to come to your jurisdiction. Canada decided to get out of it.

The domestic marketing program envisioned by the TIA would have seen some set goals, a review, and then ongoing, sustained funding. In response, the Yukon Party government has provided \$3.6 million over two years, not \$5 million. So far there are no discernible criteria to determine what would be the basis for the decision to continue or not, and there is no commitment beyond this fiscal year — again, short term, ad hoc. Where's the long-term strategic thinking and plan with respect to domestic tourism marketing?

We know that tourism has a significant potential to help build a strong, diversified economy that benefits all Yukoners. We heard this, time and time again, as we went across the territory in the various regions of the Yukon. The tourism potential in each region of this territory is diverse and exciting.

A huge area of our responsibility as legislators is a responsibility for the effective stewardship and management of our resources. It has become increasingly apparent, not just in the Yukon — globally — that the fossil fuel industry is an unprofitable sector to invest public funds. We only need to look at our neighbours to the south of us. Alberta's recent experience has given us the perfect case study to examine the unpredictable and volatile nature of oil and gas development.

On the other hand, renewable energy can provide a long-term sustainable option that is not affected by volatility of the international commodity market. The fossil fuel industry is an archaic industry that has already been exploited. The Yukon Party government is chasing an industry that is past its prime. Renewables offer a strong alternative and are growing in cost effectiveness.

Mr. Speaker, we've already seen that the Yukon Party's approach to pitting the economy against the environment is a zero-sum game. To view the abundant natural wealth of the Yukon — our land, our resources, our wilderness and people in communities — as a get-rich scheme, where they seek an immediate boost to our GDP at the expense of stable, long-term economic growth and well-being, is not sustainable and it has not been effective in boosting real GDP growth which, as I said earlier, has declined, year over year, since this current version of the Yukon Party took office.

Yukoners have watched our resources and wealth flow through our fingers and out the door, instead of being strategically reinvested in our land, our people and our economy. The Yukon Party has nothing to show for it. On the

contrary, the resource boom-and-bust cycle has become a price for Yukon government and Yukoners. The result has been the depletion of our territory's stock of natural wealth — land, natural resources, wilderness and people in the communities.

The Yukon Party mismanagement of resource development has been bad for the Yukon economy, for the environment and for our communities. We only need to look at the recent example of how the government has managed Yukon Zinc — the Wolverine mine. We were promised, as Yukoners, a new way of mining that would be done sustainably and to the benefit of Yukon businesses. What we got was a failure to pay securities, disregard for a mine closure plan and \$4.3 million in unpaid bills from a mining company \$647 million in debt.

This was a direct result of the Yukon Party government failing to take its own responsibilities for responsible and sustainable mining seriously. Yukoners have seen the results of poorly managed mining projects before.

Mr. Speaker, after the Faro mine operator declared bankruptcy in 1992, the public was left with an additional — at minimum — \$900 million in environmental liabilities, including a four-kilometre long toxic waste tailings pond endangering the Pelly River, and 320 million tonnes of waste rock that could produce acid-rock runoff.

For some reason, the Yukon Party has chosen to take a course that has led it to be unable to prevent history from repeating itself. Ironically, that leadership is not missing from the public sector, because it seems to me that it appears the Premier has turned a deaf ear to the Yukon public sector, as he has done to the public — the citizens of the territory.

The authors of the Yukon Department of Economic Development's 2013 mining sector profile report knows and shows a sustainable path is the right and best way forward for the Yukon. As they state so concisely, "For a mining project to meet the values of sustainability, the overall contribution of the project must be positive to both human and ecosystem well-being over the long term. If it's good for one and not the other, the fundamental values of sustainability are not met." It's time for strong leadership on sustainable resource development in Yukon.

Again, you know Mr. Speaker, it is curious to track the Premier's position on oil and gas development in Yukon. Since 2012-13, when the Premier announced that Northern Cross and CNOOC — this is from his Budget Address — are working to develop a natural gas reserve in the Eagle Plains property, through the 2013-14 address referencing both Northern Cross and South Yukon interests, to the 2014-15 announcements of the Northern Cross 3-D seismic program, to this year's revelation of support for collaboration between the Vuntut Gwitchin Development Corporation and Northern Cross to examine the feasibility of building and operating a petroleum refinery in the Eagle Plains area, it is clear that the reliance on fossil fuels is in direct contradistinction to the international experts, the IPCC and others. It just draws a stark contrast between an effective long-term view and leadership.

We have heard the Premier making announcements across Canada and the United States as well about his support for the oil and gas sector — the gas sector particularly in the Yukon. I just want to be clear that pursuing hydraulic fracturing presents a barrier to renewable energy and it is an extractive industry that removes our non-renewable natural resources from the ground at a faster rate than the local economy and workers can keep up with.

This Premier apparently does not respect sustainable, responsible development or the right of Yukoners to demand it. He cannot understand the word “no”. As I have said, he announced internationally that Yukon is open for business in the LNG sector, well in advance of the Select Committee on the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing’s report and long before he made his pro-fracking position known at home, even if it was through the inadvertent release of government documents to the media.

Yukoners know there is no scientific evidence proving that fracking can be done safely and they make their opposition to fracking known at every possible turn. We know that the price of fracking is too high for our environment, our families and our future, despite whatever short-term benefits the Premier and his Wild West friends may think.

I think it all boils down to governance. The Yukon Party’s approach to governance has proven to be ineffective and costly. The lack of planning and mismanagement caused by their ad hoc approach leads to massive cost overruns and it doesn’t meet the real needs of Yukoners. The boom-bust cycle they are reproducing in capital spending and the constant change in focus and the contradictions between their stated goals and their actions has harmed relationships — whether it be with First Nation governments, businesses or NGOs.

The lack of accountability of this government has broken the trust of many Yukoners in their government. The NDP is committed to restore this trust by putting forward a vision of responsible governance. We are committed to this vision, where the government would truly consult with the public and its partners and reflect what we hear — in the direction an NDP government would take — because we’re committed to planning processes that aren’t centred on the need for photo opportunities but on the needs of Yukoners.

We are committed to leadership that is fair to all Yukoners, not just the well-connected old boys club. We are committed to reconciliation as it is the only way forward to strengthen our community. As the Official Opposition, we are proud to stand for this kind of responsible governance. We know it’s the way to build a sustainable and prosperous Yukon.

Some Hon. Member: (inaudible)

Speaker: Hon. Premier, on a point of order.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I would invite all members of the House to join me in welcoming Darren Parsons. He has been around a few times over the last few years and I would invite all members of the gallery to join me in welcoming him here today.

Applause

Speaker: Leader of the Official Opposition, the floor is yours.

Ms. Hanson: And it was before I was — I will just say thank you.

Speaker: So you’re done? Perfect timing.

Hon. Mr. Kent: It’s indeed my pleasure to respond to the budget that is currently being debated, the 2015-16 budget. I would like to start of course by again thanking the constituents of Riverdale North for their continued trust in me to represent them in the Legislative Assembly. I hear from a number of them on occasion, both those who support the direction of our government and those who have some suggestions for improvement, so I appreciate all of the advice that I get from those that I represent here in the House and I continue to take each and every one of their concerns very seriously.

I would also like to thank the Premier for showing the confidence in me to remain at the helm of Energy, Mines and Resources. Of course, with the Cabinet shuffle that occurred in January, the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation responsibility is now with the Member for Lake Laberge and I know those two corporations are in great hands. I would like to wish Joanne Fairlie and the Board of Directors for the Yukon Development Corporation well, as well as Kells Boland, who is the new chair of the Yukon Energy Corporation. I know that there are a couple of other new board members there with Mr. Boland and I know that they’ll do a great job in guiding the energy requirements and needs of Yukoners, both now and in the short, medium and longer term.

I would also like to thank the Department of Highways and Public Works. I have been the minister there for a little over two and a half months. The previous minister did a fantastic job at the helm there. Whether it’s Transportation or Property Management, folks in ICT or others, this is truly a department that affects each Yukoner on a day-to-day basis no matter what activity they’re undertaking, whether it’s driving on our roads or using our airports or in the buildings or the IT capacity of the territory. It’s a tremendously important department.

I’ve had the privilege of making it up to Eagle Plains and visiting the Klondike and Ogilvie camps along the Dempster Highway. I look forward to visiting a number of the other maintenance areas and officials that work in Highways and Public Works both here in the City of Whitehorse, as well as the camps and the communities that are outside of Whitehorse.

I am going to start by highlighting some of the activity that is taking place in Riverdale. There are quite a few aspects in this budget and projects in this budget that are funded and are located in Riverdale — of course close to downtown Whitehorse here.

I am going to go on as well to talk about some of the initiatives and projects in Energy, Mines and Resources as

well as Highways and Public Works that are important to Yukoners and are important to developing the private sector economy that the Premier spoke about during his budget speech, because I too believe that growth of the private sector is going to be key to drive the economy here in the territory going forward. Whether it is private sector development in our resource industries or tourism or IT or construction or any number of the industries that we have here in the territory, the private sector will be the key to ensuring a long-lasting and sustainable future for the economy of the territory.

When it comes to the riding of Riverdale North, and the community of Riverdale in particular, there are a number of investments being made. I know that these will be of particular interest not only to my constituents, but some of the facilities over there in Riverdale also service the broader population of Whitehorse and indeed the Yukon. Starting with investments in education, F.H. Collins — in this budget there is \$7.478 million to complete the project. My understanding from Highways and Public Works officials is that we can expect substantial completion of the F.H. Collins Secondary School project in August and we will anticipate students and staff moving into that facility sometime this fall once the fit-out and final commissioning is done. Part of that fit-out is the purchase of \$2.97-million worth of operational equipment. This will include furniture and desks and other things to fit out the school and ensure that it is indeed a modern facility for 21st century learning. The tech education wing will be receiving \$3 million in this budget to complete the work there. F.H. Collins is located in Riverdale, but it is a project that, through a dual-track school with both English stream and French immersion, services students and people from right across the territory and right across the City of Whitehorse.

A few of the other schools in Riverdale will also be receiving some much-needed upgrades. We have fuel tank replacement at Grey Mountain Primary this year, and as well Vanier high school will be receiving a new fuel tank. Vanier high school will be receiving a new PA system in their school. Grey Mountain Primary will be getting painting as well as library flooring replacement. Christ the King Elementary School will be getting flooring as well for an investment over there.

Macaulay Lodge, which is located in Riverdale North, will also be getting a \$63,000 investment in operational equipment.

The health care facilities in Riverdale are important to the entire Yukon, so when it comes to the emergency room and the MRI expansion, there is \$22.316 million in this budget for that important piece of infrastructure that is in Riverdale and services everyone across the territory — or is utilized by everyone across the territory. I think it's obviously an extremely important facility and the investments made by the government continue to improve that facility.

The MRI investment that was made by the government in partnership with the community through the Yukon Hospital Foundation is tremendous, and it provides a piece of medical infrastructure here that allows Yukoners to receive quality health care right here at home without having to travel outside

of the Yukon for that important diagnostic tool so that they can lessen the stress that they have from travel and being away from the Yukon for what can be done in a relatively short time. Congratulations to the Yukon Hospital Foundation and a thank you to the previous Minister of Health and Social Services as well as the current minister for their continued investment in the hospital and making sure that that quality health care can be delivered right here in the Yukon Territory.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to turn my attention now to a few of the highlights with respect to Energy, Mines and Resources as well as some initiatives that are taking place in that department, as well as some of the projects that are being delivered and/or managed by Highways and Public Works that are contained in this budget. Time permitting, I'll conclude with reference to housing, because I know that everyone in the Legislature recognizes the importance of that issue from the 2011 election and I think it's important to highlight the continued investments that this government makes in that sector and indeed across the housing continuum.

When it comes to the Energy, Mines and Resources department, I'm going to start out by talking about the importance of regulatory efficiency and improving our regulatory and permitting regime. There is an investment of \$841,000 with \$370,000 flowing to First Nations to implement the mine licensing improvement initiative or, as it is affectionately known as, MLII. It's going to clarify the rules of regulatory agencies and provide certainty for companies who want to do business in the Yukon. Beyond that, there will be continued work on the mineral development strategy, which will be covering the business climate, regulatory streamlining infrastructure, First Nation engagement, environmental stewardship and workforce training.

Mr. Speaker, I think that I was able to include this in an answer to a question from the first day of this current sitting. The Yukon Minerals Advisory Board report that was tabled in 2014, but it was actually the 2013 annual report — the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board is a collection of individuals who represent companies or organizations such as the Chamber of Mines and the Klondike Placer Miners' Association that are active in the mineral industry here in the territory. They provide tremendous advice to me, as minister, as well as some of my colleagues, whether it's the Premier or the Minister of Economic Development or the Minister of Environment. Many have been included in the recommendations that have been brought forward.

The recommendations from the 2013 report included adequacy review timelines for YESAA and the Water Board, the YESAA reassessment process clarity, consolidation of mine project oversight and coordination, as well as establishing a formal process for trilateral board meetings.

Two more — pardon me, Mr. Speaker — with respect to YMAB's reporting relationship — and establish a greater accountability for YESAA delivery within the Yukon government.

Again, two of these recommendations should sound familiar to members, because adequacy review timelines for YESAA, as well as YESAA reassessment process clarity, are

two of the additional four amendments that are being considered by the federal government in their legislation, Bill S-6, which was tabled in the Senate and is currently making its way through the House of Commons.

When you read the conclusion of this report that I tabled in this House last May, one of the things that stands out for me — and it should stand out for all members — is that YMAB chose to focus on what industry has determined is the key issue negatively impacting the industry: the deterioration in the efficiency and reliability of the assessment and licensing of mining projects in the territory.

The system has become more costly, cumbersome and protracted, and the Yukon's mineral industry is developing an increasingly negative image as an attractive investment destination. One of the Yukon's three producing mines is on an interim shutdown and a second has recently undergone the layoff of 44 employees. Again, Mr. Speaker, this is a snapshot of last May, when this report was tabled.

It concludes in that paragraph by saying that there is a clear urgency for the Government of Yukon to act.

Again, Mr. Speaker, when we hear members of the opposition saying that regulatory certainty and increasing the timeliness and effectiveness of our permitting regime isn't warranted, that simply isn't the case. When the Minerals Advisory Board, the Yukon Chamber of Mines and the Klondike Placer Miners' Association all get together to support aspects of Bill S-6, we hear loud and clear from industry that they're supportive of what we're trying to accomplish.

This isn't the only thing that we're looking to accomplish. The mine licensing improvement initiative that is currently underway is being led by Executive Council Office, as they have responsibility for overseeing the Water Board. The Water Board reports through the Executive Council Office. We recognize that water licensing, as well as quartz mine licensing, is the responsibility of the Yukon government, and we can make some improvements there. There's work that needs to be done. There's engagement with First Nations at the officials level when it comes to improving the licensing regime here in the territory, and I think it's extremely important work that we need to continue to do because we're competing for investment dollars that are very mobile and can travel anywhere in the world.

We certainly sympathize with some of the companies that are at different states when it comes to the assessment process, but we have to take the holistic view of the entire industry, whether it's those that are prospecting and finding these new deposits, to those that are currently going through the assessment and permitting regime, to those mines that have been operating in this regime for some time.

I think it was the CEO of Alexco, or perhaps the COO of Alexco, who said that they had been through the YESAA process 10 times since they started operations. Certainly that number is something that leads to that costliness and cumbersome nature that our process is currently creating. It is something that we — in response to the minerals advisory report where they say there is a clear urgency for the

Government of Yukon to act — recognize that, and that is what we are doing through MLII and, as mentioned by the Premier, through our support for the amendments to the YESAA process in Bill S-6.

I am going to talk a little bit about the annual economic benefits of the resource sectors. I know that colleagues will talk about the other sectors that they are responsible for, such as tourism and IT and others, but I am going to focus on those that are housed within the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. This is a bit of a snapshot on what we can expect. These are just estimates that are put together by department staff for consideration so that we have an idea of what type of activity we can anticipate in the territory in the coming season. For quartz mineral production in 2015, the estimate is \$200 million to \$250 million. The mineral development itself is estimated to be about \$60 million, in part due to anticipated development of Alexco's Flame and Moth project. That may or may not happen this year. There are a number of other factors that will influence the decision of Alexco, but if they are able to do that development work, we do estimate the development expenditures to be at that \$60-million mark.

Mineral exploration was estimated to be \$80 million in 2014. The forecasted estimate for 2015 is \$100 million. The majority of mineral exploration in the Yukon is conducted by junior companies that contribute significantly to Yukon's economic development and growth.

Government incentives such as the Yukon mineral exploration program will remain at the enhanced \$1.4-million mark for this upcoming year. In 2014, there were 55 exploration projects funded, leveraging over \$3.9 million in additional exploration commitments. An important seed project that will continue to lead to the development of projects and perhaps even producing mines such as — I believe the initial hole that was drilled at the Coffee Gold project that is owned by Kaminak was funded through a YMIP grant.

Placer gold production is something that is also important. In 2013, there were 177 placer leases and close to 60,000 crude ounces of gold produced, valued at \$69.4 million. 2014 production is expected to be similar to 2013, and the forecast for annual placer gold production is to remain stable over the medium term, averaging 50,000 crude ounces for the 2015-19 period.

When it comes to employment from this important industry, it has a track record of providing economic benefits to Yukon, providing employment and business development opportunities. In 2012, over 900 people were employed at operating mines in Yukon and another 1,700 were employed in mineral exploration projects and support services.

Although it decreased in 2013 and 2014, the long-term outlook for employment in the mining industry continues to be strong and that's why, through the Department of Education, we continue to invest in training Yukoners for these opportunities through the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining. I know that there were a number of individuals who were sponsored by the private sector to attend the training that we've shared with the Alaskans at Delta

Junction, sponsored by private sector companies, as mentioned, as well as those that have chosen that line of work and agreed to pay their own way for that type of training. Again, there's a capital project I believe we'll get underway this year at Yukon College to enhance the facilities that we have at the Whitehorse campus and the mobile trades trailer continues to provide training to communities. I believe it's in Ross River currently and spent some time last year in Dawson City.

When it comes to our rankings with the Fraser Institute, the Yukon is number one in the world for mining industry perceptions of our geology. We were ranked number six in 2013. We're number nine in the world for investment attractiveness, a drop of one spot from 2013, and we've dropped for attractiveness of mining policies from 19th in 2013 to 26th. Again, this really emphasizes the importance of the work that is underway with respect to the mine licensing improvement initiative and the mineral development strategy.

Oil and gas has been around in the Yukon since the 1950s when the earliest wells were drilled. The estimated capital expenditure by Northern Cross in 2013-14 was \$19.2 million. Some of these benefits flow out of the territory because of the lack of capacity here in the territory to provide the full spectrum of oilfield services, but if we can continue to develop the oil and gas industry, that service and supply sector — much as it has in the mining sector — will continue to develop and those types of services will be offered here in the territory. There was no on-the-ground activity after Northern Cross' 3-D seismic program last year. Northern Cross is currently in the YESAA process.

EFLO Energy has come out of the YESAA process with respect to work at the Kotaneelee gas fields in southeastern Yukon and again we would anticipate some positive economic benefit from the Kotaneelee fields. Of course the Kotaneelee fields have hosted producing wells since the 1970s. Royalties from those wells that have accrued to the Yukon government have been close to \$50 million. I've mentioned that number on the floor of this House previously. Again, that's \$50 million that we're able to share a portion of with Yukon First Nations. I believe \$10 million of that was transferred to Yukon First Nations. The rest was used in general revenue to fund important initiatives in education and health care and infrastructure investment.

The oil and gas industry is an important component of the overall economic mosaic here in the territory. I know the New Democrats don't like to hear that, but again, it's an industry that has existed here in the territory for a long time and we hope it has a long and prosperous future.

As I have mentioned, I will be responding to the select committee report on the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing within this current sitting and I look forward to having more debate on the floor of the House with respect to our response to those 21 recommendations that were brought forward by the three opposition members and three government members that comprised that committee.

We continue to see investments on the energy side — geothermal — and we recently announced, in partnership with

CanNor, that we will be conducting geothermal favourability mapping from December 14 to March 2016. CanNor has also contributed a further \$124,000 for geothermal energy exploration to the Kaska Dena Council. There were an estimated \$230,000 in expenditures in 2014 on solar in the Yukon territory. This estimate is for on-grid and off-grid projects that EMR has been involved in through the microgen production incentive program and other work. Wind expenditures in 2014 were estimated at \$100,000. The wind industry is in the very early stages of development in the territory. I know we have heard announcements from the Energy Corporation on bringing forward a wind project that will be shelf-ready sometime within — I believe the number is 18 months — and can generate significant amounts of energy.

I have mentioned on the floor of the House before, though, that we need to ensure that we have reliable backup to these renewable energies, whether it is hydro or solar or geothermal or wind, if they are contributing to the grid, because people need to be safe and secure in the fact that the electricity will continue to flow when those sources of energy aren't as reliable as they could be.

Energy rebates in 2014-15, through the Government of Yukon, were budgeted at \$400,000 and those included rebates for energy-efficient products and services and renewable energy systems. The number is expected to increase to \$1 million in this current fiscal year, due to the addition of incentives for improving the energy efficiency of residences and buildings.

Agriculture continues to be an important contributor to the Yukon economy. There is an estimated \$4 to \$5 million in economic benefits annually from that sector, but we know that we can do better and we will continue to explore opportunities to increase the land base that is available for agriculture, as well as the work that is underway now with our partners in the industry and the stakeholders on the local food strategies. We look forward to having something to report back to the House with respect to that strategy as soon as it is complete.

Forestry, Mr. Speaker, is another industry that I believe has significant growth potential. There are currently an estimated \$3.3 million in economic benefits annually, related to the commercial fuelwood industry. This estimate is based on 30,000 cubic metres harvested, which equates to 13,215 cords at an average of \$250 per cord. I think that through the development of a biomass strategy — which again is underway right now and I'm hoping will be completed sometime in this calendar year — we can see some of those forestry products incorporated into the industry and build jobs and opportunities from the ground up, helping to deliver on a cleaner, more affordable, locally sourced fuel supply for energy production here in the territory.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to turn my attention now to some of the highlights that are in the budget, which are either directly related to Highways and Public Works or are being managed by Highways and Public Works. This, of course, includes — of the approximately \$312.8 million capital budget, which, again, is the largest in Yukon's history. This budget is designed to put Yukoners to work building major

public infrastructure at a time when other sectors of the economy, such as the Yukon's resource-based economy, are experiencing a bit of a downturn or challenges. Many of these capital projects and capital expenditures would be going to those sectors of the economy. Through the strong fiscal management of the Yukon Party government, we're able to introduce a capital budget that has projects from Watson Lake to Beaver Creek and as far north as Old Crow and everywhere in between.

Of course, the \$60.687 million transportation budget has a number of highlights, including almost \$10 million for Shakwak to rehabilitate sections of the north Alaska Highway; \$2.265 million of remediation work on other sections of the Alaska Highway; and \$1.3 million for the planning study of the Whitehorse corridor section of the Alaska Highway. I should take this time to congratulate the previous Minister of Highways and Public Works and the officials at the department for putting together such a comprehensive consultation package as well as using some new and innovative consultation tools, such as the website and the animated flyover. I note that it did receive international attention from an NGO, I believe it was, in Washington, D.C. that talked about how effective that tool was and how effective that tool could be. The consultation closes on that in mid-May, but there are a series of open houses planned for later on this month that individuals can attend. Congratulations to the previous minister and the staff at HPW for putting together such a great package for consultation.

Mr. Speaker, \$9.73 million will be allocated in this budget to reconstruct the remaining unimproved sections of the Campbell Highway, terminating at kilometre 190, which, I believe, is the Tuchtua camp or the turnoff to the Nahanni Range Road. Almost \$3 million for rip-rap on the side slopes of the Dempster Highway, along the shoreline of the Blackstone and Ogilvie Rivers and Engineer Creek; \$750,000 to restore and rehabilitate the Dempster Highway's infrastructure; preventive maintenance on the Klondike Highway, \$770,000; \$3.325 million to construct staff living quarters for maintenance camps at Swift River, Stewart Crossing, as well as a bunkhouse at the Klondike camp on the Dempster Highway — something that was very important to the foreman of that camp when I visited there with my deputies earlier this winter; \$1.5 million to replace the bridge deck approach and guardrail at Partridge Creek; and, \$350,000 to design the replacement of the Nares bridge on the south Klondike Highway in order to handle the transportation of bulk hauls from some of the Yukon mines that exist now, as well as some of those that are contemplated in the future. This is located in the community of Carcross, and it's one of only two bridges in the territory that still have a wooden deck on them.

We have \$200,000 to complete the work on the Tatchun Creek bridge; \$1.8 million to provide pavement overlays to the parallel runway on taxiway A and E, including the development of 20 lease lots on the south side of apron 2 at the Whitehorse airport; and almost \$4.9 million for upgrading

of community aerodromes, including Dawson City and Watson Lake.

We have \$13.5 million in this budget to provide maintenance and upgrading of government buildings, including energy-efficiency upgrades to the main administration building and the Legislative Assembly, which I think will be very important, as this is one of the least energy-efficient buildings that we have in the overall building envelope that the government owns.

There's \$11 million going to be invested in technology infrastructure, of which \$4.8 million is for e-health and \$2.1 million for school-based IT. There are a number of initiatives that the Yukon government is investing in with respect to our own assets, as well as investing in buildings across other departments that are being managed by the Property Management division. I'm sure other speakers will highlight many of the initiatives that are underway within their respective departments, whether it's the continuing care facility or Sarah Steele Building, or the St. Elias Residence, which is a very successful partnership between the Yukon and Kwanlin Dun First Nation as part of the YACA agreement, where they will be building that piece of infrastructure for the Yukon government to use to replace the existing St. Elias Residence.

I'm going to conclude by focusing a little bit on housing. It's certainly a Yukon government priority, and the remaining amount of the northern housing trust funding that we have is being allocated as follows. Members will know that, of that initial \$50 million that was transferred to the Yukon government, \$32.5 million was transferred to the various First Nations for projects within their communities. There were a number of other successful projects that were invested in, and now, through the leadership of the new minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, as well as the work of the previous minister, we'll see approximately \$1.4 million for affordable rentals in Carmacks and Carcross; \$3.5 million for a new municipal rental construction program, which will allow us to partner with municipalities to increase the supply of rental housing in Yukon communities; \$1 million for the rental housing allowance for families; \$800,000 for rental-quality enhancement grants; \$800,000 for accessibility enhancement grants; \$480,000 for a housing action plan implementation; and \$250,000 for planning of the Fifth and Rogers parcel, which is a significant piece of mostly vacant land located in the downtown core of Whitehorse. We want to ensure that we maximize the private sector investment and partner with the City of Whitehorse to ensure that their needs are met.

These are some of the exciting new initiatives that are underway in this budget, on top of projects that are underway or have been completed, such as the Alexander Street housing project, the 48-unit housing project that is currently under construction. Members can see that down on Front Street, here in Whitehorse. I was in Mayo earlier this year as well, and work is nearing completion on the six-unit seniors building in that community.

Again, there are significant investments that continue to be made in housing by this government. I think those are really reflective of what we heard on the doorsteps in 2011, in ensuring that we can meet the needs of Yukoners across the housing continuum, whether it's those who require supportive services such as those the Salvation Army homeless shelter will supply, to social housing — I again reference the Alexander Street and 48 units and investments in many of the communities by this government and the previous Yukon Party government.

Home ownership and making land available is something that is crucial, and making recreational lots available will also be very important to Yukoners, no matter where they reside on that housing continuum. I'm looking forward to the implementation of these new initiatives when it comes to housing.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to wrap up my remarks by, once again, thanking my caucus and Cabinet colleagues for all their work, thanking all the officials across the Yukon government for their work in putting this budget together. I know it's never a small undertaking, and it's something that requires an awful lot of their work and time and effort. It is very much appreciated by me and my colleagues on this side of the House.

Again, I'm hopeful that all members of this House will recognize the important investments that are being made in this budget and support this budget as we move through Committee and departmental debate. I look forward to being able to highlight many of the more exciting investments being made by Highways and Public Works and Energy, Mines and Resources when we get to departmental debate in the not-too-distant future.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks.

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard?

Ms. Stick: I want to start off by thanking all of my constituents of Riverdale South. It's a diverse community, from many new and young families to seniors who have lived there a long time. We have long-time homeowners, some in the original homes they built when Riverdale was just being developed, to many new families with young children and infants who are moving in and learning to enjoy the many amenities of Riverdale South.

I have the fortune of having five very active schools in the riding and I commend the supportive staff and school councils who work hard to provide the best service for children and who include parents and families in many of the activities and planning that go on in their schools.

As well in Riverdale South, we have a variety of businesses serving not just the local community, but also all of Whitehorse and recreational programming in our schools, in our fitness facilities, in our dance studios and in the Heart of Riverdale.

I want to thank the Minister of Finance for his budget speech in the delivery of the new budget for 2015-16. On our community tour this winter — and throughout the year — we

in the Official Opposition have heard many concerns from citizens when completing community tours or when they come into our office and speak to us. I will speak to many of these concerns that I have heard and the priorities that Yukoners feel are often missing in this Budget Address.

One of the things that I paid more attention to was the heading, "Making the Yukon the Best Place to Raise a Family", and I was looking for some real clear programming and ideas that would support that. But, instead — or more often than not — it was a list of capital projects — nothing about collaborative care, patient family-centred care, expanding access to primary care — all things proven to improve health outcomes for people and the well-being of our communities. But those things were not highlighted there. I did not note access to service. I just wanted to note that access to service is about whether or not services are available, accessible, accommodating, affordable and acceptable to the communities, but we didn't hear a lot of that.

We didn't hear a lot about mental health services or alcohol and drug services and after-care, but in the communities we heard a lot in particular about those things. We heard that people in the communities, individuals, families, governments are concerned about after-care for the individuals going through treatment and for their families. How will after-care be extended to communities when ADS workers and counsellors are there only on a visiting basis?

It is good to hear about the Sarah Steele Building. That is great for Whitehorse and for those coming for treatment, but it does not address the concerns of the communities.

We heard in the communities about the need for enhanced services for seniors in their communities where they live, including increased home care provision. This is what we heard in the communities.

The NDP heard about the lack of affordable and accessible housing for families, for individuals, for workers and for government employees.

There were concerns expressed about the lack of social workers in the communities. Some are only able to attend the communities on a once-a-week basis — once a week — one day. In those same conversations, we heard about a lack of appropriate office space and workspace. This is vital if we're to provide safe and secure places for our professionals to meet with individuals.

But this should not come as news to the government. We've heard about the confusion and lack of social workers in communities from the Auditor General a year ago. He highlighted it in his report on Family and Children's Services. To be clear, this isn't a complaint about workers, Mr. Speaker, but it's a complaint about the lack of resources and a lack of full-time workers in communities. It used to be that most communities had a social worker who lived there, who was part of the community and participated in and complemented what was going on in the community.

Too often we have seen that decisions are being made in isolation of the people who they're going to impact the most and the 300-bed facility is a prime example. It is a plan that is reactionary decision-making to a problem the government saw

coming years beforehand but did not address. If we look at the government's own statistics, it appears that the number of Yukoners being served by home care has fallen as our population of elders and seniors continues to grow. The decision to build a 300-bed facility flies in the face of health and community expert opinions, including those of the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Nursing Association and the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, to name a few.

This facility was not part of any reports that have been tabled in this Legislature over the span of this government's rule. None recommended a large facility such as this — not the health care review completed in 2008; not the clinical services plan completed in 2014; and not the *Health and Social Services Strategic Plan* and accompanying performance measure framework that were intended to guide our health care planning and decision-making from 2014 to 2019.

This facility was decided on without consultation. Seniors and elders were not approached before this plan came out. Medical professionals — people who we will be asking to provide staffing and direction — were not consulted. Communities weren't consulted — other levels of government. When we were in the communities, many people had not even heard of this plan. We spoke to citizens, seniors and elders and we spoke to the professional medical organizations. They are very concerned.

This has huge impacts. A needs assessment and a business plan were completed for a 300-bed institution but not without looking at other options. There are many, many to choose from across this country, but none were considered. It has been suggested that this is the most economical, but that's not true. The Canadian Institute for Health Information, a respected non-profit organization, has been clear that facilities with anything over 200 beds are the most costly and take up the most of our health care dollars.

Across this country and globally, people, professionals and governments are looking at and creating better models of care for seniors that respect their rights to choose, their ability and opportunities to age in place with the supports they require. It's about making choices. It's about seniors deciding what they want.

The suggested cost to build this is over \$300 million and that's today's cost. Is this really the most effective and affordable, or even the only option Yukoners have? I don't think so. This does not even touch on the O&M that will be required. What portion of our health care dollars will be taken up by the O&M that it will take to operate such a large facility? Instead we should be looking at how to improve the health and well-being of our seniors and elders who are ending up in long-term or continuing care at a younger and far higher rate than their Canadian counterparts. The information is available; it's there. Our seniors and elders are ending up in long-term or continuing care at a younger and far higher rate than Canadian counterparts, but instead this government is repeating history by forsaking health systems planning and health promotion in favour of another large capital project.

Nowhere in the business plan has there been a suggestion of how many workers, how many individuals will be required to staff such a large facility. Doctors, nurses, LPNs, janitors, cooks, laundry — the list goes on. The numbers will be huge and where are we going to find those professionals? Even now, governments and hospitals struggle to find doctors, nurses and health care professionals. There is a shortage, but imagine what we could do or what could be created with those same dollars that would serve Yukoners in Whitehorse and communities. Imagine if we were to give more funding to the college to offer home support worker and LPN programs, not just in Whitehorse but at community campuses across the territory.

Community members could gain the knowledge, the skills and, ultimately, jobs without having to leave their communities, and they would be able to work and provide supports to elders and seniors living in their communities.

Imagine if we took some of that money and increased funding to home and community care to offer a broader, more comprehensive range of services in every community and to every senior needing them. To me, that sounds like a better way to spend our dollars.

Imagine a range of senior residential services in the continuum of care that meets their needs. There are many seniors I have met and spoken to who would like to move from their homes that have become, perhaps, too unmanageable, too large. They are over-housed, and they would like to move into something such as assisted living — an apartment, a suite, able to live independently but, perhaps on the same premises, meals are provided, there's a common dining room, a common recreational and shared social space. We don't have that. We have plenty of apartments that are available for seniors, but we don't have that level of assisted care. This is what seniors are looking for — not a move from their own home to Copper Ridge or to a 300-bed facility. They would like to see a range of services. Why weren't those considered?

Imagine if we were able to provide more tangible supports to the informal caregivers, including family members and friends who may be required to take time from their jobs or from their own families to care for an aging parent or a friend. We will need more continuing and long-term care, but putting so much of our health care dollars into one 300-bed facility is not what Yukoners are saying they want. They want a range of options. They want choice.

It's not just the elders and seniors I'm hearing from on this project — it's also local contractors. They're telling us that they're being shut out of the current tendering that is being managed by Partnerships B.C. They are shut out by the scope, but they're also feeling they're not able to access information that would be available through our own procurement process, such as information with regard to who is looking at this project and whom they might partner with. It's not open and accountable, as our own procurement process is.

Moving on, this government takes a lot of credit for the services to individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. I

am interested to hear what has happened with the adult diagnostic clinic that has been a year in the making. I'm going to be interested to find out how many assessments have actually been completed by this new team in the previous fiscal year.

In this year, we have heard from individuals and families and caregivers who are frustrated that they are not able to have those assessment services available. In 2013-14, FASSY, a local NGO, was able to coordinate and complete seven assessments. This was done in cooperation with Health and Social Services. It was an important service that was provided and it gave many individuals a clearer understanding of their own strengths and needs and a direction for what kind of services they required. That funding was withdrawn from FASSY in favour of this in-house team. I am not against an in-house team. I believe it is important, but have there been any assessments completed in this last year or did we lose ground?

We heard mention in the budget speech a comment about McDonald Lodge in Dawson City and we heard that this new 15-bed facility will have an option to expand. I was surprised at that, because just this fall, in the last sitting, the minister made it very clear that this was to be a 15-bed project and only a 15-bed project, but already we are talking about expanding it. We are pleased to hear about the rebuild of the St. Elias group home. It has been long overdue, but what are the plans? Who will it provide support to? Is it transitional or is it permanent? Are there independent suites or just rooms? Where will people move to if they are no longer appropriate for that service?

Back to the Sarah Steele Building and contractors: currently a request for proposals is open for the building of the new Sarah Steele replacement building. In a matter of weeks from that request for proposals coming out, there have been eight addendums, including pushing the date for proposals out by an additional week, still leaving only seven weeks for businesses to complete their work. But the question should be: Why so many addendums? Why so much confusion on a project that has been in the planning stages for so long? This is costing contractors time and money. They seem to move forward on what they are doing and go backwards two steps when another addendum is provided to them. I believe that in listening to Yukoners, to businesses, to contractors and to citizens.

Another project going forward is the transitional housing residence for individuals with mental health issues. Again, this is a project that speaks to transitional housing, but transition to where? What is the plan, Mr. Speaker? To what affordable and accessible housing options will these individuals be able to move? Are we just setting these individuals up to complete something, tell them they're done and not have appropriate housing available? For many, many, affordable rental housing options remain out of their grasp.

We've heard a bit of talk this week about mental health services in the communities and it continues to be a huge concern to citizens. Right now we have two mental health nurses who are required to cover all of the communities,

Mr. Speaker. As you can imagine, some might get a visit once a week, others not so often, and certainly not when there's a crisis. It's difficult to provide services when we don't have the resources or the people in the communities to provide those. We know that Many Rivers and the workers we have now are stretched, restricted by hours, travel and what they're able to do. I've heard from parents concerned that they have made referrals or asked for support from Mental Health Services for their children. It's a gap. They're on a waitlist and not getting the supports that they request.

We know there are long waits for mental health counselling and support and, again, this is not the fault of the mental health care professionals, but I would suggest a lack of resourcing and, more important, a clear mental health strategy for the Yukon. This has been talked about, has been studied and has been promised. There have been recommendations made through many plans, but still we are without a clear plan, clear goals and measurable outcomes and the public is left wondering when these services will be available throughout the Yukon.

I always come back to the social inclusion and poverty reduction strategy. How is that coming? Have we seen improved conditions for families and individuals — children? Are the numbers coming down for those requiring social assistance or support from the food bank, whether in Whitehorse or in the communities? Are we measuring the gains that citizens have made? I can't find that information anywhere.

We know that poverty, poor housing and lack of nutritious food all have long-term impacts on children, on their brain development and on their health outcomes further down the road. These have impacts on our health care system. These have impacts on people's health and susceptibility to chronic disease, such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease and poor overall health. Yet these social economic determinants of health are poorly represented in this government's current budget.

In fact, over the last decade, the Yukon Party government's approach to health and social services has left many Yukoners with a poorer health status on a national basis than our fellow Canadians on many key indicators.

Health decisions have not been anchored in tenets of responsible government, such as comprehensive, coordinated, strategic planning, program management and accountable decision-making. Rather, they seem to be characterized as a series of ad hoc, frequently contradictory, public announcements and top-down actions. They have been overwhelmingly inappropriate, ineffective, inefficient and costly, not just in terms of dollars, but in individuals' health and in the health and well-being of our communities and of our children.

The Yukon NDP know that we can improve the health and well-being of all Yukoners by listening to what our community members want and are asking for, by working with our health and wellness professionals and service providers, and by listening to the wealth of expert advice available to us within our public sector and across Canada.

We believe that improving our health and social services planning and outcomes will be supported by evidence-based decision-making, rather than decision-based evidence-making, which seems to be the norm. There are a lot of questions and a lot of concerns of Yukoners that I intend to bring forward in Question Period and during the budget debate at the department level. The NDP will continue to ask and to listen to Yukoners' concerns.

I just want to end this by thanking all the Yukoners who welcomed us in the communities, who spoke to us, who shared their concerns and have continued to visit our offices, e-mail us or stop us in the grocery store. We are listening, Mr. Speaker, and we thank them for speaking to us.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It is a pleasure to rise and speak to this year's budget and respond to the Premier's Budget Address, which was done last Thursday on the first sitting day of this Spring Sitting. I have a number of things I want to cover with regard to the budget, with regard to my current responsibilities as Minister of Community Services and minister responsible for the Public Service Commission. I also want to touch a little bit on some of my previous roles as Minister of Environment and Minister of Economic Development, but first I did want to touch on a few riding matters that relate to my riding of Copperbelt North.

As I try to do from time to time, I would obviously like to thank the residents of Copperbelt North for their continued support as a member of the Legislative Assembly on their behalf. I would like to thank them for their interest and willingness to express their thoughts and opinions to me in various meetings over the course of the last several years.

I did want to make mention of one particular individual who we unfortunately lost this year from my riding. I know we'll hopefully be able to do a tribute to her later in the sitting, so I won't say too, too much now but, earlier this year, Jean Jamieson, who was a constituent of mine — a very good friend, better known as "Nanny" to those of us who knew her well — unfortunately passed away at the tender age of 101. She was only a few months shy of 102 and passed away in the company of her family earlier this year. As I said, we will hopefully be able to do a tribute to her later this year, so I won't say too much about Nanny's life, but simply that she will certainly be missed, that she was an exceptional woman, and that it was an absolute honour to have known her over my life.

Mr. Speaker, also with regard to my riding, I want to take note and mention the hard work of the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association, which does a lot of great work around our neighbourhood to build a sense of community in the Copper Ridge area. They operate a number of programs in Copper Ridge, including administering the FireSmart program, which has seen a lot of activity in the areas adjacent to Copper Ridge and Granger in the last few years. It has been a welcome program there.

They also operate the Snow Angels program, which offers the opportunity for residents who feel that they have the capacity or willingness to help out and shovel somebody

else's driveway, should somebody need to. They offer the matchmaking program there called Snow Angels.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, I should note the tremendous amount of work that has gone into the development and proposed changes to the Winze Park area. It's an open space on Winze Lane that a number of folks from the neighbourhood have expressed an interest in seeing improved or developed in some way. To date, it has been simply an empty lot. It's fairly large. It has been seeded at certain times in its past and has, at various times, gone to weed; but, more recently, we've seen some trees planted on that facility. There has been some vision articulated by the community, vis-à-vis the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association, and some desire expressed to see some other activities hosted at that site. I'm looking forward to seeing what the neighbourhood association will come up with and I'm looking forward to working with them to secure funding to try to see that site developed or improved to the needs and to the wishes of the community.

Earlier this year, of course, we had our Cabinet shuffle, and this is our first sitting since then. You know, Cabinet shuffles are always interesting for ministers, I think, because, on one hand, you do regret leaving the department that you've become very closely associated with and interested in, and you miss the fact that you get to work with those departments; but, on the other hand, there's a certain degree of excitement about the new opportunities that a new department brings.

I wanted to say just a few words about my previous departments — first of all, Environment. It was an absolute pleasure to serve as the Minister of Environment for the last three and a half or so years. A number of the initiatives that we were able to get going during my time as minister there have either concluded or are underway and continue to be supported by the current minister — not the least of which, Mr. Speaker — I mean, there are a lot of things and I don't want to list all of the initiatives under Environment, but there are a few things I did want to mention that I was particularly proud of.

Of course, the first one that comes to mind is the work on the Conrad campground. I know that the minister shared with me the most recent updates on that and it is very promising and very exciting that we have a new campground being constructed. It is the first campground being constructed in the Yukon since the mid-80s, so quite a long time — over 30 years, perhaps even closer to 40 years since we have seen a new campground constructed in Yukon. So that is exciting to me, and not only because it's a new campground and Yukoners love campgrounds, but the way and location of the campground being developed at Conrad is of particular interest.

The partnership with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation is a wonderful example of partnership across governments, and the location is very important as well — the historic relevance of the Conrad site, as well as the fact that it ties in very nicely with some of the work that has been done in that area with regard to the mountain biking trails around Carcross. The community, in particular the First Nation, has really done a

fantastic job in developing some of those trails over the years, and I think that the campground will serve as a very nice addition to that network. It is right at the end of one of the trail networks, I understand, and the campground is being constructed in a way that will accommodate group camping or group activities with those trails in mind.

As well, Mr. Speaker, as members are very familiar with, we initiated, developed and ultimately brought forward a water strategy for the territory, something I was very proud of. I thought it was an excellent piece of work, and I would like to take a moment to thank the Department of Environment and the staff who worked on that strategy over the years. It was a lot of work, involved a lot of consultation, a lot of meetings and a lot of ground work by staff to go out to communities and spend a lot of time on the road, working on that strategy but, ultimately, I think we ended up with a product that was fantastic and is something that is going to benefit our territory for years to come.

Alongside that strategy, of course, was the implementation of it through the expenditure of considerable resources, both in terms of human and financial resources. We saw an increase in both of those as a result of the water strategy and, as a result of that work, we will know considerably more about Yukon's water resources than we did when we started, which is ultimately the goal.

As well, with the Department of Environment, I really valued my time — not to focus too much on the department, but also on the relationships developed with other non-government organizations, like the renewable resources councils and the Fish and Wildlife Management Board. The Fish and Wildlife Management Board is probably one of the more under-rated boards in the territory, I think. They deal with some very serious issues that are of great importance to a lot of Yukoners and issues that raise a lot of interest and passion among Yukoners. Those can be challenging issues in a small community like Yukon, but they are able to navigate those and deal with those issues very astutely.

I would like to thank the members of the board, who are there now or who were there previously over my time as minister, for the strong working relationship we had between me, the department and the board. I am expecting very much that the current minister will continue with that relationship, and I know that, having served as a member of a renewable resources council, he knows all too well the importance of the relationship between renewable resources councils, the Fish and Wildlife Management Board, the department and the minister, so I sure he will continue on with that strong relationship.

With regard to the Department of Economic Development, there are a number of projects that were initiated or underway when I left the department that I look forward to seeing continue on, not the least of which is the diverse fibre optic project. It is one I found to be tremendously interesting and really appreciated the work of the department on that. Of course, a lot of the work had been done by the new telecommunications branch of the department, which came into existence under my tenure as minister, and so I was

naturally very proud to see that directorate extended in our current budget.

As well, I certainly appreciated the staff in Economic Development who dealt with the investment attraction work. They have come a long way in a fairly short period of time, in terms of promoting Yukon in a very concerted, very organized way throughout the world. These folks spend a lot of time on the road, unfortunately, and thus away from their families, but they do very important work on behalf of all Yukoners in raising the profile of Yukon as a jurisdiction for investment and for economic opportunities, whether they are in mining, oil and gas, tourism or any other sector in the territory. The folks at Economic Development in the investment attraction area have done work that I am very proud of.

Moving now toward my current role as the Minister of Community Services, I have, over the past number of years, been very familiar with the Department of Community Services from the outside, as a minister in other departments, but to enter into the department just over two months ago, I have really gained an appreciation of the breadth and extensiveness of the department. There is such a wide variety of issues that Community Services deals with. They are very diverse and they are very important and are often overlooked.

In Community Services, there are over 70 pieces of legislation that fall under the aegis of Community Services, so the department is, and now I am, responsible for over 70 pieces of legislation. It is a tremendous amount of work. There are pieces of legislation out there that I had never heard of until being briefed on them by Community Services recently — everything from the second-hand sellers act and the *Dog Act* to a number of lists of what sound like obscure acts but are actually fairly important in their own right. I really gained an appreciation for the breadth of the department when I learned about all the pieces of legislation that we are responsible for.

I'll walk through some of the initiatives that are underway in the department and how the budget that we're discussing today influences, or contributes to, those initiatives, but the first thing I wanted to mention was the Sport and Recreation branch in the Department of Community Services. My personal background is one of considerable involvement in the sport community in Yukon. I've been involved in a variety of different sports throughout the territory throughout my life, both as a player, a coach, an athlete, an official and an organizer. I've certainly had a fair share of experience with a number of the sports but, entering into the Sport and Recreation branch, you realize that however many sports you think you are involved with, there are about 100 other ones that you have never been involved with. Yukon has such a robust sporting community that I'm amazed by what goes on in the territory with regard to sport.

I wanted to take note of a few particular points of interest of mine with regard to sport. The first one was that, soon after the shuffle that saw me become the minister responsible for Sport and Recreation, I got to attend the opening ceremonies of the Canada Winter Games held in Prince George. I got to see the full contingent of Yukon athletes in their Team Yukon

kit and see them take part in what was, by all accounts, a phenomenal opening ceremony in Prince George.

Not only did they look great at the Canada Winter Games, they performed exceptionally well. Yukon was able to, at the end of the games, end up with eight medals across a variety of sports. We had three golds, one silver and four bronze. When you hold those against some of the totals of other provinces, it doesn't seem like that much, but to finish as we did, eighth in Canada, I think is a tremendous feat and a strong testament to the passion and skill that the athletes we have in Yukon have for their sports.

We finished just behind New Brunswick and ahead of provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, P.E.I., as well as the other two territories, N.W.T. and Nunavut. For a small territory like our own to outperform provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador, like Nova Scotia and like P.E.I., I think is a phenomenal accomplishment. I think all our athletes should be very proud.

I don't mean just the athletes who got medals. I think we should be proud of all the athletes who participated in the Canada Winter Games, regardless of how they finished. To be selected to participate in the Canada Winter Games is a tremendous honour, and I know that all the athletes, parents and coaches who participated found it to be a very rewarding experience.

At those games, one of our gold medals was by a young lady by the name of Rachel Pettitt. The Pettitt family is very well-known in Whitehorse. Rachel's mother, Trish, taught me — and I think probably other people in this House — how to skate a number of years ago. She has been involved in both hockey and figure skating for many, many years, as are her sons and Rachel's brothers. It was phenomenal to see Rachel accomplish what she has accomplished.

The week that we had the Cabinet shuffle, when I was brand new as minister responsible for Sport and Recreation, Rachel won the nationals. She had the best free program at nationals, and that was the first time that a Yukoner had ever won that level of figure skating.

For a young lady who is only 15 years old, she has gold medals from Canada Winter Games, and she has won nationals, and we can only imagine what lies ahead for Rachel as a young athlete coming from the Yukon. We obviously have high hopes as well a great deal of pride in her accomplishments to date.

As well at the Canada Winter Games, we took note of the medals that were won by Nadia Moser, our flag-bearer at the opening ceremonies. Nadia won silver and two bronze, I believe, in biathlon. The reason I take note of those is that they were the first — they were won on, I believe, the first or second day of the competition and they were the first medals by anybody from the territories, so Nadia really put us on the map when it came to medals at the Canada Winter Games and so I would like to offer my congratulations to her as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Canada Winter Games are very exciting and fantastic for Yukon athletes to participate in, but I think all Yukoners and all northerners have a special place in their hearts for the Arctic Winter Games. As members of the House

are aware, the 2016 Arctic Winter Games are right around the corner and they will be held primarily in Nuuk, Greenland, with some events also being held in Iqaluit, Nunavut. I was very pleased to see in this budget that has come forward \$1 million that will be allocated to support our athletes to participate in those Arctic Winter Games next year in Nuuk and Iqaluit.

Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the Arctic X Games that we will be hosting concurrently with Arctic Winter Game here in Whitehorse. There is a long story with this that I think we're all familiar with — we've passed motions and discussed this issue in the House previously — and I think all members are aware of the great effort and work that was done by previous ministers, the MLA for Whitehorse West as well as the MLA for Lake Laberge, who did a considerable amount of work to ensure that these games happened. We wouldn't be announcing the \$100,000 that we have in this budget for the Arctic X Games if not for the work of those of my predecessors so I would like to of course thank them for that.

As well, I have to note that while we always focus on the athletes in these events, whether they're the Canada Games or the Arctic Winter Games, we can't forget to note the important roles of parents and friends who support our athletes when they go to these types of events. Parents often put in as many hours as the kids do and as many hours as the athletes do.

We certainly appreciate the great amount of time, money and effort that goes into having a young athlete in the house and having an athlete participate in the kinds of games like these.

I can't begin to tell you how fascinating it is to see the number and breadth of sports events that are hosted in Whitehorse and in the Yukon on what seems like a weekly basis. Just last week we had the national masters curling in town, here in Whitehorse. There were teams from across Canada participating in that and there are many more events like that to come, whether they are for kids, whether they are for adults, whether they are for seniors, whether they are focused on any number of different groups, Yukon is constantly hosting sporting events both here in Whitehorse and in the communities.

Also in the budget this year, I should take note of the fact that we, of course, are continuing with the increase to the community recreation assistance grant funding for unincorporated Yukon communities to support community recreation, wellness and active living. That was a decision that was put forward by my predecessor as well to increase that CRAG funding, so all of those unincorporated communities that receive support from the government will see a substantial increase in the support they receive. In most case, I believe, The CRAG funding is being doubled for most communities, but it is based on the various communities.

As well, speaking of successful athletes, I almost missed one that is very near and dear to my heart. Earlier this year, the Bantam Mustangs won the B.C. Provincials. That was a phenomenal accomplishment. I participated as a Mustang in at

least three different provincials and I think the best we ever did was sixth. I know that a few years ago — probably close to eight or nine years ago — we got second at one point, when we had a really strong team and that was a fantastic accomplishment. I remember when we got second and we lost the final game, I remember that a lot of the local media were very happy that we got second, as was I, and they said that for a team from Yukon to even get second was such an accomplishment. Well, I think the Bantam Mustangs from this year have shown us that doing not bad for a team from the Yukon is actually first place. We are very proud of the Bantam Mustangs in their accomplishment of winning the B.C. Provincials.

I am a little bit jealous. I wish it would have been me that had done it when I was playing, but I am very happy to see that this year's squad was successful. I know that there are a number of younger players on the team too, so I think that the Mustangs have a bright future over the course of the next few years, both in the Bantam and going into the Midget levels.

I should also note that the budget contains \$325,000 for Yukon's participation in the Western Canada Summer Games in Alberta this August. That will be a great opportunity for our summer athletes to participate in the Westerns. I have to admit a small amount of bias toward winter sports, but Yukon has a very robust summer sport community as well and it is evidenced by the strong contingent of athletes that we are sending to the Western Canada Summer Games this August.

Turning if I could to the infrastructure development associated with sports, I know that there has been some interest of late in the proposal for a new soccer field — or two new soccer fields and running track in the Whistle Bend area. I wanted to take a few moments to talk about that proposal. Obviously, the budget contains some money that's allocated toward that project. This initiative was announced originally in last year's budget in April of last year. Since then, there have been a number of meetings between City of Whitehorse officials and Yukon government officials, as well as meetings directly between mayor and council and the previous minister. Obviously, those meetings included the initial proponents, which were the Yukon Outdoor Sports Complex Association group themselves.

The project is, of course, being led now by Yukon government, but it's being led in partnership with YOSCA, the group that is advocating for the project. That group is a diverse group of individuals who come from a variety of backgrounds, including soccer and other sports. They have done a lot of work in terms of developing the needs component of the facility. I think it's pretty well understood that there's a strong degree of demand for this type of development and the need has been well-expressed by the groups that have been coming out in droves to city council to express their support.

As we know, the Yukon government is planning to develop two artificial turf soccer fields and a rubberized track in the Whistle Bend subdivision of Whitehorse, which to this point has been referred to generally as the "Yukon outdoor sports complex". Yukon government had issued a request for

proposals earlier this year for the design of the fields and track, as well as necessary supporting infrastructure, such as lighting, a utility building and viewing stands. Once Yukon government has selected a design and construction plan, we will, of course, budget the appropriate funds and issue a tender for the construction of the complex. The final design will be based on experience from other community installations of a similar nature, built in similar conditions across North America. We are doing this work with the Yukon Outdoor Sports Complex Association — YOSCA — pursuant to a memorandum of agreement. I should note that while the RFP did contemplate conceptual planning for the development of future components, we are currently only planning the development of the infrastructure noted in the RFP, which of course is those two fields and the running track. While we think there is value in conceptual planning for future development, additional phases or additional facilities are not being pursued at this time. If we ever plan to do anything more, we will, of course, consult with the City of Whitehorse and other groups before we do that.

We expect, obviously, to pay for the construction of the sports complex and will own the facility. We expect to enter into a lease agreement with YOSCA, allowing them to manage the operation and maintenance of the complex. Charging appropriate user fees will be among the methods employed by YOSCA to cover these costs. Additionally, we anticipate YOSCA will seek support from other potential user groups and may raise funds through advertising or sponsorships. I want to note there are currently no expectations on the City of Whitehorse for the operation and maintenance of the complex.

Of course, we are not requesting that any fees or taxes be waived. As is the case with other YG-owned properties in Whitehorse, Yukon government will pay a grant-in-lieu to the City of Whitehorse. In general, this funding arrangement is consistent with historical practice for O&M for recreational infrastructure adjacent to public schools.

While the design of the field and track will be site-specific, there are design elements that could be used elsewhere, should it become necessary to consider another site. That being said, I believe the field and track would be an ideal addition to a burgeoning neighbourhood like Whistle Bend.

While various sports organizations would probably be better suited than I to comment on the needs of their specific sports, I am pleased to provide a little bit of general information about the need for this facility. Despite the fact that Yukon has sent numerous teams and athletes to national and international soccer tournaments and competitions, Yukon has never — and I repeat, never — had a full-sized competition-level soccer pitch. Over the years, our athletes have played and trained on schoolyard grass fields of inadequate dimension and of quality that is determined by the whims of Yukon weather.

The field nearest to meeting regulation was that at F.H. Collins, which is now the site of the new school. The situation is similar for track and field athletes who need access to a

quality running track. My understanding is that access to artificial turf fields will extend the soccer season considerably. They will also allow sports organizations to have access to playing surfaces comparable to those used by their competitors in the rest of Canada.

Put simply, the proposed infrastructure will be a welcome addition to Yukon's recreational infrastructure and will improve the ability of Yukon's athletes to train and compete in a manner comparable to the rest of Canada. This will be of great benefit to Yukon athletes and Yukon communities.

As currently contemplated, the sports complex will be fenced and gated. At the very least, this is necessary to protect the artificial turf of the fields, which are vulnerable to damage from improper use. This type of controlled access is not unusual and is the practice at many other sports facilities in Whitehorse, such as the broomball rink, Mount McIntyre Recreation Centre and the Canada Games Centre. As we all know, the sports complex is deliberately being proposed adjacent to a site planned for a future school. The lease agreement with YOSCA will contain the terms required to ensure this complex is available for public use in the future. There are many factors that will be considered before moving forward with that school, and that is not being contemplated currently, but of course this is a facility that will be needed by the school eventually, once it is constructed.

As I have mentioned, Yukon participates in a variety of summer and winter games around the country. While we aren't currently considering or don't currently have any bids forward for summer games, a facility of this nature would put us into a position to consider applying for such summer games. We would be in a better position to host regional, national or international summer games with this facility.

As is common practice, if we were to consider hosting one of those types of games, we would consult and partner with the City of Whitehorse on any such bid.

I am pleased to provide some of that information about that facility. I think it will be a wonderful addition to the community. Obviously, city council has had a number of questions about it, as it is their job to ask questions about rezoning applications before them. We look forward to a positive response from city council. I believe tonight is the first vote on that rezoning.

Let me turn now to the municipal — that offers me a nice segue to the next aspect that I wanted to touch on with regard to the Department of Community Services, and that is the Municipal and Community Affairs branch of the department.

In my short time as minister, I have had an opportunity to work with and discuss issues with a number of community leaders, including the mayors of the various municipalities. In my first week as minister, I was able to speak with somebody from every municipality in the Yukon to discuss some of their interests and priorities, and to introduce myself and offer my willingness to engage in a meaningful way and discuss matters of importance to Yukon communities. I have to say that I've been blown away by the amount of work that goes into all the municipalities. Of course the expenditures that are made by Yukon government are considerable, but also the

time, effort and passion that folks either in the positions of municipal leaders like mayors and councillors, but also administrative support as well from the staff like the chief operating officers or chief administrative officers — it is commendable.

The AYC of course is an important feature of that relationship between Yukon government and all Yukon communities. There is a lot of work going on between our government and the AYC. I look forward to attending their annual meeting this year in Haines Junction. I know Haines Junction is looking forward to hosting the AYC later this year and I believe the agenda features functions that involve a number of members of this House, including the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Leader of the Third Party, so I look forward to hearing from those folks at that venue about their vision for Yukon's communities. I look forward to working with the AYC on a number of issues that are of importance to them, not the least of which of course — I'm running out of time, Mr. Speaker, thank you — are the changes that are being proposed to the *Municipal Act* that we've been working very closely with all the Yukon municipalities on. The working group that is doing that work on those proposed changes has done a considerable amount of work and we really appreciate the work that they've done.

As well, we're doing some considerable work on the solid-waste file. We've re-engaged the Solid Waste Working Group at AYC. As well, we have a number of initiatives underway with regard to recycling throughout the territory.

One initiative that was undertaken late last year was the passage of the legislation to allow the rural well program to be applied in municipalities and I look forward to working with interested municipalities to implement that program within their municipal boundaries if they are interested in it. I know that the AYC will offer an opportunity for us to extend those discussions further.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I wasn't able to get to much of what I wanted to talk about. I see that my time is running down, so I will use my last few minutes to note that I'm really looking forward to working with all of the groups in the Protective Services branch, as well as with Corporate Policy and Consumer Affairs, the Employment Standards and Residential Tenancies branch of the Department of Community Services.

In my introduction to the department, I was really blown away by the EMS folks in the Protective Services branch. I admittedly had a poor understanding of how EMS worked in the territory, and I have become enlightened by the conversations I had with the officials in our EMS facilities. The EMS folks do such an incredible job. They are such an important part of our health care system, and they often go under-recognized and I want to make sure that I get on the record my appreciation for the work that they do, as well as the fact of my sincere level of appreciation and respect. I was very impressed by what they did. Part of it was because I don't think I could do that job, and that is a testament to the fact that only certain people are cut out for that job and we really appreciate that they do it.

I wasn't able to get to fire or search and rescue, unfortunately. These are all important aspects that I'm sure I'll have the opportunity to talk about in the future, as well as a number of the investments we make in drinking water, solid waste management, land development and, of course, property assessment and taxation in the Department of Community Services.

I see that my time has ticked away. I would commend this budget to the House and I look forward to implementing the considerable investments that are made in this budget throughout the Yukon Territory. Whether it be in municipalities throughout the territory or in unincorporated communities or in other areas of the territory, I think this budget offers a tremendous step forward for the territory, and I look forward to supporting it and ultimately to implementing the vision that is articulated within it.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will commend the budget for this year to the House.

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard?
Are you prepared for the question?
Motion for second reading of Bill No. 18 agreed to

Mr. Elias: 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 4:57 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled April 7, 2015:

33-1-155
2014 Annual Report of the Yukon Ombudsman (Speaker Laxton)

33-1-156
2014 Annual Report of the Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner (Speaker Laxton)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 192

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, April 8, 2015 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Government House Leader Vuntut Gwitchin
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
Wednesday, April 8, 2015 — 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 International Day of Pink

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to International Day of Pink. In November, many Yukoners demonstrated their solidarity against bullying behaviours on Sea of Pink day with students, staff and community members wearing pink to school.

Today on this International Day of Pink, groups around the world do the same to express that they stand with people victimized by bullying and they're prepared to take action against those hurtful behaviours. There is the potential for all of us to be bullied or to bully other people. Bullying prevention tends to focus on what victims can do to protect themselves. We all tell ourselves and our children to stand taller, walk faster and be stronger. Although these strategies help to keep kids safe and to cope with being bullied, they also place the burden of change upon the victims of bullying. To truly overcome bullying, we must address the perpetrators.

This means we must take an honest look at our own behaviours and teach our children to do the same. Whether intentionally or accidentally, we may have teased someone, participated in gossip, left someone out, intimidated someone or hurt someone's feelings. We must set the example in recognizing when we have been guilty of bullying behaviours, apologizing to those we have hurt and working hard not to repeat those behaviours in the future. We all have a responsibility to our younger generations and to each other to demonstrate every single day how to treat one another with respect and with dignity.

Yukon government is committed to providing safe and caring schools for students and staff, where students can focus on learning. Confronting bullying behaviours is an important part of ensuring the safety of students from the hallways to the playground to the digital world of on-line learning opportunities. Teaching our children that they do not have to tear others down to raise themselves up is a very important lesson.

The Yukon is the best place to live, work, play and raise a family. Let's make it an even better place to live by ensuring that bullying in the Yukon becomes a thing of the past. It is the responsibility of each of us to demonstrate this to Yukon's youth and children in how we treat one another each and every day.

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to commemorate the International Day of Pink. Today, millions of people worldwide are standing together against bullying, discrimination, homophobia, transphobia and trans-monogamy.

Today, millions around the world are celebrating our rich human diversity by wearing pink. I don't think it would surprise anyone to know, Mr. Speaker, that this movement started right here in Canada. In 2007, students at a Nova Scotia high school retaliated to an act of bullying by flooding their school with pink shirts, in solidarity with their bullied classmates. This act of resistance inspired the International Day of Pink, which now has millions of participants in more than 25 countries.

Organizations and activists across Canada are working to stop bullying, discrimination and homophobia in schools and communities not only in Canada, but worldwide, by offering and facilitating workshops, presentations and training conferences. They customize programming for communities and seek to engage everyone in an important dialogue about the diversity around us. These champions of equal rights chalk up their successes in their ongoing campaign to end bullying, discrimination and homophobia to a youth-led model that better engages both young people and their communities in celebrating diversity.

As legislators, we can tackle bullying and discrimination in a number of important ways. We can stand here once or twice a year and praise the work being done by others, or we can choose to do some of that work ourselves. For example, in 2013, the Manitoba government took action to end bullying in their province by amending their public schools act. The changes make schools safer and more inclusive by combatting bullying, cementing the right for students to form gay-straight alliances and ensuring safe places for everyone.

I look forward to the day that, instead of only paying tribute to the work of others, we can look back on our work as legislators and know that we made our community safer for all.

Mr. Silver: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal Party to also pay tribute to the International Day of Pink. This year represents the 10th anniversary of the International Day of Pink, a day to celebrate our diversity and to push back against bullying.

The day's origins go back to when two students in a Nova Scotia high school saw one of their peers being bullied in their high school and supported him by getting everyone at the school to wear pink. Today we all wear pink to show solidarity with those who are bullied or discriminated against.

This inspired the youth at Jer's Vision, who founded the International Day of Pink, an effort to support their peers internationally, with resources and ways to make their schools safer. At their worst, bullying and discrimination isolate people, severing them from the support that we all crave. As a community, we must stand up against those who bully, discriminate and foster hate and violence against other people.

I urge all who are listening to this tribute or anybody who is reading this later on in Hansard to make your way over to the Day of Pink website, <http://www.dayofpink.org>, and read the Day of Pink quotes from leaders across this great nation.

I was at this time going to read to you one of the quotes that I provided the website but, in order to end the isolation, we must stand together against bullying in all of its forms to create a more accepting and welcoming society for everyone, so, in the spirit of a united front, I wish to quote from another leader who also submitted a quote for the Day of Pink organization — and I quote: “There are many ways in which discrimination can manifest itself. Stereotypical ideas often lead to prejudices that may easily lead to discrimination that will affect how we work, study and treat one another. Ultimately, these stereotypical ideas create barriers: bullying, harassment, hate and violence. I urge... our fellow Yukoners, to stand united against discrimination and bullying in whichever form it may occur.”

Mr. Speaker, that quote was from the Hon. Premier of the Yukon.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the volunteers at Jer’s Vision who organized the great events this year and provide support to anti-bullying against trans and homophobic activities.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would like to welcome to the gallery a constituent — and ask all members to join me in welcoming Peter Wojtowicz.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I have for tabling a letter from me, as Minister of Community Services, to His Worship Dan Curtis, Mayor of Whitehorse, regarding the Yukon outdoor sports complex.

Speaker: Are there any other documents or returns 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. 88: *Pharmacy and Drug Act* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I move that Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 88 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced? Are there any 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 conclude the required review of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* within the 2015 calendar year, with a particular focus on the implications of technological advancements on the access to information and protection of privacy.

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

THAT this House congratulates the Government of Yukon for following in the footsteps of the Premier of Saskatchewan, the rural municipality of Gimli, Manitoba and the newly elected senator for New York’s 62nd senate district in declaring their jurisdiction the best place to live, work and raise a family.

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

THAT this House urges the governments of Yukon and Canada to support Bill C-656, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (fetal alcohol disorder)*, to improve access to justice for individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) by requiring the courts to consider, as a mitigating factor in sentencing, a determination that the offender suffers from FASD if the condition was relevant or contributed to the commission of the offence.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Economic outlook

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, members of this Legislature from all parties know that small businesses are the backbone of the Yukon economy. That’s why an NDP government established the Yukon small business investment tax credit. That commitment fostered the growth of Yukon’s iconic airline, boosting other small businesses’ share of Yukon’s economy and building a strong base to support and anchor many other local enterprises. The Yukon Party government has failed to take measures to sustain a strong business climate. The City of Whitehorse’s 2014 annual report showed the loss of nearly 800 businesses from 2012 to 2013. Those that do survive are not doing as well as elsewhere in Canada. Average weekly earnings for all Yukon businesses are below the national average, while small businesses are experiencing negative growth.

When will the Premier acknowledge that when small businesses suffer, Yukon's economy also suffers?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Of course this government is committed to a private sector economy. When it comes to small business, we're very proud that last year we reduced the Yukon small business tax by 25 percent in this jurisdiction from four percent to three percent.

What we are doing with our budget is exactly what the member opposite is talking about. We are supporting medium- and small-sized Yukon businesses by having the largest capital budget in Yukon's history. We are making strategic investments in infrastructure that will benefit this territory and its growth for many generations, but while we're doing it, we will be supporting Yukon small businesses, Yukon trades and Yukon workers to ensure that families can stay here in Yukon.

Ms. Hanson: You know, Mr. Speaker, Yukon's economy is stagnating in the absence of a coherent strategy and the Premier continues to confuse spending with planning. Large capital projects can be good stimulants for economic growth and job creation when they prioritize local capacity, local economic development and are phased in a managed way. But the Yukon Party government has not worked with local industries, suppliers and contractors to maximize local benefits and has effectively prevented Yukon businesses from bidding on their \$300 million continuing care institution.

The Yukon Chamber of Commerce president notes that when it comes to job creation, benefits will largely depend on how much construction work goes to Yukon firms. How is the Premier's most recent spending spree going to ensure that Yukon's small and medium businesses don't lose out in this rush to spend massive amounts of money before the next election?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This government will continue to invest in areas that are a priority for Yukoners. We'll continue to invest in schools. We'll continue to invest in hospitals and health care facilities like the new Sarah Steele facility, like the two new hospitals in Watson Lake and in Dawson City. We'll continue to invest in roads and bridges and in aerodromes. We'll continue to invest in hydroelectricity. We'll continue to invest in areas — strategic investments in infrastructure — that will ensure that Yukon is ready as we continue to grow and develop and, as a result of those investments, we continue to support Yukon families and Yukon businesses.

Ms. Hanson: The Yukon Party's continued barriers to involvement of small businesses in megaprojects and the mismanagement of the economy have left Yukon pulling up the rear in terms of wholesale and retail sales, in Canada. Statistics Canada data shows that Yukon retail sales declined last year, and that trend continues in early 2015. Meanwhile wholesale sales have also declined in the past two years, with the lowest wholesale growth rate in Canada. This government likes to call the 2013 economic downturn a blip, but the downturn persists. Our economy has been in steady decline since the Premier took office and small businesses are bearing the brunt of it.

Will the Premier admit that his trickle-down approach to small-business growth has failed and commit to working with

small businesses to develop a real economic strategy that supports sustained local economic development?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: What I can say is that during the last NDP and Liberal governments, we had a mass exodus of people from this territory because of double-digit unemployment because of debt. This Yukon Party government and the previous Yukon Party governments have seen a rise in the population in this territory by over 20 percent because of that strong growth in our private sector. We can't control commodity prices, but Yukoners trust this government to manage their finances in good times and in bad, and that's why, across this country right now, we see provinces that are cutting jobs and raising taxes. This government is lowering taxes for Yukoners and spending money to create jobs and infrastructure for Yukoners.

Question re: Alaska Highway corridor functional plan

Ms. Moorcroft: On the radio this morning we heard the owners of the Airport Chalet and Centennial Motors raise concerns about the government's plan to twin the Alaska Highway through much of Whitehorse. So far there are 30 business owners who are concerned about the impacts of this development. They calculate that the plan would see 11 lanes, including turning lanes, bypass roads, shoulders and meridians, in front of the airport. Area business owners are opposed to the plan and say it's too much, too complicated and too costly. They think the \$202-million plan responds to a problem that doesn't exist. Business owners have taken the extraordinary step of hiring an engineer to produce an alternative design.

How does the government plan to address the concerns of affected businesses?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The Yukon government is doing what we believe in and are committed to, which is developing a vision for the future and planning for the long term. This includes the Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway. I know that members opposite will know that we received international kudos for the way that this consultation is being conducted. We're in the midst of a 60-day consultation that closes in mid-May. In fact, this morning I reached out to the owner of the Airport Chalet and am in the process of setting up a meeting with him as well as the concerned businesses in the Whitehorse corridor to listen to their concerns.

That is the stage of the process that we're in. The public and industry is getting an opportunity, as they should, to have their say, and I will meet face to face with those business owners to listen to and address their concerns where we can.

Ms. Moorcroft: Some work could be done to increase safety, address congestion and meet future needs, but do we really need to spend \$202 million? Public comment on this massively expensive project is due by May 15 — just six weeks away. Yukoners have taken to social media to point out flaws in the government's plan, such as: there are no sound barriers in places like Takhini; the impact on Squatters Road residences that would be by-passed; the amount of fill needed to twin the highway would be astronomical, and one wonders

where this fill would be obtained; and problems with pedestrian and bicycle trails. There are so many questions that this government must answer before it should proceed.

Has the government considered more affordable scenarios that would still increase safety and meet future needs?

Hon. Mr. Kent: We are in the midst of the public consultation period right now. As mentioned, the consultation period will close in the middle of May — May 15, I believe. There are a number of open houses scheduled for later on this month at, I believe, the Transportation Museum here in Whitehorse to hear from concerned Yukoners. Each and every Yukoner received in their mailbox a form to fill out, describing the project, because this is a piece of the Alaska Highway that is important not only for the residents of Whitehorse, but indeed residents throughout the territory, so we are conducting that public consultation.

Again, with respect to the concerns raised this morning by the owner of the Airport Chalet — and representing other businesses that may be affected in the Whitehorse corridor by these plans — I have reached out to that individual and have offered to set up a meeting. My staff will be coordinating with him and members of the business community who are affected by this project, and we will look forward to hearing their feedback.

With respect to comments on social media and comments that we are receiving, clearly the public consultation is working. We are receiving feedback from Yukoners. They are engaged, and I should also congratulate the previous Minister of Highways and Public Works and staff at Highways and Public Works for putting together such a comprehensive public consultation package and a website that has received international recognition.

Ms. Moorcroft: I am glad the minister has reached out, but the Yukon Party has a long track record of mismanaging capital projects and has repeatedly been taken to task by the Auditor General. There is no doubt that some improvements to the Alaska Highway corridor are needed to improve safety, address congestion and meet future needs, but local businesses and private citizens are questioning this government's \$202-million plan.

The deadline for public comment on this massively expensive project is May 15, just six weeks away — why the rush? This is too little time for the public to consider whether such a massive expenditure of public funds is warranted.

Does the government have a tender ready to go for May 16, no matter what the public says, or will the government extend the consultation period on the Alaska Highway corridor?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Of course it's important that government make plans for infrastructure. This piece of the Alaska Highway between the turnoff to the north Klondike Highway and the turnoff to the south Klondike Highway is well utilized now by residents in Whitehorse and the Whitehorse periphery and indeed throughout the Yukon. It is an important piece of infrastructure that supports not only passenger traffic, but industrial traffic going through to Alaska

and some of the ore trucks that are travelling from central Yukon.

It is important to plan. I know the members opposite are quick to criticize us for not planning. This is a 60-day public consultation on this important piece of infrastructure. I have personally reached out to business owners in that corridor who feel that they may be adversely affected. We are in the consultation phase. This is very much a long-term plan — a long-term vision — for improving an important piece of infrastructure and we are going to work through the consultation phase before we make any decisions.

Question re: *Income Tax Act* amendments

Mr. Silver: I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Many signed Yukon First Nation governments have tax-sharing agreements with the Yukon government. It allows them to collect income tax from people who live on First Nation settlement land. In some cases, it is a substantial amount of money. When the Government of Yukon changes income tax rates, as it does in this budget, it has a direct impact on First Nation governments' revenue. If any level of government did something that was going to impact my bottom line, I would expect to be consulted about it before it happened.

Can the minister explain why there was no consultation with First Nation governments before these tax changes were introduced?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This government on a daily basis consults with First Nations and works cooperatively with First Nations in many, many areas. I know that the opposition likes to find the small instances — the few instances — where there are disagreements between governments and tries to make a big deal of it. The reality is that we continue to invest and work with First Nations on a daily basis.

Some recent investments working with First Nations: \$2.7 million to the Carcross learning centre; \$250,000 working with Kwanlin Dun First Nation and Carcross-Tagish First Nation on a First Nation youth skilled trades and entrepreneurship program, building tiny houses, which — my understanding is that all of those houses, while not completed yet, have already been agreed to be leased out — have been a tremendous success; and \$538,000 for Kluane First Nation's geophysical data along the Kluane ranges, looking for geophysical data and mineral potential in those areas. The list goes on and on of the examples where we continue to work with First Nations and will continue to do so.

Mr. Silver: I would like to congratulate the Premier for successfully avoiding the answer and randomly pointing to something in his binder about money spent.

I am pleased to see these tax cuts — don't get me wrong. Personally, I will be saving hundreds of dollars, but First Nations who are losing revenue may not be happy with this government, especially when you consider that they were blindsided by this announcement. There was consultation, no discussion — just an announcement. First Nation governments are only now finding that their revenues could be impacted by this. Signed Yukon First Nation governments have tax-sharing

agreements with the Yukon government. These agreements say the government must discuss any possible changes with First Nation governments before they happen and not after. This did not happen.

Can the Premier explain why there was no consultation beforehand?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: We continue to work with First Nations and we will continue to do so. There will always be an opportunity to deal with First Nations on the potential impacts of any changes where we are reducing the taxes for Yukoners by a total, in 2015, of \$5.5 million — \$5.5 million going back into Yukoners' pockets so that they can spend that money as they choose. I know some of that money will go back into the economy, which is something that we need right now. Some people might choose to put it away for a rainy day or to invest it whichever way they choose, and that is important.

Of course, if there is an impact to some of the First Nations, we will certainly be willing to sit down and talk to them. As we know, the government does do this work on behalf of First Nations, and we're very proud of the agreement that we have on the tax sharing for people who reside on settlement land. We'll continue to have dialogue with the First Nations.

Mr. Silver: I'm glad that the Premier has committed to some consultation after the fact, but this is a colossal oversight. This government's track record when it comes to consultation with the First Nations is not good. Our courtrooms are full because this government has a bad habit of not meeting its obligations under the agreements with the First Nations. These are not small oversights, Mr. Speaker. This is yet another example of an obligation to meet with First Nations that was discarded by this government. These changes will impact First Nation governments' revenue, because what they collect is tied to the income tax rate.

Does the minister know what the financial impact will be to the First Nation governments because of this cut to taxes?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I don't have the exact number with me at this time, but I know that it is a nominal amount by First Nations. As I've stated in the past, we are more than willing, as we always do, to sit down and talk to First Nations about what we are doing together and the many partnerships that we have and the investments that this government makes every day to invest in ensuring that we are building capacity for First Nation governments, working with their development corporations, because, in the end, that benefits all Yukoners.

Question re: Housing as a human right

Ms. White: Does the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation believe that access to housing is a human right?

Hon. Mr. Hassard: I thank the member opposite for the question. I think it's important that all members and all Yukoners look at the track record this government has with investments in affordable housing and seniors housing. I think Yukon Housing Corporation has done an incredible job over

the past number of years in making investments for housing in the Yukon.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I was hoping that, with my third minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, I would get a clear answer on what this government believed — whether or not housing is a human right.

This is not a rhetorical question. This isn't just some lofty principle. This question changes everything when it comes to housing. Whether or not this minister thinks that housing is a human right will determine how he will approach all issues around housing and how he'll take that to his Cabinet table.

So I would like to give him another opportunity to answer this question: Does the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation believe that housing is a human right?

Hon. Mr. Hassard: I believe that it's important that government take a collaborative approach to anything it does, and I believe we've done this with our investments in housing and we will continue to do this with our investments in housing.

Ms. White: The right to housing is enshrined in article 25 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, as well as the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. So I'm going to ask for a third time: Does the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation believe that housing is a human right?

Hon. Mr. Hassard: I have to again say that I believe that it's important that we recognize all people when we deal with these issues in housing, and it's important that we try to work with all Yukoners when we deal with housing issues — or with any issues, for that matter.

Unfortunately, when we're in government, we're faced with this difficult task of trying to keep all people happy at all times, and I don't believe that that is physically possible. I believe that we just have to keep doing the good work that we're doing and do the best to keep all Yukoners as happy as we can keep them, Mr. Speaker.

Question re: Seniors facilities

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, the Yukon government likes to state that they've done their homework and that their health care system decisions are based on evidence and strategic planning. Given this, one would believe that the decision to build a \$330-million, 300-bed institution in Whistle Bend — the largest capital project in Yukon history to date — is the result of clear and transparent decision-making, but no plans or demonstrated needs for the 300-bed institution can be found in the 2008 *Yukon Health Care Review*, the 2014 *A Clinical Services Plan for Yukon Territory* or the *Health and Social Services Strategic Plan* for 2014 to 2019 released this past December.

If plans did not come from the Yukon Health and Social Services data and analyses, where did they come from and based on what information, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: My initial response to the member opposite would be very brief. The study would be based on the needs of Yukoners, Mr. Speaker.

Let's be very clear. In this budget, moving forward, we have plans for a 150-bed facility in Whistle Bend. That construction will continue with the Department of Health and Social Services working with the Department of Highways and Public Works. There were two needs assessments completed and a business case conducted for government that looks at the current use of the long-term care facilities and looks at the number of people who will be coming into those facilities. This government believes in putting Yukoners first, and we're looking forward to a very community-based, home-based facility to take care of our seniors who require a very high level of care.

Ms. Stick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and a reminder that the news press release that came out was for 300 beds.

Let's review some of the real data. The number of Yukon seniors being assisted by home care services is falling as our population ages. The Yukon has the highest ratio of seniors aged 65 and older living in long-term care beds in Canada, yet these seniors are relatively younger, more fit and more independent than their national counterparts.

If this government is focused on addressing root causes behind this high demand, we could reduce that ratio of seniors using long-term care beds. If we could bring this ratio to the national average, it would reduce the government's projected need for long-term care beds by over half.

Did this government consider that investing in home and community care would ease the demand on long-term care beds in the Yukon before announcing —

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

Hon. Mr. Nixon: What we have here is a clear example of the opposition being extremely confused on continuing care and extended care for seniors. They are getting this confused with independent living; they're getting this confused with home care; they're getting this confused with supported and assisted living.

Mr. Speaker, what we're talking about is a community-based facility to provide care to 150 seniors in Whistle Bend. This government, unlike the members opposite, has the ability to plan ahead, to look into the future and provide infrastructure and land set aside for the potential for growth in that facility.

Those decisions will be made by a future government, but, for now, home care and this continuing care facility are not an either-or question. This Yukon Party will do what the other two parties have proven they're unable to do, and that's plan for the future.

Ms. Stick: The 2008 *Yukon Health Care Review* advocates for — and I quote: “the right care at the right place at the right time”.

The Yukon NDP has long emphasized the importance of patient- and family-centred collaborative care and that extends to continuing care. The minister clearly does not understand that helping more Yukoners age in place at home and in their communities is better for Yukoners, for their families and is more affordable.

Will the minister shelve plans for the proposed 300-bed institution, consult Yukoners and look at ways to support Yukon seniors and elders to age in place at home and in their communities?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The last thing that this Yukon Party government will do is exactly what the members opposite have done and refer to our seniors care facilities as institutions and warehouses. The members opposite should be ashamed of those comments.

What this Yukon Party government has done over the last 10 or 12 years is increase the budget for home care by over 350 percent. That's something that the members opposite never did in their tenure in government — and why? Why is that? Maybe we should flip Question Period around here.

We actually agree with the NDP, though. Expanding home care has been in our platform since 2002. This Yukon Party government will take action over words, and I think that we've proven that we've made these commitments to Yukoners and we fulfilled these commitments to Yukoners.

Question re: Mine closure security

Mr. Tredger: When this Yukon Party government allowed Yukon Zinc, a subsidiary of Shaanxi province, to defer their security payments well into the mine's operation phase, they were in effect giving them a loan with no guarantee of seeing the money back. They took Yukon Zinc's word that they were good for the \$10 million, and we see the result of that. Now the minister is telling Yukoners that he is taking court action to recover a fine, but Yukon Zinc has been granted creditor protection, meaning they cannot be forced to pay the monies owing. The horse has left the barn and the Yukon Party government, despite the Premier's special relationship with Shaanxi province, is not getting that \$3 million back.

Why did this Yukon Party government let Wolverine operate for two years without having received their full security payments?

Hon. Mr. Kent: With respect to the Wolverine mine and mining in general, of course, we recognize that mining is the cornerstone of our economy here in the territory and the impacts that this closure is having on Yukoners. We are holding almost 80 percent of the security that is required from this mine. We chose not to shut down the mine given that we were holding nearly 80 percent of security. That's causing hardship for families and sending workers home. We chose to work with the company. Unfortunately the company defaulted on payments.

We still do hold that \$7.8 million in security. They have missed two payments. We have laid charges against the company to recoup those payments, but again, I think it is important to note that we chose not to take action to shut down the mine. Given that we were holding a significant amount of security, we wanted to ensure that those Yukon families could continue to work there while we resolved this issue. Again, I will repeat what I offered last Thursday in Question Period: we will be offering a technical briefing to members of the opposition. I sent an e-mail to both the

Member for Mayo-Tatchun and the Member for Klondike prior to coming into the House today offering a technical briefing on this mine closure for Monday, and we intend to follow through on that.

Mr. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, public accountability is well overdue. Yukoners don't want or need a technical briefing. They want the minister to stand up and be accountable for what happened at Wolverine. Last Thursday, and again today, the minister implied that he had the opportunity to step in at an earlier date, but he decided not to do so. Yukon citizens have many questions. How did this government decide that it was in the interest of Yukoners not to step in and correct the situation at an earlier date? Why didn't the government step in when they couldn't meet their original payment schedule? Why didn't the government step in when they missed their \$350,000, October 31st payment? Why didn't the government step in when WCB had a stop-work order? Yukoners want to know.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Well I guess, taken from that question, we no longer have to offer the technical briefing to the Official Opposition. I will still extend that offer to the Leader of the Third Party on Monday. Clearly the Member for Mayo-Tatchun thinks he knows everything that is going on at the Wolverine mine.

Again, when it comes to the Wolverine mine, we chose not to shut down the mine, given the fact that there were a number of Yukoners employed there. We tried to work with the company — and given the fact that we were holding \$7.8 million in security for the mine at the time. Professional staff at EMR is responsible to ensure the Yukon Zinc Corporation is meeting its obligations, as required by the legislation and its mine licences. Again, as I have mentioned, legal action is being taken in regard to the failure to make the security payments. We recognize the importance of the mining sector to the Yukon economy, whether grassroots projects, advanced exploration projects or producing mines. We try to work with our clients from Compliance Monitoring and Inspections in Energy, Mines and Resources to ensure that we give them every opportunity to voluntarily come back into compliance — in this case, with respect to the security.

Again, we have laid charges and I am happy to note that the Member for Mayo-Tatchun will not require a technical briefing on this.

Mr. Tredger: He doesn't listen to the questions. I do look forward to a technical briefing on Monday. When I see it come, I will reply. Yukoners are looking for accountability. What we have here is a sad reminder of the Faro mine. Then, like now, reclamation securities were promised to Yukoners at a future date, but they never materialized. When the minister says that the mine is in a state of temporary closure and that Yukon Zinc Corporation is planning on coming back, he is being highly optimistic. But when it comes to millions of public dollars, optimism doesn't cut it.

Wolverine mine represents a failure of this Yukon Party government to oversee and regulate mining in the Yukon. Will this Yukon Party government admit that they have failed in their responsibilities to the Yukon public when a mine leaves

the territory, leaving behind a multi-million dollar tab for the Yukon —

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

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Just listening, I took the time to reflect on what we've heard today and recently. What we've heard very clearly from both parties on the opposite side is no to tax cuts to Yukoners to put more money in their pockets; no to highway corridor; no to a long-term care residence for seniors who need the care; no to a sports complex for athletics and for soccer; no to LNG; no to free entry; no to mining; no to hydro development; no to oil and gas development; no to all those positive initiatives that we have in our budget.

Mr. Speaker, the parties on the opposite side say they promote and they support economic development, but yet they rule out and they vote against all of Yukon's economic mainstays. This government plans and invests for the future; those two parties have no plan at all.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before proceeding, I would like to remind members to watch their time. I'm trying to help you with a 10-second warning. I'm not obligated to give it to you; you're obligated to keep your questions to the time period you have and your answers to the same time period that you have. If you want, I will cut you off and, if I have to cut you off, I expect you to respect that, sit down and stop talking when I call "Order." Thank you.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 896

Clerk: Motion No. 896, 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 examine options to provide Yukoners with taxation relief by both lowering taxation rates and by increasing tax benefits such as the Yukon child tax benefit.

Ms. McLeod: I'm honoured to rise today in support of Motion No. 896, urging the Government of Yukon to examine options to provide Yukoners with taxation relief by both lowering taxation rates and by increasing tax benefits, such as the Yukon child tax benefit.

First I would like to speak a little bit about the Yukon Party's record on taxes. It's a long-standing policy that Yukoners know that something they can rely on is that the Yukon Party will not raise taxes and has not raised taxes, and that we will maintain Yukon's extremely favourable general tax environment that promotes investment in this territory.

These promises are taken right out of platform promises from many past elections.

It remains a long-standing policy because the Yukon Party believes that the private sector is the engine that drives private sector growth. We know that the key to growing the economy remains, and will always be, our Yukon businesses, which form the Yukon economy's backbone here at home.

First and foremost, we have always been and always will be champions for a vibrant and successful Yukon private sector. The Yukon Party remains the lone party in Yukon politics that has proven it can create an economic climate for Yukon businesses to succeed. We remain the best choice for Yukon's economy and Yukon's business community. Last year, the Premier announced that the Yukon government will be cutting the small-business tax rate from four to three percent. I am sure members will recall that we had a discussion about that in this House, and that was a motion that passed.

Over the past decade, consecutive Yukon Party governments have been ensuring that the business community is presented with a tax regime that enables them to be successful, to grow and create jobs for Yukoners. In 2004, the Yukon government tabled Bill No. 54, which gave Yukon government responsibility for setting the small-business tax-deduction limit. We recognized the strength of local governments when determining economic policy.

With this authority in place, the Yukon government announced that they were raising the small-business tax-deduction limit from \$300,000 to \$400,000 effective January 1, 2007. Previously, the small-business tax rate was reduced from six percent to four percent, effective January 1, 2005, where it did sit until last year. In 2010, the Yukon government further increased the small-business tax-credit limit from \$400,000 to \$500,000, again providing Yukon's small businesses with the freedom to reinvest capital into the economy and their companies.

On the personal income tax side of things, in 2008 the government increased the Yukon child benefit by 53 percent and increased the threshold to qualify for the benefit by 20 percent. As a further bonus and aid to Yukoners, this was backdated to July of 2006.

In addition, the Department of Economic Development introduced the small-business incentive tax credit that benefitted growing Yukon businesses — notably, one of the mainstays and cornerstones of our economy, and that is Air North.

Recently, the new minister responsible for the Liquor Corporation announced that Yukon outlets licensed to sell liquor products can purchase them at a wholesale price of 10 percent off retail. Until now, these Yukon businesses were not granted the benefit of wholesale pricing that forms a portion of the profit margin for all other Yukon businesses. These changes demonstrate how this government is making sure that the Yukon continues to remain a business-friendly jurisdiction.

The government has done a lot of work to assist the business community. We have developed a very competitive

tax regime designed to promote private business, and we have done all this while maintaining a positive net financial position through strong fiscal management. But now we are seeing some challenges for Yukon businesses and they need our continued support.

Tax changes must be focused and they must serve a purpose. With this in mind, I am very pleased to hear the highlights of the Premier's speech to the Yukon Chamber of Commerce and his Budget Address in this House. We are seeing this government step up to address these challenges by recognizing that they also present an opportunity. This government is putting Yukoners to work on strategic infrastructure, programs and services that will benefit all of us in the long term. The government budget will put Yukoners to work and keep them earning paycheques to support their families.

The budget will also keep Yukoners supporting our local businesses and communities because, Mr. Speaker, now is the time to provide tax relief for Yukoners. It's time, as the Premier put it, to put money back into Yukoners' pockets because they know how best to spend their own money.

The Premier noted that the changes will revise the income tax rate structure and increase the child tax benefit. Both of these changes help accomplish the goal of helping Yukoners support Yukon businesses. With this tax relief, Yukoners will see more take-home income and that is right in line with our goal of helping Yukon businesses navigate these challenging economic times. The government is putting more money back into the pockets of customers of Yukon businesses, and that's a strategy. That's this government's strategy, and it's all about creating opportunities — opportunities to work, opportunities to raise families, opportunities to be successful, opportunities to live in this great territory that we all call home.

There's a flip side to this, Mr. Speaker, and that is the depressing contrast to Yukon Party management of the economy. Throughout the Yukon's history, NDP and Liberal governments have resulted in population loss, no investment in the territory, and Yukoners having to leave their homes to seek jobs and opportunities outside of the Yukon. When Yukoners look at the many investments made by diversifying our economy through film and sound, IT, knowledge, cultural industries and tourism and culture, anyone can see that this is completely untrue — the opposition has said as recently as yesterday, I believe, that this Yukon Party believes in a boom-and-bust cycle of economic activity and, of course, as I've said, nothing could be further from the truth. However, the NDP do claim that they'll flatten out the cycle, and history shows us that, yes, they will deliver on that promise, but not in the way that we would want.

The Yukon Party will continue on the good work to support Yukoners, keep them working and provide opportunities to help them support their families. Yukoners will welcome these tax changes and we will see the impacts around our great territory.

I would like to thank the Finance minister, our Premier, for making these changes for Yukoners and their families, and I look forward to seeing the changes to the *Income Tax Act*

when they're tabled for further debate and hearing from other members on this motion.

I trust that all members will support this motion. It's good for Yukoners. With that, I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward this motion for debate in the Legislature today.

In speaking to the motion, I would like to first reflect on the fundamental values lens through which I, as a New Democrat, view policy options that are presented for debate and, in particular, with respect to the discussion of subject matters in this motion. When I'm asked to consider whether I support the notion of examining options to provide Yukoners with taxation relief by both lowering tax rates and by increasing tax benefits, such as the Yukon child tax benefit, I do so through a values lens that meets the principles of modern democracy.

As legislators, let us look at those options as they are presented to us and ask, are they consistent with the principle of equality? Will they work toward ensuring that everyone has an opportunity for meaningful work, satisfying activity and shared responsibility? Will these measures provide equitable access to a reasonable income, good quality health care and education, affordable childcare and secure housing? Will the options considered improve or strengthen the notion of democracy — that is, that democracy is the cornerstone of a society based on dignity and equality? Will the options being proposed in the member opposite's motion improve democratic control of our social, political and economic institutions, which are essential to eliminating poverty, addressing unemployment and helping us decrease the ever-growing concentrations of wealth and power?

Will the proposed options result in social and economic structures that provide a balance between the needs of our generation? Because when we start talking about tax and tax policy, we're not talking about the quick fix for today. We're making structural fiscal changes. These are structural changes to our economy. So will they provide a sustainable balance between the needs of our generation and the needs of future generations? How will the proposed options foster or reinforce a strong sense of community? What tangible outcomes will the proposed options contain that will support the community values that I believe we as Yukoners share — a caring and compassionate community with a goal of eliminating poverty. How will the tax policy measures that we're discussing today or considering work toward that? How will the proposed options to be examined as contained in this motion ensure that the fundamental principle of cooperation, a core principle of a civil and civilized society — how that core principle of cooperation is fostered through the social and economic development opportunities that may arise from the implementation of the options brought forward for consideration under this motion? After all, it is through the cooperative and collective raising of taxes that citizens, residents and businesses can do things together that we could never do on our own.

Sometimes when we're considering ideas that are brought forward and sometimes in our eagerness to put forward options, we say, "I don't know why they just don't buy it; it's simple; it's obvious" and I'm often reminded of a famous quote that has come back to haunt me perhaps many times during my career. It's by H. L. Mencken and I think it does apply to the discussion that we're having here today, and it's simply this: "For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple and wrong."

I bring this quote forward not to disparage the premise of the motion, but to point out that often what appears to be just a simple, commonsense answer is, upon reflection and application of some intellectual rigour, quite frankly not the outcome we had assumed or wanted or even wanted to believe would occur.

As people elected to represent the broad spectrum of Yukon citizens, residences and business interests, it is incumbent upon us to make sure that we approach all policy decisions, especially those that have long-term and far-reaching fiscal implications, as how we, as elected members of this House, are best able to respond to the evolving needs of our citizens and our economy.

Tax policy is one of the tools in our legislative toolbox. Nobody expects a good worker to use a sledgehammer when a small tacking hammer will suffice. Hence the importance of due consideration to the outcome sought when examining the options contemplated by this motion.

I also think it's important to dispel the notion that, somehow, all taxes are all inherently bad. Quite frankly, that represents a starkly naïve view of society and a view in stark contrast to the democratic principles of our country, or any democracy.

Oliver Wendell Holmes is famously quoted as saying, "Taxes are the price we pay for civilization." I would also say taxes are the price we pay for the country, the territory, the cities and towns we love. Taxes put out fires, keep our streets safe, provide our children with education, provide our families with health care, ensure our food and water are safe, create legal standards and safeguards for businesses and employees. They provide parks. In other words, taxes provide us benefits every hour of the day, every day of the year.

Past generations paid taxes for what we have today: schools, hospitals, our courts, roads, the public transit systems we have across this country, our national parks and our municipal parks. Our taxes today allow us to pass along those benefits to our future generations — our children, our grandchildren and, hopefully, our great grandchildren.

The notion of tax relief included in this motion is an interesting one, because it sounds like aspirin or something that you need to have for relief from pain. It's not necessarily the same approach taken in all democracies. What we've seen over the last 25 or 30 years — in particular in certain political spheres primarily in North America, emanating from the United States — is really an anti-government tax bias — somehow the notion that people are elected to government to get rid of government.

That is I think, Mr. Speaker, when we started to see — my recollection, going back to the Bush era — this whole notion that somehow we needed relief from taxes and that that was going to solve the problems of the world.

I am wondering if there is not a more progressive way to consider how we, as legislators, view the tax toolbox. Perhaps a more apt metaphor would be the notion of dues. People understand that when we pay dues, there is an expectation that everyone pays their fair share. We pay our dues to be Canadians and enjoy the benefits of Canadian society. Taxes are what we pay to live in a civilized society that is democratic, offers opportunity and offers the kinds of infrastructure that I hear all members of this Legislative Assembly, in particular the members opposite, talking about spending Canadian tax dollars on.

Those infrastructure benefits are available to all citizens, by virtue of them being citizens. Those dues represent us being part, being a member, being part of a community. When we pay the dues and we maintain those dues, we maintain the infrastructure, the health care system, the educational system that we want for our children and our children's children. Being a dues-paying member in good standing is part of our democratic responsibility as well as our rights. We expect people to pay their dues. We know there are some who don't, but that is a whole other area and it has been a difficult challenge for governments to deal with that aspect.

We have had a lot of conversation in this Legislative Assembly about the evolution of governance in this territory. The Premier, in his Budget Address, clearly identified a goal that he — I assume both personally and politically — believes in, and that is — and I quote: "...our goal of making Yukon a net contributor to Canada." He said: "Why is this important? It's important because economic self-sufficiency is the best path to economic strength... As long as we rely on federal transfer payments and as long as we rely on other hard-working Canadians, we will not be economically secure..."

Mr. Speaker, in order to meet and beat the challenge there, we have to move from the simplistic rhetoric about tax relief or a notion that all taxes are bad. We have to give serious consideration to how we consider options contemplated by this motion, because I think there are opportunities in this motion to address the notions of the fiscal capacity of the territory, to talk about the notions of the opportunities presented by this motion to represent a progressive approach to taxation — that is they are based on the principle of the ability to pay and that can be demonstrated to contribute in a net positive way to Yukon's economic performance.

We have all heard for years about the Alberta advantage, the flat tax rate that was supposedly the model to emulate. Yet in both British Columbia and Alberta, services such as schools, hospitals and roads are being severely affected by low tax rates, by the lack of public money to meet the demands that the Premier says we as a Yukon economy should be striving to meet. I agree — that is our obligation, but we can't have it both ways. We have dues to pay and we have to decide — and that is why I am hoping that the

member opposite, when she puts forward this motion — is that she is really inviting Yukoners to talk about what role we play in moving toward that goal that the Premier articulated, of economic self-sufficiency.

Both the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta provide a clear opportunity for lessons learned about the reliance on the simple notion — and probably easy-to-sell notion — of across-the-board tax cuts, but the fact of the matter is — as we consider talking about becoming net contributors to Canada, let's look at our track record. We talk about not relying upon the other hard-working Canadians, but the fact of the matter is that, under this government, we are getting further and further and further from being a net contributor to the Canadian economy than we were before this government came to power. In fact, the dependence on federal transfers has grown under the Yukon Party government's direction. It has increased more than threefold since they came into power — 1.3 times since this Premier came into power. Our own-source revenues — whether they are from campground fees or resource royalties or personal taxes or corporate taxes — have decreased as a proportion of the total revenues over that same period. They too — our own-source revenues — have decreased by 21 percent. That is a significant drop, so when and how does the fiscal framework of this territory begin to change?

I think the opportunity may exist in the member opposite's motion as long as the member opposite, in putting forward this motion, truly intended it to be a broad conversation and not simply a conversation about implementing a government's platform, regardless of the implications and regardless of the contradictions inherent in that platform to the stated objective, the objective stated by the Finance minister in his Budget Address on April 2.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry, I'm putting these notes together at very short — scribbling as the speaker opposite was speaking, so just give me a moment.

There is also —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: Minister of Health and Social Services, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming David Miller from Vernon to the gallery. He is visiting and perhaps considering making Yukon his home, so welcome, David.

Applause

Speaker: Leader of the Official Opposition, please.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As we look at the notion and the implications, as I was saying earlier, about our own fiscal capacity and how we structure our ability to ensure that not only are we carrying our weight within the Canadian constitutional framework and moving toward the long-term objective of becoming net fiscal contributors, we also have to look at, as I said, the lessons that

can be learned from what has happened in British Columbia, Alberta and other boom-and-bust economies. Also at the federal level, we have lessons to be learned about the implications of the reliance solely on the ideology that tax cuts will result in more jobs and more investments.

I think we've seen and we've heard federal ministers of finance — several of them over the last five years — express serious consternation at the fact that, as they said — as former Minister Flaherty said — that they did their part to cut corporate tax rates to ensure that there was — because the ideology is that you cut those tax rates and people will invest; that they will create jobs; that they will invest in research and development. I don't know if you recall, Mr. Speaker, but certainly Minister Flaherty — now-departed Mr. Flaherty — in several speeches to the business community expressed his frustration that those successive tax cuts over the last 10 years have not resulted in the expected private sector investments and corporate investments in research and development, manufacturing and job creation. But as he said, and as the Bank of Canada's governor said — creation of a \$600 billion-plus stash of cash that sits there unused by the corporate sector — \$600 billion. Imagine what kind of stimulus could be created — unleashed in this country — if the private sector would do as the Conservative Government of Canada thought it was helping them do by giving them those cuts, creating the environment to do what they do best, which is to create jobs, to invest and to innovate.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said when I was responding initially to this motion, the idea of inviting the conversation to talk about ways that we frame our tax system so that it will allow us to grow as an economy and grow us as a territory is really, really important, but we must not do it with any assumptions that we are not open to questioning.

So, as I said, the intent of the motion, if the perception that we have is that this is a move that meets the test that I outlined at the beginning of my response to the motion — if it meets those five or so major, clear assessments as we go through each of the options to be considered by the motion that the member opposite has put forward — then I think we're on the right track, because we do support careful and reasoned exploration and evaluation of policy measures to support a strong and inclusive Yukon. We want our economy to be one, as I said earlier, that is inclusive and leaves no one behind.

I'm encouraged by the words “exploring options”, but I am concerned that it has also been revealed in the comments by the member opposite that this is — and I'm hoping this is not going to simply be a statement or one of these motions that is put out there just so that we can hear the opposite members' statements of platform, as opposed to a real sincere opportunity to engage in a discussion about ideas around tax and tax policy.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: I see.

Mr. Speaker, I think we're trying to move beyond that kind of cynicism. We've seen the scepticism and cynicism, quite frankly, of citizens about what goes on here. So if we're

serious about wanting to talk, as opposed to the platform of the Yukon Party just being read into Hansard, then we're open to that and we think it's a possibility that this has been presented by what the member opposite has put forward.

I think we need to make sure that we're clear. As I said earlier, there are lots of aspects of tax policy that sound the same, but I don't think that they necessarily are. There is a statement — I think I've heard it from the Finance minister and I heard it from the member opposite — and the notion that it's simply all about cutting tax rates, but perhaps there are other aspects here about taxation relief and not conflating the two. I think there's an opportunity for a discussion here.

I think it's important to do that because — I don't know, God forbid, but you know, who knows who would be — this government could, in fact, pass a whole bunch of tax cuts and then find itself, in 10 or 15 years, back in government with a taxpayer protection act that refuses to allow them to raise taxes.

One of the challenges that we need to think about, as we consider the motion put forward is that, as I said earlier about what happened in British Columbia, and what happened in Alberta and other jurisdictions — but those two in particular, which had an ideological sort of bent on flat rates and low rates across the board — is that, when you commit yourself to cutting taxes during a time of economic uncertainty, it may be sort of a desperate Hail Mary approach to stimulating the stagnating economy, but we saw what happened to the Canadian economy too. It has not worked.

I'm not making that up. I said already earlier — I cited the references of two Finance ministers and the governor of the Bank of Canada. We have more tools available to us as legislators to stimulate the economy. Let's use them. Let's use our capacity to do that.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of studies that have looked at what the implications of cutting personal income tax are. A 2012 Canadian study found that cutting personal income tax rates does not affect the growth rate and investment rates. Another more recent study in 2014 made an interesting comment, I thought. It said that there's this common argument that income tax cuts raise growth. It's repeated so often that sometimes it's taken as gospel. That study says theory, evidence and simulation studies tell a different and more complicated story. It concludes — and I quote: “Tax cuts offer the potential to raise economic growth by improving incentives to work, save, and invest. But they also create income effects that reduce the need to engage in productive economic activity, and they may subsidize old capital, which provides windfall gains to asset holders that undermine incentives for new activity.”

This is the part that I think is most challenging to governments. We've seen across the board that tax cuts — as a stand-alone policy that is not accompanied by spending cuts — typically raise your deficit. Mr. Speaker, we've already seen this territory verging pretty damn close to it. We're at \$23 million at this time of year in anticipated surplus. The Minister of Finance has seen that surplus decrease under his

watch year over year over year. By this time next year, there will be none.

At least theoretically cutting taxes — and it is pretty theoretical in this situation because of the bubble that the territorial government still lives in — even if it's only a two-percent increase projected over the next year for the formula financing arrangement, it's still more of an increase than any other jurisdiction is going to get. With prudence, we can manage within that. The challenges, if we are going to move toward, as the Premier and the Finance Minister has alleged, making the hard decisions of government — that means that you act as if you are doing it within the confines of the allocated resources, and they actually project the implications of all the measures you take that affect your fiscal capacity. That is part of the conversation that I think needs to be taken into consideration as we look at the implications and the possibilities of the motion presented today by the Member for Watson Lake.

As we go forward and as we look at these tax options and the options — not just for the motion presented today because those are limited. They are narrow in the broad scheme of things when we talk about the potential of tax and tax policy. I think it is going to be important that we look and encourage the sharing of the economic models and tools of analysis that are used by government to make the changes to the Yukon *Income Tax Act* and regulations so that we can look at and have an informed discussion about aspects of those models.

I would also be interested in seeing what impact any proposed changes, including the changes contemplated by the motion put forward by the Member for Watson Lake, can be expected to have on Yukoners — basically their inclination to consume and their inclination to save and, by extension, the projected impact on the economic multiplier effect in the territorial GDP. Those are all important and serious questions for us as legislators, and we need to think about those. I think we need to think about those. If we take it seriously — talking about tax is not something that is simply political rhetoric. It affects the day-to-day decisions taken by members of this Legislative Assembly and the day-to-day decisions taken by citizens, residents and business interests in this territory.

I think that the Official Opposition sees that the Motion No. 896 presents, as I said, some options and talks about examining options. We are prepared to support the exploration of those options, subject to the kind of important democratic lens that I applied to that review, and any options that come forward from the government side can anticipate being reviewed and discussed by the members of the Official Opposition through that lens, because that is what it is about. That is what our job is — to hold this government to account, to make those fiscal decisions, those tax policy decisions, in a way that is democratic, promotes the notions of equality and equity, and supports a sustainable economy.

I thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward the motion and I look forward to hearing from other members in the Legislative Assembly, who no doubt have some wise words to offer.

Mr. Silver: Thank you to my colleague from Watson Lake for bringing forth Motion No. 896.

I was surprised to see the income tax cuts in the budget before us. Like so many initiatives of this government, it simply was rolled out with no discussion beforehand. I would like to know from the government as we move forward today — questions. I'm sure we will get questions to answers as we debate this further in this legislative session — how these tax cuts were decided on, for example. Who did they consult with, and how did they calculate the percentage cuts for each of those brackets?

As a Liberal, I do support giving tax breaks to those in the middle class, who receive the lion's share of the benefits in these changes. The Yukon can be an expensive place to live and I am happy to see more money in the pockets of families. For low-income earners, though, the tax cut does mean only about \$90 a year. I would have preferred to see the cuts directed more toward those in the lower brackets, who are likely most in need. I am not sure that those earning between \$138,000 and \$500,000 need to see a tax cut of this magnitude and, on average, they are going to save about \$800 a year, compared to those earning under \$44,000, who see the smallest percentage decrease.

I also look forward to the rationale of such cuts. I don't think we are necessarily proving to Ottawa that we are capable of standing alone. I don't think it's lost on our federal counterparts as all the provinces are tightening their bootstraps, as the federal government downloads repercussions of their austerity measures federal budget. The Yukon relies heavily now — more than ever — on Ottawa, more than we did a decade ago. These are definitely concerns. We are lowering our income tax, which is an own-source revenue. We are increasing the size and expense of government — so lots of questions, Mr. Speaker, on the cuts themselves. It is worth noting that the last significant tax relief for families and individuals was under a Liberal government in the early 2000s.

Unfortunately, as I raised in Question Period today, there is a piece in the tax cut that needs to be addressed and that is why I am proposing a friendly amendment.

I'll provide that. I have copies here for everybody in the House.

Speaker: Do you want to read your amendment and then I can move it forward?

Amendment proposed

Mr. Silver: I move:

THAT Motion No. 896 be amended by inserting the words “, in consulting with First Nation governments who are impacted by these changes,” after the word “options”.

Speaker: The amendment is in order. It has been moved by the Leader of the Third Party:

THAT Motion No. 896 be amended by inserting the words “, in consulting with First Nation governments who are impacted by these changes,” after the word “options”.

Leader of the Third Party, you have 16 minutes and 42 seconds left on the amendment.

Mr. Silver: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll be as brief as possible here. I just want to read the motion with its amendment:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to examine options, in consultation with First Nation governments who are impacted by these changes, to provide Yukoners with taxation relief by both lowering taxation rates and by increasing tax benefits such as the Yukon child tax benefit.

As I had expressed during Question Period today, I am concerned that the tax cuts were made without consulting those who it is going to affect adversely. Many signed Yukon First Nation governments have tax-sharing agreements with the Government of Yukon that allow them to collect income tax from people who live on First Nation settlement land. This isn't just aboriginal citizens of that particular First Nation; this is anybody who is living on settlement land in the Yukon. That money, collected from income tax — 95 percent of that money goes back into the First Nation to which they are situated at on their settlement land.

When the Government of Yukon changes the income tax rate, as it does in this budget, it has a direct impact on First Nation governments' revenues. If Ottawa were to do that to the Yukon government, I'm sure the Premier would like to be consulted on the changes that were impacting the territory's bottom line and would want to know about it before it happened. I would also argue that there's an authority here to consult the First Nation governments. I'll get to that in a second.

As happy as I am personally because of the cuts — everybody in this Chamber will be affected and will get some money back — the First Nations that are losing revenue might not be so happy with this government, especially when you consider that they were blindsided by this announcement. There wasn't any consultation or discussion, just an announcement, and First Nation governments are now only finding out that their revenues could be impacted by this.

Signed Yukon First Nation governments have tax-sharing agreements with the Yukon government. Those agreements say that the government must discuss any possible changes with First Nation governments before they happen, not after — and that's what happened here.

So, Mr. Speaker, the government's track record, when it comes to consultation with First Nations, as mentioned, is not necessarily great. Our courtrooms are full, because the government has a bad habit of not meeting its obligations under the agreements with First Nations. This may be another example of an obligation to meet with First Nations that was discarded by this government. These changes will impact First Nation governments' revenue, because what they collect is tied to the income tax rate. So this is a great place to have this discussion and this debate, and I hope that there's a response from the government today as far as this information.

As I have said in my previous remarks on the initial motion, I do support taxation relief for Yukoners — absolutely — but given the potential loss to Yukon First

Nation governments, I think it's important to calculate that into the equation and have a discussion on the floor of the Legislature on what those impacts will be.

Unlike the territorial government, Yukon First Nations are not operating on the same massive scale as far as their budgets go. These cuts will disproportionately affect the bottom line. It doesn't matter if it's \$5, \$500, or \$5,000 or \$500,000. What's more important here is: Does the Yukon Party government have the authority to cut money that is going to Yukon First Nation governments?

Having spoken to a number of chiefs in the last few days and officers inside the financial departments of self-governing First Nations, they all learned about this in the newspapers and are just now calculating what this loss could mean for their budgets for the next few years. I would like to reiterate that I do support tax cuts. That's not the issue here, but what I do hope is that the Yukon Party government recognizes that this was an oversight and take steps to rectify this issue with Yukon First Nation governments. That is why I'm proposing this amendment and I look forward to hearing the response from the government side. This motion as amended — I have no problem agreeing with.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As was recently discussed during Question Period today, this government continues to invest time, people and money into working with First Nations on a day-to-day basis. We could go into the amount of money that is invested with First Nations every day — and it is significant. We continue to work with First Nations because it's in our best interests to ensure that First Nations can build up their capacity to be able to be stronger and stronger partners in a small economy in Yukon — in Yukon's economy — whether that's the First Nations or whether that's their development corporations, we continue to invest in ensuring there's capacity. There are agreements within individual final agreements that allow for some First Nations — for example, the Yukon asset construction agreements that exist with some of the First Nations. We continue to find areas to support and grow and foster the development of First Nation governance capacity, but also fiscal economic capacity as well and we'll continue to do that.

What we won't do is give away our right to set our own tax policy. The public government must retain the right to set out our own tax policy and we will not cede the responsibility and control of the finances to another government. What we will do is we will live up to all of our obligations to consult per the agreements as they have been agreed to. As I stated earlier as well, there can potentially be an impact to some of the self-governing First Nations. That impact is not significant, but we will work with First Nations and we will live up to all of our obligations as per the agreements to consult with First Nations and therefore we will not be supporting this amendment.

Ms. Hanson: On the amendment, I would like to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this matter forward. I

quite frankly had not considered the implications of Chapter 14 of the self-governing agreement until he raised it this afternoon.

I am astounded — absolutely astounded — at the dismissive tone in the response from the Premier. What the Member for Klondike's motion does and what the issue he has brought forward speaks to is not a challenge to Yukon government's taxation authority. It is simply another example of an opportunity lost by this government to actually do what it said it would do when it signed these agreements. I will admit, Mr. Speaker, that I haven't gone back and looked at the taxation agreements that were negotiated pursuant to section 14.8 of any of the First Nation self-government agreements, but I do notice and I do note that all the way through and in the conversations — and I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the issues of taxation and tax room are one of the most — no government gives that up. But the idea was that First Nations, as was mentioned by the Member for Klondike, negotiated provisions to tax interests in settlement land and residents of settlement land, persons and other entities.

I think the Premier may want to reconsider his harsh words and his rash words in the context of section 14.5.1 of the self-government agreement because it speaks there to the coordination with existing tax systems. All the way through the agreements, there is an obligation of one government and the other government — the Yukon government and First Nation governments — where the subject matters of legislative decisions taken will impact the other to consult. It's in the agreements, Mr. Speaker. It's not about how much money the Government of Yukon gives to First Nations. Again, that's a very paternalistic typification of that relationship. What the Minister of Finance needs to recognize is that the relationship established in these agreements is not one of paternalism; it's government-to-government. When it speaks in these agreements about the obligation to consult, it is a serious one.

Mr. Speaker, the materiality of the issue — whether or not we're talking about hundreds of dollars or thousands of dollars — at this point in history, it may not be materially significant but it is, on matter of principle, incredibly significant. I do hope that the Premier will review, and perhaps as we're sitting here he is sending BlackBerry messages to his advisors elsewhere to reconsider and agree to the eminently reasonable amendment proposed by the Member for Klondike.

Ms. McLeod: I just want to say briefly that obviously I won't be supporting the amendment. I think that the way the motion is worded currently allows for an examination of options, which is precisely what the motion calls for.

Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard on the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Disagree.

Mr. Elias: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: 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, 11 nay.

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

Amendment to Motion No. 896 negatived

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the main motion?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this important motion forward today. In preparation for today's debate, I spent some time reading up on taxation policy. I came across a number of very helpful websites and commentaries on the merits of lowering taxes. All of us realize that some taxation is appropriate. We all benefit from common infrastructure, from common programs, from common policies and from common services.

I started to build a list of different jobs public servants perform and very quickly I realized that the list would be very, very long. We all benefit from shared public services and I think it is fair that we all contribute through our taxes to support that public infrastructure, but I think it is helpful to recognize that taxpayers should have to pay only what they need to pay.

Many years ago, a man was commenting on a proposal for a new tax. If memory serves, it was to pay for a bus transit system, because the system wouldn't ever break even with just charging the bus riders. He said that for everyone who receives a benefit and doesn't earn it is someone who earned it but doesn't receive the benefit. I think that succinctly reminds me of the challenge of finding a fair tax policy.

As we discuss taxation policy, I would like to point out a few arguments for lower taxes. Some of these comments came from an editorial piece by David Boaz. One of Mr. Boaz's comments that I thought was important to note is that, in a free country, money belongs to the people who earn it. The

most fundamental reason to cut taxes is an understanding that wealth doesn't just happen, it has to be produced, and those who produce it have a right to keep it. I am a firm believer that people who work should be able to enjoy the benefits of their labour. That brings me to a related point, which is that high taxes discourage work and investment. When the difference between the reward-to-risk ratio of creating a job is diminished because of taxes, the capital investment will often flow to other investment opportunities. High marginal tax rates also discourage people from working overtime or from making new investments.

I believe that the best way to help people is to create an environment where existing and aspiring businesses can grow. That, to me, is a place where taxes are low. This is in keeping with our platform commitment to implementing *Pathways to Prosperity*. We committed to implement the vision outlined in the Yukon government's *Pathways to Prosperity: an Economic Growth Perspective 2005-2025*. To summarize, that calls for us to continue to expand the Yukon economy by promoting our economic mainstays in the resource extraction fields, by promoting the diversification of Yukon's economy and maintaining Yukon's extremely favourable general tax environment that promotes investment in our territory.

The motion before us today speaks to that commitment. Mr. Speaker, in one of the blogs I read, the author argued that the ideal tax system reflects a compromise between two conflicting goals: equity and efficiency. The author argued that equity requires that those who are able to pay more taxes do so. In his view, that meant taxing the rich and giving to the poor and thereby reducing inequality in addressing poverty. Efficiency, on the other hand, he argued, meant opting for the lower marginal tax rates.

I found those comments interesting, but I think they are only partially helpful. I don't think that wealth redistribution is the key to ending poverty. Many of us are aware that one of the aims of communism was to make everyone equal. I think most of us in this Assembly would agree that the reality of communism didn't match its aspirations, so, to me, we need to think carefully about using taxation policies to redistribute wealth. To me, the way to end poverty is to work to create an environment where those who wish to work are able to find meaningful jobs. I don't think it's the government's job to be the economy. I think it's the government's job to help create a context where the private sector can flourish and can grow. I think we need to look at options to create an economic environment that encourages Yukoners to work. Rather than taking a wealth-redistribution approach, I would argue that we should look for opportunities to take a wealth-creation approach.

Yukon government has several tools as its disposal to implement public policy, including legislation and regulations, programs and projects. Governments have a crucial role to play in establishing regulatory regimes that enable people to undertake activities to pursue dreams, to generate wealth and to build communities, while at the same time protecting other citizens and the environment. We committed to helping Yukoners achieve a better quality of life, to protecting our

environment, to promoting a diversified economy and to practising good government. In each of these areas we have delivered.

I have spoken previously about the things that we need to build a better economy: transportation, communications, energy, skilled workers, access to capital and a balanced, consistent, modern regulatory regime. This motion fits with our platform commitments. Yukon offers a very competitive tax regime with no territorial tax and numerous tax incentives for small- and medium-sized businesses. As a former business owner, I believe this is very important to Yukoners.

Yukon was built on and still remains predominantly serviced by small- and medium-sized entrepreneurs. Today's business people recognize the available labour pool in Yukon communities, the infrastructure in place to service development and a favourable tax regime as successful components in building a healthy return on investment. I would also note that we need to take into account those with low incomes who are raising families.

I am pleased to see this that motion calls for us to find ways to use tax benefit programs to help those low-income earners who have children and all the demands on their finances that come with raising those children. I would like to note that the national child benefit or NCB is a joint initiative of Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments, which includes a First Nations component. The NCB initiative combines two key elements: federal monthly payments to low-income families with children and benefits and services designed and delivered by the provinces, territories and First Nations to meet the needs of low-income families with children in each jurisdiction.

The Yukon child benefit or YCB is a supplement to the national child benefit. Enhancements to the Yukon child benefit in this budget will see a significant positive impact on low-income families, raising the maximum annual benefits per child from \$690 to \$820, starting in July of this year.

Yukon savings associated with the NCB supplement have been reinvested in the children's drug and optical program, the kids recreation fund and the healthy families program. Yukon also invests the Yukon child benefit, a benefit that is not considered low income, when determining eligibility for social assistance.

Having children of my own, I know how expensive and unexpected some of those bills can be. The tax benefit program is available to those living on very modest means, and I think we should look at options to help them too. In previous mandates, we have worked to restore the economy. I have talked at great length before on how the economic situation was dire in 2002 when we took office. Yukon was in trouble; people were leaving the territory. The Liberal government of the day had collapsed and hope was fading. Through hard work and deliberate, strategic investments, we were able to restore confidence and investment in our territory. By working together, we were able to do better. We committed to building Yukon's future. The Premier noted that this government believes and has a desire to make Yukon a net contributor to Canada. The more revenue we generate

locally, the greater flexibility we have in responding to emerging pressures and needs.

As the Minister for Health and Social Services, I am reminded on a daily basis of the demands on government to provide services and programs. If we are ever going to have any realistic hope of providing the kinds of services that so many of us look for, then we are going to need steady, reliable, own-source revenue streams to fund those programs. This motion urges the Government of Yukon to examine options to provide Yukoners with taxation relief by both lowering taxation rates and by increasing tax benefits, such as the Yukon child tax benefits. Yukoners have the confidence in this Yukon Party government to deliver on its commitments and to work diligently on our behalf. I will be supporting this motion, and I thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing it forward today.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I rise today in support of Motion No. 896:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to examine options to provide Yukoners with taxation relief by both lowering taxation rates and by increasing tax benefits such as the Yukon child tax benefit.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the Member for Watson Lake for putting forward this motion — a motion that is in fact very important and very timely right now in Yukon. Certainly, as we have seen — because of where the economy is right now and as we all know — I know that the opposition would like us to take the blame for the commodity prices, but of course neither this government nor any individual government has control over commodity prices. What we are doing is focusing on where we can for the future to make sure that the territory is in a better place to be able to take full advantage of the opportunities as they move forward.

I did have some things I wanted to say with respect to this motion specifically, and then probably a few comments about what we heard from the members opposite as well. As we know and as I've stated in this House, we're at a time right now where we're seeing governments cutting jobs and increasing taxes here in Yukon. Because of the strong financial management of successive Yukon Party governments, we are in the most enviable position in this country.

I will note a couple of things — going east to west of recent announcements. Nova Scotia's budget day is tomorrow and their Finance minister quotes that there will be some pain and some difficult decisions.

In Quebec, they've just tabled their budget. Program spending increases will again be reduced to 1.2 percent this year — a total of \$729 million in fresh cuts, which include cuts to school boards and to education, and they're adding \$16 billion to their debt.

New Brunswick increased taxes. They bumped the price for fuel — their fuel tax. They closed some courthouses. They eliminated 249 teaching jobs — the fifth consecutive deficit budget — and increased premiums for seniors who use the prescription drug plan.

Saskatchewan didn't have any new cuts, but they dramatically reduced a number of tax incentives that they had — encouraging people to come to Saskatchewan is one of the examples. Again, very strict, controlled spending — and they're increasing their public debt by over \$1 billion.

In Alberta, there are the first tax increases in a number of years. About 2,000 full-time positions will be cut, with Alberta Health Services being hit the hardest. A new health care levy will be introduced on July 1 of 2015. Alberta's fuel tax on gasoline and diesel will be raised. It's worth noting that Alberta had the second-lowest fuel tax in the country. Yukon, of course, had the lowest fuel tax in the country, and our rate was over 30 percent lower than Alberta's. Alberta will now be moving their fuel tax — gasoline and diesel rates — up, and an immediate 10-percent liquor markup and hike on tobacco tax. That is the reality that is going on around us.

What have we done? Last year we reduced the small-business tax by 25 percent. We reduced it from four percent to three percent, putting more money back into businesses' pockets to allow them to make decisions that are important for the success of their business, whether that's reinvesting in their staff, reinvesting in their equipment, or even just the ability to perhaps make some profit.

This year we have focused on Yukoners and Yukon families. We are, through this budget and through the amendments to the *Income Tax Act*, looking at a net increase of approximately \$5.5 million in 2015 — back into the hands of Yukoners to make decisions on what they want to do with that money. I am certain that a portion of that money will be reinvested back into this economy. Perhaps it's to help them make the decision to buy a new vehicle or to go out more frequently, take their family out to the show or buy a meal — whatever it is. A lot of that money will go back into this economy.

We can do this because of the prudent management we have had of our economy, because not only have we not had a deficit in years — one deficit in the last 11 years, I believe it is, otherwise surpluses. I'll maybe talk about the confusion. It's unfortunate that the Leader of the Official Opposition doesn't understand the difference between debt and deficits, but we will get to that.

What we are doing with amendments to the *Income Tax Act* is reducing that tax burden on taxpayers by lowering the rate on the three lowest tax brackets, but then we're also removing the surtax. When you actually add the surtax in as well, all four existing tax brackets will see a reduction in the amount of money that they are paying.

We will be introducing a new tax rate that imposes the same tax on a person's income as the *Income Tax Act* imposes on businesses that take the corporate form. That's for people whose incomes are \$500,000 or greater in a calendar year.

We are going to lower taxes across the board for Yukoners. We're going to remove the surtax, which really is a tax on a tax. What has happened is the fact that this amount has been the threshold and the rate has been fixed for years and, as people make more money, what we've seen is it isn't only the high-income earners who are now paying a surtax. In

fact, people who have an income greater than \$82,000 are also now paying the surtax, so we're removing that surtax. It's old, it's antiquated, it's confusing and not necessary.

We're also going to be making changes to the child fitness tax credit. We do mirror the federal government. In 2014, they had gone from \$500 to \$1,000 for the 2014 tax year. In 2015, they have made the change from a non-refundable credit to a refundable credit. This government continues to support and deliver programs — social-based programs and subsidized sports and recreation — throughout the territory. There are the childcare subsidies, there's the children rec fund — I believe the rec fund is probably about a quarter of a million dollars a year — the low-income family tax credit and, of course, the child tax credit as well.

What we will be doing is making this fitness tax credit refundable, meaning that those people who would not pay tax will still be able to get a refund on the investment in the child fitness tax. That, Mr. Speaker, ensures that all people will be able to benefit from a modified child tax credit.

We're also, as we heard members on this side talk about, enhancing the Yukon child tax benefit, so the cost to the government for the Yukon child benefit for 2015 — we're going to estimate it at approximately \$1.4 million. We're increasing the benefit and the threshold by the cost of living, and we're estimating that the additional cost for a full fiscal year is going to be almost half a million additional dollars that we are reinvesting back into Yukoners.

Here's just one example that I think sort of highlights what kind of impact this will have. If you have a single parent who has three children and is earning \$50,000 a year, they will save \$817 a year between changes to the tax credit and to the Yukon child benefit. That's \$817 in that parent's pocket to make those decisions that are best for their family. I think that is really the fundamental difference that we're talking about between the Yukon Party and the parties opposite, the parties opposite who are very willing to tax and spend — give us your money and we'll decide how to spend it. We know what's best for you.

The Yukon Party government disagrees with that ideology that we heard about. Of course, they feel that they should determine — and they know what's important for our citizens, and so we should just give them the dues that they deserve or the taxes and they will endeavour to spend that money. We believe that putting as much money back in the pockets of Yukoners to allow them to make the decisions of what's important for them is the right way to go. We are very proud of the social safety network that we have and the investments that we make on the social side of the ledger, and we will continue to do so, but, because of that strength that we've had in our fiscal management and the fact that Yukoners trust this government to be able to look after their money, we're able to now, after 12 years of no tax increases — I think we have to remember that since 2002, not a tax increase — give money back to Yukoners on top of a record capital budget where we are investing in infrastructure that is important.

It's a bit ideological, I think. Where the opposition thinks when they can increase taxes that just will increase the amount of money they have to do whatever it is that they feel is important for citizens. The reality is that when you increase taxes, people have less money in their pocket to spend so they spend less money. That means there is less money for business as well. If business has less money, people are spending less money, there are less people working in business as well because businesses don't have as much money. What you do see ultimately will be a decrease. We don't believe in that philosophy. We believe that by keeping as much money in the pockets of citizens and of businesses, we will promote the growth of our private sector economy. I think fundamentally that is the significant difference between us and the parties opposite.

It is disappointing to hear how reliant the other parties are on the territorial formula financing. We rely on that money and it's necessary to ensure that we have an equal level of service for an equal level of taxation, but our vision and goal is to become a net contributor to this country and I think that is the fundamental difference, because ultimately we don't know where that money will go. We know what the Liberal Party did in the 1990s. They did balance their budget, but they did it on the backs of the provinces and the territories. Over a 10-year period, Prime Minister Chrétien and Finance Minister Paul Martin eliminated \$2 billion from Yukon and made major cuts to education. We had doctor and nurse shortages for a generation as a result of those changes.

I know that the Liberal leader doesn't like to hear this and wants to talk over top, but the reality is, Mr. Speaker, that we don't know with certainty what will happen with the territorial formula financing in the future. Perhaps we know what the federal Conservatives have done over that time, but we don't know what will happen in the future. The Liberal government reduced transfers to provinces and territories from 17 percent of the federal budget when Mr. Chrétien took office to a low of 13 percent in 1999-2000.

The Conservative government restored the historical funding arrangement by rapidly eliminating the fiscal imbalance that all provinces and territories were concerned about.

Since 2003-04, the federal government has increased transfers to all provinces and territories by approximately 99 percent. Yukon's transfers during that same period increased by only 77 percent. However, contrary to the assertions by the Leader of the NDP, Yukon's own-source revenue grew an impressive 122 percent in that same time period — contrary to her assertions that our own-source revenues are going down.

The territorial formula financing grant has grown over time. However, in the past 11 years, our grant — as a percentage of the total revenues — has dropped significantly. That is the reality. NDP math — I don't understand it.

Mr. Speaker, there really is a fundamental misunderstanding as well, as I mentioned, about the difference between debt and deficit. Because a government spends more in one year — if their expenses exceed their revenues — that creates a deficit for that fiscal year, which, over a long period

of time, is not healthy, but there has been a case — only one year in the past decade, while Yukon Party has come into government — where that has in fact occurred.

The reality is that, because of the strong fiscal management, we have net financial resources. We have money in the bank, so, if in fact you do spend more in one year — if you spend \$20 million more in one year than what your revenues were but you have \$200 million in the bank — you had a deficit that year but you still have money in the bank.

That is, sadly, coming from leaders of political parties — to not understand the difference between a deficit and a debt. This government is proud of where we are today, from where we were back when the NDP and the Liberals had power in the late 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s. We have, since that time, been strong fiscal managers and implemented policy to encourage the development of the private sector. We have seen an increase in population of over 20 percent and diversification in our economy. The work is not done. We have more work to do.

I am proud of the members of this government and the focus that we have, not only on the short term but also on the long-term objectives, like hydro projects, diverse fibre projects — strategic investments that will ensure that we are ready to be successful in the future and ensure that we create the job opportunities for Yukoners so that they and their families can remain here in the Yukon.

We're proud of our accomplishments, we're proud of this budget and we're proud to be putting more money back into the pockets of Yukoners, because Yukon can continue to be the best place to live, work, play and raise a family.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward this motion for debate. Part of our job as legislators is to look at our fiscal system to see how we can improve it and to see what we can do for the benefit of all. I'm glad that, at least on paper, the Yukon Party government is willing to examine options and to consider options.

It's no surprise to Yukon businesses and Yukon citizens that they need certainty. They need to know what they can expect. They need to plan. That's why it's important that our taxation system, our capital projects and our operation and maintenance budgets are examined carefully and we look at them to see what risks are entailed, to see what possibilities there are and to see where we can go.

It's important, as the Member for Watson Lake said, that we start to examine options. It's important that these be debated on the floor of the House; that we consult with the people who are going to be affected. There's a lot of concern among Yukon citizens and Yukon businesses and Yukon industry that the Yukon Party government is making decisions behind closed doors and that they're making decisions based on an election cycle, rather than on common sense and business sense.

It isn't a laughing matter; it's very concerning. I've heard from businesses. We need to be able to plan and today the Member for Klondike raised a very valid concern, perhaps one

that hadn't been considered. Rather than take that and include it in our thinking, it was rejected.

While I support this motion as written, I'm concerned that decisions have already been taken and made that have narrowed the options that we can consider. Just last year, the Premier stood and talked about what an enviable position the Yukon and Alberta were in — Yukon and Alberta, the only two jurisdictions in Canada with positive surpluses. I read in the *Edmonton Journal* today that oil prices have plummeted to below \$50 a barrel and the province famous for low taxes is facing a \$7-billion budget deficit. It went on to quote the current Premier of Alberta as he headed into an election: "We understand that some choices are unpopular...And I...we understand — that no one wants to pay more...But we have made the realistic choices. Any meaningful plan has to contain hard truths".

There's a lesson for us there. Profligate spending and randomly cutting taxes in a run-up to an election is not necessarily wise or prudent. This Yukon Party government continues to take the easy road: ad hoc projects with little regard for risks, planning and sustainability. In report after report, the Auditor General has noted the need for more risk assessment, strategic planning and responsible building.

We in the Yukon, like Alberta, depend on a single source for the majority of our funding. The Premier noted this. As long as we rely on federal transfer payments and as long as we rely on other hard-working Canadians, we will not be economically secure. Yet our transfer payments from Canada have increased dramatically at the same time our own source revenues have decreased as a portion of total revenues. Contrary to what the Premier would have Yukoners believe, Yukon is farther from becoming a net contributor to the Canadian economy than we were before the Yukon Party came to power. In fact, dependence on federal transfers has grown under the Yukon Party government's direction. Own-source revenues have decreased, confirmed in the consolidated Public Accounts consolidated financial statements and are available to those who wish to read them.

The federal government, on whom we depend, is billions of dollars in debt and is currently struggling to eliminate their annual deficit. I do understand, as does the Leader of the NDP, the difference between a deficit and a debt.

The federal government has created an extractive, resource-based economic system, primarily driven by fossil fuel extraction. It should be no surprise that the federal government on whom we depend for our transfer payments is experiencing a boom-bust cycle. Norway recognized this as a problem and ensured that their revenue was not dependent upon cyclical revenues for their operating and capital costs. They ensured that their tax regime was realistic.

Are we going to end up like Alberta and their famous bumper sticker, which I have edited for the Legislature: "Please, God, give me another oil boom and I promise not to waste it this time"?

We have been the beneficiaries of hard-earned federal tax money. It is our responsibility to use that money responsibly to promote the well-being of Yukon citizens, businesses and

industry in a prudent and responsible manner — to pay our fair share through our entrepreneurship and our industry, and pay a fair portion of our earnings to the benefit of all.

I am heartened to see the motion proposed by the Member for Watson Lake urging the government to examine options. The NDP believes in responsible fiscal governments. We support careful and reasoned exploration and evaluation of policy measures to support a strong and inclusive Yukon economy where no one is left behind. It is our hope that this motion will result in a careful consideration of government's role in our economy.

Our concern is that this government is committing itself to cutting taxes during a time of economic uncertainty in the last quarter of this legislative rotation as a sort of desperate Hail Mary, last-ditch effort to stimulate our stagnating economy. Now is not the time to use Canadian money as election fodder. Now more than ever we need a government willing to make the hard choices that will be necessary to move from dependency toward an independent, diversified, self-sustaining economy. Now is the time to assess the risks and to do prudent, long-term planning.

Where is the Yukon government's long-term plan 10 years hence for our children? What are we setting them up for?

Again, will we end up like Alberta, a notorious low-tax province, now faced with hard times — the inevitable bust phase of boom — having to cut spending for the future, cutting their spending in education, in health and social services, in community infrastructure and services? These are services that ensure all Yukon citizens have a fair shake in life, so that they can live and contribute to our society with dignity.

As noted in many Auditor General's reports on the Yukon Party, the Yukon Party government has either been unwilling or unable to assess the risks, do the planning and make the responsible difficult decisions that are necessary to move forward in a fiscally responsible manner.

The NDP supports the gathering of evidence and performing a reasoned and balanced analysis to determine whether or not, and to what extent, the Yukon Party government's proposal to cut taxes and reduce Yukon's own-source revenue is a fiscally responsible decision that will yield positive net benefits to the economy and to Yukoners, and that these benefits will be shared equitably among all levels of income.

In the meantime, we recommend restraint, robust strategic planning, and the coordination of capital budget implementation with local industry, suppliers and contractors to ensure the massive amount of territorial public dollars being injected into an unprecedented capital rollout will maximize local benefits and sustain, rather than deplete, our territorial resources.

We agree that the government should examine options, but we think the issue of taxation rates needs greater debate than just suggesting all rates should be lowered. It is time for the Yukon Party government to think of Yukon's future, to rethink their cynical pre-election spending binge, to rethink

their poorly thought-out pre-election tax cuts and to consider options, to make the hard choices, to show leadership and truly put Yukon on the path to long-term, sustainable prosperity.

I would like to express again my disappointment at the outright rejection by the Premier and his caucus of the amendment proposed by the Member for Klondike. I am not speaking to the amendment, but the principle contained. It was simply a collegial offering by an opposition member to help this Legislative Assembly fulfill our obligations set out in First Nation self-government agreements. The Premier's harsh reaction to the amendment was surprising and disappointing.

This is not the first time that this Yukon Party government has proposed to make legislative amendments that do not respect the provisions of Yukon self-government or land claims agreements. As the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Member for Klondike both pointed out, the amount of money is not the issue. The fact is the Yukon and self-governing First Nations agreed in section 13.5.4 of the self-government agreements that where Yukon reasonably foresees that a Yukon law of general application — which the tax law is — which it intends to enact may have an impact on a law enacted by the First Nation, the Yukon shall consult with the First Nation.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: In spite of the member's assertion that he was not speaking to the amendment, I believe he has gone beyond that and is now speaking at length to the amendment. You had an opportunity when the amendment was on the floor to speak at that time. You chose not to, so could we get back on track on to the main motion please? Thank you.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Considering that this was just brought forward, the reference to the First Nation governments I would hope was an oversight and the fact that we are debating it — and I'm speaking to the general principle of the debate — when we rush through something, we often don't know all of the consequences. That is why we're having this kind of debate. This kind of oversight by this government is unfortunate. It could have been an easy win and a bridge to First Nation self-government and it would have been much easier for me to support this motion.

I would like again to thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing it forward and thank you.

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

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. 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 No. 896 agreed to

Motion No. 894

Clerk: Motion No. 894, standing in the name of Mr. Elias.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2015-16 budget to make Yukon the best place to live, work and raise a family.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: If it hadn't been for that 2015 budget part, I would have had to take this one off because it already is the best place.

Mr. Elias: I concur, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. I'm honoured to rise today in support of Motion No. 894, urging the Yukon government to use the 2015-16 budget to make the Yukon the best place to live, work and raise a family.

This government believes in Yukoners. We believe that Yukon is the best place to live in Canada and it can be made even better. I would like to use this opportunity to speak directly to the 20th anniversary of the first four of the Yukon final agreements and self-government agreements and how I see them contributing to this motion.

On February 14, 1995, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the Teslin Tlingit Council, the Na Cho Nyäk Dun and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation led the way. The foresight, sacrifice, compromise and perseverance shown during the 20 years leading up to those agreements was truly extraordinary and their vision of self-governance is an example to all of us as we strive to make Yukon the best place to live in Canada, to work and raise a family.

I recently spoke to my constituents and to the new Vuntut Gwitchin chief and council, and I said to them that when we

speak of governing ourselves, what does that really mean? To me, it means we are in charge of our own destiny and that our future is ours to shape. I believe it also means that when anyone looks to north Yukon to do business, they view the Vuntut Gwitchin government as the resident government to partner with.

I am proud of how far the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation has come since 1994. Our future looks bright, but it also looks very challenging. There is so much yet for us to accomplish. A hundred years from now, our children may be studying our Vuntut Gwitchin heritage and asking: Why were certain leaders able to inspire and mobilize so many of our people to achieve the things we have achieved, and how did they achieve what they achieved? I believe it is by partnering with other orders of government, being solution-oriented and working for our citizens to become healthier, better educated, more secure, better equipped to be strong players in the north Yukon economy and to secure environmental sustainability, and to do this we must work together.

I am proud to be a part of this government, which is partnering with our Vuntut Gwitchin government to deliver on these things, not only for my community and my constituents, but for all communities and all people across the Yukon, and I'll expand on that a sentiment a bit now.

Mr. Speaker, this is the largest capital budget in Yukon history and it is about putting Yukoners to work. I support that vision 100 percent. This government knows that the time is right to invest in public infrastructure in all of our Yukon communities. The Dawson City residents will see the replacement of the McDonald Lodge. They will see their water systems being upgraded. The Eagle Plains area will see rehabilitation and erosion control work on the Dempster Highway. Beaver Creek will see their fire truck replaced. In Destruction Bay, the Destruction Bay Health Centre will receive much-needed maintenance and renovation and their school will get a fresh coat of paint. The St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction will receive a replacement of their underground fuel tanks. They will see investments in their water reservoir and pump station. The Carmacks waste-water plant will be upgraded. The citizens of Carmacks will witness a partnership with the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation to develop geothermal energy. The fire hall in Carcross will be replaced. The RCMP detachment in Faro will be replaced and the improvements to their pumphouse will be completed. In Mayo and Pelly Crossing, their water, sewer and road infrastructure will get upgrades.

These are just some of the investments that this government is making in Yukon communities. They are not merely upgrades for the sake of upgrades. This is about putting Yukoners to work, making our communities stronger, safer, healthier and more prosperous. This budget also brings significant tax relief to Yukon families, and, as Donna Summer sang so eloquently, we know that Yukoners work hard for their money and that they deserve to keep as much of that money in their own pockets.

That is why we are amending the Yukon *Income Tax Act* and regulations to revise the personal income tax structure to

reduce the burden on taxpayers, significantly increasing the Yukon child benefit, increasing the political contribution tax credit and mirroring the Yukon's children's fitness tax credit with the federal children's fitness tax credit.

In addition, through this budget we are also improving regulatory and permitting regimes, promoting cooperative governance, partnerships and reconciliation agreements with Yukon First Nations, promoting partnerships with Canada, our sister territories and the provinces, and promoting community development and a clean environment for generations to come.

This is my ninth year serving as the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin, and it is a pleasure and an honour to do so. All of my constituents know that I care for each and every one of them, and I thank them for their guidance and direction over my tenure.

When I reflect on our work here and my work here on behalf of my constituents in the context of this budget and the 20th anniversary of the first four, I feel hopeful and confident about our territory. But our Yukon story didn't end when we signed those first four final agreements that belong to us all. It was only the beginning of the implementation path. Now we are well on our way. We have 20 years of history of truly working in partnership, government to government, but you know what, Mr. Speaker? Working in partnership doesn't always mean seeing eye to eye on every issue. It means that when we do disagree, we resolve our differences respectfully, in good faith, with professionalism, tact and diplomacy. As Yukoners, we all want the same thing. We want our people to become healthier, better educated, more secure and better equipped to be strong players in the Canadian economy.

When we say that we want Yukon to be the best place in Canada to live, work, play and raise a family, we are not making up pretty words. This is about the path and vision to making Yukon a net contributor to Canada. Relying eternally on federal transfer payments, on the sweat of other hard-working Canadians, will not do. This not the legacy I want to leave my children and their children. I want us to embrace our traditional values and be self-sustaining like we have always been. I want our children to take full advantage of all the opportunities provided to them while holding true to our values.

We have a moral obligation to take economic responsibility and environmental sustainability for ourselves. This is the honourable path. It is fuelled by the same spirit that has sustained and strengthened Yukoners as they negotiated our final agreements. It is the same spirit that carried us as we sought and achieved devolution. This government is clear in our aim, and we make no apologies for it. We are moving forward together on the path toward a stronger and more prosperous Yukon.

There is actually a saying in Gwich'in about that. In Gwich'in, we call this [*Member spoke in Gwich'in. Text unavailable.*] That is what it means. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi' cho and merci beaucoup.

Ms. Moorcroft: Today we are being asked to debate government talking points, which have been introduced as a motion in this House.

The motion before us today is not a motion of substance. It is a motion asking the House to debate the Yukon Party election slogan. It reflects a disrespect for this Assembly and for the Yukon public.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Elias: I believe the language used by the opposition member with regard to the word "disrespectful" — as I was the only member who spoke before her, she used my words as being disrespectful. I believe that's in contravention of Standing Order 19(i), using abusive or insulting language that's going to create disorder. I don't see anything that I've said as being disrespectful and I ask for an unqualified retraction of that statement from the member opposite and an apology to this Assembly.

Speaker: Opposition House Leader, please.

Ms. Stick: I heard my colleague provide her opinion on the actions of the government and not necessarily targeting the colleague across the way, so I don't believe this is a point of order. This is the opinion of my colleague, and this is debate in the Legislature.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I'm going to have a look in Hansard tomorrow to confirm exactly the phraseology that was used, but the word "disrespectful" in the way I heard it right now — and recall it — referred to this motion in general and bringing it forward to this House. All members of this House — and I mean all members — are permitted to bring forward any motion that they choose to bring forward. To say that it is disrespectful of the House in the context of the motion, I believe is actually wrong. The member is permitted to bring forward their motion the way they word it, and all motions and all ideas before this House are worthy of debate.

I would ask the member to refrain from using the word in that context and find another way of stating your disagreement with the motion.

Ms. Moorcroft: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be guided by your ruling.

As election slogans go, the Yukon Party could do worse, but they seem to have missed that it's already taken. Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Iowa and an Ontario Progressive Conservative candidate have all said that their jurisdictions are the best place to live, work and raise a family.

I want to debate substance, not the Yukon Party campaign lingo, which is appearing more and more often in government press releases, as well as the members' opposite comments in the House on a daily basis.

At the outset, I want to thank the residents of Copperbelt South for the honour and privilege of representing them in this

Legislative Assembly. Copperbelt South is a large and diverse riding. I enjoy speaking with constituents and hearing their views so I can better represent their needs and interests. I want to thank them for their time and for their conversations, whether they are supporters or not, and in fact whether or not they choose to vote.

One common resource through Copperbelt South is the Alaska Highway, which runs through that riding. The government's proposal to twin the Alaska Highway from the Carcross Cut-off to the Mayo Road Cut-off has finally been released publicly and it is generating a lot of comment. I will have more to say about that in a few minutes.

The flagship project for the Yukon Party in this budget is the 300-bed seniors megaplex in Whistle Bend at a cost of over \$300 million. That's not what Yukon seniors or their families want to see. The real priority is for home care and people aging in place. That's what the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, the Registered Nurses Association, and the Canadian Medical Association among others support. For this project, for this new 300-bed facility, local contractors are concerned that they will not be able to bid. We'd like to know how the government will evaluate whether using B.C. Bid will represent value for money.

My colleague, the Member for Riverdale South, spoke yesterday about the Sarah Steele proposed replacement building for alcohol and drug treatment, which is budgeted at \$1.2 million for this year. There have been eight addenda to the tender package since it was issued. This is not a sign of good advanced planning, but we don't expect to see good advanced planning from the Yukon Party.

The most obvious difference between the Yukon Party and the Official Opposition NDP is in our respective approaches to budgeting. The Yukon NDP do needs assessments first, consult the community and interested parties first about needs and problems, listen to what the public has to say and then invest in services and infrastructure. That's a good project management approach — contrast the Yukon Party that fails to consider evidence prior to decision-making, ignores public comment when they do consult, and mismanage the capital projects they undertake.

Let me give a few examples: Whitehorse Correctional Centre — overbudget, a slew of change orders throughout the entire construction period; building a floorplan for an arrest processing unit that, oops, was too big and they had to cut it back because they couldn't afford to build the larger one; there are the Watson Lake and Dawson City hospitals, overbudget and constructed with borrowed money that mortgages our future generations; F.H. Collins, shovels in the ground for a photo opportunity for the 2011 election campaign before they threw out the plans and purchased a design from Alberta; and the Dawson City waste-water treatment plant that still doesn't work. Here's a more recent example: the new LNG plant facility is running at \$6.4 million above the estimate provided to the Yukon Utilities Board confirmed by Yukon Energy Corporation president Andrew Hall in February. The new LNG plant has gone from \$36.5 million to

now \$42.9 million. I guess we'll just have to wait and see what the total cost is.

The NDP believe it's important to make the Yukon more self-sufficient because economic self-sufficiency is the best path to economic strength. Now let's look at what Yukon Party budgets will show us. The reliance on Ottawa has increased. The transfer payments from Ottawa to the Yukon are now over \$1 billion per year. It's easy to spend money when you have that kind of money to spend. But the budgets have been going up and the management of those budgets is not sound.

What about the Yukon Party approach to legislation? In the last sitting, we passed amendments to the *Marriage Act*, but a recently appointed marriage commissioner said the act posted on the Department of Justice web page is still the 2002 act, which says a marriage commissioner can charge \$5. So I wonder: Will the new 2014 *Marriage Act* be proclaimed before the 12 weekends of summer that are the prime wedding dates under the midnight sun are behind us?

Mr. Speaker, I do want to acknowledge the hard work of government officials in completing the consolidated statutes on the legislative website, which is maintained by legislative council office and the Queen's Printer. It's good to see that there. However, the Yukon Party government is not as diligent. It took the Yukon Party 10 years to finally bring forward a whistle-blower act and again, the new *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* has not yet been proclaimed. The new *Landlord and Tenant Act* still has not come into effect, leaving tenants without any protections or recourse.

On off-road vehicle safety, the Yukon Party government has responded to some of the recommendations from the select committee, but the government appears to be against safety. They weren't willing to require ATV owners to wear a helmet except on public roads.

The Yukon Party Cabinet seems reluctant to set aside protected areas. Each year, we see extensive areas of sensitive habitat destroyed and the Minister of Environment fails to act as he's legally obligated to do.

The Yukon Party refused to call a public inquiry into the carbon monoxide poisoning deaths of five citizens in a Porter Creek rental home. The *Oil-Fired Appliance Safety Statutory Amendment Act* amends three other acts: the *Building Standards Act*, the *Electrical Protection Act*, and the *Fire Prevention Act*. These amendments don't go far enough to address the problems and there are still no regulations. Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't call that "the best place to live".

The Yukon Party likes to boast about its successive largest capital budgets in history. Of course it's easy to spend money when the transfer payments are now over \$1 billion, but this government doesn't spend its money wisely. I will use the Alaska Highway corridor twinning project for an example here. This morning in Question Period, I asked the minister whether the government would look at other options than a \$202-million expenditure. We don't yet have the future growth needed. The population living in the Whitehorse area is nowhere near approaching 50,000 people. Commodity

prices are down and the resource extraction industry is again in decline. So that doesn't support the magnitude of that project at this time.

The business owners along the Alaska Highway corridor have also expressed their concern about the size of this project. In front of the airport, it would include turning lanes, bypass roads, shoulders and meridians — and the business owners are opposed to this plan, saying it's too complicated and too costly. I think the government needs to look at addressing those concerns and consider more affordable scenarios.

There are other problems, like rerouting neighbourhoods away from the hospital, concerns about access to pedestrian and bicycle trails. I wonder how many properties will be appropriated under this plan and what the anticipated cost of that is. Have businesses located within the right-of-way been told to move? Is the airport maintenance shed going to be moved and, if so, what will that cost and when will that be done? How will construction be managed to limit disruptions to businesses and the driving public? Is the 2011 highway survey document the basis for the plan, or are there other studies of high-collision areas that are less than four years old?

I asked the previous Minister of Highways and Public Works to table in this House the safety work that was done by an engineering firm to look at the Alaska Highway corridor for the last three and a half years, and the minister steadfastly refused to provide that information to the House. It was only released last month, at the same time they released their consultation plan for 60 days. It's a very complex plan; there's a lot of detail; there are a lot of documents. I don't understand why they now want to rush so quickly. I have asked the minister if they have plans to proceed with a tender, no matter what the public says. That would be consistent with the approach that has been taken to consultation in other areas.

On the Alaska Highway near the airport, the road is falling apart. The paint is wearing off. I've heard a lot of people saying that windshields are getting busted. I would like to know if the government is going to ensure the contractor repairs the damage on this section of the Alaska Highway and how much it will cost to repair the damage.

Whether or not the government does have a tender ready to go on May 16, no matter what the public says, I think people are concerned that they shouldn't trust this government when it comes to consultation. Nevertheless, I would urge the government to consider extending that consultation period on the Alaska Highway corridor. I would appreciate too if they could table additional information. Even the 2011 report was based on traffic data that ended in 2009. I'm wondering to what extent the Hamilton Boulevard extension has been included in those information packages.

Again, the flagship project is the 300-bed seniors megaplex at over \$300 million. That is a lot of money that could build a lot of housing options for people.

This spring, the Official Opposition visited 17 communities to hear from Yukon residents about their priorities. We heard many times about the need to diversify

the economy. We heard about the need for food security. There is a premium on access to fresh and healthy food because it has to be shipped. Support for local agriculture improves our food sovereignty and improves good health.

We also heard about the need for land-based treatment programs to help community members who struggle with addictions and who don't necessarily do well in a Whitehorse residential facility. The government has only budgeted \$1 million over four years for land-based treatment. That is obviously not a priority for them, and it fails to meet the need that we heard the public tell us about.

We heard that Yukon government should not be spending its money hiring Bay Street lawyers to fight the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* in court. Rather, the government should respect the land claims agreements and the land use planning process as set out in the agreements. Over and over again, the Yukon Party is making decisions that violate the land claims agreements and force First Nations to take them to court.

A better approach would be to work with First Nation development corporations and recognize them as an integral part of the Yukon economy. A better approach is to have an economic strategy that is linked to a strong community and social strategy, one that that strengthens our local economies and creates opportunities for Yukon businesses seeking out opportunities for diversification.

The government finally has come out with some projects to use up the northern housing trust money that has sat dormant for many years, but they are not investing enough in affordable housing options to meet the needs of our citizens.

I want to turn to the issue of hydraulic fracturing and oil and gas development. The all-party select committee travelled to many communities to hear from the public about their assessment on the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing. There was overwhelming concern. There were many people who supported a ban on this controversial and destructive method of extracting oil and gas resources. This budget boasts of the strategic industries development fund project to consider the possibility of building and operating an oil refinery in the Eagle Plains area. That would mean hydraulic fracturing.

One of the most moving experiences that I had as the vice-chair of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing was to travel to the community of Old Crow and to meet with its citizens on the Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory.

I want to read into the record just a few highlights from the speakers at that public hearing in Old Crow. One of the first speakers noted that: "Our people still rely heavily on the land for physical and spiritual sustenance, but if it is not healthy, it can no longer help make us as a Gwitchin people healthy." The land "...gives me a place to be proud of. Seeing it intact and healthy is priceless to me. Just knowing it is healthy is priceless." On hydraulic fracturing: "I don't want to see it anywhere on Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory or anywhere else in the territory."

Another speaker said that they took the time as a community and the initiative to learn about hydraulic fracturing: “There’s a lot of risk within it, especially with our headwaters. I am not one to be really in favour with it — I mean, not only for our generation, but the next generation and the generations to come.”

“...we go every fall and every spring to hunt and fish and drink water.” With hydraulic fracturing, the chemicals that go into the water are a concern. “I don’t want nothing in our water, but the pureness of itself — what comes from the headwaters.”

“I would like to keep the water fresh for the future, for myself and for all the animals that are out there that we eat also.”

The next speaker said, “I’ve done quite a bit of research on hydraulic fracturing, and I don’t believe it’s safe.” “...we learned...that fracking creates a demand for something called frac sand mining, which is also very destructive to the environment. That’s for the sand that goes into the chemical water mixture to crack open the rock or the shale. As well, that’s very environmentally destructive.”

This speaker travelled to the Horn River Basin and met with the Fort Nelson First Nation and went on to say, “They are losing their hunting grounds. All the traplines in the Horn River Basin are now ruined due to the equipment being used, the seismic, the mulchers, just the general noise and activity going on over there. A lot of those trappers have lost their traplines, as well as their hunting territory. The community has one last spot, which is in the Liard Basin, and they are really trying to protect that, but already seismic is going through there.”

Mr. Speaker, the Liard Basin is where the Yukon Party would like to promote more oil and gas development and potentially hydraulic fracturing.

We have another speaker from chief and council, saying, “Northern Cross has some operations in our traditional territory right now and they say that they are not going to frack, but they have also said a lot of things since 2008, I think it was, when they first came up here. What a lot of us here have had the benefit of seeing is that we’ve been able to see this situation with Northern Cross evolve since the beginning. Their plans were extremely different when they first came here, and now they are different today and their plans are going to be different five to 10 years from now.” “With that type of uncertainty, it is going to be extremely difficult for us to accept something as controversial as fracking in an environment that we hold so dear to our hearts.” “It’s about how all life is connected to water, from the insects to the humans to the animals to trees and plants and vegetation. For that reason, we hold water very dear to our hearts. That’s why it’s something that we’re reluctant to risk.”

“Right now we’re left with one of the most majestic parcels of land in the world. I’m talking about the entire Yukon here, with the mountain ranges and the Yukon River, the wetlands, all the beautiful basins. One of them you’re sitting right at the bottom of right now. It’s gorgeous here. The environment we have is a commodity that we just can’t

afford to risk. At this point, I think oil and natural gas in general is a commodity that’s a lot less important in the grand scheme of things.”

“I think the time is now for us to start looking to other sources of energy. I think that with the advancement of our collective knowledge moving so quickly, it’s not too far-fetched to say that we can start looking in that direction. But for the time being, anyway, the point is that we really need to be careful. This is one of the few majestic pieces of land left. We need to tread softly; we need to make sure we’re making good decisions here.”

Another member of council thanked us for coming to hear their voices and has an extensive background in oil and gas development, working on the oil rigs in Alberta. She concludes that they do not want to see hydraulic fracturing, because “...our biggest concern as Vuntut is the quality and quantity of water. The amount of water used for a single hydraulic fracturing job is enormous. Working on the rigs, I can tell you it would take me a whole day of constant hauling water just for one frack job. That water is contaminated and unusable afterward. That’s a big concern.”

We have an elder who spoke about the Berger inquiry coming through north Yukon in the 1950s and 1960s —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Order please. Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Elias: It seems that the member opposite is reading from the actual hearings from Hansard with regard to the community hearing in Old Crow. I request that she either recognize the people she is quoting or table the document so that members of the public and the Assembly can recognize those people who were speaking there, because the vast majority of them are my constituents.

Speaker: Member for Copperbelt South, on the point of order.

Ms. Moorcroft: On the point of order, yes, I would be happy to read into the record the names of the people who made the remarks. This is an excerpt that I have been quoting from. I did want to make a note — which I hadn’t yet — that the oral hearings for the hydraulic fracturing committee are on the Legislative Assembly web page, under the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing tab, and that does have both the transcripts and the oral testimony.

I will, however, for the three people whose comments I’ve quoted, put those on the record. I did intend to provide this highlighted document to Hansard. Perhaps they could clean it up, with putting the names to the comments.

The first section was from the remarks of Mr. Peter, then of Mr. Josie, then of Ms. Josie, and then of Ms. Bingham, who was at that time a member of council and said that she had worked in Alberta on the oil rigs. I’m now quoting from Mr. Bruce, the elder who first spoke in Gwich’in and then went on to speak in English, and I thank the member opposite for his point of order.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I think you have corrected it so please carry on — but if you could, please put the person's name ahead of the quote. The document is already a public record.

Ms. Moorcroft: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Bruce said, "For a long time now, we've had an oil company being involved in this north Yukon since the 1950s and 1960s, until the Berger inquiry came through. A lot of people in Old Crow fought against development for oil and gas, so they talked to the Berger inquiry and they put a moratorium on oil and gas for 10 to 20 years. Now that moratorium is lifted. So now that it's lifted, now we got Northern Cross south of us doing drilling. Like the younger person who talked before — Brandon said oil companies make a decision, say they're going to follow their decision and that's happening, but it's always changing. They come in with a new plan; they don't stick to the plan that they preached to the community about.

"These are the kind of things young people are afraid of for their future generation. Therefore, I call upon the Committee to look toward putting a moratorium on fracking for at least 25 to 30 years so our younger generation that's growing up can deal with this issue for their next generation."

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Schafer spoke to the community about the fact that he was born out on the land at the headwaters of Whitestone and that he really cherishes that he was born out on the land — "I was born in a toboggan out on the dog team trail with my parents. So that I cherish very much, and I cherish that land where I was born very much.

"I was born there clean and I'm still healthy and I still want to continue to teach the young generation that's going through transition to a different culture. That is hard to do..."

"We need a strong mandate to kind of monitor development within our area. Like I say, we depend on the land and we depend strongly on the Porcupine caribou herd. That's one of the dangers I always fear — what might happen with the Porcupine caribou herd and the fish habitat also, because of running water from the headwaters."

Mr. Kassi spoke about looking at the developments down south and all the animals and the contamination down there. He said, "...we're really fortunate. We've got migrating animals; we've got migrating fish and birds. They used to have that down in southern Yukon; they don't even have that anymore because of minor developments..."

Mr. Bruce spoke at the end and one of the things that he did was to translate the words of Elder Fanny Charlie who spoke in Gwitchin, and she said — reading the translation: "She doesn't want any involvement with development and fracking and stuff like that. This is for the future generations, for the younger people. She's happy with what she heard mostly young people talking, and that's for their future. She just wishes if this Committee could take in what the young people are talking about, that there be no fracking, no development and oil and gas. That was her comment".

Mr. Speaker, it was deeply moving to hear the youth — the Vuntut Gwitchin youth and the Vuntut Gwitchin elders —

speak about the land that they lived on and their concern for protecting that environment for future generations. I believe we owe that, not just to the Vuntut Gwitchin people, and not just to the Yukon, but to all of humanity and to the earth itself. The trees are alive; the waters are alive; the fish and animals and birds are alive. We as a human species do not have the right to destroy that in the name of a short-lived fossil-fuel economy.

Mr. Speaker, I think that leaves it clear that we in this caucus will not be voting for a budget that boasts of examining the possibility of building and operating an oil refinery in the Eagle Plains area.

The other thing that the select committee heard time and time again is that Yukon people are losing trust in this government. The Yukon Party government just doesn't listen. The Peel fiasco and the government's determination to proceed with hydraulic fracturing, as evidenced in the leaked documents from Energy, Mines and Resources recommending that government proceed with multi-stage hydraulic fracturing, cements the lack of trust in this government.

The Premier's favourite response to being called to account for his failure to adhere to the land claims agreements is to say, "Well, we have bilateral accords." Mr. Premier, there are accords with First Nations and they are called self-government agreements.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Ms. Moorcroft: Sorry — Mr. Speaker, that was a message to Mr. Premier.

Bilateral accords are not the vision that Yukon First Nations and the non-aboriginal population of the Yukon had when we reached those agreements after years and years of negotiations. The vision that many of us shared is one where the non-aboriginal peoples and the First Nations of the Yukon work cooperatively on the management regime for how we develop the Yukon into the future. That's a vision that we share.

Mr. Speaker, I've spoken about some of this government's initiatives using federal transfer dollars, using the public funds of Canadian citizens who pay taxes and support the Yukon. I don't think that that's a good approach. I think that this government's approach is faulty in just looking to spend as much as they can as quickly as they can.

I think that the government's approach is faulty in rushing out and boasting, time after time each year, of the capital budgets that they now have the largest capital budget in history. Good for us, take a look and let's rush in with project after project after project, some unplanned, some ill-considered, some in defiance of the evidence, and see if we can bribe the Yukon public with their money before we call an election —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Elias: The member opposite's characterization of the government bribing Yukoners is clearly in contravention

of the Standing Orders. It is 19(g): imputes false or unavowed motives to another member. Like, seriously?

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: When the Clerks and I review the Blues every morning, we often look at the wordings strictly in how they are presented and there are times when we have had interesting debates on the use of the words, the context, and the implied intent. Often the notion of a motive is missed. In this particular context, I have to say that the use of the word "bribe" is implying that there is a false motive of the government. I am sure that the member can find some other words to use to express her feelings in that direction. I would ask you to rephrase your statement. I will give you a chance to correct it.

Ms. Moorcroft: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will conclude then by saying that I believe that it would make the Yukon a better place to live if the government were to choose the approach of consulting with the public, with the community and interested parties about their needs and priorities. If they were to listen to what the public has to say and then act on it and then to invest in services and infrastructure in a way that does respect what they have heard from the public.

Our approach is to reach out to the public and to listen to what they have to say. We're disappointed that this Yukon Party has ceased conducting annual tours of Yukon communities for pre-budget hearings. That was something that was started by the New Democrat government in the past, which this government has gone away from. We've seen time and again that this government does not respect what the public has to say, and I hope that they will, in fact, listen.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this motion forward. I speak with my constituents often about issues that are important to them, issues such as a healthy economy, including resource extraction, tourism, private sector businesses, the knowledge sector and trades. I consider myself very fortunate to live in a place where the level of care is truly second to none. We are fortunate to have that, not entitled.

I recognize, just for one example, how fortunate seniors are in Yukon. Mr. Speaker, over the last 10 years, your Yukon Party government has increased the budget for home care across the territory by over 350 percent because we on this side of the Legislature believe it is important to keep seniors in their homes and in their communities as long as possible.

Since 2002, your Yukon Party government has increased budgets in mental health services, in services to people with disabilities. We see before us a record-breaking capital budget. We see before us a healthy \$23.2-million surplus. That is an investment in Yukoners.

The budget tabled before us speaks to a healthy economy, and I commend our Premier for this budget and for his remarks last Thursday. The budget speaks to investments in the resource sector. It speaks to investments in the tourism

economy. It speaks to investments in the knowledge sector and trades. Your Yukon Party government continues to make Yukoners its priority.

My constituents and I are pleased to see the investments and the vision in education. The Premier spoke at great length about education in his budget speech. I believe Yukoners appreciate the investment in our young people. This Yukon Party government is committing to Yukoners. We are committing to the youth of today and tomorrow because we believe in them and we believe in their future. I thank the Premier and the Minister of Education for their vision and for their leadership on this file, and I thank the good men and women who work so hard each and every day to deliver our education programs to our children throughout the territory.

The budget tabled before us speaks to the needs of Yukoners, the need to safely travel from one community to another, through investments in road and airport infrastructure, the need for predictability and stability in environmental stewardship, and the need for economic stability and diversity throughout the territory.

We're on the right track, Mr. Speaker. In previous mandates, we have worked to restore the economy. I've talked at great length before on how the economic situation was dire in 2002 when we took office. Yukon was in trouble. People were leaving the territory. The Liberal and NDP governments of the day had collapsed and hope was fading.

Through hard work and deliberate strategic investments, we were able to restore the confidence and investment in the territory. By working together, we were able to do better. We committed to building Yukon's future.

As Minister of Health and Social Services, I was pleased to listen in on the Premier's Budget Address and how we see highlighted a number of departmental initiatives, including the new Sixth Avenue continuing care facility, the new 150-bed Whistle Bend continuing care facility, McDonald Lodge building replacement, the new Salvation Army Centre of Hope facility, transitional housing six-plex for mental health individuals, St. Elias replacement, Sarah Steele Building replacement, the new territorial health investment fund, the MRI and emergency department expansion at the Whitehorse General Hospital, and e-health, just to name a few.

The decision to proceed with infrastructure projects like the Whistle Bend continuing care facility, Sarah Steele, McDonald Lodge and St. Elias building replacements and the Whitehorse General Hospital expansion are all based on the territory's current and projected needs. While they are all significant investments into the future, Mr. Speaker, they will be managed in a fiscally responsible way. The department's mission is to promote, protect and enhance the well-being of Yukon people through a continuum of quality, accessible and appropriate health care and social services, and we are delivering.

We saw our territory continue to grow, even through a difficult global economic crisis that affected millions around the world. That is a testament to solid leadership.

My point is this: We recognize that strong leadership has very tangible, very important consequences. Our government

has made a point of working to rebuild Yukon. Yukoners trust this government to manage the finances in the good times and in the lean times — something the other parties simply cannot say.

Our government is working to make Yukon the best place to live, work, play and raise a family — to make Yukon the best place to live. The Premier noted that this government believes and has a desire to make Yukon a net contributor to Canada. The more revenue we generate locally, the greater flexibility we have in responding to emerging pressures and needs.

As the Minister of Health and Social Services, I am reminded on a daily basis of the demands on government to provide services and programs. If we are ever going to have any realistic hope of providing the kinds of services that so many of us look for, then we are going to need steady, reliable, own-source revenue streams to fund those particular programs.

To do that, we are investing new money in Yukon and reducing our tax burden. The new money is the \$1.367-billion budget before us, of which \$312 million is capital. We are investing \$1.4 million for the enhanced Yukon mineral exploration program. We are allocating \$3.5 million to extend the interim electrical rebate that provides residents with an annual saving of \$319 per year. We are spending \$531,000 this year of the total \$2 million from Canada's Northern Wellness Approach. In fact, I joined our MP just yesterday to make this announcement, on behalf of the Minister of Community Services, at Golden Horn Elementary with the grade 3 class and representatives from RPAY. These funds will build capacity at the local level and promote healthy, active living across our territory.

People will always need medical attention for reasons beyond their control. Some people are going to have broken bones, experience illness or develop conditions, regardless of their lifestyle choices. While I realize all that, I am convinced that many Yukoners would feel better, would be healthier, and would delay or avoid altogether some of their medical situations if we made better lifestyle choices. Whether it's smoking, excessive drinking or a sedentary lifestyle, Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that we need to do more than to tell people it's simply a bad choice. I think that we have a role to play in providing healthy, positive alternatives.

It is because I believe that we need healthier, positive options for people that I support our government's efforts to build a new sports complex. We announced this project a year ago and we're continuing to work on it. I believe investing in facilities that support healthy lifestyle choices is both the right thing and the responsible thing to do.

Jumping from health care to infrastructure, I'm pleased to see that we have \$200,000 per year for three years to enhance our palaeontology program in Dawson. I can't imagine how the MLA for Klondike could possibly vote against this program. It was disappointing to see that the only Liberal member in this Legislative Assembly chose not to speak to the budget, chose not to voice his support or his thoughts on O&M and capital projects, particularly in his own region of

Klondike. I have a question for the member opposite. I would like to know how the Liberal leader feels this is a good representation of his constituents.

Mr. Speaker, having industry and government work cooperatively makes all kinds of sense. This to me is the way the system should work. Having a good working relationship between the miners and the scientists is truly in everyone's best interest.

I'm also pleased to see \$775,000 to design and begin construction of a paleo facility in Dawson. I can't imagine how the MLA for Klondike could possibly vote against this program, let alone pass up the opportunity to speak to projects like this that will employ his constituents.

As the Premier has said on a number of occasions, government can provide the foundation of infrastructure that businesses and corporations need in order to grow the economy. This is just one reason I support the \$1.3 million for the planning study of the Whitehorse corridor section of the Alaska Highway. I would like to extend my thanks to the current and previous minister and the officials in the Department of Highways and Public Works for the incredible amount of work done on that project to date.

Mr. Speaker, we're investing \$9.73 million to reconstruct the remaining unimproved sections of the Campbell Highway. We're investing three-quarters of a million dollars to restore and rehabilitate the Dempster Highway.

As I looked at this budget, I thought of people in my riding of Porter Creek South who would be working because of the \$13.5 million for maintenance and upgrading of government buildings. We're investing \$11 million in technology infrastructure, of which \$4.8 million is for e-health. These investments are significant and will have long-term benefits for Yukoners.

When I was the Minister of Tourism and Culture, one of my priorities was to do my part to help explore, establish new or expand existing markets. The competition for the tourism dollar is fierce. Many of us have seen the efforts that other jurisdictions put into marketing. The Yukon has been very successful at maximizing our limited marketing resources by providing focused messages to targeted audiences. We are funding the Yukon Now program that will reach a much broader audience.

We already know how the Member for Klondike ineffectively addresses his concerns about tourism. I had to smile when I read media reports of the Member for Klondike's comments about the Whistle Bend contracts. I am glad he wants to see the work go to local firms. I have this hope that one day his voting record will match his rhetoric. The member likes to say he doesn't support the budget because of what is not in there. You know what? That new care facility that he is all excited about is in the budget, the one that he is worried that is going to go to Outside companies. I challenge the member opposite to back up his words and vote in favour of putting Yukoners to work.

We are increasing the community recreation assistance grants by \$400,000. This will support community recreation, wellness and active living. We are investing \$400,000 for

geotechnical work and detail design for the new sports complex at Whistle Bend. Again, if the members opposite care as much about putting Yukoners to work as we do, I would expect them to support this budget.

We are investing \$500,000 for the development of a new campground at Conrad. We are investing \$76,000 to allow 10 campgrounds to open earlier and close later. I think this is a great move. By linking it to our visitor information centres, I think we will be able to offer Yukoners and our guests a better vacation experience.

Every year more and more Canadians and other visitors discover that Yukon is the best place to play. We market our territory from a position of strength.

As a father of a child with autism, I am very aware of the many benefits we as Canadians and Yukoners enjoy. I am so grateful for the assistance that the Yukon Party government has provided to my family and to so many other families with similar needs over the last decade. Other parents of children with medical needs reach out and share with me the challenges that they face. We talk about the challenges and the triumphs of raising our children and we talk about the additional complications of raising a child with special needs.

When I was first elected, a number of families connected with me. Some were single parents trying to raise a child with special needs. Some were couples, and some, in fact, had more than one child with special needs. For me, a budget that focuses on putting Yukoners to work, a budget based on confidence, is a budget that enables the government to help families that have children with special needs. This is a budget that makes Yukon the best place to raise a family, especially if they have specific medical needs.

This budget has \$22.316 million for the emergency room expansion at the Whitehorse General Hospital. Speaking about the hospital, I would like to note that, with the new MRI, not only did it open on time and on budget, but since the program started to provide patient care less than three months ago, it has operated as planned and conducted nearly 400 scans. This has improved access to care, ensured quicker diagnosis, reduced medical travel and any related costs and patient stress.

We also know that some patients have received an MRI exam in Yukon up to seven months ahead of a scheduled appointment down south. I would like to thank the chair and the CEO of the Hospital Corporation, as well as the Hospital Foundation, and the women and men who work so hard each and every day.

This budget has almost \$9 million from the new territorial health investment fund that will resource chronic disease management, mental wellness, e-mental health supports and Yukon tele-psychiatry programs. This budget continues to provide funds for long-term care, including converting the Oblate Centre into a small continuing care facility as an interim solution. It includes \$26 million for the new continuing care facility at Whistle Bend. We have \$7.8 million for the 15-bed McDonald Lodge continuing care facility in Dawson City.

This budget has money to help shelter and house people with mental health needs: \$13 million for the new Salvation

Army centre; \$659,000 in O&M funding for the transitional housing for persons with mental health conditions; \$4.2 million to rebuild the St. Elias group home — this supports Yukoners with cognitive disabilities; and we have \$21 million for the new Sarah Steele Building.

The Member for Klondike talks a good game about mental health. We're doing more than talking about it. We are investing in services for people with mental health challenges, shelter, housing, treatment and wellness. We're fulfilling our commitments to Yukoners.

In conclusion, I look forward to working with an incredible Yukon Party team, the Premier, my caucus colleagues and our amazing staff, which can deliver on its commitments to Yukoners time and time again. I will be supporting this motion, and again I thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing it forward today.

Ms. White: You know, we all make decisions each and every day and the decision by this Yukon Party debate, a possible tagline for a future election, seems like a curious use of a Wednesday debate day. All one needs to do is type "best place to live, work and raise a family" in your computer search engine and you'll just see how many other jurisdictions have used that very same line. So maybe the Yukon Party isn't moving forward together any longer. But I digress. I seem to have worked up the crowd a bit.

I'm incredibly lucky that I was encouraged to follow a less beaten path when I attended culinary school, and that decision led me to a life of travelling. I've lived in really, really beautiful places. I've lived in great, big cities like Paris, France, or Melbourne, Australia, or London, England. I've even lived in Vancouver, which is a little bit closer to home. At the other end of the spectrum, I've lived in itty bitty towns through rural England and rural Australia, where the nearest laundromat was seven miles away. I've lived in ski towns across western Canada, I followed the snow and I've been really lucky in all those adventures.

My point in all of this is that I've been, I've seen and I've lived in amazing places and, after all of that, all of what I've seen and all the places I have been, I chose to come home. That decision to come back would have surprised my 18-year old self, who could not wait to leave, but being away and seeing and experiencing the world was what showed me how amazing the Yukon truly is and how lucky I am to be able to call it home.

Mr. Speaker, every day since I made that decision to come back, I marvel at the wonders of this beautiful place and the people who have chosen to make it home. In walks around my neighbourhood, in going door to door in our recent territory-wide community tour, Yukon citizens have raised many suggestions that they believe will make Yukon a better place to live. They want their government to complete regulations on what they, as citizens, believe to be important legislation that we've already passed in this House.

On March 27, 2013, the Yukon Party issued a press release that said with the legislation that they had tabled to make changes to the *Building Standards Act*, the *Fire*

Prevention Act, and the *Electrical Protection Act*, the Yukon would be the first jurisdiction in Canada to require carbon monoxide detectors to be installed in all residences, including rental suites, that have a fuel-burning appliance or an attached garage. That same press release said that the required regulatory amendments would be developed that very same summer. We passed those amendments during the Spring Sitting of 2013 — two years ago. Since this grand promise of being the first jurisdiction in Canada to implement these important measures, we've been passed by at least one province.

Now, I don't take issue with not being first, Mr. Speaker; that's not the deal. I take issue with the fact that those regulations haven't yet been completed and these legislation changes designed to save lives still haven't been enacted. That's my problem with that.

We can go even further back. We can go to November 2, 2012 and another press release talking about the tabling of a new residential landlord and tenant bill. You know this is one I'm passionate about because I speak about it all the time. The press release has a long list of attributes, including the creation of a Residential Tenancies Office that will — and I'm quoting from the press release, so if the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin would like to look, it's November 2, under Community Services, and it's the press release. So I'm quoting — this is what the Residential Tenancies Office will do: "...administer the legislation, provide public information and support to clients, hear and settle disputes outside of the courts, and have the ability to make binding decisions on those disputes.

"The new office will also lead the development of minimum rental standards, such as the requirement for carbon monoxide and smoke detectors in all rental units. These regulations will be developed with input from Yukoners in the coming months.

"Pending approval, the new act will come into force in 2013, once the associated regulations have been developed and approved".

That was the summer of 2013 that I was really hopeful we would have enacted the new *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. Here again, we have important legislation that affects people in their day-to-day lives and it hasn't yet been enacted. Today we have a Residential Tenancies Office that is unable to help people in the way it was designed and we're still waiting for regulations. If someone comes in right now to the office and they're desperately trying to navigate through an issue with their landlord or a landlord is trying to navigate an issue with a tenant, we send them to the office and at the office they get handed a stack of paper and in that stack of paper, it has things like how to file a claim in Small Claims Court. That's exactly what we are trying to avoid. We are trying to avoid the courts and we're trying to avoid the stress that that causes on people. I'm looking forward to the time when we have those regulations, because I believe that the Residential Tenancies Office and the idea behind it are critically important for the relationship between landlords and tenants. I look forward to when I send someone to that office

and, instead of them coming back with a stack of paperwork, trying to figure out what the next step is, they actually get the help that the office was designed to do. I'm sure they're looking forward to that as well.

I have some other ideas that would make Yukon a better place to live and so do the people who have suggested it. What about fairness for mobile homeowners? What about legislation that views them as homeowners and not merely as renters?

Last fall, I tabled a petition on behalf of mobile homeowners that speaks to the unfairness of the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* by asserting that mobile homeowners have only the same rights as other renters, like those who rent apartments. I am sure we have talked about this, but a mobile homeowner owns the asset. They own the home. It can be a converted travel trailer from the 1970s that is now permanently affixed to a spot, but the point is that that is that person's kingdom. That is their home. It is no different from my 1958 duplex or other people's homes. You know, home is where the heart is.

So the concern that these homeowners have is that they have no security. They can't plan for the future because they don't know about pad rent increases. Under the new legislation, when it is finally enacted — because it's not yet — every 12 months they can have a pad rent increase. But the problem is they can't plan because they don't know if it's going to be a five-percent increase, or maybe it's going to be a 50-percent increase, and they can't act with that. Mobile homeowners would like to have a conversation with government.

When I was going through with that petition process, Mr. Speaker, I went door to door in every mobile home park in Whitehorse and I spoke to the owners. It is an interesting point right now — I am going to mark my spot so I don't lose it — but I represent three out of six mobile home parks in Whitehorse and two Cabinet ministers represent the other three. I wonder what kinds of conversations they have had with the constituents. These Yukon homeowners want to be treated fairly by government. They want to be able to plan into the future with knowledge of how their pad rent may increase and they want the security of knowing that they won't face unfair evictions.

We go back to my problems with the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* that is not enacted yet, and one is that we have eviction without cause. If you own your asset and it is your home and it is on a piece of land that you rent, you can be told that you have to move. We have heard points made by the previous Minister of Community Services, saying that an existing mobile home won't meet new building codes and he is absolutely right. Then we're telling people that the asset — possibly the biggest asset that they own — is worthless because there is nowhere that it can move, and if it could move there, it wouldn't meet today's standards, so therefore it couldn't be moved there. It is a catch-22. Mobile homeowners are looking for some kind of leadership from government. They want to have a conversation; they want to talk about their reality.

There are other things, Mr. Speaker, that I think would make the Yukon a much better place to live. In reaction to Yukon Party action — or in some cases, inaction — Yukoners have become incredibly involved in environmental advocacy in the last number of years. Since the 2011 election, I have been told time and time again that Yukoners want a government that shows strong environmental stewardship. We all know on opening days, when we have drummers outside and people are making noise, how distracting it is to talk over top of them. Those are Yukoners who are talking about issues that are important to them and they want to be heard by government.

Those hundreds of Yukoners have rallied outside this Chamber. They have done it often in defence of the environment. We have seen them rally behind the Na Cho Nyäk Dun, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the Yukon Conservation Society and the Yukon chapter of CPAWS, as they took this very Yukon Party government to court over their unilateral changes to the Peel land use plan — a court case, Mr. Speaker, that they won.

Yukoners will rally again as these same First Nation governments and environmental organizations defend that ruling during the appeal of that win this summer. They will come out in droves again because, despite the fact that they've been coming out for years, they are not exhausted because they still believe passionately in the Peel land use plan that was put forward by the commission.

It has been said by many Yukoners that not forcing First Nation governments into courts to defend their rights would make Yukon a better place to live, and I think I would agree with that statement. We have seen this government make decisions that have affected First Nation governments so strongly that they have taken those decisions to court. I am sure the members across the way know what that record is, but right now First Nation governments are doing really well in the courts. It has been said that if we want to talk about building new relationships, maybe we should stop antagonizing the other governments that we have to work with. I think we have an example right now of Bill S-6. It has been pointed out that it's a federal government issue and we agree with that, but the actions by some have been challenged by others as not being that noble. First Nation governments have said that they again will not only take the Yukon government to court, but also the federal government if those changes are passed without their support.

There are other things that Yukoners have said would make the Yukon an even better place to live. One of those things that they have suggested would be an accountable government. They say that if they had a government that listened to them during consultation processes, they would be even happier to live here than they are already.

We can take that back to the land use planning commission process. We could talk about the seven years of the commission going out to the territory and having conversations with people and coming back with multiple plans, and then finally submitting their final recommended plan. Yukoners will tell you that they believed in the land use

planning process. They believed in the process because they were asked what they thought and they felt like they were being listened to. Then there are people who didn't support the final recommended plan by the Peel Watershed Planning Commission, but what they did support was the democratic process in how it was done. So even if they didn't support the plan itself, they supported the process. They said, "Okay, well, this isn't what I wanted, but I respect the way it done so, all right, I'm in." Then we have the example of a government that didn't like the outcome and rewrote the game rules at the end. We talked about the court case and that win, and I guess we are going to have to wait to see what happens in the appeal, but so far I am going to count it as a win.

The other thing they say when they talk about an accountable government and they talk about consultation and being listened to is — they talk about the process and their concerns around the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing. When the committee was hearing testimony from scientists and industry experts, the gallery was full of people. They came out because they were engaged in the process, and when that select committee ran around the territory, they didn't go to a single community where not a soul showed up. People came out in droves, and I would suggest that, in some communities — like Carcross, for example — the number was surprising because it was far more than 10 percent of the population. We say if that is how many people come out, it has been successful.

These people want to know — these Yukoners who think that consultation is important and actually having the government hear what they say is important. They want to know where the Yukon Party stands on the issue of hydraulic fracturing. So, you know, we've heard different things in Question Period, but it's not Question Period and I have the floor so this is pretty awesome.

So, we've been told different things. We've had the leaked document that talked about how government could proceed forward with — I will choose my words carefully here — the proposed advancement of hydraulic fracturing in the territory. I referenced an e-mail yesterday that talked about a test science project. So all through this, Yukoners are wondering where the Yukon Party is planning on going.

I think there was an indication of where we might end up the first time in a budget speech where the Premier talked about oil and gas as being a pillar of the economy. It was, I think, the first Yukon has ever heard that oil and gas was a pillar of the Yukon economy. Since then, we've seen other changes that are moving us toward this apparent end goal. So Yukoners have told me that if the Yukon Party is so confident in their stance that oil and gas development is where they've been given the mandate to go forward, maybe they should call an election sooner than later.

There are other things that I think would make the Yukon a much better place to live. You know, just prior to getting elected I worked in corrections. My job, my title, was life skills coach, but really what that broke down to was that I was a cooking instructor for the women who were in the correctional facility. I learned all sorts of things when I

worked in corrections and I also learned that any misconception I had before was just that, a misconception. I was really lucky to work with the women who I worked with, but what I got to see is that as they got closer to their leaving date, they became more and more anxious because when they were in this — and this is not the program that is running any more. This was a separate facility that's now the Takhini Haven group home on the old correctional — that's another issue. So women were given this opportunity and this was a program that I think was really effective because it was the women taking care of themselves and each other. They had to cook meals and they had to — they took care of the building, right? I got to hang out and it was really fantastic. But as they got closer to leaving, they got more and more anxious because, right now, we have Kaushee's Place, which is a fantastic asset in the community but it's for women fleeing violence. When women are leaving corrections, they're not fleeing violence at that point. They're not fleeing violence until they're back in a violent situation, which is often what happens. So as they got closer to the leave-by date, they got more and more nervous about what was going to happen to them once they were out.

I talked about this in 2011 in my very first budget response — that I would love to see a place for women leaving corrections, similar to the Adult Resource Centre that the men have an option to go to, because women need a safe place to go to transition to. In that same breath, women also need a safe shelter. Right now, we have a mixed shelter with the Salvation Army but it is not some — well, that's not many people's first choice.

I have I'm sure two and a half minutes to talk about affordable housing, and this is going to be really, really tough to get out. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, a household paying 30 percent or more of its pre-tax income for housing is considered to have an affordability problem.

So I have a question for government. I know we are not going to get an answer right now, but how many people in the territory pay more than 30 percent of their pre-tax income toward housing? I am not talking about social housing; I am talking about rental housing.

We have, I would suggest, an affordable housing crisis still in the territory. We had lots of solutions put forward. We had Lot 262 — remember, Lot 262 was going to change the way government did business. We were going to work together with private industry and we were going to build affordable rental housing, a minimum of 30 units on this piece of land. Well, the bids came in, the government didn't get what they wanted and they cancelled the project. It next came out as Lot 1547: Do whatever you want on this tract of land and we will see what happens. It has been purchased by a church group.

We have all sorts of announcements around northern housing trust money. It is interesting that, in October 2013, the title of the thing is "government calls for affordable housing solutions." That is where they did a call-out to private industry and they said, "Okay, tell us what you got; let's see

what happens." They had some uptake and they talked about how after the process, nine had made it through one section, and then they were going to keep going. Then, to the surprise of the three that had been approved, on June 25, 2014, a press release was announced, saying that Carcross and Carmacks were getting affordable housing trust money to build things, but the three in Whitehorse were not.

I think affordable housing is still an issue, and I think, to make the territory a better place, we need to look at affordable rental housing, because not everyone is in a position to own and not everybody needs to be in social housing. There should be choices.

There are so many more things I would like to talk about that would make Yukon a better place. I think electoral reform would be on the top of my list and the diversification of our renewable energy assets. Those are just two more.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I hope government members have taken mine and Yukoners' suggestions to heart and look at making Yukon a better place to live.

Mr. Barr: I am honoured to rise today to speak in this House. I would like to thank the member from Old Crow for bringing forward Motion No. 894.

Before I do, I would like to thank those people in my riding of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for their support and the faith they put in me to bring concerns forward in this Legislative Assembly. In the nearly four years since the election, I have had the honour to meet so many of my constituents a number of times and discuss their concerns and the things that affect their families, their lives, their work and their enjoyment of our beautiful Yukon. I thank them for this opportunity.

Before I say anything else, I would like to thank those who have spoken in the House today, especially those who have spoken on this side of the House — I must be honest — my colleagues, who share a difference in our vision — and this vision does come from listening to the people of the Yukon — going out and consulting, spending time with First Nation people who are struggling day to day in their lives, who don't have a place to live, who are living in the communities and in Whitehorse.

I would like to say: Is it the 2014-15 budget or any Yukon Party budget that makes the Yukon the best place to live, work and raise a family? I would say no, Mr. Speaker. The budget, largely from southern taxpayers — sorry, this budget 2015-16 that I'm speaking about. I thank our fearless leader for correcting me.

The budget, largely from southern taxpayers, does have good things: Conrad campground, the visitor information centre, the learning centre in Carcross coming up, the Atlin partnership with CTFN, the new EMS building, new funding structure for rural community centres. What I would like to say about all of those specific ones — and there are more — is that the Conrad campground had to be fought for to be heard by this government, to honour the final agreement that was in place.

Those of us who remember — I notice that some across the way don't like to hear what I'm saying because the truth will set you free. This government's proposal on the Atlin campground was their vision, which, in my opinion, didn't honour CTFN's final agreement — Carcross-Tagish First Nation. It didn't honour the transboundary agreements that still are unsettled with Atlin — partnership. So, as a result there was a stronger relationship built with the Taku River Tlingit and the Carcross-Tagish First Nation, which now, after this government, which in many other cases seems to have to be dragged to — to pay attention to Yukoners and listen to agreements that are in place under the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the final agreements to honour them. We are going to have the Conrad campground happening this year — great — and the new EMS building in Carcross — great. It was an election promise by the prior Yukon Party government to start to build it as the first one, after the other ones, prior to this election.

After people bringing this forward — here we are. Announcement — it is coming forward this year — great. We are still waiting on the community centre in Carcross, which people have been advocating for since — well, I can't count the number of years. I can say this about that one: The elders who have been fighting for this — some have passed on. When will they see this infrastructure?

I know we have heard about all the new infrastructure that has been promised at this point in time by this budget announcement, but we're still missing out on infrastructure that isn't forthcoming. I can also add the Carmacks rink, which is now in disarray for lack of ongoing maintenance. We have another school that's only 10 years old and that kids can't go to in Ross River because of the lack of action by the Yukon Party government. I don't hear —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Barr: It's all good. It's all good.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Barr: Dawson City — I could go on, Mr. Speaker.

What I would like to do is say that there are a lot of Yukoners who have been advocating for these projects. They deserve the credit for their efforts. This motion, this slogan — this notion that it is the Yukon Party's spending that makes the Yukon a special place to this member is self-serving and lacking in humility.

I want to take a step back away from how much credit a government can take for spending the public's money and ask the question —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Order please. The Minister of Justice, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I believe I just heard the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes accuse the mover of the motion, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, of being self-serving and lacking in humility. In my opinion, that's contrary to Standing Order 19(i). I believe that he's using abusive or insulting language in a context likely to create disorder, not to

mention being patently unfair to the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

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

Ms. White: I believe that the Member for Lake Laberge misheard what the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes said.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I believe the comment made by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes was directed at the government as a whole and not at the individual member, but I will have a look at the Blues and revise my ruling, if required.

Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, just a word of caution: Watch your words. Make sure they're pronounced clearly so they're understood on the other side.

Mr. Barr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We believe, on this side of the House, that what makes the Yukon a great place to live, work and raise a family is the people — a kind, compassionate society that takes care of its citizens. My riding is full of people who give so much to make the Yukon a better place to live. I want to say thank you to all the volunteers, the EMS firefighters, search and rescue volunteers, and all the local advisory councils, community centres and recreational volunteers who do so much to improve our lives, not only in my riding but all over the territory. It is in the relationships that come from sharing in these endeavours that we find common purpose and common goals that let us know that each other cares and that we want to take time for each other.

I think back to when my colleague for Takhini-Kopper King was talking and think back to LNG as a transitional fuel, remembering the people in Tagish when the Whitehorse Trough and fracking first became a hot topic and how they rose and how that has actually brought so many people together in this territory. We have had a select committee go around. There has been some true consultation, and people were engaged and still are engaged. Those people gathered close to 8,000 signatures in the territory. That's amazing, Mr. Speaker. Along with not wanting our tax dollars spent to further LNG endeavours or fracking, they've come up with many solutions, which include numerous amounts of renewable energy options that we, as the Yukon New Democratic Party, 16 years ago had a vision. It makes me think of where we would be today had those options been fostered here in the territory.

We would be leading. We would be leading and we wouldn't be spending all this time, money and energy on such conflict. We wouldn't be heading to court if we fostered our relationships and listened and worked with each other. We are back, threatening to go to court with Bill S-6.

When I think of the relationships with First Nations and how the government has been proceeding, money could have been put toward a women's transition home from WCC. Money would have been saved or put into Yukoners' pockets by renewable energy options to decrease their energy

bills, year after year after year after year; jobs would be created with training opportunities in our colleges, with skills that are transferrable from the fossil fuel industry.

I was speaking with a contractor just the other day — an electrical contractor — and he was sharing with me the opportunities in our economy if we fostered renewable energy options and started to retrofit solar panels on our homes.

I know that Mount Lorne is pursuing the idea of their community centre having solar panels. We know of the houses and people throughout these last few years who have adapted their homes with solar. They are now putting energy back into the grid. They are making money on what they have invested. I don't hear those things in this budget on a scale that would reduce our footprint here in the territory and lessen the conflict we continually have going to the courts. As I heard from some of the direct speaking from the Member for Copperbelt South — the elders' and youths' testimony is about our children to come; the generations to come, Mr. Speaker.

We have great educators in the Yukon who care about our children and their development. We have childcare workers too. We have a generous Yukon grant for post-secondary students. These things all help, but so does having wonderful neighbours. I think of my neighbours on Crag Lake and I think of the people I know in Dawson City, Watson Lake, Teslin, Mayo, Keno, Haines Junction, Beaver Creek, Teslin, Burwash — have I forgotten any?

I sure hope not — Faro, Ross River, Pelly Crossing, Carmacks — I think I might have got them all. Oh, I'm accused of even having a girlfriend in Ross River, because —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Barr: Yes, there are issues in Ross River that matter to me. There are a few of them and they've been receiving attention by people coming together and there are still more to come, so I'm sure people will still think I have a girlfriend in Ross River.

There are things like the bridge that we see — where was it; do I still have it? It's on one of the handouts from the government — that's now part of the heritage. That was going to be torn down. Now it's being held up. That's great. That's great news. It might not have gone that way.

I really can thank the Yukon Party for bringing people together in that way. I've heard it said you have to look for the good in things and that's the good in a lot of stuff that this Yukon Party has been doing. It has been uniting people against them. However, if that's what you want, then that's what you get. It could be done other ways, Mr. Speaker.

I know that I only have a few more minutes to go. I would like to say that there are so many areas with foster families that need support. I hope that this is recognized as we move forward because these are people who choose to take on issues or areas in people's lives — people in need — because of their compassion. That makes such a difference.

I myself, years ago, was involved in a group home here. I know that many of these foster parents end up adopting some of these children. It's not about the money. However, when we speak about “dues” or “fair exchange”, it's not

unreasonable to expect, if you were a foster parent, to receive your money in a timely manner, not four months later or four months behind. Those kinds of things are reasons why our foster parents in this territory are dwindling.

I hope that what I've said today has made some sense. I thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this motion forward. I saw the motion and I began to think about what makes the Yukon such a good place to live, to work, to raise a family. It's not the money we spend or the money we have, but it's our relationships. It's the dignity and respect that we accord each other. It's part of being part of a team.

I remember, as a principal and a teacher, we would meet challenges.

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. 894 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following document was filed April 8, 2015:

33-1-108

Yukon Outdoor Sports Complex, letter (dated March 9, 2015) from Hon. Currie Dixon, Minister of Community Services, to His Worship Dan Curtis, Mayor of Whitehorse (Dixon)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 193

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, April 9, 2015 — 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 Tourism and Culture; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Justice; Yukon Development Corporation/ Yukon Energy Corporation
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Education
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Highways and Public Works
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Community Services; Public Service Commission
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Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, April 9, 2015 — 1:00 p.m.**

Speaker: I will 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 the Battle of Vimy Ridge

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, today, across this great country, flags are at half-mast to recognize and honour the 98th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

I rise today to pay tribute to the thousands of Canadian soldiers who fought on that historic day, a day that has come to symbolize our country's coming of age. In the early morning hours of April 9, 1917, four Canadian divisions stormed the heavily fortified Vimy Ridge. These brave men were literally fighting across a graveyard, as the French and the British armies had already tried and failed to take the ridge, suffering more than 100,000 casualties. Those Canadian divisions were made up of men from across this country fighting together for the first time under Canadian command.

Three more days of costly battle left 3,600 Canadian soldiers dead and 7,000 wounded, but their incredible bravery and discipline secured a victory for Canada on that now-legendary hill. Shortly after the war, Brigadier-General A.E. Ross said about Canada's initial attack on the Ridge, "In those few minutes, I witnessed the birth of a nation."

Today is a day to recognize all of Canada's First World War veterans for their significant contribution, their courage and their sacrifices. These include more than 600 Yukoners from a population of only 5,000, who rallied to the cause, left their homes here in the territory — many to never return again. More than 100 Yukoners lie buried in the graveyards of France.

We also recognize all those who have served and given their lives on our behalf in Canada's Armed Forces since then. As Canadians, we are all indebted to our Armed Forces. As we stand before you in this Chamber today, Mr. Speaker, men and women are fighting on our behalf in the name of freedom and democracy. We all owe our precious freedoms to these brave men and women and I ask all Yukoners to join us today in reflecting on their contribution.

Mr. Tredger: I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to pay tribute to the 100,000 brave Canadians who fought the Battle of Vimy Ridge. In 1914, Canada was considered a part of the British Empire. That meant that as soon as Britain declared war, Canada too was automatically at war. Canadians responded with fervour, determination and

patriotism to the First World War with tens of thousands rushing to join the military in the first months of the conflict, so that they would not miss the action. They needn't have worried.

The war would drag on for more than four years, killing more than 10 million people. This war would see fighting that would be revolutionized by high-explosive shells, powerful machine guns, poison gas, submarines and warplanes.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge, while successful, would come at a great cost. Of the 100,000 Canadians who fought in the frontlines, 10,602 were wounded and 3,598 paid the ultimate price for freedom with their lives.

By the end of the First World War, Canada, a country of less than eight million citizens, would have more than 650,000 servicemen and servicewomen. This war took a huge toll on our young country, with more than 66,000 Canadians losing their lives and 170,000 more being wounded.

At Vimy Ridge, regiments from coast to coast saw action together in a distinctly Canadian triumph, helping create a new and stronger sense of Canadian identity. Many say that Canada came of age as a country on those hard April days in 1917. The coming of age wasn't an easy one. Countless thousands back home in Canada were affected by that faraway battle on April 9, 1917.

It has been said already that our experience of World War I, in particular the unit and selfless heroism of Canadians at Vimy Ridge, was a watershed moment in the development of our country. It was the first time in the war that the combined Canadian forces were united in combat and the entire Canadian contingent was commended for their bravery. Our military achievements during the war raised our international stature and helped earn a separate signature on the Treaty of Versailles that ended the war.

On this, the anniversary of Vimy Ridge, we remember the men and women who paid the ultimate price for their freedom, the children who would grow up never knowing their fathers, the mothers mourning the loss of sons and husbands, and the sisters who would never again see their brothers.

My grandfather was a combatant in World War I. He was exposed to mustard gas and died shortly after returning home. My grandmother, a teacher, was left with two young girls to raise without a father. I never met my grandfather, but his loss was felt in my home growing up. I felt it through my grandmother, my mother, her sister and their stories of their childhood.

My family's story is not unique. Canadian and Yukon veterans and their families' lives were changed during the war. Our victory came at a great price, paid by our nation, our veterans, their families and our communities. On this day, we recognize the bravery and the tragedy, the achievement and the loss in such a brief moment. We thank the veterans of the past, the veterans of the present and the veterans of the future for their service and their sacrifices.

Lest we forget.

Mr. Silver: I rise on behalf of the Liberal Party to pay tribute to the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

This day in 1917 marked the beginning of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. On that day, four divisions of Canada's corps began their attack on the German-held position on that ridge. This would mark the first time that the four divisions of the Canadian expeditionary force would fight together. Men from all parts of Canada came together to fight as a cohesive unit. Over these three days that the battle would last, they captured the German position, which the French and the British had previously failed to accomplish.

We remember this date each year because it's an incredibly symbolic piece of Canadian history. The battle was fought when Canada was still a very young nation and accomplished something that greater military powers had not. This was an announcement to the old world that the former colony was now a nation. For this, the Battle of Vimy Ridge is viewed as a nation-building movement for Canada.

For what this battle means to Canadian nationalism, we must also remember the 3,598 Canadians who paid the ultimate sacrifice over those three days in France. Symbolically, it represents what had been Canada's traditional foreign policy values — punching well above our weight and participating in conflicts to defend our allies in foreign countries. The Battle of Vimy Ridge was a defining moment for all of us Canadians. Its centennial will coincide with Canada's 150th birthday and will remind us all of the most significant moments as we reflect on the many events that built this amazing nation of ours.

In recognition of the Rotary Music Festival

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a pleasure for me today to rise on behalf of all members of the Legislature to pay tribute to the organizers and participants in this year's Rotary Music Festival, now underway at the Yukon Arts Centre here in Whitehorse.

Starting yesterday and continuing until next Saturday, hundreds of Yukon musicians of all ages, and particularly young people, will demonstrate their talents and the results and months of preparation at this annual showcase and competition. You can feel the excitement in the community at this time every year as instrumentalists and vocalists prepare to present their musical offerings before live audiences and to the constructive scrutiny of adjudicators.

The Rotary Club of Whitehorse has been the festival's main organizer since 1975, but the event's roots go back to 1969, when a committee of four members of the Whitehorse Choral Society established the Whitehorse Music Festival. It is indeed a pleasure for me to welcome one of those community members and a long-time mainstay of the music festival and Yukon's music education scene — Henry Klassen in the gallery today, along with his wife and fellow music teacher Joyce Klassen. I would ask all members to welcome them here today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Graham: Henry not only taught in the school system, but he and his wife also provided individual training for young budding Yukon musicians. I know that from personal experience because my daughter spent a great deal of time with Henry, learning to play an instrument and it is something that she has remembered all of her life.

The original festival focused primarily on vocal music, but over the years the categories were expanded to include flute and other wind instruments — strings, guitars, band ensembles and, of course, piano. From its more classical beginnings, the festival program has added jazz and pop categories as well. New to the festival this year is a dance component, the result of representation from Yukon's highly active and growing dance community. The inaugural dance events took place this morning, Mr. Speaker. In fact, as I speak, the jazz dance — small and medium groups and trios — are taking to the stage with hip-hop performances slated for later this afternoon.

What an eclectic and vibrant performing arts community we have here in the Yukon, thanks in no small part to the support of groups like the Rotary Club of Whitehorse. The Rotary Music Festival is the club's biggest community service project and it has an annual budget of almost \$40,000. This is a significant contribution to the nurturing of our youth and the fostering of a young and healthy performing arts community.

A music festival like this could not take place without the support of music educators and professionals who are willing to take time out of their busy lives to come to Yukon to observe and assess the performance of festival participants. This year, we welcome seven adjudicators from western Canada, who will offer helpful feedback on the performers' abilities, techniques and styles. Their objectives, which are encouraging and personalized responses to the performances, contribute to the pride of accomplishment and can be instrumental in the performers' future musical endeavours. We greatly appreciate the role of adjudicators in the success of the festival and in the musical development of the performers.

For the participating musicians, performing for a live audience and in front of an adjudicator can be a highly rewarding, but also a nerve-wracking experience. Indeed, one of the purposes of the festival is to give budding musicians the opportunity to gain stage experience, a daunting challenge for many of these young people.

I compliment and thank the many dedicated music teachers who provide the instruction and the support to their students to enable them to rise to that challenge.

The Rotary Music Festival has been the springboard for many Yukon musicians to pursue their music at the post-secondary level and, in some cases, on to the professional realm. For others, the festival is simply an opportunity to say: "I did it. I performed in front of a live audience and in front of an adjudicator." Whether a performer takes home a prize or not, the satisfaction of having performed is a great reward in itself.

Like so many of our wonderful recurring community events, the Rotary Music Festival is able to happen year after year because of a chorus of volunteers, and I would like to

acknowledge their ongoing contribution to the festival's continuing success.

As Minister of Education, I take particular note of the numerous and well-documented benefits of musical study, whether it takes place within or outside of school settings. For example, it's well-recognized that children who study a musical instrument are more likely to excel in all of their studies and work better in teams, and they possess enhanced critical thinking skills, they stay in school and they usually pursue further education. In saying that and recognizing that many of the performances take place during regular school hours, I would also like to thank the classroom teachers throughout Yukon who not only excuse their students from classes to allow them to participate in the festival, but some of them bring their own groups to participate in the festival.

In closing, I encourage all members of the Legislature to take in some of the Rotary Musical Festival over the next several days. The final concert takes place next Saturday, April 18, and as these concerts normally sell out, I encourage everyone to get your tickets early.

In recognition of Daffodil Month (Cancer Awareness Month)

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise on behalf of Yukon government to honour the men, women and children who work in the field of cancer research, help raise money for cancer research or are dealing with cancer on a more personal basis. April is Daffodil Month. The Canadian Cancer Society has chosen the daffodil because it is a symbol of strength and courage in the fight against cancer.

During Daffodil Month, Canadian Cancer Society volunteers work tirelessly to raise funds to carry on the fight against cancer for yet one more year. These funds go toward national research, support services and a host of other work, including preventive work to help ensure that every year fewer Canadians will have to deal with cancer.

Here at home, volunteers raise money through a variety of fundraising efforts. Two of the more well known are the Run for Mom, an annual Mother's Day run and walk event, as well as the TELUS Ride for Dad, which both raise money for local initiatives related to cancer.

Run for Mom has helped raise money to buy two mammography machines, produce public awareness and education resources and support community projects, programs and services related to breast health.

The TELUS Ride for Dad's mission is to raise funds to save men's lives by supporting prostate cancer research and raising public awareness of the disease. Their goal is for men to continue to be there for their families and their friends for years to come. The parade of vehicles grabs the attention of the masses and the media on ride day. The research helps find hope for the future and the awareness has the potential of saving men's lives today. This will be my second year riding my motorcycle in the Ride for Dad. I encourage others to take part, either by riding or by donating.

Another local initiative is the Karen J. Wiederkehr Memorial Fund, better known as Karen's Fund. It was

established in 2000 in memory of the 37-year old who died of breast cancer after months of treatment in and out of our territory. Her two wishes were for patients to have access to quiet, comfortable places for their chemo treatments and financial assistance to women undergoing treatment for breast cancer. Now patients with breast cancer who live in Yukon, Atlin and Lower Post, B.C., can access a one-time donation of \$1,000. As well, Karen's Room at the Whitehorse General Hospital was built by volunteers to provide a quiet, home-like atmosphere for women receiving chemotherapy.

Often a person dealing with cancer must go Outside for treatment. It's hard to be away from the familiar, the comfortable, especially when we're dealing with a frightening diagnosis. That's why the cancer care navigator program out of the Whitehorse General Hospital is so important.

Just as important is the work of the relatively new Yukon cancer care fund, which supports cancer care and cancer patients in the territory in much the same way as Karen's Fund. The Yukoners cancer care fund was established at the Yukon Hospital Foundation, thanks to the generosity of the community and the commitment of many volunteers who want to see enhanced support for Yukoners facing cancer.

The Yukoners cancer care fund is supported by volunteer-led events and initiatives, as well as donations. Monies received for this fund can only be used to support cancer care and cancer patients in Yukon. The fund has been operating for three years now and, although we have yet to collect enough money to subsidize all needs, we have continued to increase the amount raised each year and have so far been able to assist a dozen families, with hopes of helping many, many more each year.

The Speaker's Reception will be held on April 30 this year. It will be held here in the main administration building, in the main lobby. There will be both a silent and live auction, with many great donations from many wonderful local businesses. All money raised at the reception will be put toward the fund and used for Yukoners. There will be food, drinks and entertainment to support a great cause. I dream of a day when cancer will be a thing of the past.

Everywhere in town, we see volunteers selling the cheery daffodil pins and the flowers themselves. I encourage all Yukoners to stop and donate money to the cause and, while we're at it, let's thank a volunteer. They're working for each and every one of us.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I would like to acknowledge a couple of guests in the gallery. Geraldine Van Bibber and Faye Cable, both from the committee, members of the Yukoners cancer care fund — if I could ask all members to join me in welcoming them.

Applause

Ms. Stick: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to Cancer Awareness Month. April is Cancer Awareness Month, or Daffodil Month.

Our reminder is the yellow daffodil, whether the small pins that we wear or the tables set up around town with

volunteers selling fresh daffodils. It is spring and it is time for new beginnings.

I spent my time reviewing some old tributes and was struck by the hope that we all carry that prevention, treatment and, hopefully, cures for cancer can be improved, can be strengthened and ultimately found. It is a hopeful time for me and for others, but it is also a reminder of those we have lost over the past year. I am sure every person here can name one person who has been diagnosed with cancer, is undergoing cancer treatments or who has died in the last year. But I am going to hold on to hope.

Every day we have an opportunity to make healthy choices for ourselves: to smoke or not; to exercise or not; to take care of ourselves and our families; to see a doctor; to get a mammogram or have a prostate checked. There is hope too for those facing the diagnosis of cancer. More and more often, individuals are able to receive treatment and follow-up right here — closer to family and friends. I truly believe that the support of the family and community around us is a vital part of any treatment plan. I am sure someone somewhere has done research on this and that there is proof.

For those having to leave the territory, there are services, residences, supports — all types of supports — not just for the patient, but more often than not, support for family members too, and I am thankful for those services.

Without going through long lists of hard-working health professionals, community volunteers, community programs, non-governmental organizations and fundraisers who keep this hope out front and burning bright, I just want to say thank you.

Finally, I encourage everyone to buy some daffodils. Let them remind you of the hope and the symbol of spring.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Kent: It is my pleasure to introduce Mr. Gerry Whitley. He often attends the gallery, but on the day that we pay tribute to Cancer Awareness Month and Daffodil Month I would like to acknowledge Gerry as a cancer survivor and a long-time volunteer with the Canadian Cancer Society.

Applause

Ms. White: Someone in the gallery has already been introduced, but I think it is a great honour to be able to acknowledge someone for the changes that they made when you were younger. Mr. Klassen, you were an incredible driving force for me. We met when I was in grade 7. I think I was 12, and you put me on a course and you might be able to take some responsibility for where I stand today. It is not very often we get to say thank you in such a public forum, and I hope you know how I feel because I say that when I see you. But in front of people and for Hansard's purpose, thank you so much for what you have done for — I would say — hundreds, if not thousands, of Yukon students. Thank you so much and thank you Mrs. Klassen as well, although you did not

influence me quite so much. Thank you very much, Mr. Klassen.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I have for tabling the *Personal Income Tax Room Sharing Agreement Between the Government of Yukon and Carcross/Tagish First Nation (2012-2019)*, which is similar to many personal income tax room sharing agreements with other self-governing First Nations.

Speaker: Just the title — and thank you.

Are there any other 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. 86: Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 86, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 86, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 86 agreed to

Bill No. 87: Personal Property Security Registry (Electronic) Amendments Act — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I move that Bill No. 87, entitled *Personal Property Security Registry (Electronic) Amendments Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 87, entitled *Personal Property Security Registry (Electronic) Amendments Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 87 agreed to

Bill No. 84: Act to Amend the Public Lotteries Act and Related Amendments — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I move that Bill No. 84, entitled *Act to Amend the Public Lotteries Act and Related Amendments*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 84, entitled *Act to Amend the Public Lotteries Act and Related Amendments*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 84 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 continue to support community emergency response volunteers through initiatives, including:

- (1) maintaining the supply of uniforms, medical and safety equipment;
- (2) fleet management and station maintenance;
- (3) providing in-station training; and
- (4) implementing an on-line learning management system to allow community responders to develop and maintain clinical competency without leaving their home communities as often.

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

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to section 4 of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, recommends that the Commissioner in Executive Council appoint Annette King as the Child and Youth Advocate for Yukon for a term of five years, effective May 1, 2015.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT Darius Elias, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, be appointed Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to table a timeline for the transfer of land to the Vimy Heritage Housing Society in order for it to proceed with a supportive living facility for Yukon seniors.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to consult with affected First Nations, as required by personal income tax room sharing agreements signed between the two levels of government, before making changes to their sources of revenue.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Hydraulic fracturing

Ms. Hanson: The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has been caught out in this government's agenda to open up the Yukon to fracking. He repeatedly stated that his government had no projects in the queue when it came to implementing fracking in the Yukon. However, as documents

that were recently made public show, the minister gave direction to his department to move forward with a pilot fracking project in Yukon in the Liard Basin. The minister has even admitted to this in the media.

So, while the minister has been telling Yukoners his government has no plans to develop fracking in the Yukon, he has personally directed his staff to do the exact opposite.

Will the Premier direct his minister to apologize for telling one thing to Yukoners while doing the exact opposite behind their backs?

Hon. Mr. Kent: With respect to the work of the select committee that spent a number of months examining the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing, later today I will be delivering to you, as the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the final response of the Government of Yukon to those 21 recommendations. On top of that, we will also be making public our position with respect to hydraulic fracturing in the Yukon so that, starting next week and for the balance of the session, we can have a full and factual debate on the position that we have taken with respect to the response to those recommendations and our position with respect to hydraulic fracturing in Yukon.

Ms. Hanson: It's good to know what's coming. I'm talking about what has already transpired. The Premier can duck the questions or attack the opposition. It doesn't change the facts.

The facts are that this minister got caught saying one thing to Yukoners on fracking and doing the exact opposite behind the scenes. He has even admitted it to the media.

This is one of the most important issues in Yukon and the minister's actions clearly contradict what this government has been saying. Yukoners have a right to know.

Did the Premier know that his minister was pushing a fracking pilot project while telling Yukoners that they were simply reviewing the select committee report?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I agree with the member opposite that this is a very important issue for Yukoners. It has been since December 2011 when it was first raised in this Legislative Assembly, following through on that to the work of the select committee.

As I have said in my earlier response, later today I will be delivering our final response to the 21 recommendations that were provided by the select committee to you, as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and at the same time we will be making public our position with respect to hydraulic fracturing in the Yukon.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, this government's penchant for secrecy is out of control. There is a clear pattern.

The only information that Yukoners have been allowed on this government's direction on fracking has been obtained through accidental e-mails. It is one thing that he is coming up with it, but he has already given direction. This is not the way to govern this territory.

The facts are really clear. The minister was telling Yukoners that his government had made no decision. The minister was telling Yukoners that there are no fracking

projects in the queue, yet at the same time he was directing his staff to make a pilot project occur in southeast Yukon.

Yukoners deserve honest answers. Since the Premier can't or won't be accountable, I'll ask the minister again: When did the minister direct his officials to set up a pilot project on fracking in the Liard Basin?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, we will agree with the point that the member opposite raised in one of her earlier questions — that this is a very important issue for Yukoners.

When the report from the select committee was presented to you in January of this year, we took some time to review that. Later today we'll be providing our final response to you, as Speaker, and on top of that, the government will be making public our position with respect to hydraulic fracturing in the Yukon.

I think this will contribute to a fulsome debate with respect to this topic in the weeks to come. I'm pleased that we were able to provide this report early in the sitting, prior to the calling of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources during budget debate, and with the number of Question Periods left so that members opposite are able to ask questions with respect to the final response on those 21 recommendations as well as our position with respect to hydraulic fracturing in the territory.

Question re: Hydraulic fracturing in Liard Basin

Ms. Hanson: Carrying on a parallel track, saying that you are reviewing when in fact you were making decisions — the minister simply got caught. He has been telling Yukoners that his government hadn't made up its mind on fracking. He has been telling Yukoners that there is no project in the queue, but at the same time he directed his officials to make a fracking pilot project happen, to occur in the Liard Basin. The minister still refuses to answer a basic, straightforward question. It's a simple question. Yukoners deserve an answer.

Will the minister tell Yukoners exactly when he directed his officials to work on a fracking pilot project?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, Mr. Speaker, not to sound like a broken record, later today we'll be delivering our final response to those 21 recommendations that were provided by the select committee. We will also make public our position with respect to hydraulic fracturing in the Yukon. Yukoners deserve to know where the major political parties are with respect to this important issue and we plan on making that public later on today.

Ms. Hanson: The minister is avoiding answering questions because he got caught red-handed. He has been saying one thing to Yukoners —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Elias: The use of inflammatory language by the Leader of the Official Opposition is imputing false or unavowed motives to the minister, and I ask you to rule on a point of order please.

Speaker: Are you referring to the word “red-handed”?

Mr. Elias: Yes — “caught red-handed”.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: It does imply that there was possibly something going on, but I believe it's a dispute between members over the facts and I'm unfortunately not here to judge the facts.

Ms. Hanson: He has been saying one thing to Yukoners and doing the exact opposite behind closed doors. The minister stated yesterday that he is no longer pursuing a fracking pilot project. So when did the minister change his mind? Was it after the accidental leak to the local media? Was it Tuesday afternoon after the minister got caught out in the Legislature? Was it 15 minutes before his media interviews the following day? Yukoners have a right to know. When did the minister change his mind?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I'm sure members of the opposition, and indeed, all members of the public, will be anxious to see what the government's response is to the 21 recommendations provided by the select committee to you — the all-party select committee that was examining the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing.

On top of that, I think it's important that Yukoners know where the political parties stand with respect to hydraulic fracturing in the Yukon. Both of those positions we will be making public later today and we'll be able to have a fulsome debate going forward through the balance of this Sitting and, I'm sure, into future sittings on the practice of hydraulic fracturing, as well as our response to the select committee.

Ms. Hanson: Any credibility that this minister had when it came to his party's position on fracking went out the window when the minister was caught saying one thing to Yukoners and doing the other. For months, this government has been telling Yukoners that they had no plans for fracking in Yukon, while at the same time directing their staff to make plans to bring fracking to the Yukon.

Yukoners expect answers. When did the minister decide to pull the plug on the Liard Basin fracking pilot project?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, all the wild accusations aside that the member opposite is making again, I've mentioned a number of times today that, later today, I will be personally delivering to your office the government's response to the 21 recommendations that were put forward by three members of the government side and three members of the opposition side on the all-party committee with respect to the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing.

On top of that, we will also be making public our position with respect to hydraulic fracturing in the Yukon. So I know the members opposite and, indeed, other interested people in the territory will be anxious to review that and they will be able to do so later on today.

Question re: Mining regulatory uncertainty

Mr. Silver: This year, Yukon continues its slide down the Fraser Institute's ranking for a good place to do mining

business. Yukon has dropped from eighth in 2012-13 to 19th in 2013 to 26th in 2014 on the institute's policy perception index. This indicates a decline in the relative attractiveness of a place to do business.

The lower scores reflect a decrease in the percentage of respondents that perceive that the following policy factors encourage investment: our legal system, down 12 points; regulatory duplication, down eight points; and administration of regulations, down eight points.

Unlike the Premier, who now blames low mineral prices, the Fraser Institute doesn't even mention this and, instead, points its finger squarely at this government and its regulatory and legal problems. Yukoners know the government holds the Fraser Institute in a very high regard; now that we're on the decline, does the government accept responsibility for the much lower rankings?

Hon. Mr. Kent: With respect to the recent Fraser Institute report, I think the most encouraging news that we see there is that we are number one in the world for geological potential. That's something that we can be very excited about and, again, something that we can't control, but we're very proud of.

The things that we can control, such as regulatory licensing and permitting, are things that we are undertaking improvements on, such as the work on the mine licensing improvement initiative, which will address some of the shortcomings in the water licensing process, as well as the quartz mine licensing process.

We certainly want to emerge from the current downturn in the mining sector in a better position than when we went in, and that is reflected in the work that we're doing on the licensing and permitting, as well as training and infrastructure investment and a whole host of other things across all departments within this government.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, it's not lost on me, the Member for Klondike, on what our potential is with regard to mining in the Yukon. We don't need the Fraser Institute to tell us that.

Here's a quote from a Yukon Party minister in 2010 about the Fraser Institute report — and I quote: "...Yukon's climb to the top of the ranking has absolutely nothing to do with world mineral prices; it has everything to do with us — this government — making the changes necessary to restore investor confidence in Yukon".

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon is continuing to slide in the rankings. When we're up in the rankings, it's all about minerals and us and when we're sliding, it's about the world prices. In response to our poor showing, the government reminds Yukoners that it's working on a new mine licensing improvement initiative.

When will this project be completed and what changes does the minister anticipate will come out of it?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Just to clarify for the member opposite — again, when talking about the Fraser Institute rankings, I think we're very pleased and proud that we have such a rich and diverse mineral endowment here in the territory and we're pleased that the executives who respond to the Fraser Institute

survey have recognized that by ranking us number one in the world.

Again, we certainly recognize that, along with the recommendations of the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board, there is an increasingly negative image with respect to our licensing and permitting regimes. That's why we support Bill S-6 and the amendments that is proposing. That's also why we're embarking on the mine licensing improvement initiative. Early work on that is underway right now with officials being led by Executive Council Office. Energy, Mines and Resources is also participating. Early engagement, of course, with our partners, First Nation governments, is underway right now. We would anticipate that this work and some sort of recommendations for mine licensing improvement will be ready within the next 12 months.

Mr. Silver: Let's hope that the mine licensing improvement initiative goes smoother than the government's botched attempt at amending YESAA.

Mr. Speaker, here's another gem from the Yukon Party. Let me quote this. "The boom-and-bust swings of the past will be largely mitigated by sound economic planning and investment attraction efforts".

For many years, the Yukon Party government tried to take credit for a strong economy. The reality was that our economy performed well because mineral prices reached record highs. In 2013, we had the second worst GDP growth of anywhere in Canada and Keno mine closed. The numbers are not final for 2014, but they don't look good; it wasn't a great year. 2015 began with the closing of Wolverine mine.

Mr. Speaker, we are certainly in a bust period and it happens to be during the Yukon Party's charge. Will the government accept responsibility for our poor showing in the Fraser Institute report or for our declining economy?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely true that this government cannot control commodity prices. That is something that this government, nor any government, will be able to do.

We are moving forward with things that we can control — that we can make a difference — so that as we come out of this downward portion of a cyclical mining cycle, we're in a much better position.

As we heard from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, we're investing in a mineral development strategy. We're working together with First Nations on a mine licensing improvement initiative. We support the amendments to the environmental assessment act that will ensure that our assessments are consistent with other jurisdictions, but we're also investing in training — the creation of the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining.

I believe our first graduates were announced today. We are also investing record investments in infrastructure — strategic investments in infrastructure that Yukoners will benefit from for generations to come — roads, bridges, telecommunications and energy. Of course, what we know is that the members opposite like to talk the talk, but what do they do? They oppose everything that is an economic opportunity for this territory. They vote against it. We talked

about it yesterday. They are opposing new nursing homes, they are opposing LNG. What we do know is that there has been a 20-percent increase in population since this government has come in and we will continue to deliver for Yukoners.

Question re: Ross River School closure

Mr. Tredger: It has been several months since the Ross River School was shut down due to instabilities in the school's structure. Like other schools in Yukon's communities, the building plays a central role in Ross River. It isn't just a school; it is a meeting place. It is also a public library and a Yukon College community campus. We know that the government has relocated Ross River School's classroom students to temporary locations, but what about the library? What about Ross River's Yukon College students?

What has the Yukon Party government done to ensure that Yukon College classes and other important community services hosted in the Ross River School are accessible to the community in the short term?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I was beginning to think that I had been forgotten over here since I changed portfolios.

We recently made a trip to Ross River to survey the school itself and to work with the staff and students and the community with respect to offering alternatives. I have to tell you that I was completely impressed with not only the staff and school council of the school there, but also by the community as a whole. They have really worked together to make the best of this very sad situation. A number of things have happened. Alternative venues for classes have been found, even though they are not the best of alternatives. They are what is available in that community. We have also moved a portable classroom to the community. Yukon College is working very well with the Department of Education in providing their facility to the school's students as well. So the whole community has pulled together in order to make the best of this very bad situation.

Mr. Tredger: My concern was for the Yukon College students and their place. I do recognize the input from the Yukon Department of Education and the community of Ross River for pulling together around this, but we do have a serious situation. The government just tendered a project with a very short timeline to submit a complete design/build proposal to fix the elements of the Ross River School. The tender contains no mention of refrigerating the crawl space. The tender contains no mention of preventing the permafrost heating and thawing that caused most of the issues plaguing the school. It is so open-ended that many contractors are privately wondering who would even want to take it on. When permafrost thaws, and it is thawing, it can cause significant damage.

Why does the Yukon Party government's Ross River School tender ignore the important permafrost regulation needs that caused significant damage to the school in the first place?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As the member opposite mentioned, Highways and Public Works is issuing a public request for qualifications. From this, a shortlist of qualified design/build teams will then be asked to provide bids for the work to be completed. The contract will then be awarded to a team with the lowest bid. The work on-site will involve structural foundation repairs, building, re-levelling and repair of interior finishes.

HPW has also contracted EBA Engineering to review the thermosiphon system data to determine if it is functioning as designed. The thermosiphon system is intended to stabilize the permafrost below the building. Again, in working with the Minister of Education and our officials, we would like to see the school opened back up as normal for classes this fall. This is the chosen contractual format to attain that. So we are relying on the expert advice of our officials and, of course, the expert advice of independent third parties to accomplish that.

Mr. Tredger: The Ross River School is a critical piece of community infrastructure. We know that the government had to make repairs to the building in 2008 and here we are again. In the months following the school's closure, the Yukon Party government spent a lot of time promoting its ad hoc Whitehorse-centric infrastructure spending. Communities like Ross River, on the other hand, have been left behind by this unbalanced and unplanned approach to development and maintenance.

Let's put it in context. The Ross River School is being put on the back burner, but the government plans to spend over \$200 million on the Whitehorse portion of the Alaska Highway. How is this fair to students who don't have a permanent place to study? When will the government take responsibility for the Yukon as a whole and support community infrastructure like the Ross River School?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, if I said what I'm thinking right now, you would probably call me to order, so instead I will say that I don't know where the member opposite is coming from.

There are huge amounts of infrastructure outside of the City of Whitehorse being done each and every day, and as for the Ross River School, maybe the member opposite didn't understand what was said here today. The contract says that the school repairs will be finished by August 1. That is relatively quickly. He maybe doesn't understand it. It means it will be ready for the upcoming school year. We are moving as quickly as we possibly can, with great cooperation from the consulting and contracting community to get that school back on line.

Perhaps he doesn't understand it. Maybe he would like to come with the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin and I tomorrow to go up to Ross River to take a look at it personally.

Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid the member opposite is living somewhere else in the past and he just simply refuses to realize or understand the facts.

Question re: Seniors housing

Ms. Stick: Today is Vimy Ridge Day, and for many years, the Vimy Heritage Housing Society has been working

with a coalition of senior groups, including the local Royal Canadian Legion branch, to plan a financially self-sustaining 75-suite supported living facility for seniors in Whitehorse. They have completed a detailed needs analysis and public consultation of Yukon seniors to determine if there is sufficient demand. The findings are telling. Over 500 seniors are interested in this model and, based on income alone, approximately 100 people want to and can afford to live in a supported living facility within the next three years.

What is this government doing to support the Vimy Heritage Housing Society in their efforts to provide a needed and desired supported living service for seniors?

Hon. Mr. Kent: We too, as a government, have been involved with the Vimy Heritage Housing Society since before it was incorporated. I know there has been money transferred to the society through the community development fund to complete some of the important work they are doing. They have identified for us that they would like to build their facility on the Fifth and Rogers parcel of land that's owned by Yukon government in downtown Whitehorse.

As members will know with the budget we recently tabled, part of that budget is to complete a master plan in partnership with the City of Whitehorse. At a recent meeting with the representatives of the Vimy Heritage Housing Society, we also invited them to participate in that.

We have to make sure that the land provided to them will be adequate for the facility and the number of units that they want to incorporate there. Again, this is something that's extremely important to our government. It was a platform commitment that we made in 2011, and we look forward to seeing this important piece of housing infrastructure for seniors developed within the City of Whitehorse.

Ms. Stick: The Vimy Heritage Housing Society has been meeting with government officials from Health and Social Services, as well as Energy, Mines and Resources. Even government officials have gone to B.C. and toured similar models of care to get an idea of what is happening. The society is ready to move forward on plans to construct this 75-suite supported living facility, but land is the holdup.

Are there firm timelines for this government to follow through on its commitment that the minister has spoken about to transfer land to the Vimy Heritage Housing Society to build a needed supported living service for seniors?

Hon. Mr. Hassard: As the minister responsible for Economic Development, I'm happy to say that, through the community development fund, we've worked with the Vimy Heritage Housing Society and, in July 2013, the community development fund provided them with approximately \$74,000 to hire a project manager for the pre-construction development phase and to undertake a preliminary marketing campaign.

In July 2014, we approved an extension for the project until February 28, 2015. Since they needed more time, we actually — yesterday, or the day before — approved an extension for that funding to March 31, 2016. I'm not sure if they even know that yet, but I guess they do now if they're listening.

Question re: Mental health services

Ms. Stick: The Yukon NDP has raised questions about adequate access to rural mental health and addictions services for years. Just last fall, we cited the 2014 clinical services plan finding that mental health and alcohol and drug services are in significant deficit outside Whitehorse and that there's no greater need than to expand resources to these health services, particularly in the communities.

From 2003 to 2013, the percentage of Yukoners who perceive their mental health to be very good or excellent fell from 76 to 66 percent. Our health is not getting better. It's going down, especially mental health.

When will this government develop a coherent plan for coordinated, community-based action on mental health and alcohol and drug services?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The Department of Health and Social Services really provides a range of services and supports to clients with mental health illnesses, mental health challenges, concurrent disorders and addictions in their families, and we see this right across the territory.

I only need to mention a few services provided at three hospitals around the territory, services provided by Alcohol and Drug Services in communities and services provided by Many Rivers in many of the communities. This government is committed to providing those services to individuals facing those needs and we take this issue very seriously.

Ms. Stick: But you have to wonder what is going to happen differently so that we won't have these types of reports that say mental health and alcohol and drug services are inadequate in the communities. We know that expanding access to mental health and alcohol and drug services for all Yukoners in all our communities is among the most urgent needs. The reports that this government has tabled tell it, but we still do not have a plan or a strategy. Yukoners are still waiting for that. It was promised in the last sitting to be soon public. Currently we have the services that the minister mentioned, but only two mental health nurses are serving every single rural community.

Will this government increase the number of mental health and addiction workers based in rural communities who can be there every day?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mental Health Services has two rural offices staffed by mental health nurses in Dawson and Haines Junction. These nurses travel to other communities to provide assessment and treatment services to individuals with serious mental health illnesses and consultation and education services to professionals and to the public. Where there are identified clients in specific communities, Mental Health Services hire support workers who provide very practical assistance to clients and monitor their mental status in-between visits from the nurses. Mental Health Services provides inherent counselling services in Faro, Ross River and Old Crow. I would like to thank the staff throughout Yukon who provide those services on a daily basis.

This government is investing \$4.2 million to replace the St. Elias group home. I would expect the members opposite would vote in favour of that despite their past history on

services for mental health. There is \$1.47 million for the Yukon Women's Transition Home Society to help women and children fleeing unsafe situations — again I would expect the members opposite to vote in favour of these important services. There is \$2.229 million for the Child Development Centre, \$130,000 for mental health youth treatment centres, including \$65,000 for Bridges. There is \$607,000 for Challenge's community —

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

Ms. Stick: I didn't hear a lot about services for people with mental health difficulties. I'm not sure what a lot of those had to do with that.

The 2014 clinical services plan had no shortage of comments on the significant deficit facing alcohol and drug services outside of Whitehorse including — and this is a quote: "...all aspects of alcohol and drug services care, including the general absence of aftercare and a high rate of recidivism."

Imagine, Mr. Speaker, two mental health nurses — one in Haines Junction and one in Dawson — serving every community in the Yukon. What do they do in an emergency if they are in Old Crow and an emergency is in another community? It is not adequate.

The Sarah Steele replacement may expand the number of clients provided with care, but the minister cannot disagree that that building is here in Whitehorse.

What is the minister doing to address lack of ADS aftercare in the communities?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Of course this is a very important topic, and we have heard the minister articulate some of the work that has been done. I certainly want to acknowledge the work of the officials. It certainly isn't just mental health workers. Of course, we have officials across many departments — Justice, Health and Social Services, Education — all working together collaboratively throughout this territory.

I also would like to acknowledge the work of the NGOs and the work that we do with them with the goal of providing and enhancing those services — and acknowledge the work of both the Health and Social Services minister we have now and the previous minister who served in that portfolio.

We have made significant investments. What I do hear on this very important topic, though, is what I hear many times. Certainly the position of both parties on many of these issues sounds exactly the same. What we do know is that, for every investment we make, in spite of their call for help, which we are doing, they do vote against it. They oppose all the initiatives and the investments we have made and the continuing and ongoing investments like the Sarah Steele investment that we are going to make this year. That is not only replacing the building but enhancing the alcohol and drug services not only for adults but for youth as well. We are continuing to deliver on priorities that we set forward for Yukoners.

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. 16: *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 16, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 16, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, be now read second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 16, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, be now read second time.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I am pleased to introduce Bill No. 16, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, along with the companion budget document, the *2014-15 Supplementary Estimates No. 2*, to this First Session of the 33rd Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, as identified in the *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, the *Supplementary Estimates No. 2* provides for sums required of \$14,740,000. These sums required are offset by sums not required of \$48,298,000.

Members of the Legislature will have noted that a special warrant was issued on March 5 in the amount of \$14,740,000. In accordance with the *Financial Administration Act*, the amounts authorized by special warrant are identified in the *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15* and summarized in schedule C.

The members opposite can certainly appreciate that, through this third appropriation act, the Legislature will be debating and considering those additional expenditure items previously included in the special warrant. The Legislature conducts its business; the special warrant provides government officials with the legal authority to continue to make the expenditures required for uninterrupted government operations for the period of time that Bill No. 16 will be debated in the Legislature.

Ministers who are requesting supplementary budget approval will be pleased to provide members of this Legislature with the complete details of their expenditure requirements in department-by-department, there is line-by-line review in general debate. Today I will limit my comments to a few specific observations that may be of immediate interest to our Legislature, related to the financial health of our government.

As I noted, I'm taking this opportunity to provide a brief overview of what the supplementary estimates mean for Yukon government's overall financial position. The supplementary calls for the sum required of \$14.74 million, and these are offset by sums not required of \$48.298 million, for a net expenditure reduction of approximately \$33.558 million.

On the revenue side, we see a modest increase of \$1.119 million, related to recoverable expenditures offset by a decrease of \$4.083 million in taxes and general revenue. After

making the necessary adjustments to appropriately reflect Yukon government's accounting policies, which are in accordance with the public sector accounting standards as required by the *Yukon Act*, we are reflecting an anticipated annual surplus for 2014-15 of just over \$49 million, and forecast year-end net financial resources — that is, as of March 31, 2015 — of approximately \$194.5 million.

We are fiscally healthy. As I've stated previously, our government is in a position to effectively respond to potential emerging priorities and pressures. Perhaps the item of most interest to the Legislature will be the change in our own-source revenues — our taxes and general revenues. We see significant reduction to personal income tax — PIT — in this supplementary estimates. This is, in part, due to our government's proposed changes to the *Income Tax Act*, which I'll touch upon below and I'm prepared to discuss more fully when this Legislature convenes to debate Bill No. 86, amendments to the *Income Tax Act*, which I had the pleasure of tabling today.

For the 2014-15 reporting year, the Department of Finance estimates the impact of the proposed amendments to the *Income Tax Act* to be \$1.7 million. I am always hesitant to be critical of one of our most significant partners, the Government of Canada. However, the reality of this relationship is that we are frequently dependent upon Canada's modelling and estimation of our own-source revenues, specifically when we're talking about personal income tax and corporate income tax.

We are disclosing a reduction to personal income tax of just under \$8 million. This is a difficult reality facing Yukon. Yukon is often dependent upon estimates from Canada in deriving our personal income tax revenues. The model and methodology is complex, and it's certainly not easy to explain.

In summary, as the Legislature can clearly see, Yukon's personal income tax allocation, in part based on Canada's estimate, was clearly on the high side. Subsequent revisions from Canada indicate that the personal income tax accrued by Yukon will be significantly lower than previously estimated.

Mr. Speaker, our Finance officials have noted that the previous estimate was also on the high side by approximately \$6.2 million.

This adjustment is not just an annual anomaly. Effectively the new estimate has revised downward Yukon's anticipated future personal income tax revenue streams. Effectively, in the current economic environment, Yukon's multi-year forecast for personal income tax revenue is lower than anticipated from when we tabled our 2014-15 budget.

A deserved acknowledgement to our officials is in order, as our long-term financial forecast has been adjusted to reflect what I can only simply call a re-basing of our personal income tax revenues, and our multi-year financial outlook remains extremely positive. Notwithstanding the revisions required, based on the current personal income tax estimate, our government has considered this impact on our future revenues and, as significant as it may be, our government has determined that Yukon taxpayers are entitled to some relief.

As members will be aware, we have introduced a number of measures that also reduce the revenues accruing to the government. The Legislature will be aware that our government has proposed changes to the *Income Tax Act* that will, among other measures, amend the personal income tax structure and eliminate the high-income surcharge. The annual effect is approximately \$5.5 million. On a pro-rated basis, we expect to see a reduction in personal income tax of approximately \$1.7 million for the 2014-15 fiscal year.

I will speak about these measures later, when Bill No. 86 is introduced, and we will speak about Bill No. 18, the bill accompanying the 2015-16 main estimates, our budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I have spoken at great length previously in this Assembly about budgeting based on the best available information at the time. This significant revision in our PIT base is a reflection of just that. I have previously, on numerous occasions, referred to planning as a fundamental principle of budgeting. You have heard me refer to this as "budgeting 101".

We practise rigorous and disciplined planning. Perhaps we may be considered to take a conservative approach to estimating revenue growth, but we will continue to deliver strong expenditure budgets in support of Yukoners. We continue to deliver a healthy, forward-looking fiscal framework. This is a vitally important endeavour. Fiscal planning is not an easy exercise. There are no certainties per se. I simply refer back to Canada and Yukon's best efforts to estimate personal income tax, and the Legislature can easily appreciate how difficult fiscal planning can be with such potential volatility in revenue estimates.

We continue to provide a strong fiscal position, not so much on the basis of future revenues, but on the basis of a measured, disciplined and rigorous approach to expenditure management. While this *Supplementary Estimates No. 2* is not about the 2015-16 budget, it does set the tone for how our government is able to be responsive, to be nimble, to support our efforts to deliver a significant budget on behalf of Yukoners when it is needed the most.

Mr. Speaker, Yukoners are a well-informed citizenry. Yukoners will be aware of what is going on in New Brunswick as it makes some difficult choices to balance its budget. No doubt Yukoners are fully aware of the challenges facing Alberta, with the decline in oil revenues. Yukoners appreciate the efforts of British Columbia to control costs related to health care.

Yukon is not immune to similar pressures. I am proud to say, however, that what distinguishes Yukon from other jurisdictions is our long history of discipline and rigorous expenditure management. Yukon has avoided net debt, and during the economic lull, Yukon is able to not only increase its expenditure investments on behalf of Yukoners, we are also able to reduce the tax burden, thereby increasing disposable income for every tax-paying Yukoner. More money in the hands of Yukoners is more money in the economy. If I may use a very simple common reference, we can all agree that this is a good thing.

I look across the floor and recognize that members opposite may be somewhat perplexed at the focus of my comments today. As I noted in my introductory comments, I am not here today speaking of the details of individual ministries regarding their specific expenditure requirements. No, that is not what I wanted to speak about today, Mr. Speaker. I have every confidence in our government's ministers to defend the expenditures requirements supported by this appropriation bill. It was my desire to focus our financial record and how that translates to direct investment in programs, services and infrastructure on behalf of all Yukoners as we move forward.

As I have previously noted, this appropriation bill and accompanying supplementary estimates call for an annual surplus of \$49.001 million and a net financial asset position as of March 31, 2015, of \$194.565 million. This continues Yukon on the path of sound discipline and rigorous expenditure management in light of revenue challenges.

I cannot be more proud of our efforts and the efforts of our Yukon government officials in recognizing that the ongoing health, stability and sustainability of Yukon's economy are supported by the government's disciplined and strategic expenditure management. I am proud to say that our collective efforts as reflected in our anticipated 2014-15 year-end results allow our government to invest significantly in our 2015-16 budget, as well as into our investment plans for 2016-17 and 2017-18.

Throughout my comments, I have observed that Yukon government is on solid financial ground. This is indeed the case.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Leader of the Third Party, on a point of order.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, please accept my apologies if I'm wrong. There was a little bit of confusion today at the House Leaders' meeting. I am assuming that we're supposed to be talking right now about the *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, which is basically the supplementary, as opposed to a complete overarching speech about the government and the budget. I would urge the minister to please keep his comments to the bill at hand. Of course, this would be 19(b)(i) — "speaks to matters other than ..."

Speaker: Hon. Premier, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, I believe there is no point of order. I am speaking to exactly what he has described.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: It's always impossible for the Chair to know what the member is going to say until they've said it, but the bill entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15* is very broad. I would remind the minister to do his best to keep his comments directed to the bill itself.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe all my comments have been in reference to the *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Throughout my comments, I have observed that the Yukon government is on solid financial ground. This is indeed the case. Our government projects an annual surplus for 2014-15 of just over \$49 million, and our net financial resource position is forecast to be approximately \$194.5 million at year-end, March 31, 2015. This is our savings account.

Net financial resources are the most important indicator of a government's fiscal health, and our net financial resource position — our savings account, Mr. Speaker — is very enviable. While most provincial and territorial governments have net debt — meaning they owe more than they are currently capable of paying — this is not the case in Yukon. We have the cash and other financial assets to pay off all of our obligations. This is significant, as it allows our government to be flexible in timing our investment decisions.

Our very healthy net financial resource position has provided us, and will continue to provide our government, the opportunity to make significant capital and program investments to the benefit of all Yukoners. I am sure we will speak at great length about our government's investments when we convene to debate the 2015-16 budget. Our strong net financial resource position speaks to the future as we move through our mandate. I look forward to leading Yukon through the various challenges that we face. I am proud of our achievements. We, as Yukoners, continue to be well-positioned for the future.

As I have indicated previously, ministers who are requesting supplementary budget approval will be pleased to provide members of the Legislature with complete details of their expenditure requirements in a department-by-department, line-by-line review in general debate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Minister of Finance, I commend the supplementary estimates for consideration by the Legislative Assembly.

Ms. Hanson: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to speak to the *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, the supplementary budget for that fiscal year. It was an interesting tour by the Minister of Finance. I was anticipating speaking directly to the supplementary budget, but I think it's interesting that, in fact, the Minister of Finance has really opened up a very interesting and very — he has reinforced, I think, some of the assertions that the Official Opposition has been making over the last three and a half years. So I'm pleased to hear him actually acknowledge that, in fact, although he has attempted to blame the Government of Canada for a decrease in personal income tax, the reality is, despite the fact — I mean, you don't make up numbers, and the number of people paying income tax has an implication in terms of how much income tax. The Department of Finance and Treasury Board in Ottawa don't make up those numbers.

We've heard much from this Minister of Finance extolling the virtues of the Yukon Party — about how they somehow magically both created increases in commodity prices and increases in population. So suddenly, when he sees a decrease in the amount of money being paid in income tax, it's not attributable to less people working in the territory —

not attributable, perhaps, to people actually leaving the territory, because there is no employment for them.

So perhaps it's time, as we said the other day, for a bit of recognition that the emperor does have no clothes. There is a necessity to face up to reality. It's not just blaming others; it's facing up to the facts. If the Finance minister would talk to ordinary people — not the people in the backrooms, but to ordinary people — he would realize that the economy in the Yukon is not as robust as he says. It may sound great when you're talking to people in Denver or Toronto or New York or Hong Kong, when you're trying to sell the territory to an elite group, but the ordinary people working in the Yukon, the people who lost their jobs at Yukon Zinc, the people who lost their jobs at Alexco, the people who are geared up now to face losing their jobs at Capstone because of the actions of this government pushing through Bill S-6 — these are the realities that cause those numbers to go down.

So yes, you had better bet we hope that this government is responsive and nimble, because they've created a situation that's going to require them to be jumping like Jack over the candlestick.

To speak directly to the supplementary budget that's before us, the Premier is correct that the net sums required total \$14.7 million. It's when we do the analysis of what's behind the net that we start seeing some of the realities that are challenging — not just to the credibility of the Minister of Finance, but challenging to the day-to-day lives of those who are attempting to work in this territory.

We have seen this territory table a massive capital budget for this next fiscal year. Last year, they touted that year to date as the largest capital budget, but yet again the government has been unable to manage it. Of that capital budget, a minimum of \$35 million is not being spent. Sure, that's nimble; it's pushing it off. What about those people who are counting on those contracts? The Premier has said repeatedly that capital budgets in the Yukon fuel the economy. Well, if you don't deliver on it, how is that fuelling anything except disappointment — except unemployment?

There are some real concerns when we looked at the revised numbers: serious concerns about the \$20 million not spent by Yukon Housing Corporation; \$7 million not spent on capital for Community Services; \$8 million not spent on Health and Social Services on capital; and \$5 million not spent on Highways and Public Works. We will be interested and we are interested in more than just deflecting the criticism or deflecting the blame with respect to the considerable drop in personal income tax. Most Yukoners find little credibility in the notion that more people will be paying more taxes in this territory, because I would like to know — and most Yukoners would like to know — where that magical thinking has come from. What's the basis of it? Where is the job growth? As I said, this — particularly in the light of the Wolverine job losses and the continued shutdown at Alexco — with no sense, despite what the Minister Energy, Mines and Resources and despite what the Premier has said in various media interviews across the country. It's not planning any announcement in the near future to resume.

We've heard concerns expressed by two strong companies — Kaminak — active participants in the mine training program, good corporate citizens that want to mine in this territory, that have the support of both the community of Dawson, the First Nation government in Dawson, and this government is setting up roadblocks to their successfully getting the kind of financing they need to go ahead. How does that contribute? How does that contribute to jobs and the growth of our income tax, our own-source revenue?

It's one thing to suggest, you know, that as the Premier said, we've avoided debt and, you know, we don't have to deal with the challenges of provincial governments like New Brunswick, British Columbia and Alberta. But the reality is that those provinces have seen a decline in their own-source revenue and that's what causes their huge challenges. So in those provinces that got stuck into the rut of resource extraction dependence — they're suffering big time. No diversification.

Our dependency is on the federal government. Our long history of effective debt management — as the Premier talks about it — has been largely avoided due to the fact of the formula financing arrangement. It is not because the Minister of Finance has magically maintained the rigour of year-over-year probity with respect to managing the territorial budget, not managing within an envelope that doesn't change. Now the challenge he is facing is because he can't adapt to a two-percent increase as opposed to the nine percent that he has enjoyed for the last umpteen years.

Ask any First Nation government. Ask any municipal government or any provincial government across this country. Nobody has that kind of largesse. So welcome to the real world, Mr. Speaker. We need to see a government that can actually manage within the envelope. We don't have a government that can do that, and we have seen that every year — every year since this Premier, this Minister of Finance, has come into office. The annual surplus has in fact declined year over year.

There are a number of areas that we will want to focus on as we focus and talk with each of the lines by department, including the departments that the Minister of Finance wears another hat for. We will be talking and asking the ministers responsible, as we talk about an economy that has as its main pillar resource extraction, not an economy that talks about largely diversifying our investments and our expectations in terms of support for other sectors of the territory.

It will be interesting to know what return on investment we did get for the extraction of our non-renewable resources. We will be looking forward to hearing the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources report to the Yukon what we did in fact receive for royalties last fiscal year. It would be nice to know that our royalties exceeded campground fees. Unfortunately, for the 12th or 13th year in a row, campground fees continue to be much higher than any royalties that this government has received. If we look at sound investments and return on investments, we have some discussing to do.

I saw earlier a very dismissive response when questions were asked about investments in communities outside of Whitehorse. We see in this supplementary budget the fact that a number of projects in Community Services that were budgeted for in 2014-15 did not get built or major work was not completed in communities as diverse as Beaver Creek, Carmacks — you name it.

We see in this budget the fact that the ad hoc approach of this government is that they don't even follow the protocols established under the *Financial Administration Act* with respect to if you have a plan — this is why I say it's ad hoc, because if there was a plan, we would not be seeing zeroes and then see \$2 million here and \$2 million there like, of a sudden, we decided we needed another \$2 million for this project and another \$2 million for that project. Where was the plan?

There are some disturbing trends here as well. We're aware, sadly aware, of some very serious issues with respect to client services in Health and Social Services. We know from the Auditor General's report on Family and Children's Services that there are serious issues with compliance. We're very concerned when we see decreases in services being provided and resources not available in Health and Social Services for staffing. We're aware of certain sections of that department where professionals are being stretched beyond their professional capacity, which has huge implications in terms of service delivery. We will be asking the minister about that.

We will be asking questions about what has become known as the fiasco of the Alaska Highway corridor and the badly paved project last year. Anybody who has ever had to live in Hillcrest — and I would think that the Premier, the Minister of Finance, would be sensitive to this issue, as it does affect many of his constituents who I have heard from, who have had vehicle windshields damaged and other things as a result of that shoddy work.

We wanted to know how we make these decisions about resurfacing and surfacing and resurfacing of the same areas. I remember the first budget that we heard in this Legislative Assembly, and I remember me naively thinking — because I was thinking about food sustainability and food security at the time as a priority, because it has been something that I've believed passionately about and, of course, the NDP has been supporting. We're pleased to see all the work that has been going there, but I just — I find it kind of dismaying that, year over year, that area that was announced in the 2012 budget where there was going to be this significant investment in cold storage — as I said, I thought it was for food storage, and I thought that was great. Then I found that it was actually for a vault for the archives, and I thought that's really good, because it's really good to see that kind of work being done to preserve our archival material. But you know, Mr. Speaker, three years in a row it gets deferred. I guess it says something to me about the consistency of management at the management level of the leader, which is the minister. Where is that minister in terms of paying attention to these important issues?

It does beg lots of questions, and we will be asking about what happens to those precious archival materials. Where are they kept and how are they preserved?

We will have questions about the money that is identified in the supplementary budgets for the Keno to Stewart line — lots of questions. We have heard many — it is difficult to fathom how we would be spending another million dollars for this, when we have heard nothing but dismissal on the other side for the teeny population of Keno. So now we're suggesting that 10 people in Keno need a million dollars more spent to build electricity access? If we're talking about it in that this is industrial power needs, well one would suggest that they are pretty low and this government is doing nothing to encourage investment to allow that to change. You know, that is a pretty curious way to spend money — millions of dollars — when there are a number of more important renewable energy projects that this money could be spent on.

Lots of people have been asking questions about why the project RFPs are being issued by the Development Corporation as opposed to the Yukon Energy Corporation. There are a few questions that one could ask. It seems pretty peculiar on many levels. If the Energy Corporation — our energy corporation; your energy corporation, Mr. Speaker; the Energy Corporation for each of us as citizens of this territory — thought it was a good project, they would have to apply to the rate base and take it to the Utilities Board where it would receive scrutiny. The Utilities Board could say yes or no, but is this an attempt by this government to go around that because the Development Corporation isn't held to that standard? Is it another spending of millions of taxpayers' dollars without scrutiny? Those are questions that we are going to need to hear answers to.

The net amount over the billion-plus budget for 2014-15 hides — as they say — a multitude of sins. We will ask lots of questions because we believe that each and every minister is accountable for each and everything that occurs in his or her portfolio, because that is how it works in a parliamentary democracy. Our job is to hold those ministers to account for expenditures of taxpayers' dollars. We intend to do so and we do so with pride.

Mr. Silver: I am happy to rise to speak on Bill No. 16, the supplementary estimates from last year. I will say, Mr. Speaker, we do need to keep the ministers and the government accountable. I do have to say that we spend an awful lot of time talking and yet we still have to guillotine an awful lot of the main budget.

I am going to keep my speech here today extremely brief, because most of this stuff — most of these items — the government has already spent. This money is money that has already been spent.

I'm going to be very brief here and I'm going to outline some of the concerns that I will have for some of the ministers as they stand up for this third appropriation. When we get into Committee, I will have some questions on the money for the Ketzia River mine repairs. There was an issue that I raised in the fall and I believe that the money in this supplementary is

the work that had been done on the bridge and on the road so I would like an update on that.

There are also a couple of large sums in Health and Social Services, and I hope the minister could be able to speak on that. One is for a Whitehorse continuing care facility in the range of \$6.4 million and the other one is for the McDonald Lodge replacement at \$2.8 million. If the minister could do an update in the House on these projects and why that money wasn't used in the previous year, that would be great.

Much of the unused money in this budget is carried over into the 2015-16, so I will save my questions for general debate on the mains. I know that there will be opportunities of a number of the ministers to speak on the supplementary so I await their comments.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise today in support of Bill No. 16. It is one more step in moving Yukon forward. I would like to thank my family for their continued support, and I would also like to thank my constituents in Porter Creek South for the privilege to represent them here in the Assembly. I committed to work hard on behalf of everyone in my riding. I'm sincerely appreciative of their continued support.

Today we reflected on Canada's great sacrifice and accomplishment at Vimy Ridge. As I prepared for today, I felt myself reflecting on the great sacrifice made by veterans so that each and every one of us here in this Assembly could be heard. I would also like to thank the veterans who gave so very much for our freedom.

This budget is a part of a larger package of budgets. I would like to talk about the context for this budget. Like the budgets before, it reflects the commitment of moving forward together so that we can make Yukon the best place to live, work, play and raise a family.

I speak with my constituents often about issues that are important to them, issues such as a healthy economy including resource extraction, tourism, private sector businesses, the knowledge sector and trades. The constituents of Porter Creek South speak to me about health care and how they recognize that Yukon's health care is arguably one of the best in Canada, perhaps in the world. In fact, as I pay more attention to health care around the globe, I consider myself very fortunate to live in a place where the level of care is truly second to none. As I stated earlier, we are lucky. We are not entitled.

I recognize, just for one example, how fortunate seniors are in Yukon. Over the last 10 years, your Yukon Party government has increased the budget for home care across the territory because we, on this side of the Legislature, believe it is important to keep seniors in their homes and their communities as long as possible.

It used to be that Yukon seniors and elders would move out of the territory after retirement. For many reasons we wanted to find a way to help make Yukon the best place for them.

I know some people are going to ask how raising a family applies for seniors. I firmly believe that grandparents can play an important role in helping children and teens as they grow

up. Some of my constituents found that grandparents could be that bridge in those sometimes difficult teenage years.

One of the changes that I have seen is the increasing number of seniors who in fact choose to remain in our territory. I believe that they add so much to our communities.

I want to spend a few minutes talking about the continuum of care in Yukon and in Canada. I think that part of the challenge is that the definitions and terminology for living supports are not consistent across our country. I will begin with the most basic kind of support and then I will move through the list of the most complex kinds of supports.

Home living is for people who live independently in their own home, apartment or condominium. They are responsible for arranging for any home care or other support services that indeed they may require.

Supported living combines accommodation services with meals, light housekeeping and sometimes social activities. Supported living is able to meet a wide range of needs, but cannot support those with serious or complex health care needs.

Home care provides professional and personal care as required and arranged by the individual.

Assisted living provides housing, hospitality services — so food, laundry, housekeeping and personal care services — for adults who can live independently but require a supportive environment and light care due to physical and functional health challenges. These are usually very large complexes — sometimes called "retirement communities" — and have aging in place.

Residential continuing care provides the 24-hour professional, clinical care and supervision for individuals with complex care needs who are unable to manage at home with the support of family, friends, home care and so on. These clients have extremely heavy care requirements — for example, advanced dementia or total care — and require specialized care services that are delivered in a home-like setting. These are not individuals who can be maintained at home or in assisted living or supported living complexes.

Since 2012, your Yukon Party government has increased the home care budget immensely. I would add that the members opposite voted against those increases to home care, just as they voted against the new hospital in Dawson City, just as they voted against the new hospital in Watson Lake, and just as they have indicated that they don't support providing continuing care to seniors with a higher level of need in a new 150-bed facility in Whistle Bend. I will speak to that more in few minutes.

I am not sure how much clearer I can make my statements around the new continuing care facility slated for Whistle Bend. The facility is needed by the citizens of this territory, by all citizens of this territory. One of the members opposite asked if we knew what the root causes of aging were. A member opposite, in a response earlier this week, quoted from the 2008 *Yukon Health Care Review* — "the right care at the right place at the right time" — but that statement is very much behind the philosophy of our continuing care system right now. Yukon has the best low-cost home care program in

Canada, bar none. Through this program and its amazing staff here in Whitehorse and in rural communities when needed, we are able to maintain our seniors and elders in their homes and their home communities for longer periods of time than we were able to in the past.

Our staff work with families — when there are families — and other health care providers to ensure collaborative care in the truest sense of the word, but the reality is that there sometimes comes a time in an individual's life when, despite all of the services we can provide, they cannot stay in their homes.

According to John Hirdes, an internationally acknowledged geriatric researcher who completed the first and only national analysis on the CIHI continuing care report system, Yukon has a unique profile when compared to the rest of Canada. Far more Yukon residents receiving home care live alone — 63.9 percent compared to the national average of 17.1 percent. Yukon has a higher-than-average number of clients with absolutely no social or family support, and many of our clients rely on neighbours for aid rather than a child or a spouse. Fourteen percent of home care clients have no caregiver at all to assist them — again, higher than the national average of three percent without caregivers.

We have the highest ratio of individuals over the age of 85 living alone. As I said yesterday, this government has increased the home care funding over the last decade by some 350 percent and will continue to support home care as we can, but we also recognize that 40 percent of our home care clients are at high risk for institutionalization for some of the very reasons that I just mentioned.

Of our 520 clients throughout the territory, more than 200 are considered high risk — a much higher number than our national averages. A reality is that there comes a point when people can't remain in their homes and they can't remain in their own home community if it happens to be outside of Whitehorse. I am aware that attracting medical professionals to small communities is an ongoing challenge. MLAs who represent ridings outside of Whitehorse have shared with me some of the obstacles their communities face in getting people with specialized skills to come to rural and remote Yukon.

The reality is that in a territory of 37,000 people, not every community is going to have all of the options available to them in the continuum of care. Our reality is that we must have centralized services to care for our seniors who have reached this stage in their lives.

According to Hirdes, Yukon has higher levels of diagnosed dementia — 25.2 percent compared to 17 percent nationally. We have higher levels of physical disability and 51 percent of our clients require monitoring of acute conditions, compared to the national average of 30.7 percent.

Because this Yukon Party government has been able to do such a great job of keeping folks at home longer, by the time they enter into one of the facilities, they have higher complexity and acuity. In the last year alone, we have had almost 400 new referrals in Whitehorse and 168 in the communities. By way of response, I'll say that aging is not something for the faint of heart. Many seniors are able to

remain in their homes, supported by family until the end. Others are not so lucky and so require the care and support that we can provide in our facilities. We're proud of the care that Continuing Care staff give to all of our citizens and we are proud that as a government we can do this.

The budget tabled before us speaks to a healthy economy. The budget speaks to investments in the resource sector, it speaks to investments in our tourism economy, and it speaks to investments in the knowledge sector and trades. Simply put, this supplementary budget, like the 2015-16 mains also before this Assembly, speaks to investments in Yukoners. That is something I support; that is something that the good people of Porter Creek South support.

Your Yukon Party government has very proudly made Yukoners its priority. Yukoners need to remember those days and reflect upon how fortunate we really are to live, work and raise a family in the best part of Canada, and perhaps the best part of the world. We truly have it all. We have resources beneath the ground that can support us for generations to come; we have a solid tourism product that the world wants to see; we have infrastructure that supports trades, IT and other knowledge-based sectors; we have a private sector that is motivated and eager for more growth; and we have a Yukon Party government that can commit and deliver to Yukoners.

In Yukon's history I would argue, as would many others, that we have never, ever seen this from the Liberal or NDP governments.

My constituents and I are pleased to see the investments —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Order please. Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Ms. Stick: We're referred to this once already, but I point to Standing Order 19(b)(i), which would suggest that the speaker is not referring at all to the bill presently before the House. So I just have not heard the speaker across the way referring to the bill that's presently before us, which is the budget for last year, the *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: The problem with this point of order — and this is the second time we've had it — is that it is quite impossible to totally separate a single appropriation bill from the government's finances as a whole. This is where the problem lies. The second reading of any appropriation bill can always be cast very broadly. That changes once you get into Committee of the Whole, where you're going to be required to speak specifically to each item.

Within second reading, we're going to be very broad and allow a lot. This goes for both sides of the House — not just on the government side, but also on the opposition side — so I have to allow a lot of latitude.

Minister of Health and Social Services, please.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just speaking about some investments that we have in tourism, investments that we've made in infrastructure that supports trade and IT and other knowledge-based sectors, my constituents and I are pleased to see investments and the vision in education.

The Premier spoke at great length about education in our incredible territory. This Yukon Party government is committing to Yukoners. We are committing to the youth of today and tomorrow, because we believe in them and we believe in their future.

I thank the Premier and the Minister of Education for their vision and for their leadership on this file and I thank the good men and women who work so hard each and every day.

As the Minister for Health and Social Services, I see first-hand how much money we spend on health care. I often find myself thinking that there must be a better way when it comes to health care. I am convinced that many Yukoners would feel better, would be healthier and would delay or avoid altogether some of their medical situation if we all made better lifestyle choices. Now when it comes to lifestyle choices, whether it be smoking, excessive drinking or a sedentary lifestyle, I firmly believe that we need to do more than say to people that that's a bad choice. I think we have a role to play in providing healthy — in providing positive alternatives. It is because I believe that we need more healthy, more positive options for people that I support our government's efforts to build a new sports complex. We announced this project a year ago and I thank the Minister for Community Services for continuing to work on this.

On opening day, I read a tribute to autism and as a father of a child with autism, I'm very aware of the many benefits that we as Canadians and truly Yukoners enjoy. I am certainly grateful for the assistance that this Yukon Party government has provided to my family and many other families over the last number of years.

When I was first elected, a number of families did connect with me. Some were single parents trying to raise a child with special needs, some were couples, some had more than one child with special needs, and I'm pleased that this Yukon Party government has been able to step up to the plate and provide supports to those families.

I've often thought to myself, how would a family cope if they didn't live in a country like Canada and live in a territory like Yukon? How would they manage if they had to raise all that money for themselves to care for their children with disabilities? So for me, a budget that focuses on putting Yukoners to work is a budget that enables the government to help families who have children with special needs.

So in conclusion, this supplementary budget, like the mains budget, really is all about putting Yukoners to work. It is about the confidence that Yukoners have in this Yukon Party government and it is truly about making Yukon the best to work, live, to play and to raise a family.

Hon. Mr. Graham: It's truly a pleasure for me to rise in the House today to highlight a few of the items from the

Department of Education's supplementary budget for 2014-15. This supplementary budget reflects how we continue to develop and deliver programs and services to meet the strategic goals of the department. Those goals are: success for each learner; an inclusive, adaptable and productive workforce that meets the needs of Yukon employers; and organizational excellence through alignment and accountability.

The department requests a total of \$722,000 for operation and maintenance expenditures in the Public Schools, Advanced Education and Education Support Services branches for their programs and services.

The Public schools branch requests a total amount of \$645,000. In order for Yukon schools to provide the quality and accessible education opportunities to Yukon students that we currently do and also to keep pace with current educational practices, this money is absolutely essential.

We are engaging students in their education through educational technology, experiential learning, mentoring and tutoring programs and other opportunities. For instance, \$250,000 is being requested for additional costs for home education and distributed learning, as well as travel and contract costs associated with work on some new B.C. curricula that will be incorporated into our schools, and \$70,000 is also requested for additional proposals received by the Department of Education for special payments, which support programs like the 2014 fall/winter experiential program at the Yukon Wildlife Preserve.

In direct contrast to what the member opposite has to say, the rural action plan is also very important to us and money has been requested to support the rural experiential models hosted in Dawson City and Carmacks, as well as the continued rollout of the blended, differentiated learning approach in Watson Lake.

The department is also extremely proud to provide professional development to its teaching staff through the summer academy. The summer academy is a great opportunity for teachers and administrators to connect and learn about new developments in the field of education that supports success for each learner. This is especially important to me, because at a recent conference I was at, where educators from all over the world attended, we were informed from different countries — New Zealand, Finland, among others — that what was more important than class size and curriculum was the attitude and the training of the teachers that were actually delivering the programs. Those teachers and their enthusiasm for the job — and connecting with students — would result in better opportunities for those students than any amount of other changes to the system. We have requested another \$110,000 for additional costs incurred at the 2014 summer academy.

We're also forecasting — we experienced a decrease in demand for student boarding and accommodations in the 2014-15 school year that resulted in a lapse of \$50,000, but we utilized that money to offset other new budget demands, such as the \$66,000 that was provided to Kwanlin Dun First Nation's home tutor program and an additional \$22,000 for operating bridge funding for the Yukon Literacy Coalition.

The Yukon Literacy Coalition has also requested funding from the federal government, but it is unknown at this time whether the funding has been approved, so the Department of Education has provided that bridge funding for the Yukon Literacy Coalition.

A total of \$159,000 has been requested for the Advanced Education branch to support the delivery of emigration, labour market and training programs and services for the Yukon. In fact, on October 27, 2014, the department entered into a new two-year agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada to enhance the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications of accountants in Yukon. \$80,000 is requested to support the Yukon's commitment in this area, but it is all fully refundable or recoverable from Canada. This is an essential or a very important step that we are taking because, during my years at the college, one of the real difficulties experienced by foreign professionals was recognition of their credentials in Canada. Many times we had to direct these people to resources in B.C., Alberta or as far away as Ontario to accurately assess their credentials. This is a step in enhancing the assessment and recognition of foreign credentials here in the Yukon.

The Canada-Yukon job fund agreement is very important to the territory and we are working with the Canadian government to assist individuals who want to improve their job skills or who need support entering the job market. The Canada-Yukon job fund agreement provides approximately \$1 million per year to support training opportunities that will help Yukoners find or upgrade their jobs, and \$14,000 has been requested for cash-flow adjustment for anticipated expenditures. However, as members are aware, that funding is also 100-percent recoverable from the Government of Canada.

The Education Support Services branch reported a net decrease of \$19,000 under finance and administration. Student transportation has requested an extra \$225,000 for increased student transportation costs, including Handy Bus services. We are continuing to investigate further opportunities with the City of Whitehorse to have the City of Whitehorse provide more transportation for a number of high schools, or for all high school students, in the territory. As those discussions progress, I am sure we will be back to inform the House how they are going.

We also continue to work closely with our colleagues at the Department of Highways and Public Works on projects such as the Teslin School lease. In July 2014, the Department of Highways and Public Works entered into a lease with the Teslin Tlingit Council for the lease of the Teslin School, and the \$250,000-odd that is currently in the department's budget will be transferred to the Department of Highways and Public Works — or it has been transferred to the Department of Highways and Public Works. The term of the lease is 10 years commencing July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2024, but it also has the possibility of renewal for an additional five years.

The total supplementary capital budget requested for the Department of Education's capital expenditures is \$1.551 million and it represents the costs for facility construction and maintenance and instructional programs.

The \$97,000 in the capital repairs budget was identified as surplus for transfer, again, to the Department of Highways and Public Works for capital maintenance repair projects. The Property Management Division has requested these funds to complete two flooring replacement projects and snow removal at Yukon College.

In 2015-16 we will be replacing the boilers in the older wing at Porter Creek Secondary School, which was built in 1981, to improve energy efficiency, and the Property Management Division has once again requested that design money be moved forward from the 2015-16 budget for the Porter Creek Secondary School boiler replacement program. That is also reflected in this budget. \$20,000 has been moved forward for that purpose.

Approximately \$705,000 in funding has been deferred to 2015-16 under instructional programs due to the delayed implementation of the new student information system. \$597,000 of those funds is requested to be deferred for the implementation and teacher training on the new system, and that's expected to begin in the spring of 2015. The other \$108,000 of these funds are requested for transfer for a school van replacement for the Wood Street Centre. In order to continue to safely transport students and staff on extended school trips outside of Yukon, a replacement 24-passenger activity bus is being purchased. The delivery was expected by March 21, 2015; however it was delayed by the supplier to early April and that money will be moved to that year.

In conclusion, we're very, very proud of our investments in education here in the territory, and this supplementary budget just incorporates or continues our support of programs and services that serve Yukoners of all ages to succeed in school and in all of our communities around the territory.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I'm going to speak to the votes of both the Department of Highways and Public Works as well as the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources in these supplementary estimates.

I'll start by introducing the 2014-15 supplementary estimates for the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. This supplementary budget reflects adjustments made to the 2014-15 budget as Energy, Mines and Resources works to manage Yukon's natural resources and ensure integrated resource and land use. For this supplementary budget, EMR requests an overall increase of \$2.884 million for operation and maintenance expenditures and a decrease of \$485,000 for capital expenditures.

Under operation and maintenance, these are the following significant changes: \$200,000 internal transfer from Corporate Services to the Energy branch to fund the 2014-15 costs for the residential energy efficiency incentive program; a \$1-million contribution agreement with the Kluane First Nation for energy-related initiatives; and \$213,000 for assessment and abandoned mines. This increase reflects adjusted workplan for Mount Nansen, as per the amended type 2 mine sites agreements with Canada. This amount is 100-percent recoverable from Canada.

A \$400,000 decrease from oil and gas resources is for the well B-62 abandonment project. Members will recall this was a well that we went in and did some environmental remediation on in the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin's riding in north-central Yukon. Initial work on that project has been completed and additional work will be finished in the summer of 2015. This funding has been moved into the 2015-16 budget.

There is \$2.08 million to Compliance Monitoring and Inspections for the Ketz River mine. I believe the Member for Klondike referenced this in his speech, in that he would like to ask specific questions about it during Committee of the Whole on Energy, Mines and Resources here. Specifically, this money was for inspection and maintenance of the facility. This funding is security from the company and is 100-percent recoverable from that third party.

Under capital, \$485,000 in funding remaining is moved to the 2015-16 budget in order to complete road realignment work on the Dome Road.

This concludes my comments for Energy, Mines and Resources. I would like to turn my attention now to the Department of Highways and Public Works.

In this supplementary estimate, the Department of Highways and Public Works is seeking a \$1.075 million increase on operation and maintenance, coupled with a decrease of \$6.718 million on capital, for a total appropriation of \$5.643 million. When it comes — perhaps I'll do some of the line-by-line breakdowns for Highways and Public Works. That might be the easiest thing to do, so that members opposite have an opportunity to hear what these expenditures are related to.

On the operation and maintenance side, under Corporate Services, there's an \$18,000 reduction. This is resulting from internal transfers to properly allocate HPW service agreements and personnel funds. So we have a \$7,000 funding increase for manager salary increases for January to March of 2015; a \$54,000 increase resulting from postage cost increases and higher volume for mail-outs in the mailroom. A corresponding decrease of \$54,000 is as a result of an internal transfer of service agreements to consolidate the budget for service agreements in one area, and another \$25,000 reduction is resulting from an internal transfer to the Transportation division. Funds were allocated to Corporate Services in error. That is a total reduction of \$18,000 for Corporate Services.

For Information and Communications Technology, we have an increase of \$288,000. This is primarily a result of an internal transfer from all branches within the department. This is to properly allocate IT service agreement funds to the Information Management branch.

With respect to the Transportation division, on operation and maintenance there's a \$605,000 increase due primarily to road and airport equipment reserve funds and maintenance camp catering contracts.

Just to give a little more additional information on that amount, there's an increase to transportation administration due to manager salary increases of \$6,000 — again for that similar period of January to March 2015 — and a \$380,000

increase in new funds required for transportation maintenance as follows: \$237,000 for a catering contract increase for five maintenance camps; \$93,000 for a road and airport equipment reserve fund increase for equipment hourly increase; and a \$50,000 increase for road and airport equipment reserve fund review. There is a \$364,000 increase in new funds required for aviation as follows: \$196,000 for road and airport equipment reserve fund increases for hourly charges; \$68,000 maintenance increase at Dawson Airport for additional summer flights between Fairbanks and Dawson City; \$52,000 for a temporary electrician position required to cover for vacancies; \$46,000 for testing airport emergency plan two times per year, as required by Transport Canada; and finally, a \$2,000 increase for manager's salary during the same time frame as I've previously mentioned.

A \$5,000 increase is required for Transport Services as follows: \$4,000 for utility costs at the Haines Junction scales, which is 100-percent recoverable, and \$1,000 for the manager's salary increases. A \$175,000 decrease due to IT service agreement transfer that I spoke about earlier came from the following areas: \$20,000 from Transportation administration, \$78,000 from Transportation Maintenance, \$60,000 from Aviation, and \$17,000 from Transport Services. Then there is a \$25,000 increase in funds due to an internal transfer from Corporate Services to correct a coding error.

With respect to Property Management, here is a breakdown of the \$200,000 contained in the O&M portion of this supplementary. It is due primarily to transfer of funds from the Department of Education. Again, there was a \$5,000 manager's salary increase; \$249,000 increased funds due to an interdepartmental transfer from Education for the Teslin School lease; and a \$54,000 reduction resulting from an internal transfer for service agreements to consolidate the budget for service agreements in one area.

I will now speak briefly to the capital expenditures — the capital vote that I spoke about. The first one is a \$25,000 reduction in information and communication technology, corporate information tech and systems. That \$25,000 decrease is due to a transfer of funds to Environment, for work on the Yukon Environment Information System.

When it comes to Transportation division — for the transportation facilities and equipment, there is a \$3.57-million decrease due primarily to project deferral to 2015-16 year. This includes funds required for equipment purchases as follows: fuel dispensing units for two maintenance camps, three sanders, a rock crusher, in Reach for safety. Those amounts total a \$243,000 increase. A \$20,000 increase in funds is required to repair a tank shutdown switch in Watson Lake. The big decrease of \$3.836 million is resulting from deferral to 2015-16 of the following projects: Swift River complex, sand and salt sheds construction and re-powering the George Black ferry. There is a small increase of \$23,000 for an internal transfer from the Silver Trail to complete satellite Internet installation of \$23,000.

Transportation planning and engineering is seeing a \$64,000 increase in this supplementary primarily due to internal transfers. We can get into more detail as we move into

line by line. I want to be cognizant of the time and the fact that others on this side want to speak.

Highway construction — partially YG funded, Building Canada fund — there is a \$125,000 increase due to an internal transfer from YG-funded bridges, numbered highways, secondary roads. This was for the Upper Liard bridge approaches.

There is a decrease of \$114,000 on YG-funded Alaska Highway, resulting from an internal transfer to the Dempster Highway. There is an increase of \$49,000 on the Klondike Highway to complete BST work at Too Much Gold Creek and Allgold Creek after the replacement of culverts.

There is a decrease of \$828,000 due to project deferred and completed underbudget. Some of these — in summary, I won't include all of them — are a decrease resulting from projects completed underbudget, reconstruction projects on the Campbell Highway at kilometre 67 to 73, kilometre 97 to 107 and kilometre 60 to 67. This is all associated with the Campbell Highway — this \$838,000 reduction — so there are some other line items associated with that that we can talk about when we get into Committee of the Whole.

Dempster Highway and Top of the World Highway — an increase of \$142,000 for the Dempster and an increase of \$40,000 for the Top of the World Highway. The Dempster was due to an internal transfer for Dempster aggregate production and predesign work in advance of the 2015-16 project. The \$40,000 increase in the Top of the World is due to predesign and permitting for replacement of some steel beams.

Highway construction on the Canol Road — a decrease of \$300,000 due to internal transfer to bridges and numbered highways and secondary roads.

The Atlin road saw a decrease of \$205,000 due to projects completed underbudget.

Pavement rehabilitation and other road improvements — an increase of \$148,000 due primarily to internal transfer from Campbell Highway for pavement rehab work throughout the Yukon.

There is a decrease of \$649,000 on highway construction, YG funded. This is a continuation due primarily to work completion underbudget, such as the Tatchun Creek bridge and Fox Creek bridge detailed design. There are some increases — the Pelly Ranch Road bridge and Upper Frances River bridge, Blue Moon Creek bridge. We can get into further details when we get into Committee of the Whole.

There is a \$20,000 increase on other roads that are YG funded, overall again due to increased funds for additional work required and internal transfers. The largest portion of this increase, which is offset by some decreases, is \$55,000 in funds resulting from an internal transfer from pavement rehab and other road improvements for Alaska Highway rest-stop upgrade.

Aviation and Yukon airports — \$2-million decrease due primarily to contract awarded less than budgeted, a decrease in funds resulting from work completed underbudget of \$1.95 million and then a further \$50,000 decrease in funds resulting

from an internal transfer to other airport projects. There is a decrease of \$961,000 in other airport projects.

The largest portion of that — again which is offset by some other decreases and increases — is \$964,000, resulting from a number of projects, such as the Whitehorse airport taxiway G extension, Whitehorse airport pavement patching and Old Crow airport RILs installation.

Property Management — there's a \$950,000 increase in building overhead, resulting from a number of things, the biggest of which is building condition assessments in Whitehorse and Haines Junction and underground tank replacement designs at various locations.

The building maintenance piece is seeking a \$1.351 million increase. Again, a number of projects here from Justice to Health and Social Services, Tourism and Culture, Community Services, Education and Executive Council Office formulate the bulk of that increase, but I'll look forward to getting into more detail when we get into line-by-line debate.

The building development, space planning and tenant improvements saw a \$913,000 decrease in the supplementary. This is resulting from the data centre cooling and UPS system upgrades at the Whitehorse main administration building. That amount will be deferred to the 2015-16 capital budget for this project; as well, a \$42,000 decrease resulting from an internal transfer to building maintenance.

I hope that information was useful to members of the House with respect to the supplementary. Often we don't get the chance to get into line-by-line in the supplementary budgets, so hopefully, if members weren't able to follow along — particularly the critics for Highways and Public Works across the floor — they're able to review the Blues. Again, as we got toward the end there, I didn't read each line out, but hopefully that was able to give members across the way a snapshot of what's happening with respect to the supplementary budget for Highways and Public Works, as well as Energy, Mines and Resources.

If we are able to get into Committee of the Whole and departmental debate on the supplementary, I'll look forward to answering questions there or, conversely, if we're in the mains, I'll look forward to answering questions in general debate with respect to projects that are underway.

Again, I would just like to conclude by thanking officials in Highways and Public Works, as well as Energy, Mines and Resources, for their work and commitment throughout the year, especially those who have spent a significant amount of time developing these budget documents for my purposes here in the Legislature. I look forward to further debate with respect to both of these departments as we work through the Spring Sitting of the current Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It's a pleasure to rise and speak to this particular budget bill, the third appropriation act, *Supplementary Estimates No. 2*, for the 2014-15 year. As members will see on page 3 of the bill, the sums required for appropriation for the Department of Community Services, under the operation and maintenance section, are \$912,000,

which I'll get into in a few moments, and a small expenditure of \$26,000 in the Public Service Commission for O&M.

Under capital, we have a \$8.2-million decrease under the capital column for the capital section on page 3 for Community Services and an increase of \$56,000 in the Public Service Commission. I'll provide a little bit of context to this budget and discuss some of the contents of it as we go through and then of course, as other ministers and members have noted, the details of the individual projects and individual items can be addressed when we get into Committee and go through line-by-line debate perhaps later today or at a later date.

I would like to thank the department officials in the Department of Finance for their work in preparing this particular budget bill, but I should also commend the Department of Community Services finance officials as well who contributed significantly to this process. The financial accounting of a department like Community Services is no small task and we appreciate greatly the work of those folks in the finance department of Community Services in their work on this particular bill, but also the budget itself as well of course.

I would also, as I noted, the supplementary estimates before us consist of a \$912,000 increase in O&M expenditures and a decrease of \$8.2 million in capital for Community Services. The department's combined O&M and capital budget for 2014-15, including the supplementary estimate, is \$122,978,000. This represents a significant investment in programs and services that directly benefit Yukon people and communities by developing and improving community infrastructure, assisting with and responding to emergency events, fostering strong local governance and promoting and developing recreation and sport.

As well, Community Services administers a broad range of licensing, business and regulatory services for the health, safety and protection of the public. The department continues to work to achieve goals set out in our strategic plan and this enables our government to deliver on our commitments to achieve a better quality of life for Yukoners, promote a healthy environment, grow the economy and practice good governance.

We made significant progress toward priorities of Yukoners in 2014-15 and this supplementary budget — this appropriation act — builds on that. That work ranged from our work on the *Municipal Act* to finding an innovative solution to the Ross River bridge. We took steps that included making changes to the *Municipal Act* and *Assessment and Taxation Act* to expand the domestic water well program to property owners in participating municipalities. That was done last year and was announced, I believe, in the fall of last year.

As was indicated at the time, the new legislation will allow people living inside municipal boundaries to access the successful rural well program if their municipality has chosen to participate. Amendments made to the *Municipal Act* and *Assessment and Taxation Act* extend the opportunity for municipalities to take part in the rural domestic well water

program. Prior to the amendments the program was open only to property owners outside municipalities.

Since 2004, the rural domestic water well program has helped to provide almost 250 property owners living in unincorporated areas with sustainable and affordable access to drinking water through domestic well development. The program helps property owners drill a new water well or make improvements to an existing well for domestic use, and allows residents to access low-interest loans that can be paid back over a maximum period of 15 years. Loans under this program are fully funded by the Yukon government, but municipalities are required to agree to collect the loan from the property owner using a local improvement charge. That bill was approved unanimously by the Legislative Assembly last year and the work since that time has begun with work with municipalities on reaching individual agreements with each of them to provide this new service and this new program to those residents.

I can report that negotiations and discussions have been successful with a number of municipalities. Many municipalities that I've had a chance to speak with about this are excited about the opportunity to offer this program in their respective communities. Still needed are the necessary regulations to come into force. We have been sharing those regulations with municipalities so far and seeking their input in the regulations. Once we have those regulations in place, we will need to enter into individual bilateral agreements with the respective municipalities that want to participate. Anecdotally, I would note that there are a number of communities that are very interested in this project.

As a result of this development, we have budgeted additional dollars in the budget aimed at those new municipal customers of the rural well program. We are confident that the budget appropriation for the coming year will be sufficient to meet the demand. However, if it's not, we will have to look at expanding that program.

I should also note that the rural electrification program was involved here as well. That is another program that is very successful in allowing Yukoners either living off-grid or who want to provide additional energy production at their residence by way of a renewable energy project — they can access that program to do so. That involves a similar structure with regard to the low-interest loan and the repayment based on local improvement charges. That's something that is ongoing and that this budget bill will help advance through the expenditures therein.

I also wanted to note that, at the time the bill was passed last year, the former Minister of Community Services noted that the Yukon government is pleased to create this opportunity for residents and participating municipalities to take advantage of funding that will help them drill new water wells. That was a quote from the former minister, which I think is reflective of the government's opinion of this excellent new program.

In this 2014-15 budget — to which, of course, this is supplementary — we unveiled new ambulances purchased with support from the 2014-15 budget, and we brought in new

fire trucks for Tagish and west Dawson, of course, late last year — part of those purchases we announced in December.

That included two new ambulances to support Yukon Emergency Medical Services in the professional, safe and efficient delivery of pre-hospital emergency medical care. The two new state-of-the-art ambulances cost a total of \$310,000 and represent an important investment in Yukon EMS.

Each ambulance accommodates a patient and two paramedics, or can be configured to carry additional Yukon EMS personnel and two patients. The ambulances are outfitted to operate efficiently year-round and in harsh winter conditions. Installation of multiple electrical and oxygen outlets allow for greater flexibility in caring for the needs of patients. A scene lighting system, brighter emergency lights, improved reflective markings, a backup camera and a treatment area camera all contribute to safer operations.

These new ambulances join the fleet of 23 ambulances that Yukon maintains, providing territory-wide emergency medical services. Two high-mileage vehicles will now safely be retired from the fleet.

At the time that was announced — I think a quote from the former minister is certainly very relevant here, as he indicated at the time — and I quote: “The professional paramedics and emergency response volunteers of Yukon EMS train to stay sharp and be prepared to assist Yukoners and visitors experiencing a medical emergency. They respond to demanding circumstances to help those in need, care for the injured on the scene and transport them to appropriate health care facilities.” The then minister also added that, “The Yukon government continues to invest in the equipment, facilities and training that our paramedics and emergency medical responders need. By upgrading and replacing units with modern ambulances, Yukon EMS paramedics and emergency response volunteers will better meet the needs of patients.”

So I think the comments of the former minister are certainly reflective of the position of the government in terms of our high opinion of the EMS responders that we have here in the territory, and this budget will go a long way toward helping them to do their job in terms of helping Yukoners throughout the territory.

Also, we made significant progress on bringing basic 911 service to Yukon’s rural communities. Finally, we have seen significant investments in projects funded by the gas tax and by the Building Canada fund.

Further to that issue with regard to the basic 911 service — I would be remiss if I didn’t note that on March 27 of this year, we made an announcement about this particular issue. We noted that the Government of Yukon has allocated more than \$1 million in the 2015-16 budget, pending legislative approval, to lay the groundwork for expanding emergency 911 service to all Yukon communities.

As the current Minister of Justice noted at the time, the Government of Yukon is investing \$334,000 to move the current 911 call centre to our new emergency response centre, a modern facility designed for the purpose, and to outfit it with the necessary communications and support equipment.

He also noted that we’re also investing \$733,000 to support hiring and training additional 911 call centre staff. As we know, the RCMP operates the territory’s 911 call centre on behalf of the Yukon government. During the transition to the new ERC site, current 911 services will not be impacted. We’ve continued to work with our partners — Northwestel, the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs, the Association of Yukon Communities and the RCMP — to make progress on expanding 911. This move is another important step. We are making a substantial commitment this year to expand basic 911 service to rural communities by July 2016.

I should note that Chief Superintendent Peter Clark noted of this announcement that: “The current integration of RCMP dispatch and the 911 Public Service Answering Point improves community safety through dissemination of real-time information and the coordination of medical, fire and police responders ...” He also noted that: “The RCMP continues to collaborate with Government of Yukon and stakeholders and looks forward to expanding the 911 service to all Yukon communities. Relocating our current call centre to the Emergency Response Centre and growing the number of dispatchers allows us to keep in step with the planned expansion of the 911 service.”

I should add that the expansion of 911 telephone service to rural Yukon communities has also been a priority of the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs and the Association of Yukon Communities. The Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs President Jim Regimbal said of the announcement that: “The Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs is very pleased to see continued progress in expanding lifesaving 911 service to all Yukon communities ... We know it’ll take some time to get the system up and running so, for now, we urge all Yukoners to make sure that they know their local emergency numbers.”

The president of the Association of Yukon Communities noted: “Effective local emergency response services are essential to rural Yukon’s local governments. The expansion of 911 will benefit local residents, travellers and visitors to our communities because they’ll have one number to dial for help.”

“Currently, 911 service is only available within an 80 kilometre radius around Whitehorse. The Yukon government has committed to expanding basic emergency 911 service to communities across the territory by July 2016.”

The Emergency Response Centre on Two Mile Hill was designed and built to meet RCMP specifications for a 911 emergency call centre. The RCMP run the 911 emergency call centre under contract to the Government of Yukon. With the government’s plan to expand 911 call service to communities across the territory by July 2016, now is the opportune time to move the call centre from its current location in downtown Whitehorse.

The new call centre will be equipped with the latest telecommunications equipment needed to run the planned expanded 911 system. By moving to the ERC, the Yukon government will continue to work to integrate emergency response services across the territory.

In December 2014, the CRTC approved a unique interim emergency call service for rural Yukon, similar to what Yukon government had proposed, but with unexpected conditions attached. For example, the CRTC required that calls not answered by community emergency responders would be automatically transferred either to a live person at the RCMP or to the 911 call centre in Whitehorse. This is very similar to how basic 911 will function.

This condition raised unexpected challenges and, after careful analysis and discussion with Northwestel and our partners, the Yukon government has decided to focus its resources on implementing basic 911 as quickly as possible and will not be implementing the interim solution, as defined by the CRTC. The current seven-digit emergency numbers in Yukon communities continue to work, and we urge Yukoners living in Yukon to make sure that they know their local numbers in an emergency situation. Emergency response services in rural communities now, and when basic 911 is in place, will continue to be delivered by municipal and volunteer fire departments, volunteer EMS, community nursing stations and the RCMP.

Callers in the 911 service area will be unaffected by this process and will continue to access 911 as they do now. The Whitehorse call area encompasses an area 80 kilometres from the centre of Whitehorse and includes the rural communities of Mendenhall, Marsh Lake, Mount Lorne and Fox Lake.

Those are just a few examples of the great work done by our department on behalf of all Yukoners, and of course, as I noted, this budget bill will advance that work considerably. Our team members make a difference each and every day. Collectively, we are committed to promoting vibrant, healthy and sustainable Yukon communities, and this supplementary budget, and our broader 2014-15 main budget, contributes to this vision.

As I mentioned, we have an overall increase of \$912,000 in this supplementary budget for operation and maintenance. A significant portion of this includes an increase of \$272,000 in funding support for the operational needs of our solid-waste management program. There was also an increase of \$400,000 in funding as a result of the northern wellness agreement that we recently signed with Canada. My colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, recently announced the northern wellness funding, along with our Member of Parliament — funding that helps to offer active living opportunities to Yukoners and empowers communities to fight health challenges, chronic disease and the use of tobacco among youth, while also promoting physical activity.

We were also able to provide \$60,000 to the Yukon Avalanche Association to support the public avalanche forecast — a key tool that helped make wilderness use safer for both Yukoners and visitors this past winter. Finally, there was an increase in O&M to support the ongoing funding increase for the grant-in-lieu of property taxes for the senior and student housing at the Yukon College campus.

Of course, there are a number of capital expenditures that have changed in this budget bill, Mr. Speaker, and it appears I won't have time to explain them all and discuss them, so I

look forward to getting into this bill further at a later date, perhaps in Committee of the Whole next week, or whenever available.

Once again I would like to commend this bill to the House and thank officials for their hard work in bringing this bill forward, and thank the —

Speaker: Order please.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would like to thank my colleagues for their words today. It is very clear that the work of the government is very comprehensive. It is very wide-reaching and continues to build on the vision set out by the Yukon Party government when it was first elected back in 2002.

I want to first off just start by thanking the public service for all of their work in each of the departments, and the respective agencies and corporations for their hard work in working with the various stakeholder organizations throughout the territory in support of a thriving economy and contributing to the quality of life that we as Yukoners have come to know over the years.

I want to thank the Minister of Finance as well for his work as our leader, as we look to the future, as well as for the past number of years maintaining a healthy fiscal situation here in the Yukon. As the minister and the Premier alluded to already, it cannot be overstated just how fortunate we are here in the Yukon.

I am a recipient of a newsletter that is distributed by the Alaska Travel Industry Association. Of course, we worked very closely with ATIA over the years in conducting many cooperative marketing initiatives in support of growing the rubber-tire travel market but, in plain, to be able to grow tourism revenues between Yukon and Alaska. Alaska's tourism budget has been really hard hit, and little wonder. When you look at the debt and deficit that the State of Alaska has had to endure, not unlike what Alberta, British Columbia and many other jurisdictions are having to endure right now, it is a stark reminder of how we have to continue on balancing and continue to invest in the various industry sectors that are also very important to ensuring that our economy thrives.

Of course, we heard earlier this sitting, and even earlier today in QP, about all that we are in control of and what we are not in control of. What I can say, though, is that, through the supplementary estimates and the main estimates as well — which we'll soon be getting to debate — without starting off with a healthy financial picture, we would not be able to continue to invest in key sectors such as tourism and culture, IT, health care, education, vital community services — as the minister just outlined in terms of support for drinking water systems, waste-water treatment and rural road upgrades. Of course, the list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

We are very fortunate that we are here on the floor of the Assembly today and throughout the duration of the sitting to be able to talk at great length about each and every one of those expenditures, how we arrived at those expenditures, and what that means for not only the short term but the longer term for Yukoners in particular. Whether it has been making

strategic investments in infrastructure, strategic investments in reducing our taxation burden, or whether it's continuing to make investments in programs and policies and streamlining our regulatory regimes, all of these contribute to a very healthy picture — a climate that is conducive to the growth of the private sector.

I want to thank the Premier — I guess you could say — for reinstating me within the Department of Tourism and Culture after taking a bit of hiatus for the past three years. It has been with great pride that I am back in this particular portfolio. I want to thank the previous Minister of Tourism and Culture for his work in collaboration with industry to really raise the bar in terms of advancing the tourism industry as a whole.

The Government of Yukon has, in collaboration and at the request of industry, really worked hard over the past number of years to really raise the bar in terms of our marketing reach into various markets, in terms of our conventional, traditional markets, of course, of Canada and the United States, but also looking overseas. If it weren't for the healthy financial picture, we would not be able to really expand our reach into the overseas markets, such as Asia — and I'll get to that in a moment or later on in this sitting — but we also wouldn't be able to reach deeper within the domestic market of Canada.

In Canada we've seen significant growth over the past number of years, thanks to strategic partners like Air North, Yukon's airline. We've been really blessed with increased air access into those key markets within Canada, and we've been able to leverage and extend that reach through programs like the tourism cooperative marketing fund, through the assistance of our product development branch, of course, and through our marketing division, being able to really expand and raise awareness of the Yukon as a destination of travel. Tourism is very important. It contributes significantly to our gross domestic product. We just recently undertook a tourism business survey that pointed out about \$250 million in tourism revenue is to be attributed to the tourism sector alone — so a very significant sector.

Tourism is not just about investments in tourism marketing, although it is very significant to be able to really ensure that individuals across this globe in our strategic markets are well aware of the Yukon and where it is that we wish to brand ourselves — but it's also very important that, in addition to tourism marketing, we're able to continue to invest in programs.

We will get into it at greater length about some of those programs and some of those investments as we get into the main estimates. As you look at the past year — and of course we are talking about the supplementary estimate of the previous fiscal year — we have generated great success in utilizing those programs at our disposal, when we look to the marketing investments.

The Yukon Now marketing campaign, or the marketing initiative, that was kicked off last fall by my colleague, the previous Minister of Tourism and Culture, really comprises a number of various elements in that marketing campaign —

from the development and the production and distribution of television commercials to investments in the digital storytelling project, investing in our local film industry, which showcases Yukon from Yukoners' perspectives and how we can promote the territory as a travel destination through various development and creations of webisodes.

Through the user-generated content project, we've also been able to create a social media platform where Yukoners and visitors alike can post pictures, videos and content — again to share with the world what it is that makes the Yukon the fantastic place it is to visit and to live and to call Yukon home and to be able to raise our families from Yukoners' perspectives as well.

Part of that funding has also gone toward overseas marketing. Just recently we were able to utilize some of those dollars in support of our first-ever tourism mission to Japan and China and representing about a dozen various tourism businesses that went to both Japan and China. It resulted in a number of accomplishments and I don't want to get into this at great length because I have a lot more to say about this, but I can't say enough about the investments by those respective tourism businesses and the expertise around that table when we were able to meet with the hundreds of tourism buyers over in Asia when we were meeting directly with the media, the travel trade market media place, and individuals who represented print to digital to social marketing media — and again using all these platforms in conveying and raising awareness of Yukon as a destination.

We've seen significant growth from the Asian market. Even when one looks to Japan, I think we actually broke a record in 2013. From 2013 to 2014, the growth in the number of Chinese travellers, for example, actually doubled just in that one year alone. We've seen the amount of growth actually supersede that of the Japanese visitation as well. Both Japan and China and all the various markets around — when we look to Korea and others — are a great source, especially when you see the increase of air access coming into Canada and the available seats alone — just from China alone, half a million seats coming into Vancouver, into western Canada, each and every year, and we see that number continuing to climb.

So that, coupled with our daily jet service into the Yukon courtesy of Air North, Yukon's airline and other carriers, makes us a very attractive destination, particularly for travellers coming over from China or Japan for the second or third time looking for new products and looking for accessible same-day service. You can certainly do that from Japan all the way into the Yukon. The amount of products that have been built up over the years by various tourism businesses is amazing, not just about the winter or the auroras, but the midnight sun and all of the various products that go along with that — from ice fishing to dogsledding to hiking experiences, to some spectacular drives that are only known to the Yukon, and the list goes on.

We continue along that path of working alongside industry to help direct our marketing programs — research-

based, of course. We continue to pay great credence to the return on investment in each of those various markets.

Again, budgets — and I keep coming back to our fiscal situation. The situation that we do have here in the Yukon, as a result of that, is that we are able to continue to invest in initiatives such as Yukon Now — the single largest tourism marketing investment in Yukon's history. This has really raised the bar in terms of our capacity and our reach in this country and outside as well.

There is so much in the Department of Tourism and Culture that I could just spend hours and hours articulating, and I will throughout the sitting. Again, when we look to other expenditures throughout the supplementary and the mains and so forth — and I look forward to getting into that greater detail. I know that when we look to the specific supplementary budget alone, on the operation and maintenance expenditures for Tourism and Culture, we are not requesting any. Of course, on the capital expenditures, we are reporting a decrease of just over \$700,000 in capital expenditures. It includes a number of transfers initiated by Property Management Division out of Highways and Public Works for various capital maintenance projects resulting in a net reduction of some \$100,000.

In addition, the banner program for Tourism Yukon's Larger than Life banners came in underbudget by about \$10,000. We also see that a decrease of \$629,000 is requested to reprofile funding allocated to the Yukon Archives vault-expansion project to this fiscal year. Again, as members will recall, there was an expenditure that was voted in a year ago in the main estimates, as I seem to recall. We are asking for the lion's share of that to be reprofiled to the finalization in support of the actual design and to go toward a tender-ready project in support of the vault expansion. I want to make abundantly clear that we're very much — and the staff over at the Yukon Archives — committed to ensuring that Archives continues to be able to preserve Yukon's rich documentary history.

We recognize the facility that was built some years ago is nearing capacity, and we've been working on a design for an expansion of the vault that is both cost effective and meets the mandate of the *Archives Act* as well.

That work is underway. As members opposite will recall, within the main estimates for our Department of Tourism and Culture, is approximately \$629,000 in support of the finalization of that design work, continued planning and proceeding with tender-ready documents of the vault expansion itself this year.

Again, I want to thank the members, my colleagues, for their continued work and I look forward to debating at great length each of the expenditures housed within not only Tourism and Culture, but also Women's Directorate and French Language Services Directorate.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill No. 16. As this is the first time this session that I've had the opportunity to rise and speak, other than Question Period, I would just like to take the opportunity to thank all

my constituents in the riding of Pelly-Nisutlin for continuing to entrust me with the privilege of representing them here in the Assembly. I would also like to thank my family for their continued support and understanding, especially with my new role as a member of Cabinet. It has kind of impacted my personal life somewhat.

As far as the supplementary and the budget, I think it's important, as Minister of Economic Development, that we realize the jobs that are coming from this money. It's the role of Economic Development to foster responsible development opportunities that can contribute to a sustainable and diversified economy.

I would like to talk a little bit about Ross River, to begin with. Since 2008, with the Building Canada fund, we've spent approximately \$11 million. This year, we're looking at money investments for the solid-waste facility, investments in the waste-water treatment site, and I know these are two subjects that have been debated in this House over the past couple of years on more than one occasion, so I'm happy to see that this will be spending \$400,000 for the solid-waste facility, as well as \$950,000 to move forward with the building of a new sewage lagoon.

Another rather hot topic in Ross River is the state of the school. I was happy to see that the government has allotted \$500,000 to do assessments and levelling of the footings. It was mentioned today during Question Period. It was brought up and as the minister responsible for the Department of Education noted, the minister and I will be travelling to Ross River tomorrow to meet with the council, the teachers and the staff from the school. On that note, I would like to thank the staff of the Ross River School, led by Principal Fran Etzel, for both their tenacity and their ingenuity in finding ways to minimize the disruption of class during the transition of students out of the school into their temporary classrooms throughout the community.

As well, in Ross River, we see about \$300,000 on the North Canol, along with a few smaller projects such as \$75,000 for the Ross River tanker base; \$50,000 for upgrades to the multi-use community hall. Another important infrastructure upgrade is the purchase of a new \$250,000 water delivery truck.

In Faro, I am happy to see in excess of \$2.5 million for replacement of the roof of the Del Van Gorder School, and almost \$3.6 million moving forward with the replacement of the Faro RCMP detachment. As well there is \$300,000 for the Faro aerodrome and then just a few hundred kilometres down the road in the wonderful town of Teslin, we see \$2 million for waste-water upgrades and approximately \$500,000 for street upgrades as well. I believe the Minister of Education already mentioned the \$200,000 for the Teslin School to get some new windows and new fuel tanks. That will be nice.

As far as my portfolio stuff — and I don't want to give the impression that one department is more important than another in how I have started or where I start. I will start with technology and communications. That falls under the Economic Development portfolio. It is a very exciting topic right now as we look forward to improving broadband

connectivity in the north. The Department of Economic Development's Technology and Telecommunications Development directorate — or more commonly referred to as "T2D2" — they work to ensure the availability of fast, affordable and reliable telecommunications infrastructure and services for all Yukoners.

This government really understands the incredible potential that the ICT sector has here in the Yukon. It is because of this potential that the government continues to invest in determining what is the best possible way to provide Yukoners with these services.

The Department of Economic Development continues to work with Bell Mobility as we see expansion of 4G mobile services throughout the entire territory. It's also through the T2D2 shop that we see support to Yukon's research, innovation and commercialization sector or RIC. This is an area of prime strategic importance to our economy. The development of the RIC sector has strategic long-term benefits for Yukon, including: enabling growth of the private sector; supporting the development of wealth-generating industries and secondary industries; and supporting the development of a knowledge-based economy in the Yukon. I believe that investing with organizations such as the Cold Climate Innovation and YITIS is smart money, Mr. Speaker.

As well, the personnel at the Business and Industry Development branch work closely with companies, industries and all organizations to undertake strategic projects that will enhance key industry sectors and contribute to Yukon's overall economic prosperity.

The Business and Industry Development branch also supports and stimulates the development and growth of Yukon's small- and medium-sized enterprises to further maximize benefits from large resource development projects and other economic activities. Small and medium-sized enterprises have access to business development support and advisory services through the branch's partnerships with NGOs and industry associations as well as through direct financial assistance.

In February, the enterprise department services unit moved to a storefront location to better serve the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises. Clients will now be able to benefit from business and industry development staff expertise and also learn more about the branch funding services.

One of these financial resources is the strategic industries development fund. This fund is available for projects that act as enablers or catalysts for growth of Yukon's strategic industries and that will generate secondary benefits and business opportunities within the territory. The strategic industries development fund provides funds to projects focused on natural resources, tourism and culture, and research innovation and commercialization. The funding is intended to assist the private sector to address barriers to development and to improve the competitiveness of their businesses. In 2015-16, the Department of Economic Development will continue to support the development of

Yukon's strategic industries through this fund and we have provided over \$800,000 in this budget to do so.

Business and Industry Development also administers the enterprise trade fund and this is to support business development and market expansion. The enterprise trade fund was developed to stimulate and support the growth of Yukon business activity by focusing on the development or expansion of export markets as well as attracting investment capital for businesses and supporting business planning, marketing and business skills training. This fund has been accessed by businesses in a wide variety of sectors including the manufacturing, service, cultural, mining, and film and sound sectors. In addition to being available to all Yukon businesses, the enterprise trade fund also accepts applications from non-profit as well as for-profit business-related organizations and industry associations.

Trade negotiations — ultimately the Yukon's economy depends on not only what happens within our boundaries but outside them as well. The Department of Economic Development participates in trade negotiations to ensure Yukoners enjoy the benefits of internal and international trade while taking into account Yukon's position as a relatively small, developing economy. For example, as the member of the Canadian federation, the Yukon is working with federal, provincial and territorial governments to ensure that the movement of persons, goods and investments within Canada is not faced with unreasonable barriers. Presently a comprehensive negotiation on an internal trade renewal agreement is taking place as agreed to by all premiers last year at the Council of the Federation meeting.

The Government of Canada is also currently negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which provides opportunities for Government of Yukon representatives to continue to work with officials from other regions and to ensure Yukon's interests are brought to these negotiations.

In terms of investment attraction — investment attraction has significant implications for natural resources, technology and tourism and is particularly important for the mineral sector. The goal of the investment attraction is to enable the development of the private sector economy.

In addition we're working closely with the newly formed Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce to enhance the role of the First Nation development corporations.

Film and Sound Commission — just as we reach out to the mineral industry investors, we also reach out to the film and sound industries to create opportunities for Yukoners and to maximize the economic impact of media production here in the Yukon.

Regional Economic Development — this is a branch that supports a broad range of foundational activities for organizations with a mandate in the area of economic development. The Regional Economic Development branch works with First Nations, local governments, communities, community-based organizations, and this is to facilitate strong economically self-reliant regions and communities. The branch supports social and economic development projects

and works with clients throughout their process from project articulation to implementation.

As well, they provide advisory and coordination services, and the branch financially supports worthwhile initiatives through the regional economic development and community development funds — one of those funds I talked about today during Question Period.

The intended outcome for the regional economic development fund is to help coordinate regional economic development plans, positive long-term impacts on employment and wealth creation, as well as diversified local economies and an inclusive workforce. Assistance under the regional economic development fund is available for activities related to regional economic development — obviously — including assistance in developing regional plans, participation in regional economic development planning processes, opportunity identification and related research. The fund also supports activities related to capacity development, including needs assessment, training plans and corporate organizational capacity training for corporate business enterprises and the economic development organizations.

Past-funded projects have included board training, human resource planning, tourism research, mining-awareness projects, as well as attendance at networking and educational events related to economic development.

The community development fund provides support to Yukon communities, industry and professional associations, non-profit and charitable organizations, municipal governments and First Nations governments. These are for projects and events that support community well-being, create jobs, generate spending on Yukon goods and services, and have measureable social, cultural and economic benefits for Yukon residents and the communities.

The primary goal of the fund is to enable projects and events that provide long-term benefits and value to Yukon communities. Some projects made possible through the CDF include BYTE. Bringing Youth Towards Equality received just about \$58,000 to host a youth entrepreneur conference here in Whitehorse in May. If any of you are bored, I will be opening that conference on the Friday morning. This event will bring together approximately 100 young people aged 18 to 25 from across Yukon. It will be three days of learning, collaborating and networking and discovering the world of small business.

Another one was that the Percy DeWolfe Memorial Mail Race committee received \$15,000 to streamline the organization of the races, improve community-focused events, and update the race manual.

The Member for Kluane will be happy to know that Champagne and Aishihik First Nations received \$20,000 to rebuild its existing website, creating a user-friendly social-media-compatible website, allowing for more partners, citizens and the public to visit and utilize the site. We look forward to supporting more worthwhile initiatives in the coming years.

I see that I am just about out of time, so I will sit down. I look forward to hearing everyone else's comments and

concerns today. I would like to thank the Minister of Finance for bringing forward this bill today and look forward to hearing from everyone else.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It is a privilege for me to stand up in the House today. Like the Minister of Economic Development, I do believe I owe a big thank you to my constituents from the great riding of Kluane — from Beaver Creek to White River, Pine Valley, Burwash Landing, Destruction Bay, Silver City, Bear Creek, Nygren subdivision, Haines Junction, Kathleen Lake, Dezadeash Lake, Six Mile, Klukshu, Blanchard River, Stanley Flats, Forty Eight Mile, Marshall Creek, Canyon Creek, Aishihik, Champagne, Mendenhall and Takhini — 640-plus kilometres.

I also want to really thank my wife and my son and the rest of my family for the support that they give me. I don't get to be at home as much as I would like to, so I think it is key to thank your family.

I would also like to thank the Premier for the opportunity to take over the Department of Environment. I would also like to really thank the previous Environment minister. A lot of the stuff that I will be taking over are projects and stuff that he started working on.

I would like to add that, yesterday in the House, it was brought to attention through a motion from the NDP that there are other jurisdictions that think this is a great place to be, one of them being Saskatchewan. That is where my wife's family is from and I tend to agree with my wife's family, but I would probably sit at the dinner table and argue that we are a little bit better than Saskatchewan.

The Member for Copperbelt South yesterday didn't say this was the best place to live. Just for her, looking at the supplementary estimates within my department, I met with some of her constituents and they were pretty happy to see that there was money out there for work. I am pretty proud of that.

Getting down to the brass tacks of the supplementary here in the Department of Environment, there will be a result of a decrease of about two percent from the \$39.125 million voted to date. This amount involved is about \$764,000. The savings arise mostly from a remediation project costing less than we budgeted for and from moving construction work on the new Conrad campground into 2015-16.

I do want to talk a little bit about the Conrad campground. I know this was a project that the previous minister started, and he put a lot of time and effort into it and a lot of work with the First Nation. The construction of the new 35-site Conrad campground on Windy Arm of Tagish Lake will proceed over the summer and fall. We have allocated dollars for this project, and I anticipate, the way things looked that the campground, that the brand new campground will be open for the 2016 camping season.

I hope to see everybody there with their RVs, tents and/or motorhomes and we can camp together. The department collaborated with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation during the planning process and we will continue to work together as we move forward with land clearing, the construction and the

other activities. A new campground is going to help with the demand for camping sites near Whitehorse for Yukoners and visitors. We've heard that many times from Yukoners.

A heritage management plan for the site, which will be co-developed by the Yukon government and the Carcross-Tagish First Nation — this is another good example of this government working with the First Nation. The Conrad campground is really well-situated to complement the growing recreational opportunities and the Carcross-Tagish First Nation community development in and near Carcross.

So the budget is a good example of a wide range of activities undertaken by the Department of Environment, and our mandate includes taking a leading role in regulating and enforcing safe standards for air, water and soil. I want to talk just a little bit about the water strategy, which is part of this.

It's a significant initiative. It was started by the previous minister and it's to protect our environment. The importance of water of course to our livelihood and to our identity cannot be overstated. We are a territory of rivers, lakes, streams and glaciers and, as part of this action plan, we will further develop a groundwater program, expand our water monitoring network and improve access to drinking water to ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy the abundance of clean water that we have been so fortunate to experience.

Some of the work that will be underway is: the installment of 19 new hydrometric stations planned for 2015-16; the installment of three new water quality monitoring stations in 2015-16; adding new wells to the underground network collecting our baseline data; developing a comprehensive groundwater program; and holding a Yukon water forum on a regular basis for the water managers across the territory.

I had the opportunity to open the Water Forum and make a few comments and then to close the Water Forum and listen to what came out of the Water Forum. I went early and spent time listening and there were First Nations, there were rural municipalities and there were different departments that deal with water. One of the key things that came out that was the importance of having these water forums, because we sometimes find ourselves in a tunnel doing our own thing and to share data and share knowledge is key to working together. This government of course is doing our part to ensure and maintain our clean water and our beautiful environment.

Getting back to the range of activities undertaken by the department and our mandates is managing the human impacts of fish and wildlife, providing quality outdoor recreational opportunities in our parks and campgrounds — and I spoke about the Conrad campground — and of course, addressing the challenge of global climate change. I'll speak a little bit about that. Some of the actions that we're focused on are: increasing our adaptation efforts by researching ecosystem changes; predicting the impacts of the mountain pine beetle; examining the impact of thawing permafrost on agriculture, the north Alaska highway and the Yukon water systems; producing food-risk mapping; reporting internal government greenhouse gas emissions data annually through the climate

registry; and working across government to identify and implement emission reduction opportunities.

We're establishing sector-specific targets and actions to minimize growth of greenhouse gas emissions in some of our key Yukon sectors. We're also co-leading the Canadian action on the Arctic adaptation exchange and an on-line information portal that enables the sharing of climate change adaptation information across the Arctic. There are some new and great things that will come out of this, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure this House will be very, very impressed and supportive of the department's initiatives.

One of the key things is actively implementing the provisions under the First Nation final agreements and that's key to just about everything that we do.

With respect to operation and maintenance expenditures, we are seeking a net reduction of \$348,000. In the general management area, \$41,000 is being transferred from the deputy minister's office to other branches. Mr. Speaker, of this total, \$17,000 has been transferred to the parks program to help fund the extension of the fully serviced campground seasons to September 30 at 10 of the key campgrounds. I want to speak a little bit about that because I had the opportunity with the Minister of Tourism and Culture to go out with our MP. Parks Canada is also following through with the same things that we're doing. I think it's really key, because campgrounds are key for the Yukon and having them open longer — an extended operating season by three weeks at 10 government campgrounds is pretty impressive. The campgrounds will now be opened on May 8 — 10 of them earlier — and open until May 30. We've committed money to make this happen. How else can we be the best to live if we don't work? Listen to the tourism industry and listen to Yukoners by providing better or longer services.

I would also note that funds for this purpose were approved in the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1*. The total cost of extending the season is about \$67,000 for this fiscal year.

In the Corporate Services area, we are requesting a total of \$37,000. Of this, \$13,000 is needed for projects at Herschel Island, Qikiqtaruk Territorial Park, such as repairs to the mission house and the building. I'm hoping to get up there to see some of the employees. I managed to travel a little bit already this year and see some of the rural CO offices and talk to the staff and hear some of the questions that they have — things that they put into queue for upgrades and things that are needed. I'm hoping that the MLA from that area can come with me. These expenditures are 100-percent recoverable under the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*.

In the environmental sustainability area, there's an increase of \$50,000. \$13,000 is needed for the agreement with the Nature Conservancy of Canada for the northern biodiversity project. This amount is 100-percent recoverable. \$20,000 is needed for the Kluane/Duke River moose management survey. The data collected will inform harvest decisions by shared management committees. This amount is 100-percent recoverable. It's just a good example of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* stating in chapter 16 that the resource councils and the Fish and Wildlife Management

Board are the primary instruments in resource management. It's key that this government works and we believe in the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and this is just another good example of us sitting down and working with our partners to move forward on management of moose — just in this area — among other areas.

\$6,000 is needed for the trapper education workshop, and this is recoverable through the participant fees. Mr. Speaker, I just will let you know that one of the first things I did when I became the new Minister of Environment is that I went up to the fur show, which was put on by the Member for Klondike's local renewable resources council. It's a wonderful program. We brought a bunch of trappers from the Kluane area up there with their furs. Having the minister up there was very well-received by the trapping industry.

One of the highlights for me was being entered in the trap-setting competition, where I got spanked by our trapping instructor — 57 seconds. I was a minute and 20, which was average — not the worst but not the best. The highlight for me was, after the fur grading was done, the local youth we brought up there and the local youth from the community had the opportunity to speak with the fur graders who came from the south, and they got to explain what they're looking for in fur. It was novel. There are great youth in our community who are out doing basically the oldest industry in Canada — trapping. I look forward to many more trapping education workshops and the department working with our trappers on complete management of our species.

Lastly, we are seeking a net decrease in operation and maintenance funds of \$394,000 for the environmental liabilities in the remediation area. \$675,000 — and this is key to understand — is not needed for remediation projects. A detailed assessment of a contaminated soil stockpile found that the material could be repurposed, rather than treated, and that that's exactly what has been done.

However, \$275,000 is needed for a site assessment at Fraser camp to deal with contaminants from the garage sump. It is expected that the remediation will take place soon after assessment work is complete.

When we look at our environmental remediation, we put funds forward, but sometimes we find uses for the material, we find other ways of working with this, and then the monies saved get to go to remediate other sites. I would be more than happy, when we get into budget debate on the Department of Environment when the staff is here — if there are other questions that the critics have, we can get down into the finer points of it.

In addition to these projects, internal transfers are requested to address personal budget adjustments between the branch areas. You see that in most departments.

Mr. Speaker, this concludes my remarks on the operation and maintenance funding request for the Department of Environment. With respect to the capital expenditures, the department seeks approval for a decrease of \$416,000 for the fiscal year of 2014-15. The bulk of the decreases is due to the revised construction schedule I spoke to earlier about the Conrad campground. I'm pretty sure that the MLA for that

area is probably going to be one of the first guys to camp there. Hopefully I'll see him there.

We plan to move this \$500,000 of approved funds into 2015-16 to cover the construction costs that will be incurred throughout the summer. Members will be glad to hear that this project is on schedule and will be opening for 2016 — I spoke to that earlier.

\$25,000 is needed to support the Yukon Environment Information System project. This is a transfer from Highways and Public Works' IT envelope. This year's work has proceeded on modules for the fish and for Yukon biophysical inventory, as well as on on-line systems for purchasing angling and annual campground permits.

That is something that we heard about during the election and one of the campaign promises was these services. This system that is going to be implemented — it's going to be available to get a fishing licence on-line, and we look forward to further opportunities after we work the bugs out, because this is the first time doing this and we may look at the hunting licences and other licences required throughout the Department of Environment, but through other departments in the government.

\$44,000 is needed for the now-complete upgrades to the septic system at the department's Mayo compound. This is a reallocation within the capital maintenance envelope, and lastly, \$15,000 is needed to help purchase a new motor for the boat at Herschel Island. It is a big ocean up there, Mr. Speaker, and we need a good motor on the back of that boat. You being a fellow boater might understand that. This amount is 100-percent recoverable under the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*, as is some of the construction on Mission House.

This supplementary budget is a great snapshot of the many activities that the Department of Environment undertakes in order to support a healthy, sustainable and prosperous Yukon now and into the future, making it the best place to live.

I would like to extend my remarks by thanking the staff of the Department of Environment, who are dedicated and are professionals at their work and truly committed to environmental stewardship, informed decision-making and working in partnership with other organizations, communities, other governments — First Nation governments — and organizational excellence. I do look forward — as I said earlier — to comments and questions from members about the activities outlined in the department's supplementary estimates.

I do want to thank my fellow colleagues and I want to thank the members opposite, who have the opportunity to ask the questions that need to be answered for the public. I do look forward to being the Minister of Environment and some of the challenges that move forward with it. I look forward to working with our local First Nations on issues — our local management boards — and I just look forward to the Spring Sitting, because I know, at the end of the Spring Sitting, Mr. Speaker, the ice will be off and we can go fishing.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I'll be brief in my remarks in speaking to this bill. It is a pleasure to rise here in the House this afternoon. I would like to first of all thank my constituents for the continued opportunity to work with them and to serve as MLA for Lake Laberge, and I would like to acknowledge and thank the staff of the Department of Justice and the staff and board of Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation for their work. It is a pleasure to once again have the opportunity to be minister responsible for Yukon Development and Yukon Energy, and a pleasure to take on the Department of Justice for the first time.

I would also like to thank staff of my former departments: Community Services, for the continued excellent work that they do day in and day out throughout the years, and thank them for the things that we accomplished during my tenure as their minister; and I would also like to thank the staff and board of Yukon Housing Corporation for their good work during my tenure as minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation.

There are a few things that I'm particularly pleased to see in the 2014 fiscal year, which include the progress that we made toward implementing 911 services, the purchase of new fire trucks for a number of Yukon communities, as well as the purchase of new ambulances and the work that has been done to improve fire response capacity throughout the territory, including investments in my riding of the expansion of the Ibex Valley fire hall to include new water storage tanks, which have significantly increased the refill capacity for fire trucks at that hall. I am also pleased that, in the last few years, we have seen the Ibex Valley fire department receive both a new pumper and a new pumper tanker and the Hootalinqua fire department, the other fire department within my riding, received a new pumper tanker — one of the state-of-the-art series that have gone to communities, including Tagish, Golden Horn and, of course, Ibex Valley and Hootalinqua.

So through the water storage tanks added at the Ibex Valley fire hall — what the fire department tells me is that it will allow them to have an additional capacity of about four truck refills through those new tanks, and that will significantly assist in improving fire response capacity there, because the well on that site is a fairly low-flow rate, but the addition of those storage tanks will help them be able to refill an additional four times, which will also provide additional time for the well to refill the internal tanks, as well as the new external storage units.

Also in the area of fire capacity, the Deep Creek/Grizzly Valley well project was modified and is nearing completion, scheduled for some time this summer with a modification to the design that allowed fire trucks to hook up to it and increase the water storage capacity from the original design for that facility — or from the original plan, I should say.

I'm also pleased to see the continuation — I thank the current Minister of Community Services for his good work in continuing, including in areas for moving toward the implementation in this current fiscal year's budget of funding for the expansion of the rural domestic water well program into municipalities. I'm pleased that, as a result of the work

done last year and the bill tabled and passed unanimously last fall, which enabled the extension, that the 2015-16 estimates, which we will be debating throughout this sitting, include \$400,000 for expanding that successful program, which has seen roughly 250 families assisted throughout the territory and over \$5.5 million invested in helping families install personal water well systems.

I could go on at length here this afternoon, but I will leave further remarks for later in the sitting, as we'll have the opportunity in debating the main estimates, as well as bills to, I'm sure, discuss investments on many more occasions.

Prior to concluding, I would just like to very briefly congratulate the Minister of Community Services and the Department of Community Services for their success in concluding the work necessary, done both under the current minister's watch and during my time and the time of the Member for Whitehorse West, as Ministers of Community Services, that has successfully seen the Yukon hosting the 2016 Arctic X Games. Hosting the games was excluded from the 2016 Arctic Winter Games in Greenland. It would be something that came forward from parents. The amount of work done at the ministerial level and especially at the official level to get us to the point where we were able to announce that we're hosting those games should not be underestimated.

I would like to thank very much the officials for their good work and thank and acknowledge the work by Sport Yukon and their commitment to being the host society and organizing the volunteers. Without that commitment from them and from supporting other sports groups for the sports that are included in it, of course it would not be possible for the government to offer to host those Arctic X Games in 2016.

With that, I will conclude my remarks on the *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*. I look forward to rising later in debate to talk about some of the other investments in this current fiscal year.

Ms. McLeod: I only have a few comments to make. I really want to thank the various ministers who are on this side of the House for their hard work on behalf of all Yukoners, and particularly for those ridings that are served by private members and indeed opposition members.

There are two major projects that have been successfully tendered and are moving forward this year. There is \$8 million for the Robert Campbell Highway and \$5-and-some million for a water treatment plant in Watson Lake. I want to congratulate the two Yukon companies that were successful in being awarded these tenders. I think it is a little bit of a different story than what we were hearing earlier about assertions that work is all going to Outside companies, because that simply isn't true.

I do want to talk a little bit about the major investment that the Yukon government is making in southeast Yukon, in my riding of Watson Lake, in upgrading and updating our aging infrastructure — not unlike a lot of other Yukon communities and indeed communities across Canada. Our infrastructure dates back to the 1960s and 1970s. It is time-

expired and starting to cause a few problems as far as management is concerned.

Since 2010, about \$7.5 million has been spent and invested to upgrade roads, water and waste-water systems, which included improvement to wellheads, installation of new water mains, sewer lines and manholes, significant repair work to water and sewer lines to prevent leakage and to improve their operational efficiency, BST road restoration — because, of course, digging up an entire town means there's a lot of BST repair work to do. I expect that the final work on the water, waste-water and road upgrades will be completed in this year.

I want to thank the Minister of Highways and Public Works for his work in moving forward other projects in Watson Lake. I really appreciate the work that's being done to work with the municipality of Watson Lake. There have been challenges and I'm very happy that the ministers are sorting that out with the cooperation and assistance from mayor and council.

I wanted to just thank constituents, and indeed other rural Yukoners, who sit on a variety of the territorial advisory boards. I think it's very important for rural participation on these advisory boards, and I think it's a greater commitment from rural members to participate. As I say, I really appreciate their involvement and think it's very important for the territory.

I want to thank and recognize Ann Raider and Sergeant Cam Lockwood for their outstanding work in community policing and their ability to work to create programs between the RCMP and the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society. They were recognized by the Department of Justice at a dinner last fall. I know the community really appreciates the hard work that they do.

Just one further thing — I want to thank the Minister of Community Services — both past and present — for their work that has resulted in the expansion of the domestic water well program, because of course this includes a measure of funding. This program should be of great benefit to many rural Yukoners and I really urge all municipalities to get on board with the program and participate.

I think that's really all I wanted to say, other than to reiterate that I'm appreciative of the commitment that ministers on this side of the House show in their work with all Yukoners.

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

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: My comments will be short. I want to thank everybody for their comments during second reading debate. We are talking about the *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15, Supplementary Estimates No. 2*, which provides a total of \$14.74 million as sums required, offset by sums not required of \$48.298 million. There will be an opportunity within Committee of the Whole for members opposite to ask any questions that are directed at departments and will be answered by the appropriate minister as well.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of the people who put this bill together — the various departments and the finance people within those departments. I especially want to acknowledge the work of my Department of Finance. What an excellent team — what a hard-working team — and what a great job they've done. I certainly want to also acknowledge the leadership of our ministers in moving forward and leading these departments. Last, but certainly not least, is just the vision of this Yukon Party caucus as we continue to move forward, making Yukon the best place to work, live, play and to raise a family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: 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 for second reading of Bill No. 16 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is

general debate in Bill No. 16, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Do members wish a brief recess?

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. 16: *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate in Bill No. 16, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I am pleased to be joined at this time by Mark Tubman, in his capacity as acting Deputy Minister of Finance. It's nice to have you here as well, Mark.

Madam Chair, I am pleased to introduce Bill No. 16, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*, also referred to as *Supplementary Estimates No. 2*, to Committee of the Whole.

The *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15* provides for the sums required of \$14.74 million, consistent with the amount previously identified in the special warrant. While the Legislature conducts its business, the special warrant ensures that government officials have the requisite legal authority to make expenditures delegated and entrusted to them.

The members will have the opportunity very shortly to raise questions in general debate; therefore, I do not wish to get into great detail at this time.

Madam Chair, the *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15* provides for \$14.74 million for increased expenditures as identified under the sums required column, offset by sums not required of \$48.298 million. I will limit my comments to the more significant items under sums required.

For the Department of Community Services, the total operation and maintenance requirement is \$912,000, providing additional funding and support of the Canada-Yukon five-year northern wellness agreement, increased funding through Yukon Lotteries in support of sports initiatives and operation costs for Yukon solid-waste facilities.

For the Department of Education, \$2.225 million is required for a 10-year lease agreement with the Teslin Tlingit Council. This is offset by deferrals to the 2015-16 requirements for the student information system resulting in total capital requirements of \$1.551 million.

For the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, a total of \$2.884 million — \$2.08 million is required for inspections and repairs to the Ketza River mine tailings facility.

For the Department of Health and Social Services, the total operation and maintenance requirement is \$1.993 million. This additional funding supports the department in the delivery of important programs and services to Yukoners,

including physician claims, social assistance and persons with disabilities.

For the Yukon Development Corporation, \$1 million is provided to complete stage 1 of the Keno-Stewart Crossing transmission line. This initial investment will support environmental studies, fieldwork and design engineering that is required to obtain permits, start civil work and initiate the tender period.

These additional amounts required represent a few examples of the items included in the special warrant and identified under the sums required column. Sums required are, as mentioned earlier, offset by items not required. The individual ministers will speak to all changes reflected in *Supplementary Estimates No. 2* during line-by-line debate. In summary, the *Supplementary Estimates No. 2* reflects increased operation and maintenance requirements of \$9.125 million, decreased capital requirements of \$42.683 million, decreased general revenues of \$4.083 million and increased recoveries associated with increased expenditures of \$1.119 million.

Our net financial resource position remains positive. This is a most enviable position. While most provincial and territorial governments have net debt, this is not the case in Yukon. As a measure of the future revenue requirements, our positive net financial resource position means that we have not mortgaged the future. If I may, we are building the bank, not breaking the bank.

Future revenues will be used for future programs and services. Future revenues will not be required to offset current program and service expenditures as of course we know has happened in the past under the Liberal and NDP governments.

Our government continues to pay as we go. Yukoners can be very proud of how our government — the Yukon Party — has managed the fiscal framework. We have maintained a savings account while continuing to provide significant and strategic investments on behalf of all Yukoners. Our future is bright. As I have stated, a positive net financial resource position represents a measure of our resources available for the provision of future programs and services. We are indeed financially well-positioned for the future.

Madam Chair, as Minister of Finance, I am pleased to present the supplementary estimates for consideration by the Legislative Assembly in Committee of the Whole.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate?

Mr. Elias: Madam Chair, I move that you report progress.

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 16, entitled *Third 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.

Mr. Elias: 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 5:25 p.m.

The following document was filed April 9, 2015:

33-1-109

Personal Income Tax Room Sharing Agreement Between the Government of Yukon and Carcross/Tagish First Nation (2012-2019) (Pasloski)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 194

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Monday, April 13, 2015 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Government House Leader Vuntut Gwitchin
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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Sergeant-at-Arms	Rudy Couture
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Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, April 13, 2015 — 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

In recognition of National Volunteer Week

Hon. Mr. Nixon: One of the great things about living in the Yukon is how engaged Yukoners are in volunteering to make our territory the best place to live, work, play and raise a family. Across Canada, April 12 to 18 is this year's National Volunteer Week, which is a time to recognize, celebrate and thank Canada's volunteers — as their website says, "Volunteers Rock".

This year's theme is "Volunteers are part of the ripple effect." The rationale behind this is that when someone volunteers, their action is like a stone thrown in a lake. They have a direct impact; however, at the same time, just like ripples on a lake, volunteers' efforts reach out far and wide to improve communities.

On behalf of this Assembly, I would like to thank all volunteers who give their time and talents to improve the territory. I am constantly reminded of just how engaged Yukoners are when I look at the listing of volunteer groups in each of our communities. It is a long and a very impressive list.

On the Volunteer Yukon website, <http://volunteeryukon.ca>, they are advertising for their spring job and volunteer fair, which will be held on April 23, 2015 at the Yukon Convention Centre. I will note that last year, they had over 1,000 people turn out to this fair.

In my own area of responsibility, I am grateful we have so many groups who partner with the department to provide services or advice. For example, on Thursday we paid tribute to April as Daffodil Month to raise awareness about cancer. I could name many more groups as examples, but it is because of the many volunteers who work tirelessly that the annual Run for Mom on Mother's Day is such a huge success, and that is just one example of the many, many volunteer organizations and the special events they put on that make Yukon such a great place to live.

Within Health and Social Services, we have more than 130 volunteers who work with residents in our long-term care facilities, whether they take residents on outings, teach computer skills, or share their music talent, their contributions help improve the lives of residents by providing friendship, cognitive and social stimulation and personal attention to many individuals whose family or social supports are few.

Many of the non-government organizations that we fund to provide services on our behalf are led by a volunteer board of directors. For many, this can be almost a full-time job and I sincerely applaud their generosity.

Volunteers with community clubs — youth groups like the cadets and junior Rangers, sports organizations or service clubs — help others. Many do it just for the satisfaction that comes from being a positive, constructive, contributing member of society and the sense of accomplishment that comes from helping others, with literally no expectation of recognition, but on behalf of my colleagues I would like to say thank you.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge and thank those who volunteer to serve on the many boards and committees that assist the Government of Yukon. From the Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee to the Water Board, volunteers help make Yukon a better place.

On behalf of my government caucus colleagues, to each and every volunteer in Yukon, please know how much we sincerely appreciate all that you do. Also, Mr. Speaker, if I could ask the indulgence of this House to help me recognize the Executive Director from Volunteer Yukon who has joined us in the gallery, Bruno Bourdache. Welcome, Bruno.

Applause

Mr. Barr: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to National Volunteer Week, which has been recognized now for 74 years.

This year's theme is, "Volunteers are part of the ripple effect"; the notion being that a volunteer action is like a stone thrown in a lake, as the minister just previously stated.

I realize that, in our riding in Tagish — or in one of the communities in my riding as in other communities — you'll see that ripple effect in the Yukon and that it's intergenerational. Now generations of families are volunteering at the same time. I recognize Shyloh van Delft and parents on the volunteer fire department, so it is an amazing expression of how people feel about what it is like to volunteer in the Yukon.

At the same time, we see volunteers coming forward in my riding. We know that it is the lifeblood of our communities. Volunteer groups do this for free and for fun.

One of the great things about the Yukon is the high level of volunteer engagement. Yukoners volunteer for recreation, fundraise for charitable efforts, garage sale for Little Footprints. LACs and community centres — picking up trash along our roadways. Volunteerism is so important in my riding of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes that I want to mention some of their efforts.

Volunteers make our communities safer. They are first responders — fire, ambulance, search and rescue. Volunteers sit on boards of our local advisory councils, community centres, solid waste advisory committees and other boards. Volunteers organize pancake breakfasts, dog races, fundraise for worthy causes.

Parents volunteer for school outings. Carcross school volunteers take children on bison hunts. Golden Horn school volunteers took kids to climb the Chilkoot Trail last year. The parents and kids were laughing when I was at some of the celebrations there — how great it is, and how people, the teachers and the parents, get to laugh and really connect. They made up a lot of songs that we sang at that one celebration.

Volunteers organize the fall fairs in Tagish. Volunteers flood the rinks and clear the snow and prepare cross-country ski trails at Mount Lorne and Marsh Lake. Volunteers organize student school breakfasts throughout the territory.

Without volunteers, we couldn't have hosted the Canada Winter Games; we couldn't be hosting the upcoming X Games. All the great music festivals we enjoy wouldn't happen.

Volunteers advance important causes. Volunteers have been instrumental in the Walking With Our Sisters campaign. If you haven't been down to that — anyone who is listening — please go down and see. It's an emotional walk down there when you're looking at the vamps. I know the minister opposite, the Minister of Tourism and Culture, was there. Our leader was out there volunteering this weekend. It will be running for the next couple of weeks. It's amazing. I'll just leave it at that.

There is also Yukoners Concerned, with many countless volunteer hours, volunteering for what they believe in in the territory. People in the Yukon come together in those ways.

Also volunteers provide services for our seniors and elders like Meals on Wheels and make music at Thompson Centre and Macaulay Lodge. There are a lot of volunteers in this Legislative Assembly. I know that MLAs put a lot of effort into volunteering in their neighbourhoods and throughout the territory. Volunteering makes you feel good inside.

I would like to conclude by saying on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition and the Third Party — I thank all volunteers for your efforts.

In recognition of International Adult Learners' Week

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of all members of the Legislature in honour of International Adult Learners' Week.

International Adult Learners' Week has been observed in Canada since 2002. This week is dedicated to recognizing the value of adult literacy and lifelong learning and promoting access to education.

As a long-time employee of Yukon College, it was my pleasure to note the change in adult learners as they completed a two-year diploma, a four-year bachelor's degree, or even something as small as a two-week skills training program. I saw the change in their lives. I saw it was always a positive change. It was a success in their life and it improved their employment opportunities as well as their self-esteem.

Adult education promotes more inclusive societies by assisting Yukon learners to reach their full potential and full participation in Yukon's work force and in Yukon's communities.

The Department of Education's goal is "success for each learner". Our focus is on supporting the full spectrum of learners in our region, from the youngest Yukoners playing with their caregivers at Learning Together program, to the young people finished secondary school and pursuing post-secondary studies, to the mature students interested in upgrading or acquiring new skills. The Advanced Education branch continues to coordinate adult education programs and services. Initiatives like the apprenticeship program, the student training and employment program, or STEP program, the targeted initiative for older workers and community training funds help Yukoners to bridge to new fields of employment.

We are also continuing to develop a Yukon literacy strategy with our partners like First Nations. Advanced Education also works closely with many wonderful partners and community organizations that work with adult learners throughout the territory.

Yukon College, as I have already mentioned, offers a wealth of unique post-secondary and training programs and received a record amount of more than \$26.3 million in funding from this government last year. This included also about \$3.3 million for literacy programming.

The Yukon Learn Society is another partner, which is funded by Advanced Education, to assist Yukoners to achieve their grade 12 equivalency and offer literacy and computer skills, training programs and tutoring, such as digital skills for the workplace.

The Yukon Literacy Coalition promotes and develops adult literacy and other essential skills and the Challenge - Disability Resource Group facilitates the participation of persons with disabilities in the workforce and throughout our communities. They offer programs such as the excellent Bridges Café here in the Legislative building.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon provides education and employment opportunities to support people with learning disabilities or difficulties. The Multicultural Centre of the Yukon offers language and other skills training to Yukon's newcomers. L'Association franco-yukonnaise is a one-stop shop for Yukon's francophones for literacy, language and career training. The Tourism Education Council coordinates the ready-to-work program. Frontier College was funded to run a workplace communication and essential skills pilot. Last, but definitely not least, the Kwanlin Dun House of Learning works with KDFN citizens toward their education and workplace goals. They recently opened a new classroom, which was developed through the Yukon asset construction agreement, worth approximately \$250,000.

We are very proud of the many adult education opportunities offered here in the territory, and I encourage my colleagues and all Yukoners to continue to seek new opportunities and learning experiences in their life-long journey of learning.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Kent: I have for tabling the *Government of Yukon Response to the Select Committee Final Report Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing*. This document is dated April 9, 2015.

Speaker: Are there any other 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. Hanson: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to acknowledge that:

- (1) the Government of Yukon does not have the social licence to proceed with hydraulic fracturing in the Liard Basin or anywhere in Yukon;
- (2) the Yukon public has repeatedly rejected hydraulic fracturing in Yukon;
- (3) the scientific community has raised serious concerns about the safety of hydraulic fracturing; and
- (4) there is no evidence that hydraulic fracturing will bring any long- or short-term economic benefits to Yukon.

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

THAT this House condemns the Government of Yukon's decision to proceed with hydraulic fracturing against the will of Yukoners, the recommendations of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing and the concerns of the scientific community.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to redirect the public funds that it is using to sell hydraulic fracturing and the fossil fuel industry to Yukoners toward the development of a comprehensive strategy and action plan to promote a renewable energy industry in the Yukon to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Hydraulic fracturing

Ms. Hanson: Last Thursday, this government announced its plans to open up Yukon to fracking, against the wishes of Yukoners and against the cautions of the scientific community. They say they accepted the recommendations of the select committee, but when you do a thorough reading of the response, it is clear they are spinning the recommendations in pursuit of their agenda to frack Yukon.

The government conveniently forgets that the committee recommendations were to be implemented before even considering fracking, yet they have already given fracking the green light. Changing the recommendations on the fly is not the same as accepting them.

In a recent speech to the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, Mayor Naheed Nenshi warned against taking citizens for granted. He was blunt. He said people are not stupid.

Why is the government ignoring the voices of Yukoners and giving fracking the green light?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Last Thursday, this government made two announcements. The first is that we're accepting all 21 recommendations of the select committee report and moving forward with actions on each of them. We're also open to applications for potential hydraulic fracturing in only one area of the Yukon, which is the Liard Basin. That would occur only with the support of the affected First Nations.

Those affected First Nations include the five Kaska nations — three in British Columbia and two in the Yukon, the RRDC and Liard First Nation — as well as the Acho Dene Koe, which is based out of the Fort Liard area.

So when the member opposite, in her preamble, mentions that we're opening the entire Yukon to fracking, I think we need to put a little bit of context around that. Only 15 percent of the Yukon has geology favourable for oil and gas development, and the Liard Basin is less than two percent of the Yukon's land mass. I believe it's 1.3 percent, to be exact. So that's an incorrect assertion the member opposite is making in her opening statement.

Ms. Hanson: Days after opening up Yukon to fracking, the Premier will be in Quebec, meeting with the premiers about climate change. The irony is not lost on Yukoners that, days after our Premier announced opening up Yukon to fracking, he will be travelling to a climate change conference.

This government says that fracking is safe, but apparently it's only safe in the Liard Basin. They say that regulations will protect Yukoners but, as we saw at Wolverine mine, they can't even regulate an industry that has been going on in Yukon over 100 years. This government is asking Yukon to trust them after they approved fracking behind closed doors.

Why does the minister think that Yukoners would believe him when it comes to fracking, after his government has shown, time after time, that they will follow their own agenda at all costs?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The Yukon government supports the development of a strong and robust oil and gas industry in the Yukon and recognizes that the development of these resources could contribute to significant economic growth and diversification of Yukon's economy.

Mr. Speaker, again, we want to ensure that there are jobs and there are business opportunities, as well other opportunities for Yukoners to take advantage of the oil and gas industry. We have a long history with the mining industry, as the member opposite mentioned. We also have a long history of oil and gas exploration and development here in the territory.

The Liard Basin itself was the home to two producing wells in the Kotaneelee field — wells that contributed almost \$45 million in royalties to the Yukon government, \$10 million of which was shared with Yukon First Nations.

Again, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to hydraulic fracturing, we are proceeding in the Liard Basin only with the support of affected First Nations, and again, a reminder to Yukoners, only 15 percent of the Yukon land mass contains oil and gas potential and 1.3 percent of that is the area of the Liard Basin where the shale gas development will take place with the support of affected First Nations.

Ms. Hanson: This government's response to the select committee is just another example of their outright disrespect for the opinion of Yukoners. It is a repeat of the public consultation process on the Peel that was thrown out. It is a repeat of their undermining of the final agreements by their push for unilateral changes to YESAA.

Yukoners have been clear. They don't want fracking. Sadly, it appears that the select committee process was just another box the Yukon Party needed to check before they spun their way out of listening to Yukoners. This government's agenda since day one has been to bring fracking to Yukon. This Yukon Party government has ignored the views of Yukon First Nation governments and Yukon citizens on vital issues. Fracking is just the latest.

Will this government agree to delay any further activities on fracking until Yukoners have had a chance to have their say at the polls?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned in media on Friday morning, I think it is important that all of the political parties have put forward their position with respect to this practice. We have known the NDP position for an awfully long time. We have seen the Member for Takhini-Kopper King and the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes at anti-fracking rallies, leading parades, playing music at these events as well.

Again, we feel that it is important that we support, of course, responsibly regulated resource industries and are committed to creating the conditions that bring jobs and opportunities for Yukoners right here at home. All those Yukoners who are working in this industry in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan — we want to give them the opportunity to come home to the Yukon close to their friends and families and work in an industry that is regulated and safe, and protects human health and the environment.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have made our position clear. We support applications for potential shale-gas development in only one area of the Yukon, an area that comprises 1.3 percent of the Yukon land mass. Clearly, that is not enough for the NDP or the Liberals, but we are going to proceed. We want jobs and opportunities for Yukoners and we want business opportunities for those local contractors as well.

Question re: Yukon nominee program

Ms. White: Last week, more troubling claims of mistreatment of Yukon nominee program workers were published in the local media. One worker said — and I quote:

“For two months I had no days off and always did the overtime shift. I couldn't complain because I was under the nominee program and I was getting support from them”.

We know that the nominee program puts employers in a position of power by handing them control over a foreign worker's ability to apply for permanent residency. This isn't the first time we have heard of workers' rights being abused, and until this government takes action to reform the program, it likely won't be the last.

Mr. Speaker, what is the government doing to make sure that the Yukon nominee program workers are not subject to mistreatment by their employers?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The department has investigated and addressed this matter in accordance with program procedures. As the member opposite surely must know, I'm not able to discuss the details of the matter publicly because it involved personal information. However, Mr. Speaker, I can assure all members and the public that when a nominee identifies issues within the workplace, depending on the situation, they are referred to the appropriate organization, such as the Yukon Human Rights Commission, Employment Standards Board, workers' health and safety, or possibly even the Canada Border Services Agency. These various organizations have the mandate to address particular issues that may arise from time to time in this program.

Ms. White: Raising concerns with your employer as a nominee has great risks. All workers, no matter their citizenship status, have certain basic rights that we as government have a responsibility to uphold.

We know from the last Sitting that the Yukon Party government has little to no idea of how many nominee program workers there are or where they work in the territory. The problem is clear, and we hear about it every few months. The only thing preventing a fix is a government that's prepared to act. A Yukon NDP government would reform the Yukon nominee program to protect both the rights of workers and their employers.

When is this government going to stop waffling and protect the rights of Yukon nominee program workers?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The rights of Yukon nominee workers are the same as the rights of any other worker in this territory. They are protected by organizations set up by government — have already gone through the Yukon Human Rights Commission, the Employment Standards Board, Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. None of these organizations are controlled or directed by government. All of them are available to address issues that are brought forward by Yukon nominees. But also the Advanced Education department, takes these issues very seriously, and they investigate and address the matters that are brought forward to their attention by nominees in the program in the territory.

Also, if an employer is found in violation of the issue — whatever issue is brought forward — the Advanced Education department can impose a penalty, including being banned from applying to the program for up to three years, so there

are remedies available. The nominees are encouraged in all cases to bring forward these issues as they arise.

Ms. White: I appreciate the sentiment, but nominee employees, unlike their stable counterparts, can't make complaints without fearing expulsion from Canada.

To be clear, the majority of nominee employers follow the rules, but the ones who don't need to be stopped. We have no right to be enabling a system through which abusive employers can hold a foreign worker's application for permanent residency over their heads and say things like, "You know what, if you don't do what I say, then you're fired." If you are fired, then you're out of the country.

Basic labour rights belong to all workers — Yukoners, Canadians and foreign workers. When will this government table amendments to the Yukon nominee program that ensure nominee workers are better protected from abusive employers?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I think the first thing that has to be understood is that the member opposite is not telling all of the facts, or is not informing the Legislature about all of the facts, surrounding the nominee program. She just stated that if a nominee is fired by their employer, they are booted out of the country. That's entirely untrue. That doesn't happen.

The nominees, together with the Advanced Education department, have the ability to look for new employers throughout the territory so we make sure that that doesn't happen. For the member opposite to make that kind of misstatement in the Legislature and pass it off as fact is simply not correct. If an employer, as I said before, is found in violation, we have ways of dealing with it. We also have penalties that we can apply to employers under the tripartite agreement signed by the employer, the nominee and the Department of Education. The process is laid out whereby a nominee may address these issues.

Mr. Speaker, I think before the member opposite continues in this line of questioning, she should learn the facts about the program.

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, the collective agreement between the 250 employees of the Yukon Hospital Corporation and their union expired over seven months ago. The Yukon Employees Union represents lab technicians, custodial staff, administrators, pharmacy technicians and many more who perform critical functions at the Whitehorse General Hospital and the hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson City. Eighty-seven percent of these workers have voted for strike action and, with the agreement expiring seven months ago, they are in a legal position to strike. This is serious, Mr. Speaker.

The minister isn't personally seated at the bargaining table, but he is responsible for the provision of health care in the Yukon. Will the minister assure Yukoners his government is making every effort to encourage that a fair deal is reached between the corporation and its employees?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would like to thank the member opposite for her question. Certainly collective bargaining for

the hospital employees is between the union and the Hospital Corporation itself. The government is not involved nor will get involved in these negotiations. We understand that there is an essential services agreement in place so that there will be minimal disruption in those essential services to hospital patients and we look forward to the outcomes of these negotiations and deliberations.

Ms. Stick: I am aware that the department — the minister — is not involved in the negotiations, but the minister is responsible for the Yukon Hospital Corporation. He is responsible for a sizable grant given to the corporation for its activities. This Yukon government gives millions of dollars for hospital development and backstops the corporation's debts. The Yukon government has put significant resources into the Yukon Hospital Corporation, but without this hard-working staff, there is no health care. The minister can't shy away that he does have a responsibility.

Will the minister ensure that the Hospital Corporation returns to the bargaining table until a fair deal is reached with its employees?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite is asking me to do is get involved in these negotiations. That's not something that this government will do. The collective bargaining for the hospital employees is between the union and the Hospital Corporation and we have confidence that those two bodies can work together for an outcome.

As I indicated in my first response, there is an essential services agreement in place so that there will be minimal disruption to those essential services to hospital patients, and we have confidence that these deliberations and negotiations will carry on between the affected parties.

Question re: Residential school curriculum in Yukon schools

Mr. Tredger: The Premier's budget speech contained four pages of vague promises of massive changes to Yukon's K to 12 education curriculum. I laud the Premier for his ambition, but creating a new curriculum is no small matter. When it comes to British Columbia's curriculum, their government spends, on average, three years making changes to one aspect of one grade level of one subject.

In Yukon, it has been five years since we began work on the promised residential school curriculum, and it's still just a pilot project at one grade level in three classrooms.

How does this government intend to follow through on its lofty promise to revamp Yukon's entire K to 12 curriculum? How much is it going to cost? What is the intended time frame?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I've been looking forward to this question for some time. The program the Premier announced is a long-term program — there's no doubt about it. We understand; we completely realize this is not something that's going to be undertaken and completed in a year or two years. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in further fleshing it out, I've already stated publicly that our first priority will not be the kindergarten to grade 7 program, because it would simply be

too much to bite off at one time. We will be continuing to work toward changes in the high school program.

On one matter the member opposite was incorrect, and that is the residential school program. In fact, there are a couple of projects underway at the present time, and some of those programs have been implemented as sections in various schools as units in the social studies program. So it's more than just as simple as the member opposite stated; it's actually proceeding and we're continuing to work together with CYFN and our First Nation partners in that regard.

Mr. Tredger: Revamping curriculum is all well and good, but we need to ask why Yukoners feel that the education system isn't living up to expectations. Perhaps it isn't a change in curriculum we need, but a change in attitude. Perhaps it's because provisions in the *Education Act*, like a student in need's right to an individualized education plan, have been tossed aside by this government. Perhaps it's because of a lack of respect for school-based and community-based decision-making; or perhaps it's because our teachers live in a climate of fear because they have been gagged by this government from speaking out on issues at their schools —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Elias: It's obvious the Official Opposition has no interest in improving decorum in the Assembly. That was — to suggest that this government or a minister of this government is gagging employees, public servants, is just totally out of order. I'm going to use, "imputes false or unavowed motives to another member ..."

Speaker: Opposition House Leader, please.

Ms. Stick: We have spoken to this issue before in this House, in this Legislature, both in budget and in Question Period, and I would suggest that what my colleague is speaking to is an opinion that he has heard publicly from others and one that he is repeating.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: The inference of putting a gag order on a group or individual is certainly not a favourable comment by any stretch of the imagination. Whether it is true or not is a matter of dispute between the members and not for me to rule. But having said that, in the past, the type of language you use can be inflammatory and cause discord within this House. I have cautioned members on both sides on the use of their language and their inferences. Now we are only a short way into this Sitting and this is about the third time I have had to speak to you about the type of the language you are using.

While the government may not appreciate the inference of putting a gag order on someone and the opposition is inferring that this a statement of fact, I cannot judge the facts. I would caution you all, once again, if you continue to use inflammatory language, it is going to come back and get you. If you want to be upset on one side, do not expect me to protect you when you use it back.

Please finish your question, Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is because they have prevented by this government from speaking out about issues at their schools.

Why is the government ignoring the real problems that they created in the Department of Education?

Hon. Mr. Graham: In listening to the reply to the point of order, it would be really interesting — and I would like their permission to give the comments that I have heard about the opposition here in the Legislature with impunity too.

With regard to the question itself, our goal with this project is to improve outcomes for all Yukon learners. After all, that is what education is all about — it is about the children; it is about the kids. We will be working together with all stakeholders. We will be working together with the YTA. We will be working with the administrators of the schools. We will be working with the school councils. We will work with individual First Nations as well as the CYFN.

We hope that by initiating this project, even though it is a longer-term project, to be able to really improve the outcomes for Yukoners is what this is all about — improving the education system for Yukoners.

Mr. Tredger: Don't get me wrong. Our students deserve our very best. We have a multitude of research projects and reports and studies that stress the relevance of community engagement and participation. Our First Nations, our school communities, teachers, support staff and parents deserve a climate of engagement and success and that is where this government has fallen short. Some things just don't add up. This government's constant push to centralize decision-making silences the voices of school administrators and teachers. A curriculum overhaul won't solve the challenges facing Yukon's education system.

When will this government show real leadership and address the real and pressing problems confronting front-line educators, their communities in contrast to this government's policies?

Hon. Mr. Graham: What really doesn't add up are the comments made by the member opposite. All we have to do is take a look at some of the things accomplished by the two Education ministers previous to me — everything from the Old Crow experiential project to the rural equity action plan, to the rural experiential model, to the supports that were added by these ministers to rural instructors.

We also have to take a look at what was done in the partnership project with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. There are a number of projects that we have worked on with not only with First Nations but all Yukon rural schools. I just spent a day in Ross River and met with not only the school council, the member from that riding in Nisutlin — and I met with not only the school council. We met with the school administrators — First Nation council members were there, as well as all of the teachers — and I think the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin will tell you that none of those teachers held back on comments to me. Any idea that we're trying or that I'm trying to gag those instructors is entirely false. That's

what I have to get — honest opinions from those people — and we did.

Question re: Alaska Highway corridor functional plan

Ms. Moorcroft: Opposition is building in the business community about the Yukon Party's \$202-million plan to twin the Alaska Highway corridor. Businesses don't understand the logic of spending that amount of money. The volume of traffic and safety needs could be managed more efficiently at less cost. The minister said last Wednesday that no decision would be made before the end of the consultation period, but some business owners have said that they've been told by government to expect a one-year notice to move their business. They've been told to expect this despite an ongoing consultation. There is a contradiction between what the minister says and what the business owners are saying. It can't be both. So what is it?

Is it this government's intention to force businesses to relocate regardless of the outcome of the ongoing consultation process on the government's \$202-million plan for the Alaska Highway corridor?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I stated last week on the floor of this House, I have reached out to the business owners. One of the business owners who was in local media last week — I mentioned that I would like to meet not only with him but with other business owners in this corridor. Last Friday, I attended a lunch with the Whitehorse mayor and a number of council members as well as officials from HPW and CH2M Hill, which is the engineering company that is working on this. We had a very good discussion about what the plans are. I think it's important for Yukoners to recognize the time frame that we're talking about. The opposition would have you believe that this is going to be one \$200-million spend all done within a couple of years. Of course there are population milestones that need to be reached and the time frame for this project could be as far as 35 years out.

So again, this isn't something that we're going to be doing overnight. The consultation period is open until May 15. I would encourage members opposite to attend one of the open houses that is coming up at the end of the month, where they can have their say or fill out the questionnaires — the ones that arrived in the mail or going on-line.

Ms. Moorcroft: Maybe the minister should have sat down with business owners before they were told to expect an order to move or bulldoze their operations.

The price tag for the corridor project is \$202 million, and there is nothing in the documents about how much it will cost to compensate the dozens of businesses that may be forced to move or disappear behind frontage roads and cul-de-sacs.

There are studies on geotechnical issues; there are environmental studies; there are four-year-old traffic studies, which, curiously, do not paint the corridor as a critical problem in need of a \$202-million solution. There is, however, nothing on the financial cost to compensate business owners who find themselves on the right-of-way and are forced to move.

Mr. Speaker, how much does the minister expect the cost of compensating businesses along the Alaska Highway to be, and is that sum included in the budget?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I have mentioned previously, we are currently in the public consultation phase for this project. I have reached out. As I mentioned last Friday, I met with the mayor and a number of councillors and their officials to brief them on what this project means. Again, it is important for Yukoners to recognize that this is very much a long-term plan. It could be as long as 35 years — \$200 million spent over that amount of time. We are in the public consultation phase. I'm not going to prejudice what the outcome of that phase is.

I can say, though, that the response has been tremendous, both on-line — we are receiving a number of the mail-in applications. Consultants and officials are going door to door with the businesses and talking to them. Of course, any business owner or individual who is concerned is welcome to reach out to me, just as I did to the one who was in the local media, and request a meeting. I am always happy to hear the concerns of Yukoners, especially when it comes to such a critical piece of infrastructure.

There are a number of uncontrolled accesses that are in the Whitehorse corridor, and we want to make sure that that corridor is safe and are able to ensure that we have economic opportunities going forward as well.

Ms. Moorcroft: Forcing business owners to move or bulldoze to make way for the Yukon Party's \$202-million road will drive up the cost of this project even higher, but it appears expropriation costs haven't been studied.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking about businesses that will be affected in the first phase of this project. Some business owners have said publicly that they may just shut down, cease operations and lay off workers. The effect on the local economy could be huge. Of the studies on the corridor, there are some numbers on the economic benefits of shaving a few minutes off the commuter's drive, but there is nothing on economic impacts to local businesses, to jobs at these businesses and to tourism.

The Alaska Highway is our main tourism access road, and we want travellers to stop in Whitehorse and spend their dollars here at local businesses. Does the Minister of Highways and Public Works believe the impact on tourism should be considered before such a major overhaul of our main tourism access road?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I think it is important to note that this is a draft functional plan that is out for public consultation right now. That consultation closes on May 15. Each and every Yukoner received in their mailbox a questionnaire and background information with respect to this project as well as the timelines. As I have mentioned, this project is slated to take place over the next up to 35 years and also requires population milestones to be met during that time frame.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we haven't decided what the first phase will look like, contrary to the member opposite's assertions. We want to ensure that the travelling public — whether they are visitors or whether it is industrial traffic, or Yukoners who commute from the Whitehorse periphery back

and forth to work every day, or those Yukoners from our outlying communities — is safe and they have a stretch of road that will ensure they are safe and that is a modern piece of infrastructure that meets the needs of Yukoners now and those 35 years and beyond.

Question re: Palliative care program

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, the story of missing palliative care beds in the Yukon has been 10 years in the making, riddled with abandoned election promises and government commitments that could never be pinned down. In 2006, the Yukon Party government promised voters they would reopen 44 beds in the Thomson Centre, including palliative care beds. In 2012, there was revived talk of opening a palliative care unit with designated beds at the centre. Two elections have come and gone, yet promises were broken and these missing palliative beds remain a serious gap in care planning in the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, why has the Yukon government sat for 10 years and failed to proactively address what the Yukon Medical Association's past president, Dr. Tadepalli, has called an urgent need for palliative care beds?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the member opposite for her question. I know we spoke at great length already this session on the continuing care facility that this government has committed to providing in the Whistle Bend region. Those facilities, like the 150-bed continuing care facility, the Oblate Centre and Thomson Centre, certainly take some of the pressures off the hospital on a move-forward basis. We certainly have a good relationship with the Hospital Corporation and we have a great relationship with a number of facilities that we have throughout the territory, including the number in Whitehorse, as well as McDonald Lodge in Dawson City. We continue down that path with those relationships and working with the Hospital Corporation at alleviating some of the pressures there.

Ms. Stick: The palliative care unit resource team — those services exist and they were established using federal funding. Well over 200 million pan-territorial dollars were meant to make our health care system more responsive to northerners' needs and were supposed to improve community-level access to services. This federal funding has changed and Yukoners are still waiting for northern focused, community-level access to palliative care beds. The only option we see on the horizon is a 12-bed palliative care pod housed in the proposed 300-bed long-term facility for seniors.

Does the minister believe a palliative pod is the strategic community-level option that Yukoners have waited 10 years to see?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I think this Yukon Party government has been very clear in its commitment to Yukoners to providing different levels of care to seniors across the territory. In fact we've seen the members opposite continue to vote against investments in the 150-bed continuing care facility. They vote against investments in the Oblate Centre, which will take pressures off of the Hospital Corporation. We've seen the members opposite vote against expanding the

Thomson Centre beds, which will alleviate the pressures from the Hospital Corporation. We've seen the members vote against investments in the Hospital Corporation, which provides these types of services. This government will continue to put its money where its mouth is in working with the Hospital Corporation and the continuing care facilities that we have around the territory. We have a great track record and I commend the previous Minister of Health and Social Services for getting this ball rolling.

Ms. Stick: It's the lack of planning we're concerned about. The 2014 clinical services plan states — and I quote: "Options for a palliative care framework are anticipated in the spring of 2014, built on a foundation of principles and recognizing, "the many services and organizations that are involved in the delivery of quality hospice, palliative, and end-of-life care."

The palliative care framework sounds like it will call for much more than a pod for palliative care patients and families to spend their final days. Of course, there's no way to be sure, since the framework is still missing.

Where is the palliative care framework? When will it be released? Were Yukoners and health care professionals involved in its development?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would argue that Yukon probably has the best low-charge home care and senior care programs in the country, if not in North America. We continue to make investments in independent living; the members opposite continue to vote against them. We continue to make investments in home care. In fact, over the last 12 years, we've increased home care by over 350 percent; the members opposite continue to vote against that. Supportive living — we continue to make investments in supportive living, but the members continue to vote against them. Assisted living in complex care and extended care, through the continuing care facility — the 150-bed facility in Whistle Bend — the members opposite have already indicated that they don't support that.

The member opposite just indicated that there are palliative beds in the new 150-bed continuing care facility. I hear the Member for Takhini-Kopper King laughing at this. That's a true testament to the NDP's vision on senior care. The Yukon Party will continue to stand behind these investments and we'll continue to work with our seniors, because we believe that seniors want to live and die in dignity, and that's something that the members opposite are laughing at — they should be ashamed of themselves.

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. 88: *Pharmacy and Drug Act* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 88, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Dixon.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I move that Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It's a pleasure to rise at second reading to introduce Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. This bill supports the government's priority to enhance public safety by creating industry standards and a framework for the operation of pharmacy facilities in Yukon.

Pharmacies are regulated in all Canadian provinces, and this new legislation will provide a strong regulatory framework consistent with other jurisdictions. The new legislation will improve recruitment and retention of pharmacists in Yukon by creating a welcoming environment for entry-level pharmacists and providing standards that attract pharmacists currently registered in other jurisdictions.

We believe that, by modernizing pharmacy legislation, we are improving the quality of life for Yukoners. Work on this new bill began last April when an advisory community was appointed to help us modernize this legislation.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the outstanding support we have received from this group and the work that they have done closely with the department in developing the new *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. The external advisory committee included two members from the Yukon Pharmacists Association, one pharmacy owner, a member of the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, a member from Health and Social Services Community Nursing, one member from the Yukon Hospital Corporation and two members of the Yukon Medical Association — one of whom was a community physician with a rural permit and the other was a physician from Whitehorse. The group also included a member of the public from a community that has a rural dispensary. That rural input was very much appreciated and very important in this work.

These people have met several times over the past number of months with our internal working group, which included officials from Community Services and Health and Social Services. They have reviewed and provided their input on policy issues associated with this new legislation as well as continuing work on modernizing the regulation of pharmacy professions.

I am pleased to note that the collaborative approach used to draft this complex legislation reflects what will be part of a new model of collaborative, patient-centred health care for Yukon.

The proposed *Pharmacy and Drug Act* will regulate the operations of community pharmacies and rural dispensaries. It may enable the regulation of other categories of pharmacies, should the need arise in the future.

To summarize, the legislation proposed today will address the following areas. It will require a licence to provide pharmacy services in Yukon and provision of those services only by qualified individuals. It will also establish a registrar of pharmacies — a staff member of the Yukon government —

and a pharmacy advisory committee to ensure oversight and compliance with the standards, codes of ethics and other requirements outlined in this act.

The pharmacy advisory committee will be established to advise the Government of Yukon on specific operational standards for licensed pharmacies and licensing rural dispensaries and criteria for licensing.

If requested by the registrar of pharmacies, the committee may review a licence application or advise on limits and conditions to be imposed on a licence, as well as outline what to do about complaints of misconduct. This new legislation will ensure a patient or someone acting on their behalf must be able to, with reasonable ease, contact the manager or a pharmacist for assistance.

This new legislation sets out roles and responsibilities for pharmacy and rural dispensary owners, referred to as "proprietors", as well as for managers of pharmacies, who are known as "licensees" in the bill, and who must be licenced pharmacists or physicians who are permitted to prescribe and dispense medications. It also outlines clear obligations that prohibit the proprietor from directing or influencing the management or operation of a pharmacy or rural dispensary that would cause the licensee to contravene their obligations under the bill and compels the licensee to report such an influence to the registrar.

The bill establishes a duty for the proprietor to report to the registrar any licensee who the proprietor believes is contravening any provisions of the proposed act. It obligates the licensee to manage the facility and ensure due diligence is exercised in dispensing drugs in a pharmacy or rural dispensary in accordance with the standards of operation of licensed pharmacies or the standards for operating licensed rural dispensaries as well as comply with professional standards of practice and a code of ethics.

Like pharmacists, all proprietors, regardless of whether they are pharmacists or not, will also be held accountable for any misconduct defined under the bill.

The bill also allows the government to temporarily manage or wind down the operations of a pharmacy should a disciplinary or other matter arise. The registrar may apply to the Supreme Court to appoint a qualified administrator or oversee the required process.

Of note — any person providing pharmacy services at the pharmacy or rural dispensary will now do so under the management of the licensee, who is responsible for the following: compliance with all applicable legislation; standards for the operation of the facility; standards of practice and due diligence with respect to dispensing of drugs; and counselling and maintaining accurate and current records. Under the bill, a licensee who plans to be absent for more than eight weeks from the territory must notify the registrar and arrange for management and supervision of the pharmacy or rural dispensary during their absence by an interim manager approved by the registrar.

Unless otherwise specified, a manager of a licensed pharmacy must ensure that a pharmacist is always present on-site and supervising pharmacy services when open to the

public. This holds true also for managers of licensed rural dispensaries. Codes of ethics will be established and must be followed for the operation of both licensed pharmacies and licensed rural dispensaries.

Inspectors will be appointed by the registrar of pharmacies. They will have the authority to investigate, inquire into, inspect, observe or examine the operation and records of a pharmacy or rural dispensary during regular office hours without a court order. A complaint and discipline mechanism is in place and this conduct is defined in this bill.

Records are kept and information sharing maintained in accordance with Yukon regulations for patients' safety and are supportive of collaborative care.

Amendments to the *Medical Profession Act* and the *Registered Nurses Profession Act* ensure that doctors and nurses who prescribe pharmaceuticals can continue to practice their professions.

Protecting Yukoners is top of mind with the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. A complaint and discipline model in the legislation will provide that a discipline committee may caution a licensee or proprietor, suspend or cancel their licence, impose limits or conditions on a licence or order that limits or conditions be imposed on the operation of a licensed pharmacy or a licensed rural dispensary.

Pharmacists and rural permit holders will need to be familiar with the standards established in the workplace as well as any professional standards. For example, there are requirements to maintain confidentiality and cooperate with inspectors. Non-pharmacists and rural dispensary staff will need to be supervised to ensure public safety. These staff may alert the registrar if they believe standards in their workplace are not being met by the pharmacy owner or licensee.

The proposed act references the national drug schedules, which have been endorsed by the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities, also known as NAPRA, and which are used in most provinces, Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

The national drug schedule consists of three separate schedules within which there are four categories of drugs. They identify where and how a particular drug can be sold. For instance, in non-pharmacy retail outlets, only drugs that are not on these schedules may be sold.

The new legislation will support expanded scope of practice activities for pharmacists, which will be identified in the pharmacist regulation that is currently under development and which I'll say more about in a few moments. It will also clarify the roles and responsibilities of the owner and managing pharmacist or rural permit holder and bring the pharmacy standards in Yukon up-to-date with other jurisdictions across Canada.

The *Pharmacy and Drug Act* and its regulations will be consistent with the pharmacist regulation under the *Health Professions Act* and *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, as well as the *Health Information Privacy and Management Act* when it comes into effect.

Mr. Speaker, the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* is the first step toward a greater initiative to modernize the pharmacy

regulations in Yukon. Work has also begun to draft regulations to implement the proposed *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. Pharmacist regulations that will govern pharmacists and rural permit holders under the *Health Professions Act* are also being drafted.

As with the bill before us today, we will be seeking the input of the external advisory committee in the development of these regulations. When they are ready, we will again be seeking public feedback. The *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, together with these two sets of regulations, will come into effect at the same time. Combined, they will provide Yukoners and those working in pharmacy professions with a robust and modern regulatory framework that supports increased public safety and this government's vision of a more collaborative health care model.

Developing legislation is an arduous process, so I would like to mention how important the collaboration with members of the advisory group and other stakeholders has been to the creation of Yukon's modernized pharmacy and pharmacist legislation. I would personally like to thank all the members of the advisory group and especially those who have and continue to provide substantial amounts of time and effort into developing these pieces of legislation and regulation. Their hard work, skills, commitment and ability to collaborate as a team is exceptional.

Mr. Speaker, I should go further in my commendation of the work done by the advisory committee and say that I think that they have done a fabulous job in communicating to government the needs of not only the pharmacy community, but of all Yukoners, both rural and urban, whether they are in Whitehorse or the communities. I am confident that the input received from those members from outside of Whitehorse was tremendously valuable in ensuring that this legislation reflects the needs of all Yukoners throughout the territory.

I would also like to thank other jurisdictions who have provided their valuable experiences and insights in supporting the Yukon team throughout the development of this act. I will speak a little bit more and later on — perhaps in Committee — about the work and reliance we have had with Alberta as a model for this legislation.

The *Pharmacy and Drug Act* is the result of significant collaboration with the Yukon health community and public consultation and I thank Yukoners for their input into this most important bill. I would also like to thank the various departmental officials from Community Services, as well as Health and Social Services, for their work in preparing this new legislation, which will help to meet Community Services' vision of vibrant, healthy and sustainable Yukon communities.

I am sure that my colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, will have a chance to discuss further how this new legislation fits with Yukon government's vision of a more collaborative health care system. I also wanted to make a few comments about some of the specifics in this act.

I noted that we relied significantly on Alberta as a legislative model for the development of this bill, and I wanted to say a few words about that. Yukon government decided to pursue the Alberta pharmacist model, as it leads the

country in terms of pharmacy legislation, particularly in expanded scope of pharmacist practice. After reviewing other Canadian interjurisdictional legislation, it was decided that the new *Pharmacy and Drug Act* would also follow Alberta as a legislative model. Reasons for this decision are that the Alberta legislation is a comprehensive model that addresses a broad range of legislative elements common to Canadian pharmacy legislation. It also has the operational standards in place to support expanded scope of practice — for example, counselling rooms. It is designed to work with the pharmacist regulation under the *Health Professions Act* by linking the discipline and complaint systems that exist between the professions and the pharmacy operations. It has integrated linkages between the pharmacist regulation and *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, providing continuity between the two pieces of legislation and ensuring that they work together, for example, with specialty pharmacies.

There are also linkages between the standards — for example, pharmacy operation standards require the implementation of quality assurance programs, and the pharmacist standards require that pharmacists must participate in them. There is also a sharing of a common code of ethics. Yukon's legislation will still consider the Yukon context and other considerations in the new act and ensure they are adapted to be consistent with the existing *Health Professions Act* and Yukon laws.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, we've done a great amount of work in terms of determining which model is appropriate for Yukon, and we determined that Alberta was one we were going to lean on, in terms of the guidance for the creation of the legislation, and will likely be the jurisdiction we lean on in terms of ongoing support for some of the work that needs to be done in the future.

As I noted in my earlier remarks, this is simply one component of a broader pharmacy initiative that we've undertaken and it includes, obviously, the tabling of this legislation, but will also entail a significant amount of regulatory work that will be developed in the coming months and years. The tabling of the bill, the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, is the first step in the regulatory development of a full legislative framework for the practice of pharmacies and the regulation of pharmacy operations in Yukon. This pharmacy initiative is comprised of the proposed *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, modernizing the regulation of pharmacists to reflect expanded scope and current practices across the country, and move regulation of this profession to fall under the *Health Professions Act*, as well as regulations for the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*.

Collectively, these three pieces of legislation are required to properly regulate the delivery of pharmacist services, including standards and codes of ethics.

So, Mr. Speaker, as you can see, there's a great deal of work yet to be done on the creation of these regulations, these standards of operations, these standards of practice, and the codes of ethics. I should note a little bit about some of this work.

Regulations address the administrative details of the act, such as establishing licensing categories, committee appointments, licensing and terminations, physical facilities, information management systems and record-keeping. Standards of operations address details such as suitable physical facilities and equipment, quality assurance programs, records, adequate staffing and so forth. It is expected that Alberta's standards will be used as a framework for Yukon but with some minor revisions.

Standards of practice are a list of statements and rules that further define how the pharmacist and rural permit-holder perform key professional activities. For example, some standards refer to: use of appropriate information; identifying and addressing drug therapy problems; following proper procedures when dispensing; release of drugs and providing counselling; establishing and maintaining professional client interactions; prohibiting return of a drug or health care product for redistribution or reuse; providing assistance with schedule III drugs and other health care products and devices; providing direction and supervision of other personnel; and creating and maintaining proper patient records.

The codes of ethics, by comparison, serve as the foundation and benchmark for professional behaviour, actions and attitudes to support the high level of trust that patients place in pharmacists and rural permit-holders. The principles that make up the code of ethics address issues related to serving patients, contributing to society and acting as stewards in their profession. These principles also provide direction to pharmacists and rural permit-holders faced with ethical dilemmas.

Types of principles include: holding the well-being of patients to be the primary consideration; respecting patient independence and dignity; respecting patient confidentiality and the right to health care; advancement of public health in prevention of disease; responsible use of health resources; ensuring competency and continued education; acting with honesty and integrity; nurturing the profession through mentorship; maintaining professional relationships; taking appropriate action in the event of an adverse situation; et cetera.

The *Pharmacy and Drug Act* also allows for codes of ethics for pharmacies and rural dispensaries to be developed in regulations in combination with the relevant legislation, the standard of operation, standards of practice and codes of ethics with the provision of safe and effective pharmacy services for Yukoners. The purpose of establishing the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* and its related regulations, standards and codes of ethics is to create and maintain an environment, both administratively and physically, for the safe and effective delivery of pharmacy services. All Canadian provinces have pharmacy legislation in place, which provides the framework for the safe operation of pharmacy facilities, but Yukon will be the first territory to do so. The act will set out the obligations of owners and managers, the standards around services, facilities and equipment, along with establishing an accountability framework and codes of ethics for licensed pharmacies and rural dispensaries.

The second legislative project is the development of a pharmacist regulation for the health profession. These are being developed under the *Health Professions Act* and are intended to replace the dated *Pharmacists Act*. This will modernize the regulation of this health profession, provide and expand its scope of activities that support collaborative care, and will continue to issue rural permits for dispensing positions.

In January 2014, Community Services and Health and Social Services consulted with an external advisory committee, as I noted earlier. That group consulted on a monthly basis for advice during the summer and fall of 2014 around the issues of expanded scope, rural permits and the regulation of institutional pharmacies.

The group's recommendations included support of expanded scope, retaining the rural permit with conditions and reviewing whether or not to regulate institutional pharmacies at this time. In addition, the group was provided updates about the policy work being done with the pharmacists working group.

During this same time period, the pharmacists working group was formed to do a weekly review of the policy issues surrounding the legislative development of the pharmacist regulation and the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. This group consists of members of the Yukon Pharmacists Association and pharmacy owners.

In the winter of 2014-15, further discussions were held with the Yukon Medical Association and Yukon Medical Council to discuss issues around physicians' rural permit and concerns around pharmacists' expanded scope.

Finally, an implementation working group consisting of Yukon Pharmacists Association, Yukon Medical Association and employees of Health and Social Services and Community Services was formed to review conditions for rural permit holders, expanded scope, activities for pharmacists and other required regulatory pieces to implement the pharmacy initiative legislation.

As the regulation and standards for the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* will still require development, it is anticipated the key stakeholder will continue to be engaged in this future work. While the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* goes through the Legislature for approval, work will be done to prepare and release the pharmacist regulations for consultation.

As you see, there is a significant amount of work yet to be done, but I cannot overstate the amount of work that has been done to date on this particular bill, both by officials in the government and those folks from the health community, as well as the community at large, who provided significant input in the development of this bill. I would like to again thank them sincerely for their work. It was a tremendous amount of work, and we certainly appreciate it here in the Legislature.

I look forward to hearing comments from my colleagues about this bill, and I look forward to getting into Committee of the Whole debate later this afternoon, where I will be joined by government officials who will assist me in providing answers to the members of this House with regard to some of the detail as we get into the individual clauses of the bill.

With that, I will conclude my second reading comments and commend Bill No. 88, the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, to the House.

Ms. Stick: I am pleased to stand here on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition and speak to this important piece of legislation that has been needed in this territory for a long time. We will be supporting this piece of legislation. It is important for everyone — all of us. Up until this time, it should be noted that there was no legislation governing pharmacies or rural dispensaries, only the pharmacists themselves. So to see the two brought together under one piece is good.

Pharmacists are an integral part of supporting a collaborative care approach to health care in the Yukon, just as pharmacies and rural dispensaries are.

I want to thank the officials and the staff from Community Services and from the Department of Health and Social Services for their work on this legislation and for the briefing that they provided us last week. I think thanks also has to be given to the advisory committee that helped drive this planning with their input, with their follow-up, with their professional skills, with their knowledge and with their advice.

I will save further comments and questions for Committee of the Whole — and I have many — but at this point, I am pleased to see this brought forward, but recognize that there will have to be a lot of work completed to be able to actually see this legislation come into effect with regulations, with standards and with changes to other acts.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'm pleased to have the opportunity today to speak to Bill No. 88, the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*.

The Departments of Community Services and Health and Social Services are undertaking a joint pharmacy initiative to modernize pharmacist regulation and establish legislation around pharmacy operations. Consultations with key stakeholders and the public was a key part of the development of these laws. Modernized legislation will ensure standards keep pace with professional practice and support public safety, as well as access to health care. This government is committed to increasing collaboration among health care professionals to ensure improved health care for all Yukoners.

Just an important note: there are six pharmacies in the territory and there are two rural dispensaries. The new pharmacist regulations will replace the 1995 *Pharmacists Act* and respond to pharmacists' lobbying since the 1990s for modernized legislation and expanded scope. Changes will keep pace with expected standards of professional practice, as well as support of public safety.

Yukon now joins all Canadian provincial jurisdictions in regulating pharmacy operations. This new legislation addresses accountability and obligations of proprietors and managers, and it enables standards of operations — so for example, facility and equipment requirements — but it will also regulate rural dispensaries and place conditions around physician dispensing, as many other jurisdictions do.

In our previous platform, we committed to caring for Yukoners. We committed to a number of initiatives, including increasing support for multidisciplinary collaboration. The bill before us today is part of our delivery on that commitment. I've spoken previously in this Assembly about our government's desire to make Yukon the best place to live, work, play and raise a family. The Government of Yukon and the ministry for which I am responsible, the Department of Health and Social Services, has a vested interest in this legislation as it supports the delivery of collaborative, patient-centred health care for our territory.

Like our colleagues in Community Services, my staff and I would like to acknowledge the hard work and professional commitment of the people who provided input on the development of this bill. This list includes the Yukon Pharmacists Association — including pharmacists and pharmacy owners — the Yukon Medical Association, the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, the Yukon Hospital Corporation, our public representative, and the many other stakeholders, as well as the public.

I would also like to acknowledge that, by moving forward with the team from Community Services on this legislative initiative, I believe we have a solid bill before us. I believe this bill reflects on our platform commitments. This bill helps achieve many objectives. The primary purpose of establishing this legislation is to create and maintain an environment, both administratively and physically, that provides for safe and effective delivery of pharmacy services in Yukon.

All Canadian provinces have this type of pharmacy legislation in place, and now so will we. This legislation sets a framework for governing the safe operation of pharmacies. It creates a level playing field by ensuring that common standards are in place and adhered to by all businesses. Suitable facilities and equipment, organizational structures and enforcement are all essential underpinnings to the delivery of effective pharmacy services designed to protect the public.

Last year, the government commissioned a study with Health Intelligence Inc. and associates. This study was undertaken with the key health system stakeholders to produce an evidence-based clinical services plan for Yukon. This report was designed to be used in health and social services planning for the territory.

One of the findings and recommendations of the report was to utilize collaborative and team-based care. This is seen as key to addressing the health and social service needs of Yukon residents. Collaborative practice is a model that offers the engagement of multiple health professionals to work together to deliver a comprehensive range of the highest quality effective health care services for Yukon people.

Their findings coincide with our platform, which also recognizes the importance of a collaborative approach. Collaborative care is central to workforce and clinical service planning with a substantial and sustained impact on primary care and outcomes. It is seen as a centrepiece of a model of care delivery that would address many challenges faced in Yukon. This bill provides a foundation upon which collaborative care can be built further.

Another objective of the clinical services plan was to have our health care workers working to the top-of-licence, also known as expanded scope. Some Yukoners may wonder what expanded scope means for them. To answer that question, I'm going to talk in general about the improved health outcomes, and then I'm going to mention some of the specific practical examples from other jurisdictions.

This approach encourages health professionals to provide services to their maximum skill level. This role supports the provision of a continuum of service centred on patient care. It is proven to support patient satisfaction levels.

Expanded scope of health care professionals provides increased access to health care. It improves service-delivery outcomes, supports collaborative practice and offers cost-effective health care delivery systems.

We see this bill as providing the foundation for such health care delivery in Yukon, a foundation from which standards can be built — standards that support pharmacists and more progressive health care delivery models through the practice of expanded scope. We know that many Canadian provinces now enable their pharmacists to practise expanded scope. This scope has been gradually implemented to include the provision of emergency refills, renewal of prescriptions, changes to drug doses or formulation, therapeutic substitutions, prescriptions for minor ailments, the ability to order and interpret lab tests, and to administer some injections.

Yukon too will progressively work at phasing in pharmacists' expanded scope as other jurisdictions have done. We have been working with our stakeholders on this issue for the past year, and we will continue to do that work.

We support this bill because it establishes the structural support and standards necessary to enable pharmacists to work toward expanded-scope health care delivery. By ensuring pharmacies have facilities such as counselling rooms in place, we will be able to carry out more enhanced functions.

In 2012, we brought in new regulations that introduced nurse practitioners into the health care system to support collaborative practice. Now, with the pharmacist regulations, that starts to build the framework of expanded-scope practice for pharmacists in Yukon. Progress is well underway.

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased with the development of this work. All of this work contributes to the broader picture of strengthening our health care delivery system in Yukon and improving service opportunities to Yukon people. Our department is committed to continuously working to improve our health care delivery in our wonderful territory. This bill also supports the framework for electronic health care delivery in Yukon's health care system. As our technology systems are developed, this bill recognizes support — the application of information and management systems in the delivery of pharmacy services in Yukon.

Our government, through the Department of Health and Social Services, is actively working on an e-health system with funding support from the federal government through Canada Health Infoway. This system will allow for sharing of

drug and lab information between the public sector and the private sector health care providers.

E-health is complex and requires expertise in technologies, medical and clinical care, privacy stakeholder engagement, governance, and information management. This proposal will improve patient care as well as patient safety, and it will create efficiencies for patients, health care providers and the health care system. It helps achieve this by reducing duplication of tests, medical errors, management of drug therapies and so forth. It provides more timely access to information, particularly helpful in emergency room situations. E-health will support Yukon's move to a collaborative care model and patient-centred seamless services.

Finally, this bill supports Health and Social Services and managing the health system. It does this by providing for the disclosure of information to the department and enabling drug monitoring programs — all which support the proper planning and management of the health system.

This bill requires the registrar to give notice to the Health and Social Services ministry where there may be a disruption to the health system as a consequence of an order.

My department officials have shared with me their gratitude to our stakeholders for their commitment to this project and the joint efforts of Community Services. As my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, has already mentioned, we would like to thank the many Yukoners who provided their advice and their assistance in the development of this bill. We will continue to work toward improved outcomes for the delivery of health care in Yukon and toward our commitment to improve the quality of life for Yukoners. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister of Community Services and his department officials for the hard work that they've done in order to bring this bill forward today. This bill will help us achieve our goal of making Yukon the best place to live, work, play and raise a family.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I too want to add my support to the bill before us. I want to start by also thanking those many individuals who have contributed to this process over the past year and some. In particular, I want to start off by thanking the Department of Community Services, working in collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Services as well. It is a large project underway as we speak, and this is really the first of a number of pieces of legislation and regulations associated with this very initiative.

What we've seen over the course of the last number of years under Community Services — they have been very busy indeed, from work on the oil-fired appliances regulations and the associated legislation that went through the House. There is also the *Landlord and Tenant Act* — another large project underway and now the associated regulations that go alongside with that — also the crafting in collaboration with stakeholders on the business corporation regulations and so forth. It is a very busy department indeed — and large pieces of legislation and very wide-reaching pieces of associated regulations as well go with each of these.

When it comes to the pharmacy initiative — and in particular the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* — it's yet another example of how our government has been working in support of collaborative care. As the Minister of Health and Social Services just outlined, it was a major platform commitment of ours. We've taken a number of steps over the past recent years in support of collaborative patient-centred care, which is so very critical. I think, as we proceed — not just into the year coming, but years in the future, looking to those various models of care and being creative in being able to deliberate on behalf of Yukoners so that we can continue to provide that quality of life that Yukoners have come to expect and will continue to enjoy over the years.

This initiative, of course, is comprised of the act itself that is underway here at second reading today. It also includes modernizing the regulation of pharmacists across the territory to reflect the expanded scope. A very important critical component of this initiative refers to expanding the scope of pharmacists — being one — but I know my colleague just spoke of expanding the scope of practice for other health care practitioners, nurse practitioners being one of them.

I recall being at the doorstep a number of years ago and talking to individuals at the doorstep about being able to expand and articulate on that expanded scope of practice for nurse practitioners as a case in point. I did not really realize the significance of that need until I heard it first-hand from individuals who work over at the hospital. It was effectively at that time individuals were coming in from Alberta for a short period of time to be able to fill a critical need and it was becoming increasingly a deterrent in coming to the Yukon as a destination to do business and to be able to exercise that scope, because they didn't actually have the backing of the regulations — so to speak — to be able to exercise that full scope of authority. Being able to amend the regulations and being able to deliberate in collaboration with our nurse practitioners or nursing community across the territory — and other health care professions — we were able to make those changes necessary. Now it is not so much of a deterrent, but really an attractive point of being able to exercise that full scope and being able to gain the experience, whether or not you are looking to expand your experiences, whether it is here in the Yukon or in Alberta, but being on a level playing field is so very critical in being a very attractive destination and being able not just to attract but to retain those health care professionals to our communities as well.

Keeping with current practices across the country and working to later on this year move the regulation of the profession to fall under the *Health Professions Act* and the associated regulations on the regulations for the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, collectively, all these three very big pieces are required to properly regulate the delivery of pharmacy services across the territory. As we have already heard, that includes standards and codes of ethics.

Indeed, I am very pleased that, although perhaps we are one of the last jurisdictions in the country, we are, however, the first territory to be able to do just that — to have this modernized pharmacy legislation in place, which ultimately

provides a very safe operating framework for pharmaceutical facilities. It sets out the obligations of owners and managers, standards around services, facilities and equipment, along with establishing an accountability framework — a code of ethics for licensed pharmacies and rural dispensaries.

As I mentioned earlier, there has been a tremendous amount of work that has been done by not only our officials within the Government of Yukon, but working with the external advisory committee, including representatives from the Yukon Pharmacists Association, the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, the Yukon Medical Association — which includes not only Whitehorse, but rural physicians — the Yukon Hospital Corporation, the public at large, pharmacy owners and, as I mentioned before, our own department officials in Health and Social Services, as well as Community Services. So a tremendous amount of work has been done over the past year on all those areas, from expanded scope of practice to issuing permits — rural permits, in particular — and giving credence to the unique needs of rural Yukon and, of course, the regulation of institutional pharmacies.

I'm really glad to see the recommendations coming forward from that group and their support for all of these pieces that are housed within the legislation before us. That work is far from over. As I mentioned, while the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* goes through the Legislature for discussion, consideration and approval this Sitting, work likewise will be done to prepare and release the pharmacist regulations for consultation. It's really the next order.

Again, I would like to thank the Minister of Community Services and the Minister of Health and Social Services and their respective departments for the really hard work that has gone into this overdue legislation. I'm very pleased to provide my support to the bill and commend it to all members, and look forward to the ensuing debate in the days to come.

Ms. Hanson: I'm pleased to also rise to speak with initial thoughts on Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. As my colleague, the Member for Riverdale South, has already said, we do thank the public servants. I would be remiss to not also talk about the legal drafters who were involved in this. It's certainly the policy people in Health and Social Services and Community Services, both from a policy point of view and an administrative point of view — but the legal drafters in Department of Justice have obviously done a significant amount of work on this bill to bring it to the state that we now have before us.

I am particularly pleased, because the whole issue of the antiquated framework under which pharmacists were asked to operate — and still are asked to operate — in this territory has been a real concern to the Official Opposition. Members opposite will know that we have, on a number of occasions, brought forward concerns in Question Period and in budget debate with respect to issues of safety and conflict of interest that have been manifest or have occurred within this territory — situations where we have doctors both prescribing and selling medication, whole issues around accountability and some difficult situations.

So we are very happy to finally have this piece of legislation brought forward, because it is something that we've been advocating in this House for many years. It's only because of an unfortunate blip, one would say, on the legislative history that a previous attempt by a previous NDP government to move this forward was delayed for 15 years, so we're 15 years after it was attempted and we're there because pharmacists are an integral piece of supporting.

I'm pleased to hear the members opposite using the language of collaborative care. It's a major, major move from the members opposite from three and a half years ago. It's a language — it's a shift — and I'm hoping that the use of the language actually reflects taking to heart what that means when we talk about collaborative care, because as we've talked about in the past, pharmacists are indeed that integral piece.

As we speak though, Mr. Speaker — and if we were to look at the Canadian Pharmacists Association's environmental scan of pharmacy practice legislation across this country, pharmacists practicing in the Yukon as of today — unlike pharmacists in most provinces — including the Province of Alberta, which we are emulating in terms of best practices, as it's one of the provinces where, unlike the Yukon, pharmacists can provide emergency prescription refills, pharmacists can renew or extend prescriptions, pharmacists can change drug dosage and formulations, pharmacists can in those jurisdictions make therapeutic substitutions, they can prescribe for minor ailments and conditions and they can initiate prescription drug therapy, they can order and interpret lab tests, they can administer a drug by injection and the legislation provides for regulated pharmacy technicians. When we speak about the scope of practice and expanding the scope of practice of these highly trained, educated professionals, this is what is meant. It is meant that we are actually recognizing their ability and their capacity to do that whole suite of functions that they're currently prohibited from doing in the Yukon.

The challenge — there is a challenge that we faced with other pieces of legislation that have been brought forward by this government — is that the legislation is brought forward with great fanfare, but then we have to wait for the regulations. We are still waiting on regulations, for example, with respect to the *Landlord and Tenant Act*.

I understand that the regulations for this legislation are not expected for at least another year. In the meantime, the health professions regulations for the pharmacists and the long-awaited expanded scope of practice for these — really, as I've just said outlined in terms of the kind of capabilities that they have — capable professionals are also in the process of being drafted and are going out for consultation.

It is a challenge, given the overlapping concerns that have been brought forward with respect to the governance, regulation and oversight of pharmacies, the pharmaceutical drug provision and pharmacists over the past number of years.

We've had many concerns and we've had many practical examples of what could have been different — and different outcomes — if these kinds of regulations and provisions were

in place. We heard them very clearly through the coroner's inquest into the deaths of the two women in Watson Lake and we've heard them from pharmacists, nurses and physicians themselves.

So, Mr. Speaker, until all the pieces of the pharmacy initiative are completed, including the regulations as well as for pharmacists under the *Health Professions Act*, there is still concern about the extent to which outstanding issues of concern have been addressed, and how we make sure to safeguard against any repeat of some of the unfortunate situations that have occurred as well as address the real challenges of retention of highly skilled pharmacists who are not prepared to work under the antiquated system that we have in place.

We believe that this legislation is one step toward promoting and ensuring the health and well-being of all Yukoners, and we do look forward to seeing a real plan to bring so many diverse and talented health care professionals together in a real team-based, collaborative care approach that will work toward improving all Yukoners' access to care, Yukoners' health outcomes and, most importantly, the future quality and sustainability of our health care systems.

There are many strengths in this legislation, because it goes without saying with the fact that we have something that's modern, that's more reflective of 2015 and going forward. As I said, it is a great step to see the legislation. The reality is that nearly all the major items and functions of this legislation will be structured and implemented through the regulations, which we have not as yet seen as they are being developed and still have consultation, which is necessary. But the fact is, it's regulations that breathe life into legislation. So we're left in the position of evaluating and voting on the skeleton of the legislation rather than its full and complete form.

An example of this is the accountability framework for pharmacy proprietors and managers. That's a positive step. However, the curtailed absence of attendant regulations means that this legislation remains silent on a wide array of steps for implementation such as the membership and tasks of the pharmacy advisory committee. We can go into more detail on these, Mr. Speaker, when we go through the legislation, but I just want to give the minister opposite a heads-up in terms of some of the issues. I'm sure that, in his review of the legislation, he will have answers to these and provide assurances to the members on this side about how these are to be dealt with.

The membership of review committees and discipline committees — partly it's how they are structured, who they are, the categorization, scope and issue of licence. The content of a code of ethics — are we simply adopting the code of ethics from elsewhere or is there a professional code of ethics for pharmacists in the Yukon? It's a question, Mr. Speaker. I don't know the answer and I don't see reflected in this legislation how that's done.

The rules for personal health information and record management — and I'm sure that as the minister goes through that, he will show us how this links through the privacy

provisions that were passed through the health information privacy — or something last week here — and the how's and the requirements for prescriptions in e-prescribing.

The power to make regulations, as we know, is important and they are critical to the governance and implementation of this legislation.

I will ask the minister in Question Period if it is common practice to appoint every single individual who is designated in the legislation to oversee the governance of this legislation and its regulations. In this legislation, the minister, or Cabinet, will hold the authority to appoint the registrar, the pharmacy advisory committee, the review committee and the discipline committees. Are any of these independent or arm's length from government? I don't know.

The minister touched on the provisions with respect to the eight-week absences. There is a general concern that we might have about how that applies in particular for those in rural practices. It is one thing when we have drug stores in Whitehorse but it is quite a different thing in rural situations, so we will probably want to probe into that a bit more.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from Riverdale South said, the Official Opposition is pleased to see this legislation come forward. We —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Ms. Hanson: Not only is it extremely important, we know that the pharmacists have been very patiently waiting for this legislation and have worked very diligently over the last number of years. I only hope that we haven't lost too many good and skilled pharmacists due to their frustration with the antique system that they are asked to operate under.

That being said, we look forward to the detailed discussion, when we get to it, on Bill No. 88.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, in rising I would like to begin by sincerely thanking staff of Community Services as well as staff at Health and Social Services and legal drafters in Justice for their work on this. I would like to acknowledge the external advisory committee as well for their participation and their work in representing the various stakeholders who would be affected by this legislation and whose views were an important part of developing this new structure.

I am not going to spend a lot of time talking about the Leader of the NDP's comments, but I did find it somewhat notable that it is interesting to hear someone be supportive of legislation, and I don't think I have ever heard someone sounding so negative in their comments toward a bill they were supporting.

I also have to point out that the member's assertion that the NDP were on the verge of bringing in legislation of this type that would have acknowledged the current scope of practice in pharmacists is, quite frankly, ill-informed because the change in scope of practice allowed within jurisdictions in Canada has evolved in recent years, and that is one of the reasons that this legislation is being brought forward now. The details governing pharmacists will be dealt with in the pharmacist regulations, but I should note that changes in Alberta particularly have been at the forefront of increasing

what pharmacists can do within their scope of practice. Other Canadian jurisdictions are at various stages in terms of what additional elements they allow pharmacists to do and that they are trained to do, but in some cases not all areas that are within their scope of training are within their licensed scope of practice.

That type of situation is far from unique to Yukon. It is common that, as training for health professions expands and enables greater proficiencies for people trained in that discipline, it does take time for provinces and territories to bring their regulations in line. In fact, part of that is quite deliberate in nature, in that if there has been a province that has been an early adopter of new legislative provisions, there is often a very deliberate effort, not just by government but also by other health professions within other jurisdictions, to assess how well that is working to determine if there are lessons that can and should be learned from that, prior to those jurisdictions making changes to their regulatory and legislative structure.

It should not be underrated how many hours of effort by how many policy people and by stakeholders have gone into the development of this legislation. Contained within the 38 pages of the legislation are important provisions that do modernize the Yukon's legislation for governing pharmacies, ensuring that we have an effective, modern structure that is based on an understanding of what has worked well in other jurisdictions and where there are lessons learned that we do not want to repeat ourselves. We also have to be cognizant of the Yukon context. The solutions that work in a larger jurisdiction with more established pharmacies are different in the Yukon when, in particular, in two communities outside of Whitehorse — Dawson City and Watson Lake — there have been rural pharmacies for years operated by a physician under a rural permit. While this legislation is intended to provide further regulatory structure and oversight to operations of the rural dispensaries, it is also important to consider — as the external advisory committee considered — the fact that if the services are removed from those communities, it has an effect on people's access to pharmacy services and to drugs and ends up falling back to them likely relying on those medications being sent through the mail instead of dispensed to them from a physician's clinic.

Under the new legislation, the roles and responsibilities of owners and managers are spelled out. Managers or licensees and the owners — proprietors — are assigned accountability and distinct obligations and roles under the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. One of the most fundamental principles of this legislation is to have a managing pharmacist or rural permit holder responsible for overseeing supervision, control and management of the pharmacy or rural dispensary. It's clearly spelled out in this legislation that the owners must not attempt to direct or influence the management or operation of a licensed pharmacy.

That is acknowledging the fact that, whether through the pharmacies in Whitehorse or the rural dispensaries, the owner and the manager are often different people, making it clear that there must be very clear responsibilities, so that the

primary motivation in decision-making around medication is based on patient needs and appropriateness, rather than financial in nature.

In the area of licensee obligations, the obligations for a licensee are spelled out under this legislation, under Bill No. 88. They include: manage, control and supervise the operation of the pharmacy or rural dispensary; and ensure that the pharmacy or rural dispensary is operated in accordance with the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* and regulations under it, with the *Health Professions Act* and any applicable regulations, and with the pharmacist regulation. The licensee is also obligated to comply with any order made under these acts and any limits or conditions imposed on a licence.

I should also note, particularly with regard to another of the comments from the Leader of the NDP, that I was quite surprised to hear her make — was a lack of knowledge when it comes to the area of a registrar being recognized under legislation. In fact, it is typical across health professions for there to be a registrar. In the area of physicians, for example, under the *Medical Profession Act*, the Yukon Medical Council, which is an independent board, appointments to that board are made through order-in-council by Cabinet. The registrar is a government position, which has distinct legal responsibilities under legislation that they are obligated to fulfill. The appointment with the pharmacy advisory committee — though their roles and responsibilities would certainly not be identical to that of the Yukon Medical Council, it would be comparable, in that a body composed of people, including, in the case of the medical council, a certain number must be physicians and a certain number are lay people. Those people are appointed and given very clear powers and obligations to the public.

I should also note, going back to the specific obligations of licensees under this act, a licensee also has a legal obligation to comply with all privacy legislation in place within the Yukon and to comply with any act or regulation in the Yukon or Canada that is applicable, relating to the compounding, prescribing, dispensing, manufacturing, sale, supply or distribution of drugs, devices or natural health products.

The licensee also has a legal obligation to ensure that due diligence is exercised in the dispensing of drugs in accordance with the standards of pharmacy operations and practice of pharmacists as well the drug schedules. The licensee is also obligated to ensure that counselling is conducted in accordance with all standards, as well as ensure that a licensed pharmacist or rural permit holder can be readily contacted for assistance.

The licensee also has a legal obligation to create and maintain records that are under the care and control of the licensee. They have an obligation to notify the registrar if they are absent for more than eight weeks and arrange for an interim licensee to fulfill their responsibilities and take on that role. Unless the regulations authorize otherwise, a licensee has a legal obligation to ensure a pharmacist or rural permit holder is always present and supervising the provision of pharmacy services at the pharmacy overall dispensary.

As well, they have an obligation to cooperate with an inspection, to comply with the code of ethics, standards of practice and standards of operation and they have an obligation to report a proprietor who directs, who influences or attempts to direct or influence in a way that contravenes or could result in a contravention of the obligations of the licensee or the management in operation of the pharmacy or rural dispensary, as the case may be.

Mr. Speaker, the proprietor has their own legal obligations under this act which include keeping the registrar apprised of the address of the pharmacy or rural dispensary and ensuring records are created and maintained and kept under the control of the licensee. The proprietor is also legally obliged not to direct or influence or attempt to direct or influence in a way that contravenes or could result in the contravention of the obligations of the licensee, the management or operation of a licensed pharmacy or of a licensed rural dispensary.

The proprietor is also legally obliged to report to the registrar when there is reason to believe that a licensee is contravening an obligation of the licence under this act and they also have their own distinct legal responsibility to cooperate with an inspection.

It should be noted when the members will see specific references under here to other legislation, including references to the *Health Professions Act* and to regulations — that is to ensure that, as changes are made to those other legislative or regulatory instruments, these remain in harmony and do not conflict with each other.

There are also provisions contained within this legislation to provide for the inspection of complaints and for discipline of licensees and proprietors to establish the obligations of licensees and proprietors — pardon me, I'm repeating myself — and again, in the course of inspections of pharmacies and rural dispensaries to clearly provide for the powers of the inspectors to take records and to take copies of records that are relevant to inspection and provides them with the ability to take appropriate action in follow-up.

There is also provision, as referenced by the Minister of Community Services, for the appointment of an administrator in the absence of, or in the windup of, the operations of a pharmacy or rural permit-holder.

I should also note that there are provisions for the Supreme Court, on application, to replace an administrator or terminate the appointment of an administrator and provisions for a discipline committee to be appointed to exercise the duties and powers of a discipline committee under this legislation.

There are also specific provisions related to allowing any person to make a complaint against a licensee by delivering the complaint in writing to the registrar. The registrar has the ability, of their own volition, to investigate a licensee regarding conduct that may constitute misconduct. They provide for the ability that the registrar has a requirement also to forward to the registrar for pharmacists, under section 8 of the *Health Professions Act*, any information related to their investigation and that the registrar must forward to the Yukon

Medical Council any information obtained by the registrar respecting conduct of a licensee that may constitute grounds for an investigation under section 23 of that act or an inquiry under section 24 of that act.

In reference to the powers of a discipline committee — they provide the ability that a discipline committee may caution a licensee, suspend or cancel a licence or impose limits or conditions upon a licence. They also have the ability to order that limits or conditions be imposed on the operation of a licensed pharmacy or a licensed rural dispensary and the powers to direct that periodic inspections of a licensed pharmacy or a licensed rural dispensary be conducted by an inspector at the cost of the licensee.

The discipline committee also has the ability to direct that periodic audits of drugs at a licensed pharmacy or licensed rural dispensary be conducted by an inspector at cost of the licensee. A discipline committee has the ability to order that no person may provide pharmacy services in a licensed pharmacy or licensed rural dispensary for the period of time set by the order.

Additionally, they may order the licensee is required to pay the costs or part of the costs of the investigation initiated into their conduct and to order the licensee to pay all the costs or part of the costs of the registrar associated with enforcement of an order made under any of the paragraphs in (b) to (h) under section 31 of the legislation.

Moving on — they provide a similar ability for a person to make a complaint against a proprietor by filing that complaint with the registrar, and provide the ability for the registrar to investigate a proprietor regarding any conduct that may constitute misconduct under this legislation or any applicable regulations.

In that case, the powers of a discipline committee include the ability to dismiss the matter, caution the proprietor, reprimand the proprietor and impose limits or conditions on the operation of a licensed pharmacy or of a licensed rural dispensary.

The discipline committee also has the ability to direct periodic inspections of a licensed pharmacy or licensed rural dispensary conducted by an inspector at the cost to the proprietor and to direct that periodic audits of drugs held at a licensed pharmacy or licensed rural dispensary be conducted by an inspector at cost to the proprietor. As well, the discipline committee has the ability to order that no person may provide pharmacy services at a licensed pharmacy or licensed rural dispensary for a period of time set by the order and the ability to fine the proprietor in an amount not exceeding the prescribed maximum under this legislation and applicable regulations. They also have the ability to order that a proprietor pay all the costs or part of the costs of investigation into the conduct.

Those are a few of the highlights from this legislation. I hope that members will recognize and agree that this is an important piece of legislation and, in my belief, it is also legislation that has struck an appropriate and careful balance and structure to responsibly regulate pharmacies and drugs within the Yukon and recognize the importance of not only

modernizing our legislation to reflect the best practices in other jurisdictions but also understanding the Yukon context and ensuring that we have reflected what we have heard from Yukon stakeholders and Yukon communities in developing this legislation.

With that, I will close my comments and commend Bill No. 88 to this House and thank the Minister of Community Services for tabling it. I thank all officials involved in this for their good work in developing this legislation.

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

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you to my colleagues for their comments at second reading so far. I have heard it indicated from the Official Opposition that they would be supporting the bill so I look forward to seeing their support come time to vote.

I should note there were a number of questions raised by a number of different members in their second reading comments that I will certainly have a chance to address later in Committee of the Whole, but I wanted to respond to a few particular issues. In a very general sense, I note that this bill supports the government's priority to enhance public safety by creating industry standards in a framework for the safe operation of pharmacy facilities in Yukon. Pharmacies are regulated, as I have noted before, in all Canadian provinces and this new legislation will provide a strong regulatory framework consistent with other jurisdictions. By modernizing pharmacy legislation, we indeed improve the quality of life for Yukoners, we believe. We have consulted extensively with pharmacists and other key stakeholders, including members of the external advisory committee. They have worked over the past months with our internal working group, which included officials from both my department and the Department of Health and Social Services.

I know it has been said already, but I did want to again thank those members of the advisory committee who participated in the development of this bill. As I indicated previously, there were two members from the Yukon Pharmacists Association, one pharmacy owner, a member of the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, a member from Health and Social Services Community Nursing, one member from the Yukon Hospital Corporation, and two members of the Yukon Medical Association, of whom one was a community physician with a rural permit and the other was a physician from Whitehorse. Finally, the group also included a member of the public from a community that has a rural dispensary.

I think that each of these individuals and each of these representatives represented a different segment of the population interested in this legislative development, and I think each of them brought forward a perspective that was very much valuable to the initiative.

Obviously the pharmacists themselves provided sage advice in the development of this legislation and, of course, noted that it was long overdue. I do understand as well that

some of the pharmacists who participated found the initiative to be quite interesting because of the fact that they got to see, in a real sense, the development of legislation from nothing into a bill before the House. I think that it was a rewarding experience for those pharmacists who participated, as well as the pharmacy owner who did participate.

The member of the YRNA, as well, provided some very important input in terms of bringing forward the perspective of the nurses of the territory. The result of that input from the YRNA did result in some significant — not significant, but some important changes that were made throughout the development of the legislation. Of course, as I have noted previously, there is a subsequent amendment to another piece of legislation that deals with nurses, so that input was greatly appreciated.

The member from the Yukon Hospital Corporation provided some important input in terms of the decision that was ultimately made by government with regard to institutional pharmacies and the role of the accreditation process that hospitals go through with regard to the decision that was made regarding institutional pharmacies in this legislation.

The two members of the Yukon Medical Association — as I noted, one was a community physician with a rural permit, so a rural permit holder, and the other was a physician from Whitehorse, who was not. Obviously the doctors who participated brought forward the perspectives of themselves as individuals but also from the YMA at large. I know that there is always an interest, whenever we talk about expanding scope or expanding scope of practice — that doctors are always interested to see how that is done and want to make sure that they are involved in the legislative and regulatory aspects of that expansion.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the individual from the public, from a community that has a rural dispensary, was integral because of the fact that that perspective is very, very valuable. It is important to Yukon communities that their voices are heard and that their perspectives, as citizens of the territory who don't live in Whitehorse and who live in the more rural areas of the territory, are heard, and I know that the individual who did participate provided that perspective very well. We want to ensure that the services that are available to rural Yukoners continue to be adequate, and I think that that input was very much appreciated.

I also want to note that the collaborative approach used to draft this complex legislation reflects a very important part of the collaborative patient-centred health care model for Yukon. I know the Leader of the Official Opposition noted some surprise at the fact that we were pursuing a collaborative care model when, to look back, one needs only review the Yukon Party's platform to see collaborative care noted therein. I believe page 9 is the page, if folks want to look.

This is an important initiative, not only for pharmacists and those who use pharmacies and pharmacist services, but for the entire health care system. We are, through the changes that we made previously to the expansion of scope for nurses to this initiative, making our health care system more

collaborative and more responsive to the health care needs of Yukon citizens.

There are a number of specific questions that were asked and raised by members throughout the course of their second reading speeches. I won't address them all, so I'll have to leave some of those to Committee of the Whole when we can have a more informal back-and-forth with regard to the activities and contemplation of the legislation.

I did want to note, though, that a considerable number of individuals throughout the Yukon participated. I mentioned the advisory committee, but a number of individuals from the public provided comments as well, and I would like to thank those folks for their input. The Pharmacists Association, pharmacy owners, Medical Association, Yukon Hospital Corporation, the Registered Nurses Association, the office of the registrar in Community Services and the Community Nursing branch of the Department of Health and Social Services all provided considerable input and we are appreciative of that.

As I've noted before, Mr. Speaker, this is only the beginning. There's a significant amount of work that has yet to be done. Obviously, this legislation contemplates significant regulatory development, including the development of codes of ethics, standards of practice and associated regulations. That work will take time. I know that sometimes members express frustration with the speed at which this occurs, but I assure all members that officials in the departments are working as diligently as they can to bring forward the regulations that are pursuant to the various pieces of legislation we pass in this House. It's not an easy task, it's a very complex one, especially in a case like this, where there's significant consultation that needs to be done prior to the tabling of those regulations.

As members will note, this bill will come into force, along with those regulations, once they're developed, so we will have a complete package that will come forward for Yukoners to see and understand. Once that occurs, and once there has been the passage of those regulations and this legislation, there will be a transition period that will allow pharmacies and pharmacists to take the time to understand what the legislation means and make necessary changes to their operations to allow for the new provisions to come into force.

As I've noted previously, this legislation contributes significantly to the public safety of Yukoners by establishing controls on the operation of a pharmacy or a rural dispensary by providing the requirements for licensing, obligations of licensees and proprietors, compliance with the legislation's standards of operation, standards of practice and the code of ethics and a system for inspections, complaints and enforcement that can result in immediate extraordinary actions, orders or fines.

It's important to note that this framework doesn't exist currently and it's important to see that framework brought in. It's never easy to institute a brand new system where there has been none previously, but we're confident we'll be able to

accomplish that with this legislation and the subsequent regulations.

I won't go into the details that we will get into in Committee and I look forward to doing so, so I will look forward to hearing the support from all members of the House as they vote here to pass this bill at second reading. I would conclude by commending of the bill to the House. Thank you.

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.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

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

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

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 88 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug 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. 88: *Pharmacy and Drug Act*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I am joined by Charlene Beauchemin, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Corporate Policy in Community Services, and Brian Kitchen, the director of Policy and Program Development.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Before we get going, I did want to ask members to join me in welcoming a visitor to the gallery. Josianne Gauthier is the president of the Yukon Pharmacists Association. She was also on the external advisory committee and is also on our implementation committee. She has been very involved in this initiative, and she has joined us here for the debate in Committee. I would ask members to join me in welcoming her.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I am pleased to rise again today to speak to Bill No. 88, *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, here in Committee of the Whole. The bill supports this government's priority to enhance public safety by creating industry standards and a framework for the safe operation of pharmacy facilities in Yukon.

Pharmacies are regulated in all Canadian provinces, and this new legislation will provide a strong regulatory framework consistent with other jurisdictions. We believe that by modernizing pharmacy legislation, we are indeed improving quality of life for Yukoners. We have consulted with pharmacists and other key stakeholders, including members of the external advisory committee. They have worked over the past months and with our internal working group, which included officials from Community Services and Health and Social Services. I am pleased to note that the collaborative approach used to draft this complex legislation reflects what will be a part of the collaborative patient-centred health care model for Yukon.

The proposed *Pharmacy and Drug Act* will regulate the operations of community pharmacies and rural dispensaries. To summarize, the legislation proposed today will require a licence to provide pharmacy services in Yukon and the provision of those services only by qualified individuals. It will also establish a registrar of pharmacies and a pharmacy advisory committee to ensure oversight and compliance with the standards, codes of ethics and other requirements outlined in the proposed act.

This new legislation sets out roles and responsibilities for pharmacy and rural dispensary owners, referred to as "proprietors", as well as for managers of pharmacies, who are known as "licensees" in the bill, who must be licensed pharmacists or physicians who are permitted to prescribe and dispense medications.

It outlines clear obligations that prohibit the proprietor from directing or influencing the management or operation of a pharmacy or rural dispensary that would cause the licensee to contravene their obligations under the bill and compels the licensee to report such influence to the registrar.

It obligates the licensee to manage the facility and ensure due diligence is exercised in dispensing drugs in a pharmacy or rural dispensary consistent with the standards of operation of licensed pharmacies or the standards for operating licensed rural dispensaries, as well as comply with professional standards of practice and code of ethics.

Any person providing pharmacy services at the pharmacy or rural dispensary will now do so under the management of the licensee, who is responsible for compliance with all applicable legislation, standards for the operation of the facility and standards of practice. Unless otherwise specified, a manager of a licensed pharmacy must ensure that a pharmacist is always present on-site and supervising pharmacy services when open to the public. This holds true also for managers of licensed rural dispensaries.

Codes of ethics will also be established and must be followed for the operation of both licensed pharmacies and licensed rural dispensaries.

Inspectors will be appointed by the registrar of pharmacies. They have the authority to investigate the operation and records of the pharmacy or rural dispensary during regular office hours without a court order.

A complaint and discipline mechanism is in place and misconduct is defined in this bill. Records will be kept and information sharing maintained in accordance with Yukon regulations for patient safety and support of collaborative care.

Protecting Yukoners is top of mind with the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. Pharmacists and rural permit holders will need to be familiar with the standards established in their workplace as well as any professional standards. The new legislation will support expanded scope of practice activities for pharmacists, which will be identified in the pharmacist regulation that is currently under development and will be pursuant to the *Health Professions Act*. It will also clarify the roles and responsibilities of the owner and the managing pharmacist or rural permit holder and bring the pharmacy standards in Yukon up to date with other jurisdictions across Canada.

The *Pharmacy and Drug Act* and its regulations will complement the pharmacist regulations under the *Health Professions Act* and ATIPP, as well as the *Health Information Privacy and Management Act* when it comes into effect.

The *Pharmacy and Drug Act* is the first step toward a broader initiative to modernize pharmacy regulation in Yukon. Pharmacist regulations that will govern pharmacists and rural permit holders under the *Health Professions Act* are also being drafted. Once these are complete, work will begin on the regulations for the proposed *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. As with the act itself, we will be seeking the input of the external advisory committee on these regulations as well.

The *Pharmacy and Drug Act* is a result of significant collaboration with the Yukon health community and a member of the public. They have contributed considerable time and effort to assisting this government in modernizing the regulation of pharmacy services for the betterment of all Yukoners. They are to be commended for their monumental work to date and their continued dedication to this initiative.

Lastly, I also wish to thank the various department officials from Community Services as well as Health and Social Services for their work in preparing this new legislation. I appreciate their attention in these opening remarks and I look forward to going through the bill in detail with questions coming from the members opposite.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Stick: I want to thank the officials for coming today to answer questions for me and for the Official Opposition, and thank them also for the briefing.

We have had this legislation a short time, so I am going to apologize up front if I repeat questions or if I have read something wrong. Every time I have gone through it, I have found more questions. It is quite possible I will repeat myself — as a matter of fact, it is highly likely. Having said that, I do appreciate the work that has gone into this legislation. It is very important because it impacts probably most people in the Yukon at one time or other with regard to pharmaceuticals — having prescriptions filled that our physicians give to us or something that we receive in Emergency. So it is good that we have this legislation that lays out the framework for how we will move forward. I understand there is a lot of work yet to be done, including regulations, standards and amendments to other acts that have to take place.

I look forward to seeing this legislation take on a life of its own and, in fact, be something that will be useful for all people — for pharmacists, for pharmacy owners, for hospitals and for rural dispensaries.

We were told that the Alberta legislation was followed closely. I commend the committee for that, because certainly when we did look at the Canadian Pharmacists Association and their report card, it was very apparent that Alberta met many of the scope of practices — or met all of them that they were reviewing when they did a review of every province and territory in Canada. I will be interested to know when we start to look at regulations if we will also be following along on some of theirs or using it as a guideline for starting to create our own regulations that are built for the Yukon. I'm happy to hear that there is a committee that is carrying on to look at the regulations and to review what the suggestions are for that. I'll put out a couple of questions and then I will sit down and give the officials and the minister an opportunity to address those.

With regard to the committee that will be looking at regulations to accompany the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* — I'm sure the minister has mentioned it, but again, I will just ask for clarification. Who will be on that committee? Will it be inclusive of citizens also, so we do have the professionals, as in the previous committee? There was a member of the public, and I think when we talk about collaborative care and patient-centred care, it's important that their voice also be heard.

I know there was public consultation completed recently on this legislation. I think my last question for this little block would be: Is there a summary report, or a "what we heard" report that has come out of that consultation that was looking at the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* legislation?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: A number of questions there, so I'll try to go through them in the order they were presented but, if I miss one, of course we'll certainly come back to it. First of all, the questions around why we used Alberta as a legislative model and will their regulations be used going forward — the short answer is, yes. We decided to pursue the Alberta pharmacist model, as we felt it led the country in terms of pharmacy legislation, particularly in terms of expanded scope of pharmacist practice. When I met with the pharmacists here a few weeks ago — or perhaps a month ago now — they provided me with a great resource that's done by the Canadian Pharmacists Association, which shows the pharmacists' expanded scope of practice in Canada, and it has boxes checked for whether or not it's provided in various jurisdictions.

In that document it notes that Alberta does pretty much everything that exists in terms of expanded scope — in Canada at least — and of course Yukon does nothing. That's certainly the model we wanted to emulate and that's what we're going to use to guide us. We did a fairly comprehensive review of Canadian interjurisdictional legislation. It was decided that this bill would follow Alberta's model. Some of those reasons include: the Alberta model is a comprehensive model that addresses a broad range of legislative elements common to Canadian pharmacy legislation; it has the operational standards in place to support expanded scope of practice; it's designed to work with the pharmacist regulation under the *Health Professions Act* by linking the discipline and complaint systems that exist between the profession and the pharmacy operations, so that's a model that we will employ here in Yukon as well; and it has integrative linkages between the pharmacist regulation and the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, providing continuity between the two pieces of legislation, ensuring that they work together.

There are also linkages between pharmacy operation standards and they require implementation, quality assurance programs and pharmacist standards that require that pharmacists must participate in them. There is also a sharing of a common code of ethics. Yukon's legislation will still consider the Yukon context and other considerations in the new act and will be adapted to be consistent with the existing *Health Professions Act* and Yukon laws. We will, to a certain extent — to use a bit of a loose term — "Yukonize" the code of ethics from Alberta a little bit, but that will be the model that we use.

I should also note while on the subject of Alberta that I think we'll also be relying on the Alberta College of Pharmacists to a certain degree in the development, as well, later down the line when it comes to actually regulating the pharmacies in the territory. The expertise that they have in those jurisdictions, including Alberta, will be necessary for us

to supplement our knowledge and our understanding of how to do this work and so we'll lean on them for support.

With regard to which members of the committee will be involved — the external advisory committee will again be employed. I've listed the names — the list of who was on that committee previously so I won't do that again. As I noted, there is a member from the public involved on that committee. The person is from a community that has a rural dispensary, so they provide that perspective. But following that work, we will also have additional public consultation. The public will have the opportunity to review the regulations once they're developed. That will be helpful — not only to see the regulations themselves but it will give Yukoners a picture of this legislation, which will be passed — we're assuming that it will be passed by then — and there will be the regulations to go along with them, so they'll have a fairly complete picture of what it's going to look like. There will be the involvement of the public in that sense, Madam Chair.

With regard to the public consultations that were conducted already, there was no "what we heard" report, but the comments received are reflected in the final bill.

The comments that we received were all acted on and all went into the final bill that we have before us today. We took all the comments that we received into consideration. There were obviously, in some cases, differing views, but we think that we've arrived at an amicable solution and that the bill before us today is a sound one that has the broad support of all those who were involved.

Ms. Stick: I thank the member opposite for those answers. That was certainly informative. I would just reiterate the importance, I think, of having the citizen voice, or the patient-centred voice, as a part of these discussions and planning as we move ahead. It is important, when we're talking about collaborative care, that we include all voices. Certainly, if it is patient-centred, then that is a very important one.

It is good to see that there will be a window for individuals to go to in terms of concerns they might have about how their prescriptions are being filled, or not filled — a place to take complaints or if they have questions. We have seen recommendations that have come from the coroner's inquest last year that had recommendations with regard to the handling of prescription drugs and hope that those are also included when looking at the regulations.

I understand that the regulations for this legislation are probably not expected for another year and that, in the meantime, we have the health profession regulations for the pharmacists and an expanded scope of practice for those professionals that are also in the process of being drafted.

I am sure there are timelines that the two departments are looking at, and I am just wondering if the member opposite can give us an idea of what those timelines will be, moving forward, once this legislation is passed.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I think there was a question about the coroner's report, and I just want to note that the Yukon Hospital Corporation, in the case of the death in Watson Lake — of course, the Department of Health and Social Services

and the Yukon Hospital Corporation, of course, work closely together to ensure patient safety and improved service to patients. The Yukon Hospital Corporation oversees the pharmacy services delivered to patients in the hospital. Both Watson Lake and Whitehorse are accredited institutions with oversight in drug distribution and clinical services. In addition, these institutions provide pharmacy services only to patients and not to the general public.

The coroner's inquest report into the death of Ms. Scheunert last year was issued in June last year. The report indicated that Ms. Scheunert died as a result of mixed drug toxicity and the death was classified as an accident. The Yukon Hospital Corporation did not wait for the coroner's report and immediately acted upon opportunities for improvements. The corporation hired an external resource to conduct an independent patient safety review, focusing on health care. This, along with the recommendations from the coroner's inquest, have guided their actions for system improvement.

Given the oversight already in place, which includes accreditation policies, the regulation of institutional pharmacies can be considered at a later time. I did want to note that this act does enhance the safety of pharmacy services to Yukoners by ensuring a manager of a licensed pharmacy or rural dispensary must ensure that a pharmacist or rural permit holder is always present on-site and supervising pharmacy services when open to the public. All persons working at a pharmacy or rural dispensary are supervised by pharmacists or a rural permit holder. Arrangements are made for management and supervision of the pharmacy or rural dispensary during an absence of the licensee with the approval of the registrar. Codes of ethics will be established and must be followed by pharmacy and rural dispensary owners and managers — and I'll return to that issue of codes of ethics in a moment. Standards of operations will be established under this act for pharmacies and rural dispensaries, which will include requirements for facilities, equipment and record-keeping.

I think that addresses that aspect of the member's question.

Let me turn, then, back to those issues of codes of ethics, standards of practice, standards of operations and regulations. The general question was about timelines, so I'll try to provide a bit of a sense of this for each.

We're going to start with the pharmacist regulation under the *Health Professions Act*, which will govern the conduct and operation of pharmacists in the territory. We'll bring that forward. We'll do that work with the external advisory committee, as I noted before. Following that work, we'll begin work on the regulations pursuant to this legislation. Those include regulations, standards of operations, standards of practice and codes of ethics.

I realize there's a lot of work and it will take some time. We're hopeful to have the pharmacist regulation under the *Health Professions Act* out later this year. That will then have public consultation, so members of the Yukon public can expect to see that then, but the external advisory committee will remain engaged in that work.

Once we have that then, as I said, we'll move to the regulations under this act. I think it's important to note what the difference is between these items. The regulations address the administrative details of the act, such as establishing licensing categories, committee appointments, licensing and termination, physical facilities, information management systems and record-keeping. The standards of operations address details such as suitable physical facilities and equipment, quality assurance, records, adequate staffing, and so forth.

It's expected that Alberta's standards will be used as the framework for Yukon, with some minor revisions — or the verb that I invented earlier, "Yukonization", I guess — that will be applied to those standards. There are the standards of practice. That's a list of statements and rules that further define how the pharmacist and rural permit holder perform key professional activities.

For example, some standards refer to: the use of appropriate information; identifying and addressing drug therapy problems; following proper procedures when dispensing; release of drugs and providing counselling; establishing and maintaining professional client interactions; prohibiting the return of a drug or health care product for redistribution or reuse; providing assistance with schedule III drugs and other health care products and devices; providing direction and supervision of other personnel; and creating and maintaining proper patient records.

Then, finally, there will be the code of ethics. The code of ethics, by comparison, serves as the foundation and benchmark for professional behaviour, actions and attitudes to support the high level of trust patients place in pharmacists and rural permit holders. The principles that make up the code of ethics address issues relating to serving patients, contributing to society and acting as stewards of their profession. These principles also provide direction to pharmacists and rural permit holders faced with ethical dilemmas. Types of principles can include the following: holding the well-being of patients to be the primary consideration; respecting patient independence and dignity; respecting patient confidentiality and right to health care; advancement of public health and prevention of disease; responsible use of health resources; ensuring competency and continued education; acting with honesty and integrity; nurturing the profession through mentorship; maintaining professional relationships; and taking appropriate action in the event of adverse situations, et cetera.

In combination with the legislation, the standards of operation, standards of practice and the codes of ethics will all assist with the provision and effective pharmacy services for Yukoners. It is an overall regime that we are bringing forward here that will include a number of pieces. I have tried to explain what those various pieces are and what makes them distinct from one another. I think I have tried my best to answer the timing on that, although I appreciate that I cannot say a single date that they will be available, but we are anticipating them to come in the order that I have described.

Ms. Stick: I thank you for those responses.

One of the things in the legislation — and I thank you for the description of the different standards and the regulations that have to still be created that will add to the strength of this particular legislation.

I have a number of smaller questions and I am not sure where the answer would be within the legislation. One of them has to do with the listing of the types of individuals who can fill prescriptions. One of the questions is: Are we anticipating that there would be anyone else who might be able to do that? In particular, I was wondering if nurse practitioners would be included in some of these regulations — or community health nurses — in terms of being able to prescribe medications under this act.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: There are a number of exemptions in the act that discuss the various other professionals or individuals or groups throughout the health care spectrum that can dispense drugs or medication.

The act does not restrict the practice of: dentists, nurse practitioners, optometrists, or physicians who practice under an enactment; persons authorized to sell a drug by law, such as a pharmaceutical company authorized under federal legislation to sell to prescribers, such as a dentist; a wholesaler from supplying drugs; drugs sold under the *Food and Drugs Act* or its regulations that may be sold for agricultural or veterinary purposes without a prescription; a manufacturer from carrying out their business; a member of the Canadian Armed Forces or a visiting force from doing anything in the course of their duties such as the dispensing that a pharmacy officer may do.

The act does however prevent anyone from operating a pharmacy without a licence. The regulations also provide for the exempting of persons or classes of persons from the requirement for a licence, and this is where veterinarians and institutions could be exempted.

In general there are these people who I have listed who can dispense drugs in various ways and for various reasons. Each of them are covered by a different piece of legislation or their own piece of legislation or set of rules or federal legislation outside of the scope of the Yukon Territory — for instance, the federal legislation that may apply in the case of service people or other folks under federal legislation.

So, in the case where you have somebody who is dispensing drugs not contemplated in this act, it's because they're covered by different legislation, different rules. What this bill does is govern pharmacies — so how exactly pharmacies themselves work and the rules that they have subscribed to. In terms of the other professionals like nurses or dentists — they are exempted and that's under, I believe, section 3 of the act.

I should note as well that there is a consequential amendment to the *Registered Nurses Profession Act* contained in this bill to ensure the practice can continue that I've discussed. When the proposed *Pharmacy and Drug Act* has passed and is in force, the *Pharmacists Act* is repealed and the regulation pertaining to registered nurses dispensing will be moved under the *Registered Nurses Profession Act* in order to continue to allow registered nurses in the community health

centres to dispense medications. So they were governed under the former *Pharmacists Act*, and when that act disappears, we need to provide that ability for them to continue to do that practice so we've taken that chunk out of the *Pharmacists Act* and brought it over underneath the *Registered Nurses Profession Act*. That's the subsequent amendment that is being made in this bill as well.

I hope that provides the clarity and answers the member's looking for.

Ms. Stick: Thank you again for that response. I realize there are lots of pieces of legislation and regulations. It's quite a — I wouldn't say a spider's web, but they're woven together to work together. In the short time that we have had this, I haven't been able to review them all, but thank you for that explanation.

There are a number of committees that are covered in this legislation, including — well, we have heard about the pharmacy advisory committee, but there were also review committees, discipline committees that are to come forward once the regulations are — and I just wondered if there is a sense now of how individuals would be appointed to these important committees that support this legislation, as to who would have membership on these committees and will it again be a mix of professionals, of citizens, community members.

I guess the other one would be First Nation representation. I mean, certainly we know that, under CYFN, they do have their health director and sometimes those things can become a little bit more confusing when we are looking at non-insured health benefits and the regulations those individuals come under. I think I'll leave it at that — for the answers.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: To start with, the pharmacist advisory committee — of course, this bill before us establishes an advisory committee. The committee is the same as the advisory committee in the pharmacist regulations, so there will be reference there as well. The composition of this committee is made up of at least registrants under the pharmacy regulations who will be appointed by the minister — so, at the leisure, I suppose, of the minister to appoint those registrants.

At the request of the registrar, the committee may advise the Government of Yukon about operational standards to be set for licensed pharmacies and licensed rural dispensaries, criteria for licensing, and the composition of the discipline committee.

The committee, at the request of the registrar, may also review applications for licences, advise the registrar on limits or conditions to be imposed on a licence, what to do about complaints of misconduct, and perform any tasks set out in the regulations or with keeping with the purposes of the act. The advisory committee is a standing committee that exists by way of OIC. The discipline committee is on an ad hoc basis, as needed. So when a complaint is forwarded and it is determined that it is necessary to look into this through a discipline committee, that discipline committee is appointed by the minister. The reason why the individuals aren't the same, or that the advisory committee is a standing committee

and the disciplinary committee is an ad hoc one, is because the discipline committee has to be very specific about who is on it. You can't have standing members because they could be the ones who are in conflict or have the issue. So when appointing a disciplinary committee, you need to make sure that there is no conflict of interest. You need to make sure that the person is not involved, somehow, already.

That is done on an ad hoc basis that is determined by the event or the occurrence that has resulted in the creation of the discipline committee. That's why the advisory committee is a standing committee — a permanent committee that exists forever or continuously — and the discipline committee is a temporary or an issue-based one.

Speaking of the disciplinary committee, I think it's helpful if I add some of the comments about enforcement in general because I think it's helpful to provide the context of why we have a discipline committee and how we arrive at that. The act and its related regulations will provide public safety by enabling the inspections, complaints, discipline and appeals.

Inspections — inspectors are appointed under the act. The inspectors will have the power to enter premises and investigate and inspect pharmacies and rural dispensaries. They will be able to inspect records, equipment, materials and take samples of drugs and substances. Failure of a licensee or a proprietor to follow with the direction of the inspector may result in the complaint action taken by the registrar. Inspectors can conduct a search and seizure.

Complaints — anyone can make a complaint under the act against a licensee or a proprietor. The registrar will determine whether to investigate using the procedures established under the *Health Professions Act*. Where a complaint has any information about the conduct of a rural permit holder, the complaint will be forwarded to the Yukon Medical Council. In addition, the Yukon Medical Council must forward any complaints received on a rural permit holder that may constitute misconduct under the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* or the pharmacist regulation. This provides the public with the means to make a complaint in one area and have the complaint addressed by the appropriate parties and areas. The processes under the *Health Professions Act* can result in a registrar taking no further action or taking action to resolve a complaint. If a complainant is dissatisfied with the registrar's decision, a review committee may be appointed to review the matter. The registrar can request certain actions or recommend a remedial action by consent or issue a citation to the discipline committee. The discipline committee is where a registrar gets no consent or a reprimand or remedial action, and he or she may issue a citation for a hearing by the discipline committee. The registrar can also issue a citation to the discipline committee under certain grounds, such as a contravention of the act or regulations or failure to comply with a limit or condition. The minister appoints the discipline committee under the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. Orders of the discipline committee can range from cautions, reprimands to suspensions, inspections, fines and so forth. The fines are set out in the bill as well.

An order can be made against the licensee or proprietor. A decision of the order may be given to the Minister of Health and Social Services, regulatory bodies as in the case of a rural dispensary, the Yukon Medical Council along with being published in a manner the registrar considers appropriate.

Appeals — a decision of the discipline committee can be appealed by the respondent to the Supreme Court.

The act also allows the registrar or the discipline committee to take any extraordinary action the registrar or discipline committee considers necessary to protect the public, such as setting limits, conditions or the suspension of the licensee before an investigation or hearing is completed.

Where such an action is taken, notice may be given to the Minister of Health and Social Services, a regulatory body and, in the case of a rural permit holder, to the Yukon Medical Council, or published in a manner the registrar considers appropriate.

I think the act does a good job of contemplating the various instances that could occur and allowing for the various measures to be taken, as needed. These aren't always going to be the same and there will be some differences in how that works, depending on the case and depending on the complaint. For instance, as I noted, there's a distinction between a rural permit holder and a pharmacist because of the fact that the rural permit holder is a physician and is governed by the Yukon Medical Council and a different set of rules and structures as well — so there are multiple layers of protection in place here, which is a good thing, I think, when we consider the fact that most of this hasn't existed up until now. It's important that we bring in this new structure to ensure the safety of Yukoners.

I think I've covered off those particular questions, but I look forward to hearing if there's more detail I need to provide.

Ms. Stick: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I thank you for those responses. Moving on — there will be a professional code of ethics that's to be created. I am just curious — because there is the difference between rural dispensaries and pharmacists and pharmacies and physicians, what I'm curious about is, will all pharmacies, whether it's the private, the hospital or whether it's a rural dispensary — will they all have the same set of standards and oversight?

Along with that, does this include — what I haven't seen in particular is mention of pharmacy technicians and how they would be fitting into this legislation, these standards, and these regulations that are to follow this legislation.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The short answer is there will be a different code of ethics for each, and let me explain that. When we think about this, we have the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, which covers the pharmacies themselves, the institutions. We have the pharmacist regulations under the *Health Professions Act*, which cover the pharmacists themselves. Then the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* contemplates rural dispensaries, and then we have the rural permit holders — so basically each one of these will have their own code of ethics. That's four, if you count those.

In the case of the difference between a pharmacist and a rural permit holder, there were some questions raised about why — not necessarily today, but in general — there is the possibility of different standards of practice for pharmacists and rural permit holders. The act doesn't require those to be identical, and the reason for that is the standards of practice for pharmacists include activities, such as compounding of drugs. It's anticipated that rural permit holders will require modified standards of practice of their own to address a number of areas, including limits to simple compounding, similar to nurse practitioners.

So there are additional parameters and additional restrictions around rural permit holders that won't be in place for pharmacists — that's why those aren't identical — likewise the difference between pharmacies and rural dispensaries.

I should also note that, as I noted before, the rural permit holder is also a physician and therefore bound by the rules outlined by the Yukon Medical Council. So there is another layer of accountability or oversight in that sense.

Each of these will have a different code of ethics. I realize that is a lot of work so it is going to take some time, but obviously that will be developed over the course of the coming months and years. Each of them will be available for public consultation.

With regard to the pharmacy technicians, pharmacy technicians will not be regulated initially, but perhaps later.

Ms. Stick: I think I actually was able to follow all of that. There are so many layers involved in this. It is important and we want to see it done correctly.

There is the whole section that I have some questions on that has to do with personal health records, information, sharing of that, collection of it, the storage — there is a lot involved there. I am just curious as to — before this legislation came before the House, did in fact the Information and Privacy Commissioner have a look at it, and did she make recommendations as to what was covered in this legislation?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I will start with the last question, and the answer is yes, the Information and Privacy Commissioner did review the initial draft and made comments. We made changes subsequent to her comments to accommodate her input.

With regard to the legislation that will govern registrants' information, the registrar can only collect information that is necessary to administer the act. Since the registrar is considered a public servant, the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* applies to the information collected by the registrar, both for the protection of personal information and the disclosure of general information. So the information that is gathered by the registrar is subject to ATIPP in the sense that it is protected and that act covers what can be disclosed. So if you were to do an ATIPP for personal information, a certain amount of it would be redacted for personal privacy concerns.

The act provides for the disclosure of information for the protection or enhancement of public safety, the quality of patient care, the integrity of the drug distribution system and

for the administration of the act. It allows for disclosure of information that is already collected to Health and Social Services for the planning and management of the health system. The registrar may only share information with bodies that regulate pharmacies and the practice of a pharmacy in other jurisdictions, a law enforcement agency, the Government of Yukon or Canada, the Yukon Hospital Corporation or a person or body named in the regulation. In terms of the information that is brought by the pharmacies, both the proprietor or owner and the manager or licensee are responsible for patient records. Licensees are responsible for creating and ensuring that patient records are up to date.

Proprietors who have overall responsibility for the records must take all reasonable measures to enable compliance with the licensee's obligations under the act, including maintaining their records. The proprietor is responsible for the care and control of the records according to the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and HIPMA.

Ms. Stick: Again, I apologize for some of these questions. I'm sure they've been explained, but I'm still trying to work through this.

When we came to talking about ATIPP, I understood that. Under HIPMA — and we've talked about e-health — how will this all fit in in terms of prescribing or e-prescribing and whether that's going to be something covered in the regulations? I mean, we passed the legislation, I believe, last spring with regard to health information and privacy. So does this fit together in the jigsaw that we're creating here when we talk about the records that the registrar might have? Are we talking about the ability of physicians to — because we've heard of e-prescribing prescriptions. I'm sorry if that's not more clear.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Okay, so with regard to HIPMA, or sorry, the *Health Information Privacy and Management Act*, that's obviously not enforced yet but —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Chair: Order please.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: So with regard to that legislation, the proprietor or the owner would be a custodian under that act. So to use the language for that act, they would be a custodian of the data, but those systems aren't in place yet in terms of the e-systems that will come up with HIPMA, so they will be dealt with in the regulations pursuant to HIPMA and also in the regulations pursuant to this act with regard to prescriptions.

Ms. Stick: Thank you for that response.

Moving forward a bit — there is talk of the ability to do inspections by inspectors and it talks about auditing of pharmacies. I'm wondering: Are we looking at regularly scheduled audits when we talk about this? The numbers are small in terms of the number of pharmacies here in the Yukon or rural dispensaries. So would there be regularly scheduled audits or is this something that would be a complaint-driven process? We've certainly heard that there is that need for more regular audits and reviews to ensure that best practices are

being followed and hopefully those professional standards are being met.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The issue of inspections and audits is an area that, as I mentioned earlier, is going to be one where we are going to have to lean on some outside expertise. I think at this point, the most likely source of that will be the Alberta College of Pharmacists.

Initially, what we are contemplating is an audit of all licensees or pharmacists. Then, in the course of the regulation development, we will determine whether or not this is an annual process or a scheduled process, or with what frequency these audits will occur. I think it is a reasonable assumption at this point, although we haven't finally made a decision — but I would expect that we would borrow or contract an inspector from the Alberta college to do that initial audit of pharmacies.

I know that is a concern that has been raised by pharmacists that they want to ensure the Yukon government or the registrar and the folks doing the inspections have the capacity to do this work. At this stage we are going to need to lean on outside help to achieve that capacity.

There will be one initial audit to begin with and then, in the course of the development of regulations, we will determine with what frequency that occurs on an ongoing basis — whether it's annual, whether it's scheduled or whether it is some other frequency. I think that covered the question.

Ms. Stick: I guess one of the questions, just listening — or getting the answers today — with regard to the registrar and inspections and audit and all of that type, has it been contemplated what type of human resource support we are going to need — or the government will need — to implement and follow up on what comes out of regulations and standards of practice and out of this legislation and other legislative changes?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: At this point, we haven't allocated additional resources to the registrar, but I would note that, as I have said before, when it comes to the development of the regulations and the creation of the capacity within government, we are looking to outside help when it comes to developing our capacity.

I have indicated that I think that the Alberta college is the likely source of that. As we have noted, Alberta has been the guide for the creation of legislation; they will be the guide for the creation of the code of ethics, standards of practice, et cetera. It is a logical step to engage the Alberta College of Pharmacists to lean on for the development of our capacity. As I indicated, when it comes to inspectors, the inspectors are appointed by the minister and, in this case, we are anticipating leaning on the Alberta College of Pharmacists to conduct those initial inspections and audits and will develop the capacity as needed. As with anything, if we don't have the capacity in-house, we will work with outside bodies like the Alberta College of Pharmacists.

Ms. Stick: I understand the initial reasons for going out possibly to Alberta to look for support and assistance on those things, but it also has to be a system that meets the needs of citizens, where a complaint process is accessible so people

have an easy way of being able to contact someone and say, “I took my prescription and this happened” or “They told me this and I don’t think that’s right” — that type of thing. Is this going to be — perhaps in the very beginning it’s not going to be the most accessible, but are there going to be assurances that citizens have an easy way of accessing a complaint process that’s open and accessible to them, rather than dealing with a body that is possibly out of territory?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I think it’s fair to assume that this is very open. Complaints can be made by any person in the public to the registrar. That part is very simple and accessible to the public. What happens after the complaint is made is determined by what the complaint is and the nature of the complaint.

I walked through the various avenues that could be employed in terms of dealing with the complaint, whether it’s simple remedial action or, ultimately, the creation of a discipline committee, which is the further end of the spectrum. I think we have the capacity in-house now to receive those complaints, without a doubt. I have confidence in that. After a complaint is received and if there is a need for outside expertise or additional help, that’s when we would consider needing additional help, but at this point, I have no doubt that the complaint process will be simple in terms of its understandability and its accessibility to the public. What we do with complaints and what we do with complaints that need considerable action is something we’re going to have to deal with in the course of this. I’m confident that we have the capacity currently to receive those complaints and to deal with them. That may include leaning on outside expertise or assistance but, in terms of the question about accessibility or the facility with which a person can access the registrar, it’s a fairly simple process to lodge a complaint from what I understand, so I think we’ll be okay on that front.

Ms. Stick: I was curious about one of the provisions in the legislation which talks about an absence from the Yukon of eight weeks or more when we were discussing rural permit holders. The legislation states that they must — in accordance with the yet-to-be regulations, or for the regulations that will come — notify the registrar and arrange for the management and supervision of the pharmacy or rural dispensary during their absence by an interim licensee approved by the registrar. Eight weeks seems to me a fair amount of time to ask people to go, without accommodating access, to a licence-prescribing authority for their prescription drugs.

We did ask the question when we were in the briefings and we were told that small amounts of pharmaceutical drugs are immediately available throughout the rural health centres, but I am just wondering how it was determined that eight weeks was chosen and not a shorter period of time.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Obviously the licensee or the rural permit holder is responsible for overseeing the conduct of the facility in general, but obviously we would want to accommodate for that person leaving for a period of time, whether for holidays or other reasons.

My understanding is that the eight-week number came from what is done in Alberta or thereabouts. I think it was

through the external advisory committee that we arrived at the conclusion that eight weeks was a suitable duration of time. I think that found its impetus in what is done in Alberta.

Ms. Stick: I am not sure if I personally agree with eight weeks because I do think we are quite a bit different from Alberta in terms of access to nearby communities or facilities where there is more than one pharmacy or where you have better access. Some of our communities are more remote than most in Alberta.

I believe the member opposite spoke to the expanded scope of practice across Canada and what Alberta — you know I have that same chart that shows everything that happened. I just wanted to clarify: Are pharmacists able to do any of these things that we had discussed earlier — the emergency prescription refills, therapeutic substitutions and that type of thing — or is that something we are going to have to wait for — the regulations to come into place? Just talking to my own family doctor or friends who are physicians, especially the one around emergency prescription refills — it might be a Saturday night and you have lost your prescription or something has happened to it, and you do not want to take that break or it could be detrimental to your health not to have access to that emergency prescription. Are they now able to do those things or is that something we have to wait for the regulations for?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The list of actions that are done under expanded scope of practice — there are a number of things that are done in other jurisdictions by pharmacists that are not done here. I referenced before the chart that the Canadian Pharmacists Association puts out that lists all of the possible things.

The scope of practice for pharmacists will be in the pharmacist regulation under the *Health Professions Act*, which will come out next — so later this year, that will come out. It’s not in this bill. That will be released for public input so the public will have a chance to comment on the expanded scope that’s going to be contemplated for pharmacists here in the territory, but it will be under the *Health Professions Act* and it will come up later.

My understanding is that, technically, none of the things on the expanded-scope list can be done in Yukon, but there have been some hoops that have been jumped through to achieve some of the things that are being done now. The regulations that will come under the *Health Professions Act* will provide a lot more clarity and a lot more simplicity for pharmacists to do these things. We’re going to start with renewing and extending prescriptions, changing drug dosages and formulations, and making therapeutic substitutions as a starting point. Of course we’ll do this in consultation with all the groups and the public as I’ve explained previously. But that’s what we’re anticipating starting with. From there we will move on to — over the course of the implementation of the act and the regulations, look at other actions under the expanded scope list. Those include other jurisdictions — for instance, Alberta — prescribing for minor ailments or conditions, initiating prescription drug therapy, ordering and interpreting lab tests, administering a drug by injection. Those

are all actions that are done in Alberta by pharmacists, and it's our intention to get there eventually but we're going to start with those ones that I mentioned earlier.

Ms. Stick: We've talked in the past in this Legislature — and this is going back to information sharing. One of the things we've heard over the past is the ability of pharmacies to share information among themselves. You hear of the occasional person who might have multiple prescriptions and tries to have them filled at different pharmacies. I'm wondering if the minister could tell this House how those instances will be dealt with. Will there be that type of ability for pharmacists to check with other pharmacies to ensure that theirs is the only prescription? It's also important if you're looking at mixing different medications. There may be a time when one pharmacy is closed and you need a prescription filled on a Sunday and you might go to a different one but without that pharmacist knowing what you've already been prescribed. I'm just wondering if the minister could speak to that and the ability to share that type of information across different pharmacies, and I guess with rural dispensaries also.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Other jurisdictions employ a more complex system that allows for pharmacists to share information among themselves in an organized way. We don't have that kind of system here but we are working toward that.

The Health and Social Services department is currently developing a drug information system in collaboration with stakeholders. The drug information system will create a single, comprehensive database of drugs that have been prescribed and dispensed to people in Yukon. The drug information system will allow authorized health care providers in the hospitals and in the communities to see a complete, up-to-date and accurate medication profile.

The DIS — the drug information system — will give health care providers better tools to identify drug interactions, adverse reactions and allergies. It will also support, as we talked about earlier, e-prescriptions. Physicians will be able to post prescriptions for electronic pickup by pharmacies. Currently the requirements for the Yukon drug information system are being developed, and we're hoping that system would be launched later this year, or perhaps early next year.

Details related to the operations of the system will be in compliance with the HIPMA and included in future regulations under this act, the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, and under HIPMA, as needed.

There is some ability on an individual basis to search some information, but to do it in a coordinated manner, we need to develop a new system, like other jurisdictions have done, and we're in the process of developing that now.

Ms. Stick: This is a relatively simple, but I think important, question that has to do with statutes of limitations when individuals are making complaints. Will there be a statute of limitations, or is that something to be contemplated under the regulations?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'm afraid to say I don't know the answer to that. We believe our friends in legal counsel do know the answer, but they are not here with us today and I can't answer it. I can commit to getting back to the member

opposite on the answer as to whether or not there is a statute of limitations that would apply on a complaint that would be made by an individual about some sort of service that they received, or any kind of incident, as contemplated under the act.

I know that the bill itself doesn't include a statute of limitations explicitly, but I'm sure that there's an answer that relates to perhaps precedence or another bill or another piece of legislation — but I don't know the answer today. I'm sorry.

Ms. Stick: That's okay. Thank you.

It was just a question because there are different statutes of limitation lengths in various pieces of legislation across all departments, and it was just a curious question that I had.

One of the questions also, and it's I guess along the same — no sorry, I'll move on from that one. This has to do with exemptions to licences required.

I believe it was partially answered, but one of my questions about the exemptions that I was just curious about — I didn't understand where it came from, and it just kind of stood out for me — had to do with a member of the Canadian Armed Forces, or of a visiting force, and they came under the exemptions. I'm just asking for an explanation on that please.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The Canadian Armed Forces or a visiting force is covered under the exemptions section from doing anything in the course of their duties, such as dispensing, that a pharmacy officer may do. My understanding is that the Armed Forces have a different set of parameters under which they operate and, from time to time, they are posted in various parts of the country and are covered by their own rules and regulations.

To use an example, when Operation Nanook was hosted here in Yukon, they would have an officer in their company who is allowed to or permitted to dispense certain medications, as needed, in the course of their jobs. It's not very common, obviously, but there is the provision for that.

We note in the bill that that is exempt from this bill, as it's covered in a different piece of legislation. I can't tell you the name of the legislation that governs that federally — there's actually an act called the *Visiting Forces Act*. It covers that sort of thing. I just learned that. I confess I just learned there is a federal *Visiting Forces Act* and it covers those types of activities.

I hope that answers the question.

Ms. Stick: I appreciate that answer. I assumed it would be something like that, in terms of the Armed Forces coming here for exercises, no doubt having their own physician and medical dispensary. I just wanted to be clear on that.

One of the other questions I have has to do with naturopaths. It's mentioned in the act. It talks about them coming under the different — here it is. "Natural health product" has the same meaning as in the natural health products regulations.

I was curious, though, about naturopaths — which we have a number of in the Yukon — and their ability to sell or dispense supplements that they might provide to people who come to see them. Does this speak to that group at all?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding — and I do stand to be corrected — is that substances or products that are dealt with by the types of individuals the member is talking about are unscheduled drugs. Yukon follows the national drug schedules, and these schedules identify how drugs can be sold and which ones require the services of a pharmacist. There are four categories of drugs in total: three schedules of drugs and one category of unscheduled drugs.

Schedule I drugs require a prescription and are provided to the public by a pharmacist. This would include antibiotics. Schedule II drugs, while less strictly regulated, do require professional intervention from a pharmacist at the point of sale and possibly a referral by a practitioner. While no prescription is required, these drugs are only available from a pharmacist and must be retained within the area of the pharmacy, where there is no public access and no opportunity for patient self-selection. For example, this would include codeine.

Schedule III drugs may present risks to certain populations in self-selection. These are available without a prescription, but they are to be sold from the self-selection area of the pharmacy, which is operated under the direct supervision of the pharmacist. This area is accessible to the patient and clearly defined by the professional services area of the pharmacy.

The pharmacist is available, accessible and approachable to assist the patient in making an appropriate self-medication selection. For example, this would include certain antihistamines.

Unscheduled drugs can be sold without professional supervision. There is adequate information available for the patient to make safe and effective choices and the labelling is deemed sufficient to ensure appropriate use of this drug. These drugs may be sold from any retail outlet. For example, this would include low-dosage Ibuprofen.

So, Madam Chair, my understanding is that any drugs or substances sold by naturopaths, of course, follow federal legislation, including the National Drug Schedule.

Ms. Stick: I don't think I have any questions aside from a few that might come up when we go through the legislation clause by clause, but I do just want to say that safety with prescription drugs, regulations around pharmacies and standards for pharmacists are important for all Yukoners. Again, I just want to thank the committee that helped steer this legislation and thank those public servants, both in the Department of Health and Social Services and in the Department of Community Services, for their hard work on this.

There is a lot more work to come and it will be very interesting to see the regulations roll out — to see the standards roll out — and it will be good for the Yukon. It will give us a way to know what's happening, a way to make complaints if it's necessary and hopefully it is all accessible and understandable. I am sure that there is lots of work ahead to be done and I look forward to hearing further information on this. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Just in response, I am happy to walk through it, clause by clause, and respond to individual questions on the clauses as they arise. I would echo the member opposite in indicating that, yes, this is long overdue and we are happy to bring it forward now. The provisions in this act will certainly go a long way to improving Yukon's health care system and improving service to Yukoners.

With that, Madam Chair, I am happy to go through it, clause by clause.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate? We are going to proceed with clause-by-clause reading.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Clause 2 agreed to

On Clause 3

Clause 3 agreed to

On Clause 4

Ms. Stick: Under clause 4, I am looking for a bit more explanation under 4(1), which discusses the compound, supply — compound. We heard the member opposite speak to this earlier with regard to the difference between a rural dispensary and a pharmacist being able to create compounds — so if I could just have a bit of a description on that please.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Section 4(1) — this provision allows registered nurses to continue to compound, supply or dispense drugs at health centres in the various communities without penalty. The type of medicines or formulary, the supply of pharmaceuticals and the conditions under which they may be dispensed at the community health centres are reviewed regularly and overseen by a joint committee of Yukon Hospital Corporation, Whitehorse General Hospital pharmacy and the Department of Health and Social Services Community Nursing.

Clause 4 agreed to

On Clause 5

Ms. Stick: It is not so much a debate or a question, but looking for assurances that, when we talk about the pharmacy advisory committee and who would be appointed to that — just looking for assurances that we always include that patient voice, the citizen voice, that is impacted by this legislation because, when we talk about collaborative care — patient- and family-centred — the voice has to be there and has to have a method. I am just looking for assurances on that.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: In southern jurisdictions, pharmacies and the practice of pharmacy are regulated by professional colleges that have the expertise to self-regulate. In order to assist with expertise in Yukon, a pharmacy advisory committee is permitted under this legislation, upon the request of the registrar, to advise on matters such as standards, code of ethics, licensure, recommendations for disciplinary committee members and other issues pertaining to the enforcement of the act. The advisory committee established under the *Health Professions Act*, pharmacist regulation, will serve as the same committee for this act. Regulation-making authority allows for

additional members to sit on the committee, should they be required.

This could include experts from outside of the territory and/or pharmacy owners. But of course it's done by an OIC. It's at the discretion of the minister in Executive Council Office. I would just simply note that we want to ensure that the advisory committee is able to operate well and in certain times have the authority to make recommendations for the discipline committee. I will take the member's comments about the need for public engagement and public voices to be heard under advisement and will assure the House that as we implement this legislation, we'll take note of that comment.

Clause 5 agreed to

On Clause 6

Ms. Hanson: I would just like to ask for clarification. The appointment and duties of the registrar — in section 6(2), it details the duties of the registrar. That includes issuing licences to applicants who are “eligible for them”. My question is: What are the qualifications for the registrar in terms of knowledge of and experience with respect to pharmacy and pharmacy-related functions? They're going to be issuing licences and determining the eligibility of practising pharmacists against some criteria so do they have to have any expertise in the field?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The registrar is of course the same registrar who we have in the branch of Community Services who regulates a number of different health professions. While I don't have her CV handy or her job description handy, I do note that the registrar has considerable experience with regard to regulating health professions and other professions throughout the territory.

I should note that when it's necessary to employ specific information or specific details or capacity, the registrar can also seek the advice of the advisory committee. The advisory committee is there in place to provide that technical support and understanding of the details of the profession. Then, if necessary, as I said before, in the cases where inspections need to be taken or further action needs to be taken, we can call upon contract support from outside the territory as well.

So the registrar herself obviously is responsible for regulating a number of different professions, but in the instances where a specific amount of knowledge is needed about the actual field, the registrar can lean on the advisory committee if needed.

I should also note that in the legislation, the registrar for pharmacies will be the same as the registrar for pharmacists. They've been identified as two separate positions to allow for greater flexibility, should either one be moved to a separate branch or department. The appointment of a member of the public service means ATIPP applies to that as well — just as a side note.

Ms. Hanson: The scope of the registrar's duties set out in section 6(a) to (g) is quite broad and includes putting into effect the decisions of the discipline committee. I understand what the minister is saying with respect to bringing in outside or external resources to assist, should there be a problem, but who makes that decision? We've ascertained that the registrar

is not going to be somebody who is a pharmacist or has an expertise in pharmacy or the business of pharmacists, but will in fact be playing a significant role in determining whether or not they're eligible to have a licence, and then if there are problems going along. Who makes the decision to refer? Is there an appeal process set out here in terms of a decision? There is an appeal in section 7, but who makes the decision that would trigger an appeal and when is there a decision to bring in outside expertise?

The reason I'm saying that is because we've seen this in the past. It's difficult for patients and others when it comes to challenges with respect to patients encountering occasional problems with physicians, so who makes a decision about how you get somebody else involved to help resolve those issues?

I'm wondering, if the registrar is making these decisions and if a pharmacist doesn't like the decision around any one of the (a) to (g) functions that that registrar performs, do you wait until they go to an appeal before bringing somebody in or are you going to try to resolve it before that?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: There are a number of specific questions, but I'll try to address just the general theme. Section 6 here obviously outlines what the registrar must do. One of those things is issue licences, and the licences are what guides the conduct as well as the code of practices, the code of ethics, the standards of practice, the standards of operations. All of that will guide what goes into a licence. A licence actually issued for a pharmacy or a rural dispensary will have a number of stipulations, a number of rules, and if a complaint is made about the pharmacy or the rural dispensary, the registrar makes a decision based on the regulations that guide the registrar in terms of what they need to do.

If they need to take further action in terms of administrative fees or further action, they can do that, but the decision about at what point do you, as the member opposite said, seek additional advice from the advisory committee, is going to be something that is going to be guided by the regulations, by the standards of practice, by the standards of operations and by the code of ethics.

All of that accumulates in terms of the guidance that the registrar has. The advisory committee would then provide advice as necessary.

In terms of appeal or appeal decisions, the next section, section 7, discusses this but, in my opening remarks, or in Committee earlier, I talked a little bit about the appeal process in the bill as well. Section 29 of this bill speaks to complaints from public persons, so that's where — so there are a few different avenues for complaint, there are a few different avenues for recourse and we're confident that, with the help of the advisory committee, the registrar will have enough support to make those decisions.

Clause 6 agreed to

On Clause 7

Clause 7 agreed to

On Clause 8

Ms. Stick: This has to do with public registry and access for the public to that. I'm just wondering how this is

anticipated or what the — how would it happen that the public could access this information?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: So this clause, section 8(1), requires the registrar to keep a register of licensed pharmacies and rural dispensaries, but the information in the register will be set out in regulations, so we'll know exactly what that looks like when we have regulations in place. This is to allow time to determine if regulations under HIPMA will impact what information may need to be in the register. This clause — and 8(2) as well — addresses a growing trend toward greater public access and accountability; however, it does not mean that personal information about registrants will be available publicly. The information that's set out in the register will be in the regulation and that will determine what exactly goes in there and how that system works.

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

Ms. Stick: I am just looking for an explanation on this one and where this might have come from. It has to do with leased premises and rental rates and based on value of drugs. It was just an interesting one that I was looking for clarification on. That is section 15.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This provision ensures that pharmacy services and patient safety are not influenced or compromised by commercial gain with regard to a premises being leased.

Clause 15 agreed to

On Clause 16

Clause 16 agreed to

On Clause 17

Clause 17 agreed to

On Clause 18

Clause 18 agreed to

On Clause 19

Clause 19 agreed to

On Clause 20

Clause 20 agreed to

On Clause 21

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug 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.

Mr. Elias: 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.

The following sessional paper was tabled April 13, 2015:

33-1-157

Government of Yukon Response to the Select Committee Final Report Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing (April 9, 2015) (Kent)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 195

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, April 14, 2015 — 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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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, April 14, 2015 — 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 the Bridge Building Competition

Hon. Mr. Graham: I rise in the House today to pay tribute to the 22nd — although I understand from an engineer that it was the 23rd annual bridge building competition — which was held Saturday, April 11 at Porter Creek Secondary School.

I had the pleasure of attending the competition and was truly impressed by some of the bridges that were constructed. This bridge building competition is a partnership between Science Adventures at the Yukon Research Centre and the Association of Professional Engineers of Yukon. This annual competition introduces students to structural engineering principles. This popular hands-on event brings together students from grades 4 to 12 in friendly competition. It's also open to families and the general public to test their construction prowess. I was totally amazed at how many friends and family members attended this competition on the weekend. It was truly an exciting occasion.

The objective of the bridge building competition is to construct the strongest model bridge that will span a distance of 700 millimetres, using only wooden stir sticks, glue and dental floss. Although all the teams begin with the same materials and rules, they approach the challenge in many, many different ways. The creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking needed for successful bridge building matches the four skills areas focused on in Yukon schools' 21st century learning approach. The development of these four skills is crucial for the success of each learner. I extend my thanks to Science Adventures and the Association of Professional Engineers of Yukon for providing this engaging learning opportunity for Yukon students.

Those who might have felt daunted or unsure about their ability to apply engineering principles are presented with an accessible, fun activity. They learn the principles through trial and error. When a bridge comes crashing down, it is not a failure, but an adventure shared by all participants. I want to congratulate all the participants in the bridge building competition on their teamwork, their sense of fair play, hard work in creating beautiful, well-crafted — and in many cases extremely strong — bridges. More than 90 teams entered the

competition and I wish to congratulate the winners in each category.

In the grade 4 to 5 category, Theo Anderson and Thomas Gishler, from Holy Family Elementary School and Aurora Virtual School — they are here with us in the gallery today. They won the 4 to 5 category. Congratulations, boys.

In the grade 6 to 7 category, Rylan Stoker from Christ the King Elementary School. In the grade 8 to 12 category, his brother Aidan Stoker from Vanier Catholic Secondary School won the competition. I have to add that Aidan Stoker's grade 9 bridge had an extremely high strength score. The bridge weighed 277 grams and carried a load of 138 kilograms. That is 304 pounds, so it was truly an amazing feat. I should also note that Aidan is having a very good year. He is also representing the Yukon/Stikine in the Canada-wide science fair in Fredericton, New Brunswick, May 10 to 16. Best of luck, Aidan, and I hope you do really well there as well.

In the open category, we have today with us Victor John. Victor is a little shy and I am not sure he is going to stand up, but accompanying him is Steve Tapp. Victor and Steve are from the Elijah Smith Elementary School and Victor did an excellent job in winning the open category.

I encourage everyone in this House to visit the competition website to learn more about this year's entries and the special awards given to teams and participants who built the best-looking, lightest bridge or offered the best narratives to accompany their creations.

On a special note, I would like to also tell you about a group of four bridges that came down on Friday from Ross River. I mentioned them at the bridge building competition because these four bridges were constructed by students in Ross River under very trying circumstances.

As everyone in the Legislature knows, Ross River School was forced to close because of some structural difficulties and these students constructed their bridges in small — very small sometimes — homes where they're holding classes. They also never had the advantage of having an engineer visit them in Ross River prior to building their bridges. They were well-represented. They did an excellent job. In fact one bridge from Ross River that they felt would not last very long I think was one of the higher scoring bridges in their competition. I just would like to say a special thanks to Ross River and the school and the instructors there who did such a wonderful job producing those four bridges.

I would also be remiss if I didn't point out a couple of people who are absolutely integral to the operation of this process. We have Tim Green and Heather Dundas with us here today. Without Tim and Heather, this bridge building competition would not be the resounding success it has been. Thanks everyone for attending the House today. We really appreciate it and congratulations to all of you.

Applause

Mr. Tredger: It gives me great pleasure today to rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to the annual Yukon bridge building contest. This contest is open to students in grades 4 to 12. There is also

an open class for families and the general public. This even is a direct partnership between Science Adventures of the Yukon Research Centre and the Association of Professional Engineers of the Yukon working together with the school community, teachers, parents, and especially the students.

I was unable to attend this year as I was in Mayo for the weekend, but over the years I have attended as an MLA, as a principal, as a teacher, as a parent and as an interested member of the public.

The bridge building contest is an important and looked-forward-to event for many students, their teachers, their parents and, in some cases, their grandparents, and the science community. The bridge building event is an example of how community involvement can give wings to learning. It is an example of education that works.

While this event might look straightforward, it takes a lot of planning and organization to make it run smoothly. I would like to do a shout-out to all those who gave their time to organize this successful event: the engineers and scientists for their inspiration, knowledge, enthusiasm, and especially time — for the time taken with each bridge builder and each student to discuss the merits of their projects, to discuss ways it can be improved and to discuss the successes of it.

I would also like to give a shout-out to the staff and teachers of our schools who recognize the value of events like these, who promote and encourage and provide time and resources to make it possible. I would especially like to recognize the parents and the grandparents of the families of the students who spend long hours with the students, developing and promoting the project.

The Yukon bridge building contest is a community coming together for our children. I'm especially pleased to note the support and reach out to our community schools.

We have many challenges facing our society — climate change; how do we accomplish more with less? We need young, enthusiastic citizens trained in scientific methods with a can-do attitude.

The keys to learning are engagement, presentations of real challenges, research, sharing and collecting of information, putting forth hypotheses, building and testing those hypotheses and bringing information learned to the next project. The bridge building contest is about sharing and working together — how the students share their ideas, refining them and planning next year's project and what changes they might make.

Again, I would like to thank the Association of Professional Engineers of Yukon. In their introduction to the contest on their webpage they said, "You will be introduced to basic engineering principles in a fun format and gain a better understanding of the impact that engineering has on your life. Thousands of wood stir sticks are just waiting to be glued, tied and destroyed!"

Real life, hands-on solutions — this is a wonderful opportunity for our community and businesses to engage our students in real challenges, building a way of thinking, learning how to meet challenges and perhaps inspiring future

scientists or setting students on career paths that engage them in the real world.

Thank you to Yukon College, the Association of Professional Engineers of Yukon, the Department of Education and all those who supported this annual event for being fabulous role models, for modelling and engaging our children in the future.

I would like to acknowledge the many parents and teachers here in the gallery today. Thank you for taking the time to come out.

In recognition of Ducks Unlimited Canada

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It is a pleasure for me to rise in this House today on behalf of all members to pay tribute to Ducks Unlimited Canada — in particular the efforts of its members in Yukon.

This worthy organization has been an ongoing partner in the conservation of Yukon's wetlands critical to waterfowl, biodiversity, wildlife and the environment. Ducks Unlimited's most recent conservation efforts involve the ongoing protection of Canada's boreal forest. Stretching from Alaska to Labrador, the boreal forest provides nesting grounds for more than 300 bird species. The boreal forest makes up almost 60 percent of Canada's land mass. Nearly the same portion is forested in the Yukon, with forested areas extending into the Subarctic.

Environment Yukon is working to ensure that Yukon's natural environment is maintained for the sustainable use and enjoyment for current and future generations. By working toward the continued conservation of habitat, we can help sustain summer migrants such as the threaded olive-sided flycatcher or the common nighthawk or some of our resident birds, such as the northern goshawk.

This includes working to acknowledge and better understand any deterioration in this area from the impact of climate change. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend Ducks Unlimited for working with governments, birding organizations and others in spreading the awareness about boreal conservation.

I would also like to recognize their work in supporting the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan* by: conducting waterfowl surveys; promoting wetland classification and conservation; sitting on some of the technical working groups that developed the recommendations for initiatives that arise out of the final land agreements; and leading wetland traditional knowledge workshops.

The work of Ducks Unlimited complements the work undertaken by the Government of Yukon to maintain and enhance the quality of Yukon's natural environment for present and future generations.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we have in the gallery Jamie Kenyon. I had an opportunity to meet with him right after I became the minister. I was really impressed by the work he does with Ducks Unlimited, so please help me in welcoming him to the House today.

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?
 Are there any bills to be introduced?
 Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to support the Watson Lake Ski Club in replacing the T-bar lift cables, the groomer tiller bars and fuel tank.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to support the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in utilizing local knowledge to research, mark and clear traditional travel routes in north Yukon.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to live up to its 2009 promises and set territory-wide targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to analyze the cost and feasibility of a smart grid with the capacity to transmit and redistribute multiple sources of renewable energy throughout the Yukon in order that the territory have a comprehensive options analysis for its renewable energy future.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to listen to parents concerned about the safety of Yukon's schoolyards and repair the existing soccer fields.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Seniors housing

Ms. Hanson: You know, the Yukon Party government boasts that its proposed \$330 million, 300-bed, long-term care institution will be the largest and most expensive capital works project in Yukon history. Building the biggest and most expensive should not be the goal. The Yukon NDP knows that responsible planning involves meeting the needs of Yukon seniors through the most effective and cost-efficient means. By working with citizens and medical professionals, we can find the most effective and affordable way to meet the needs of our seniors and elders. There are better options to support

the health and well-being of our aging population than building a seniors' institution that is based on questionable needs estimates, no public consultation and no cost-benefit analysis.

On what evidence did the government base its decision to build a 300-bed institution and what options were considered to determine that it was the most effective and efficient use of public health dollars?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The simple answer is that Yukoners need this facility. Yukoners need this 150-bed long-term care facility. We have committed to Yukoners to providing those services to them.

We know that we have conducted two needs assessments and a business case for this facility, and we look forward to the vast array of services that we can provide for our seniors who are not able to stay in their homes any longer and who require that level of care that cannot be provided in their home or their community any longer. We are looking forward, on a move-forward basis, to the budgetary item in this spring budget to move forward with this long-term care facility.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, who says an internal needs assessment is not public consultation? The Canadian Institute for Health Information data shows that long-term care facilities in Canada with 200 or more beds are proportionally more expensive to operate, and it is not just the \$300-million capital cost. The estimated operation and maintenance costs for a 300-bed institution will rob the continuing care budget of its ability to focus on home care and other supports to keep people out of institutional care. The minister says — and I quote: "By creating a larger facility, we can deliver services in an affordable and sustainable manner." But, Mr. Speaker, national data is clear: His 300-bed approach is actually more expensive. This Yukon Party approach has already wasted millions of health care dollars.

Why did the minister pursue a mega-complex when that approach has been shown to be more expensive?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would remind the member opposite, the Leader of the Official Opposition, that what we are proposing in this budget is, on a move-forward basis, a 150-bed continuing care facility in Whistle Bend. This government believes in planning for the future and planning for future needs of Yukoners and Yukon seniors. What we have allocated is land set aside for future expansion if and when there is a need or a desire to do that by a future government. That is a decision that we are not making today. That decision will be made in the future.

It is important that we provide this level of care to seniors so that they are able to live and die with dignity, whether it is in their communities through home care or, if their needs are greater, that we have facilities like this, as well as Copper Ridge Place and Macaulay Lodge. Macaulay Lodge has 96 beds and that is a great facility. It fits in with the community and we are looking for the same thing with 150 beds in Whistle Bend.

Ms. Hanson: The minister might want to pay attention to his own motions from his own government. There is an

Order Paper motion today from the government for a 300-bed continuing care facility.

In contrast, the Yukon Party government's push for a \$330-million institution as the magic solution for all seniors care, the Yukon NDP's vision for aging in place will provide seniors and elders with a continuum of care to choose — choices that are both more affordable and more effective.

The Canadian Nurses Association says that investing in home care can make a positive difference in a person's health status, relieve pressure on over-crowded care facilities, and lead to performance efficiencies in the health system.

A recent analysis performed by the Canadian Medical Association shows that the cost of one day in home care is nearly 60 percent less than a day spent in long-term care.

Will the minister shelve his expensive 300-bed proposal and invite Yukoners into a discussion about what care options offer the most effective and affordable model to help seniors age in place?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I have to agree with the member opposite on the fact that we believe that keeping seniors in their homes as long as possible is the most viable option.

What the member opposite and the parties opposite fail to reflect is that, at a point in time in a person's life when they can no longer stay in their home or in their community, we need services for them. This Yukon Party government is standing up to the plate, unlike what the other two parties have done in the past, on a move-forward basis to provide these therapeutic services and therapeutic environments for seniors in a long-term care facility.

What we're looking at is advanced dementia care services, hospice, palliative care, sub-acute or activation unit, a mental health unit, bariatric care, as well as day programming. This government supports those programs for Yukon services, and, on a move-forward basis, we're very proud of this decision.

Question re: Mine closure security

Mr. Tredger: After only three years of operation, the Wolverine mine shut down. They only managed to be in full production for a little over a month. Their owners, Yukon Zinc Corporation, now owes the government just under \$3 million in outstanding mine site cleanup securities. Yukon Zinc also owes Yukon businesses \$4.3 million. These are just the direct costs.

Last year's budget alone allocated \$7.25 million to upgrade the highway to the mine road to help Yukon Zinc get their ore out. Does the minister think that the public money that his government invested in Wolverine mine paid off over its three-year lifespan?

Hon. Mr. Kent: On this side of the House, we believe in the importance of mining, not only to our economy, but also to the people who live here in the Yukon, the people who work at these mine sites, the people who work in the placer mines, and the people who work in the businesses that support this important industry to the territory.

As I've mentioned before, government officials have been meeting with the Yukon Zinc Corporation and are

closely monitoring the mine site to ensure there's no risk to the environment or people who work and live in the area. Last week, I believe it was, I spoke — along with the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, the Minister of Economic Development — to the chief and some of the council members of Ross River. We've since offered to travel to Ross River, hold a public meeting with respect to developments at the mine, as well as take individuals from the community out to the mine site to show them first-hand.

I guess I have to take exception with one of the points the member opposite raised, though, with respect to upgrading the Campbell Highway. That's a public highway. That's as important to the people of Watson Lake and Faro and Ross River that he seems to forget.

Mr. Tredger: During the very short lifespan of Wolverine mine, less than one in four jobs at the mine went to Yukoners. Yukon Zinc Corporation has paid zero dollars in royalties. Yukon Zinc has left with millions in debt to the Yukon government and to local businesses, and millions more in public dollars invested in the Robert Campbell Highway to help the mine ship its ore out.

Does the minister really think that Yukoners got a fair deal out of Wolverine mine investments?

Hon. Mr. Kent: With respect to the Wolverine mine, Yukon Zinc hasn't left. They're on-site. They're taking care of care and maintenance. The mine right now is in temporary closure.

I thought the member opposite actually attended a technical briefing yesterday where this question was raised, but clearly he wasn't paying attention to the answer provided by officials at that technical briefing.

When it comes to investments in infrastructure, investments aren't only made in infrastructure for industrial purposes. We make investments in infrastructure for the travelling public and Yukoners who live outside of Whitehorse.

When it comes to the Campbell Highway, that also services people from Carmacks — which is in the member's riding — to Faro, Ross River and Watson Lake, as well as individuals who are coming off the Cantung mine that is at the top of the Nahanni Range Road. So again Mr. Speaker, these are important investments that we make in infrastructure. We are also investing in training so that Yukoners can take advantage of these Yukon opportunities. We have partnered with the federal government on the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining in not only program dollars, but significant capital investments in facilities at the Whitehorse campus of Yukon College, as well as a mobile training trades trailer that has travelled not only to Dawson City, but is currently, I believe, in Ross River.

Mr. Tredger: The road improvements stopped just after the mine site turnoff.

While less than one in four of Wolverine employees were Yukon residents, millions are owed to Yukon government and Yukon businesses. Yukon government poured more millions into infrastructure for the mine, and what do they have to show for it? No royalties and a royal mess. The fact is that this

government has failed to ensure that Yukoners got a fair deal out of our own natural resources at Wolverine mine. If the minister disagrees, he can answer this simple question. Does the minister believe that Wolverine mine is an example of sustainable mining that benefits all Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I have to question the member opposite's facts. The road improvements do not end at the Wolverine mine turnoff. They are not even at the Tuchitua camp, which is the turnoff to the Nahanni Range Road, so I would encourage the member — perhaps later on this summer — to take a drive around the Yukon and visit some of the communities outside of his riding and take a look at the incredible infrastructure improvements that this government has invested in. We have a \$60-million transportation budget that we are debating right now on the floor of this House. I am sure the member opposite will, of course, be voting against that when the time comes.

Again, when it comes to value for Yukoners, Mr. Speaker, we are investing not only in our infrastructure; we are investing in training; we are making regulatory improvements; we have terrific geology. Mining is an important industry to Yukoners. Members on this side of the House recognize that. Members on the other side of the House do not.

Question re: Mineral staking on settlement land

Mr. Silver: In 2013, as the result of another legal battle with Yukon First Nation governments, this government was under a court order 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, only a few days after the legislative session concluded, we found out at the government was unable to reach an agreement with Ross River.

Without a deal in place, the entire 63,000-square kilometre area was taken off the table for staking. Last fall the minister assured Yukoners that a deal would be done by the latest deadline of January 2015. Instead, since we last met, the government has extended the amount of time that this land will be off limits for another two years.

Why did the minister break his promise to have the land back in circulation by January 2015?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I thank the member opposite for the question. With respect to what the member is speaking about, there were two declarations that came out of that Yukon Court of Appeal decision. One was, of course, with respect to class 1 mining and notification. The other is what the member opposite is talking about — determining which land will be made available to staking in the Ross River area.

My understanding — again, this is being led by Executive Council Office, so perhaps the Premier will have more information for the member opposite — is that discussions did carry on up until the late stages before the January 31, 2015 deadline, but we were unable to reach a deal. At that point,

caucus and Cabinet colleagues, as well as the Premier, decided that it would be beneficial to extend that staking moratorium a further two years, so we could come up with a deal that is fair to Yukoners and fair to citizens of the Ross River Dena Council.

Mr. Silver: This is what the government had to say last year — and I quote: "...the staking ban is due to come off at the end of January ..." Instead, because it was unable to reach an agreement, the government has, once again, been forced to extend the staking ban for another two years. By that time, the Yukon Party will have 63,000 square kilometres of land off-limits to staking for a period of more than three years.

The minister was very certain when we were in the House last fall. He said that a deal would be in place before we met again, and it is not. Instead, the government is forced to keep 13 percent of the Yukon off-limits for staking.

The Ross River Dena Council is in full support of this moratorium, of course, because the government is not addressing their concerns. So my question to the minister is: Why hasn't the government been able to come to an agreement with the Ross River Dena Council?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Negotiations are always between at least two parties and, in this case, that certainly holds true. When it comes to the land and the land quantum that the Ross River Dena Council wanted to keep from being open to mineral staking, we couldn't come to an agreement with them on that in the time allotted, and that's why we extended the time by two years.

I do find it interesting, though, that the member opposite seems so outraged and appalled by the Ross River area but, at the same time, he would like to remove the entire Peel River watershed from any and all industrial development. It's quite something to get lectured by the Member for Klondike with respect to the Ross River area and government-to-government consultations with Ross River. Again, he's supporting mining there but, when it comes to the Peel River watershed, would prefer to see that entire area withdrawn from any industrial development.

Mr. Silver: I don't seem to be enraged here and, with the Yukon Party government, we have 100-percent protection on the Peel right now for at least the next 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, almost 13 percent of the Yukon is currently off-limit to staking because of this government's frayed relationships with the Ross River Dena Council. The staking ban has been extended several times now, and it stretches until January 2017. Instead of blaming mineral prices for the slump in our mining sector, maybe the government should pay more attention to resolving issues between itself and First Nation governments.

Last fall, the minister said — and I quote: "... 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."

Does the government accept responsibility for the negative impact that this massive staking ban is having on the

mining industry? Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister to stick to this particular mess —

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

Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, please.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, of course, we're supportive of a strong and robust mining sector. I realize that we need to have those types of initial discoveries so that we can have the mines.

I met last Friday with the Yukon Prospectors' Association to talk about some of the issues of concern for them. I'm happy to report that in this budget we've continued with an enhanced Yukon mineral exploration program of \$1.4 million. Surely the Member for Klondike will not be supporting that when it comes time to vote on the budget.

Another initiative that we have undertaken this year is to provide double credit for assessment work, which will also help some of the smaller prospectors.

Very much like farming, you need to plant the seeds in the spring to get the crop in the fall and we recognize that the prospectors in this territory play that important role of planting the seeds so that we can have those big mines like Casino, Alexco, the Coffee project and Minto come forward in the end.

Mr. Speaker, we're proud of our support for the mining industry, when it comes to free entry and keeping royalties where they are, lowering taxes — all things that the NDP Party doesn't support, as well as their colleague the Liberal leader.

Question re: Yukon nominee program

Ms. White: Yesterday, the minister painted a rosy picture of opportunities for nominee program workers to report abuse and to find new employment if they are unhappy or being mistreated where they work. The minister wanted to debate the facts so I would like to share this one.

The nominee application handbook has a paragraph in bold at the bottom of the last page about what happens if a nominee program worker leaves their job during the nomination process. This is a quote from that paragraph: "If you lose or quit your job during the nomination process, you will lose your nomination and your Permanent Residency application will be canceled."

Mr. Speaker, what part of this paragraph is designed to make nominee workers feel safe about blowing whistles on an abusive employer?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, the part of the handbook that the member opposite doesn't state is the part that says that we will assist you to look for a new employer. That's what is currently being done with one of the people who the member opposite is talking about. The other person already had gained their permanent residence status, so it's not a difficulty with them.

As I said yesterday, all of the remedies to an allegation of unfair labour practices that are available to you and me as citizens are also available to nominee people as well, and we want to make sure that that is understood. That's why we've

investigated the case — the Department of Education has investigated the case — and made several recommendations to the nominee as well as assisting them to find another employer.

Ms. White: The problems run a lot deeper than the cases that the minister is referring to. The clause that he is referencing isn't highlighted like that warning I just read.

Yesterday, the minister suggested when Yukon nominee workers have problems with their employer, his government has ways of dealing with it. Nominee program workers are only speaking out once their permanent residency is approved or if they have left the country. We see this every few months. Even if they feel that they are right, these workers just don't want to restart the nomination process and they are jeopardizing their permanent residency application. What the minister hasn't said is that there are 90 days to start and finish that paperwork. This is a clear sign that the current system just isn't working and that the nominee program workers are in an unfairly vulnerable position.

Has the minister noticed that nominee program workers are mostly only speaking out once they have left the country or have obtained their permanent residency?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I don't exactly know what the question was there. The member opposite seems to believe that the only people who are speaking out are people who have already gained their resident status or left the territory.

Mr. Speaker, that is simply not accurate; not true. The department deals with complaints and issues on a monthly basis, and the vast majority of these issues are sorted out between the nominee, the employer and the department as quickly as possible. There are safeguards in place, and I will stand by that. The member opposite does not seem to realize that we have certain rules that we have to work under as well that are set by the federal government, by the immigration department. Those rules are not ours to change.

Having said that, I hope that I have answered the kind of question she asked.

Ms. White: We have nearly answered that question. If the mechanisms for the Yukon nominee program workers to speak out against abusive employers are so strong, then I would like the minister to show us some of those numbers. We know that the minister doesn't really know how many workers there are in the territory; we found that out during the last budget debate. We know that they really don't know where they work, but maybe now that he has just said so, he knows more about the enforcement of the nominee program rules. The nominee handbook itself tells workers experiencing employment issues to contact Advanced Education. So the minister hopefully can show us some of those numbers.

How many nominee worker complaints were made last year and how many sanctions were handed down?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I don't have those kinds of numbers available to me immediately. I will endeavour to obtain those numbers and transmit them to the member opposite when I receive them. But the member opposite has to understand the restrictions under which we operate. She doesn't understand them; that is obvious from the questions

that she is asking. However, I will make every effort to ensure that I have the answers that she has just asked for in the very near future.

Question re: Probation Services

Ms. Moorcroft: On March 5 the Auditor General of Canada provided his report on the status of corrections in Yukon to this Legislative Assembly. The report found many shortfalls in Yukon's corrections system and concluded that the Department of Justice failed to meet some of its key responsibilities set out in the *Corrections Act, 2009*. The Auditor General found that the department didn't adequately manage many aspects of community supervision. Specifically, it highlighted a number of deficiencies in the support, training and resources provided to Yukon's probation officers. Probation officers are the front line when it comes to managing offenders in Yukon's towns and communities.

How can this government claim to take the safety and security of Yukon citizens and communities seriously, but not provide adequate resources to the probation officers who they task with keeping that safety?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, in answering the member's question, I would like to again note that the reviews by the Auditor General are always a useful tool in helping identify where there is room for improvement. As the member may know from statements made by staff of my department in responding to the report, some of the problems identified by the Auditor General were also identified through internal review processes and steps have been taken to address them. Those additional matters that were identified by the Auditor General are being worked on by staff right now. I can assure the member that the staff at the Department of Justice treat this matter seriously and will take steps to improve it. They can be confident that they will have my support as minister in taking the steps to further improve the programming services that we are providing, both in the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and in after-care.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's report made it clear that this government does not adequately support the front-line staff who make Yukon's communities safer and provide the much-needed support to rehabilitate offenders. This government talks a big game about respecting corrections officials, but the report found that out of the seven probation officers who worked in rural Yukon, four did not have reliable physical space to meet with offenders. This harms the probation officers' ability to conduct their work safely.

How can this government claim to have the best interests of corrections officials at heart when they don't even provide the probation officers with the reliable physical space in the communities that they need to do their job?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, I would note, as I did in my first response to the member, that we appreciate the review by the Auditor General. It is a useful tool to help us identify room for further improvement. I would remind the member of the fact that some of the areas that she is referring to — where the programming was not meeting the standards set out — were

areas where we had recently raised the bar as a result of work done through the correctional reform process. So, in setting out that new standard, there clearly were issues at that point in time that were identified in the case files reviewed by the Auditor General.

Again, as I noted to the member, some of these issues had already been identified by staff, due to internal review processes, and actions already taken to address them. The member can be confident that department staff are working on those additional matters and taking steps to address them, and be confident that they will have my full support, as Minister of Justice, in taking those necessary steps to continue to raise the bar in the standard of rehabilitative programming that we are providing to offenders.

Again, it should be noted that the Yukon has actually been a leader in some of the steps that have been taken in the correctional reform processes through initiatives such as the Community Wellness Court and the domestic violence treatment option. We will continue to look for ways that we can continue to do better in this area.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, corrections in the Yukon isn't just limited to the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. In 2013-14, there were almost twice as many offenders on community supervision than there were incarcerated. A government that really wants to focus on community safety would put some emphasis on supporting its probation officers, yet the government's abysmal lack of support for probation officers goes to show that their commitment to community safety is just another empty promise.

The Auditor General found that the probation officers themselves often felt that they had not been trained thoroughly enough to adequately carry out their duties. The minister said that he and his officials appreciate knowing of the problems. My question is when this government will live up to their rhetoric and provide the resources that probation officers need so that they can keep Yukon safe.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I think that the NDP Justice critic does our staff a disservice in her characterization of the work and services that are provided.

As I noted to the member in my previous responses, the Auditor General's audit is a useful tool to help us identify room for further improvement. A number of the deficiencies identified in the report had already been identified by the department through internal review processes and steps have been taken to correct them. Those additional matters identified by the Auditor General — staff are taking the steps to address them and raise the bar in terms of providing the programming services. As I stated to the member previously, they will have my full support in taking the necessary steps to further improve the already-high-quality services provided to offenders and in after-care.

The focus, it should be noted, is about rehabilitation, and the reason that these programs are provided is an attempt to reduce recidivism and to help people who have committed offences to get their lives back on track.

I should also point out to the member that she is very obviously failing to note that the Auditor General effectively gave the department a gold star after the management of the construction of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and was complimentary in the language of the report about the good work done by the Department of Justice and, of course, the Department of Highways and Public Works.

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, April 15, 2015. They are Motion No. 912, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt South, and Motion No. 911, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre.

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, April 15, 2015. It is Motion No. 893, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. The matter before the committee is Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, continuing consideration of clause 21.

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. 88: *Pharmacy and Drug Act* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, continuing consideration of clause 21.

On Clause 21 — continued

Chair: Mr. Dixon, you have the floor.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Just to reiterate, section 21 deals with fees and expenses. I just want to take a moment to note again today that I'm joined by Charlene Beauchemin from Community Services and Brian Kitchen from Health and Social Services. We'll happily continue to walk through these clauses, one by one, as we conclude with this portion of the bill before us, Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*.

Clause 21 agreed to

Ms. Stick: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all remaining clauses and the title of Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming all remaining clauses of Bill No. 88 read and agreed to

Chair: Ms. Stick has, pursuant to standing order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all remaining clauses and the title of Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: Disagreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has not been granted.

On Clause 22

Clause 22 agreed to

On Clause 23

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, section 23 in this part relates to the two definitions included specifically under this part, as complaints may be made against a licensee or an owner in spite of relinquishing their professional status and commercial obligations. You see a definition for both licensee and proprietor. I think it's important to note the difference between the two.

Managers of a pharmacy are licensees, while the owners of a pharmacy are the proprietors. Both the licensee and the proprietor have clear and distinct obligations under the act. One of the most fundamental principles of this legislation is to have a managing pharmacist responsible for overseeing the supervision and management of a pharmacy and a licensed rural permit holder responsible for overseeing a rural dispensary. These individuals hold the licence of the pharmacy and have a designated level of autonomy.

Owners must not direct or influence — or attempt to influence — the management or operation of a licensed pharmacy.

This relates in general to the licensing provisions of the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* as well. The act before us requires that pharmacies and rural dispensaries operating in the Yukon be licensed. A person cannot provide pharmacy services except from a licensed pharmacy or licensed dispensary in accordance with this act and regulations supporting pharmacy operations, or in accordance with the services to be provided under the *Health Professions Act* and pharmacy regulation, and in accordance with any limits or conditions imposed on the licence.

Categories of licences will be established in regulation and will set out what services may be performed under the authority of each category, along with the limits, conditions or requirements that apply. A suspended licence cannot provide a pharmacy service.

Licensing decisions or conditions can be appealed to the Supreme Court. This is consistent with the appeal process under the *Health Professions Act*. Yukon is a small jurisdiction and does not have the resources readily available to establish additional appeal bodies. The regulations will establish licensing categories that will address community pharmacies and rural dispensaries. Additional categories of pharmacies can be regulated if the need arises. I think that is some helpful additional information about section 23, which deals with the two definitions of a “licensee” and a “proprietor” relative to this part — part 3 — of the act.

Clause 23 agreed to

On Clause 24

Hon. Mr. Dixon: To provide some additional context to this section, section 24(1) reads that: “The registrar may appoint one or more inspectors for the purposes of this Act and the regulations to assist and work under the direction of the registrar.”

To provide some comment on this — as the pool of pharmacy owners in Yukon is quite limited and the inspection of pharmacies and complaints concerning pharmacies requires a certain expertise, this provision allows the registrar to appoint an inspector from another jurisdiction if needed. If a complaint or follow-up inspection can be managed from the registrar’s office, this provision allows the registrar to act in this capacity.

This is important, Madam Chair, because we have discussed previously the role that inspectors would have under the act and the fact that it is likely that we would lean on other jurisdictions — in particular, the Alberta College of Pharmacists — for some assistance in providing that level of expertise in an inspection scenario. As I have indicated previously, the inspectors will play an important role in providing certainty for both pharmacies and pharmacists as to what needs to be completed through the provisions of their licence.

I think that is some helpful background information, as the inspecting role is one that came up numerous times throughout the previous discussion, both today and yesterday.

Clause 24 agreed to

On Clause 25

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This particular section, with regard to the discipline committee, is important. I know there were questions yesterday that were, to a certain degree, unanswered. I wanted to take this opportunity to fill in some of the blanks that I left yesterday with regard to the role of the discipline committee vis-à-vis the role of the advisory committee as well.

So, unlike the pharmacy advisory committee, the discipline committee is not a standing committee. Should a citation be issued for a discipline hearing, the pharmacy advisory committee, at the request of the registrar, will review

the complaint and make recommendations concerning the makeup of the discipline committee for each specific case, which the minister can take into consideration before appointing.

I should note that the pharmacy advisory committee, which is proposed to be created under the new pharmacist regulation, is given certain functions under the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. Those functions are purely advisory, and the advisory committee will not itself make any decisions or direct how anything is done under the act.

This kind of advisory role is commonly given to committees in a number of areas, including health professions regulation. In particular, under the *Health Professions Act*, there are already advisory committees for physiotherapists and registered psychiatric nurses.

The discipline committees that are provided for in section 25 of the act, in contrast, do have the power to make decisions, and those decisions have direct impacts on the rights of individuals. For example, a discipline committee can decide that a licensee must carry on their business in a particular way or can cancel their licence altogether.

Again, this is a familiar concept that can be seen in the *Health Professions Act* and other professional licensing legislation. Just as the regulations under that act provide details about who can be members of a discipline committee for a particular profession, this new act provides regulations to do that in respect of these discipline committees.

Whether the pharmacy advisory committee or a discipline committee is considered arm’s length from government depends on what that term is taken to mean. The advisory committee acts only on request by the government, and its role is again purely one of advice-giving, so in those senses, perhaps it’s not arm’s length in the strictest sense. A discipline committee is more clearly independent of government. Because it is an adjudicative body, it has to comply with the common law requirements of procedural fairness and natural justice. This ensures that there can be no improper influence by the government or indeed anyone else on its decisions and its actions.

Also, relevant to the member’s question from yesterday is the new act’s overall approach to the regulation of pharmacies, in that pharmacies and rural dispensaries will be regulated by government. So it’s the government that appoints the members of these committees, the government that provides the regulatory apparatus of the registrar and so on, and the government, through this legislation, that sets out the general operation framework.

That context, which can be contrasted to the case of a self-regulated profession, such as lawyers, may help members understand why these different communities are designed as they are. As a matter of interest, registered nurses are the only self-regulating health profession in Yukon.

As I indicated yesterday and earlier, obviously the discipline committee is anticipated to rise on an ad hoc basis and respond to the needs of the registrar, based on the advice of the advisory committee, and we anticipate that may occur from time to time. Obviously the makeup of the discipline

committee will be a matter of interest and it will be determined based on the case at hand. Obviously it can't be a standing committee, because members who are on the committee may be involved in some of the proceedings that are before the discipline committee, so the discipline committee necessarily must be ad hoc so that it can be ensured that there will be no conflict of interest between potential members and a case at hand before the discipline committee.

I trust that explanation under section 25(3) explains not only a little more of the context but provides some additional information pursuant to questions that were asked yesterday about this matter in general debate.

Clause 25 agreed to

On Clause 26

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Section 26 relates to the records for inspection. I should note that other jurisdictions prescribe different time limits for those records that are archived and those that are active and in current use in the pharmacy. Yukon will take this into consideration in regulation development. When this act says that any person who is a proprietor or a licensee must make the records prescribed by regulation available to an inspector without delay for the purpose of an inspection under this act, it means that much of that will be set out in regulation with regard to the detail. Obviously it is expected that proprietors or licensees provide information forthwith to inspectors for the purposes of an inspection, but that will be dealt with in further detail in the regulations.

Clause 26 agreed to

On Clause 27

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This section deals with the powers and duties of inspectors. As I've indicated previously, this is an important part of the act because it deals with what inspectors actually do on the ground and what they're empowered to do under this legislation.

Some jurisdictions delineate and establish criteria in regulation for different types of inspections, such as a pre-opening of a new facility, random operational inspections and complaint-driven inspections. Depending on the type of pharmacy and the type of inspection, out-of-territory expertise may be required to complete inspections. Additional policy work will be undertaken to address this issue.

Further to that, I should note that, in section 27(2), it references subsections 16(2) to 16(4) and sections 17 and 18 of the *Health Professions Act*. Subsections 16(2) to 16(4) and sections 17 and 18 of the *Health Professions Act* set down the powers and duties of inspectors, the right of the registrar to apply for search and seizure orders from the Supreme Court and specific details concerning the detention of things seized.

Further to that in section 27(3), there is reference to — “In addition to the powers that an inspector may exercise under subsection 16(2) of the *Health Professions Act*...”. I should note that in addition to the inspector's power to utilize the equipment and technology within a facility to access, review and copy any record or data, an inspector may do the following — and it's listed there.

Those pieces are outlined in 3(a) and 3(b) — (a) being that they can “inspect and take samples of any drug or other substance”, and (b) being that “on giving a receipt, remove drugs or other substances for the purpose of examining them or performing tests on them.”

As you can imagine, this allows inspectors to enter a premise and test drugs. Obviously, this kind of work is fairly technical and will require a certain degree of expertise. As I have noted previously, it is likely that we will have to draw on our colleagues to the south for this type of expertise. As I have indicated previously, it is most likely that we will lean on the Alberta College of Pharmacists to do this. It is likely that we would contract with them to do this kind of work of inspections. I do anticipate that over time we may be able to build additional capacity in-house in Yukon government, but for the foreseeable future, I think it is reasonable to continue to deal with Outside organizations. I know that the Pharmacists Association, in their meetings with me and previous ministers, have raised a concern that they want to ensure that those conducting inspections and those doing this kind of work do have the type of expertise and capacity necessary to do this properly. I think they will be satisfied in hearing that we will most likely be working with the Alberta College of Pharmacists to do this work.

Under section 27(4), which reads: “An inspector who removes drugs or substances under paragraph (3)(b) must if possible, return the drugs or substances within a reasonable time after they have served the purpose for which they were taken”, I want to note that originally records were included in this provision. However, as per consultation feedback from the Pharmacists Association and pharmacists in general, they have been removed. Inspectors will make copies of the records so that the original can be retained at the pharmacy or rural dispensary as stipulated in other legislation for auditing and reimbursement purposes. This simply relates to the nature of this particular type of evidence and where the originals rest. This will empower inspectors to take copies as opposed to the originals.

Finally, section 27(5) reads: “Any person who is a licensee or a proprietor of a licensed pharmacy or licensed rural dispensary, or an employee or agent of a licensee or proprietor, must cooperate with an inspection.” I think that section is relatively straightforward and self-explanatory. Obviously, we expect that proprietors and licensees will comply with the regulations that will be developed and that, in the event that an inspection takes place by inspectors contemplated under this act, the proprietor or licensee will cooperate to the full extent that they can with inspectors. I don't believe that this will be a problem. I think that the pharmacists are certainly willing and interested to have inspectors present. But in the event that we have something that is perhaps untoward or unfortunate, we do expect full compliance and cooperation of the licensee and the proprietor in these types of investigations.

I think that provides some helpful additional information about section 27 — all five subsections of it. I am happy to

answer further questions if there are any and provide additional information if needed.

Clause 27 agreed to

On Clause 28

Ms. Stick: My question was a simple one. Will there be public access to the inspector's reports and findings, including those made by a complainant?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I believe that they will not be available because, if there is a finding of something untoward, it will be passed on further for the registrar to deal with in terms of disciplinary measures. I understand that once certain disciplinary measures are taken in the discipline process, they will become public through that means, but the initial report won't be made public vis-à-vis posting on the Internet or anything like that. It will be an internal document for the registrar to determine whether or not further action needs to be taken.

Clause 28 agreed to

On Clause 29

Ms. Stick: I would like an explanation, or just a clarification, of 29(2), as I understand that this means that the registrar can investigate, even if a formal complaint has not been made but is aware of something and can do that.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With regard to section 29(2), the member is correct. That is what the meaning of that section is. The registrar may, on the registrar's own motion, investigate a licensee regarding conduct that may constitute misconduct. Therefore, of course, a complaint is not a necessary precondition of investigation. The registrar may take action of their own volition.

I wanted to also note that further in this section, in section 29(3), it reads: "Sections 21 to 30 of the *Health Professions Act* apply for the purpose of dealing with a complaint made to the registrar under subsection (1) or the investigation of a matter by the registrar under subsection (2) except that..." Then there is (a) and (b).

To explain this, I should note that to ensure there is consistency, the complaint and investigation process under this act will be as set out under the *Health Professions Act*, which will regulate pharmacists and rural permit holders. Section 21 to 30 of the *Health Professions Act* set out the specific parameters concerning investigations and actions by the registrar, including the following: the duty to investigate and collect relevant information from the registrant who is the subject of the investigation; to determination of action or no action; action to resolve the dispute, reprimand, or remedial action; issuance of a citation for a disciplinary hearing; extraordinary action to protect the public; and reporting requirements.

Subsections 23(1) and 26(11) of the *Health Professions Act* allow the registrar or the discipline committee to take immediate action for the protection of the public, even if it is during an investigation or pending a discipline committee hearing. Action can include setting limits or conditions on the registrant's practice of pharmacy, or interim suspension of the registration, pending a final decision by the discipline committee.

Further, Madam Chair, as I indicated, section 29(3) lays out some brief exceptions under (a) and (b) for members to consider. Further, under section 29(4), the bill reads: "The registrar must forward to the person appointed as the registrar for the pharmacists profession under section 8 of the *Health Professions Act* any information obtained by the registrar respecting conduct of a licensee that may constitute grounds for an investigation under subsection 20(2) of that Act."

To explain this a little further, this allows for sharing of information between registrars where the content of a complaint may result in matters being determined under the *Health Professions Act*. This enables the public to make a complaint in one location and ensures that internal coordination can be addressed and dealt with according to the nature of the complaint and the act, or acts, it may fall under.

Further to that, Madam Chair, in section 29(5), it reads: "The registrar must forward to the Yukon Medical Council established under the *Medical Profession Act* any information obtained by the registrar respecting conduct of a licensee that may constitute grounds for an investigation under section 23 of that Act ..." — that act being the *Medical Profession Act* — "... or an inquiry under section 24 of that Act."

So to provide some explanation of that subsection, as members will, I'm sure, anticipate, it relates to the relationship of a rural permit holder who is a physician and, therefore, falls under the parameters of the Yukon Medical Council. Upon discussion with the Yukon Medical Council and review of the practices in other jurisdictions that allow physicians to dispense, it was determined that, since rural permit holders are, first and foremost, physicians, any information concerning their conduct would be submitted and reviewed first by the council. Should the council determine that the information pertaining to, or actions of, the rural permit holder or rural dispensary does not contravene the *Medical Profession Act*, the information can still be reviewed under the *Health Professions Act*, pharmacist regulation and the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*.

A reciprocal provision is included in sections 49(2) and 49(3) as an amendment to the *Medical Profession Act* concerning the exchange of any information from the Yukon Medical Council to the registrar under the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* and the pharmacist regulation that may constitute misconduct under those acts.

So, Madam Chair, you can see that there is a consideration under section 29 that allows for the overlapping authorities of the various discipline measures, under both the *Health Professions Act* and the Yukon Medical Council. It's anticipated that, in the event that a complaint or an inspection is taken on a rural permit holder as a physician, there is allowance for review under the Yukon Medical Council's terms, first and foremost, and then, if it's determined that there is no contravention of that process, it can be considered whether or not there's a contravention under this act.

So subsection (5) allows for the precedence of the Yukon Medical Council in the instance that the rural permit holder is a physician, which, of course, is always.

I hope that provides some context as to what section 29 means and how it works, not only in terms of its own function, but its function with other acts, such as the *Health Professions Act* and the role of the Yukon Medical Council, in regulating physicians in the Yukon.

Clause 29 agreed to

On Clause 30

Ms. Stick: Looking at 30(1)(b), it speaks to providing information to the public and in the next paragraph it also talks about published notices of cancellation or expiry. I'm just wondering how these public notices would be managed.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I will try my best to answer under this section, but also would note that, further on in section 35, there is more discussion of this with regard to the function of the discipline committee.

I would say that, first of all, the mandate of the registrar's office is the regulation of professionals for the protection of the public. As such, the provisions set down in section 30(1) contemplate this for the Yukon and other jurisdictions in Canada by requiring mandatory reporting to other key bodies responsible for the regulation of health care providers, the provision of health care and the protection of the public itself.

Madam Chair, you will note in section 30(1)(a) and (b) that there are requirements to give notice to those bodies. In the case of more minor — and I say this relatively; minor may not be the right word — but in the case of more minor incidences there is a possibility that we would simply post this on a website or make it available publicly through the registrar's office, but later on when we deal with the disciplinary committee and the requirements of the discipline committee to make various actions public, we'll explain that in section 35.

Under section 30(2), "If a limit, condition or suspension referred to in subsection (1) is cancelled or expires, the registrar must notify the persons or bodies referred to in paragraph (1)(a) and publish a notice of the cancellation or expiry in the manner that the registrar considers appropriate to inform the public." Similarly, the registrar must notify the key bodies and the public if there is a change or a termination of the limit, condition or suspension.

Again, I would anticipate that to be — obviously it's what the registrar considers appropriate, but my understanding is that the most common way to do that would be by posting it on-line on the registrar's website. If it's a more severe or more — I don't know what the word is — a more serious matter, the registrar may determine to do that through publishing it in the newspaper or some other sort of public notice.

The intent there is reflected in section 30(2) and is that the registrar considers appropriate to inform the public, so we want to get the message out to the public — well, sorry, this act contemplates getting the message out to the public and that would be up to the registrar to determine how best to do that, but for the reasons I've explained, those are the tools that they typically employ for that.

Clause 30 agreed to

On Clause 31

Hon. Mr. Dixon: To provide some additional colour here, section 31(1) reads that: "In addition to the orders that a discipline committee may make under section 27 of the *Health Professions Act*, a discipline committee may, by order, do one or more of the following..." Then there is a list of lettered sections. I should note that under section 27(1) of the *Health Professions Act*, upon completion of a hearing, the discipline committee may: dismiss the case; issue a reprimand; impose limits or conditions on the practice; suspend the registration; fine the respondent; or assign costs of the hearing. The discipline committee must provide reasons for the decisions in writing to the registrar and to the respondent.

Further to that, under 31(1)(h), which reads: "order that a licensee pay the costs or part of the costs of the investigation into their conduct." To provide some comment on that, ordering the payment of the costs or part of the costs is an effective tool that is commonly used in many jurisdictions. Not only is it a deterrent as a penalty, it also serves as an incentive to cooperate with the inspector and the registrar, and expedite the hearing process to keep costs at a minimum. Costs for a disciplinary hearing are significant and estimating or budgeting for these expenditures is not feasible due to the intrinsic nature of each case.

Further to my comments earlier a few sections ago about the expectation that a licensee or proprietor cooperate the best that they can with an inspector, this section provides some additional teeth to really encourage, at threat of penalty, the participation of the licensee or proprietor with an investigation by an inspector.

Clause 31 agreed to

On Clause 32

Ms. Hanson: I have a question for the minister with respect to the provisions of section 32(2). In that section it says that: "The registrar may, on the registrar's own motion, investigate a proprietor regarding conduct that may constitute misconduct." When we look to the definition of misconduct, it means an act or omission that — among other things, talks about contravenes — results in the provision of pharmacy services by or with a person who is contravening the act or the regulations — yada, yada, yada. Then we get to (v), which is issues with respect to: "any act or regulation of Yukon or Canada relating to the compounding, prescribing, dispensing, manufacturing, sale, supply or distribution of drugs, devices or natural health products."

Yesterday when I asked the minister to outline — because when the question was raised about the qualifications of the registrar vis-à-vis the provisions of this legislation and the need to have expert knowledge of the matters at hand — I am wondering, if the registrar does not have that expert knowledge, on what basis is the minister satisfied that the registrar will in fact be able to ascertain what in fact is a misconduct under any of the outlined sections — outlined provisions — of the definition of misconduct as it pertains to this section of the act, section 32 of the legislation?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As members would note, this section is very similar to the one we just dealt with a few sections ago with regard to the licensee.

Of course, in 32(2) it notes that the registrar may, on the registrar's own motion, investigate a proprietor regarding conduct that may constitute misconduct. That simply implies that the registrar may initiate an inspection. It doesn't necessarily mean that they would be the ones conducting the inspection or the investigation.

It's contemplated, as I said, that if the registrar determines that there is a need for an investigation of a proprietor, this section allows them to initiate one absent a complaint. A complaint may be the impetus for an investigation to occur, but this section simply allows the registrar to initiate an investigation absent a complaint. It's not necessarily contemplated that the registrar herself or himself would conduct the investigation. Rather it's likely that we would employ through contract additional expertise or capacity from outside the territory to assist with that.

I should also note that in the following section — in section 32(3) — it references, "Sections 21 to 26 and 28 to 30 of the *Health Professions Act* apply for the purposes of dealing with a complaint made to the registrar under subsection (1) or an investigation of a matter by the registrar under subsection (2) except that" — and a number of exceptions. To explain that, a complaint or matter for an owner is dealt with in the same way for an owner — or a proprietor I think is the term that we use — in the same way that is for the licensee. The application of the sections of the *Health Professions Act* is the same for the licensee where the registrar or the discipline committee can take extraordinary action for the protection of the public.

Further to that, section 25(1)(c) to 25(1)(e) of the *Health Professions Act* apply directly to the registrant as a professional. Since the owner is not required to be a pharmacy professional, this section and the subsections do not apply. The subsections refer to failure to meet professional standards, not competent to practice, suffering from a physical or mental ailment, or emotional disturbance or addiction that impairs the registrant's ability to practice their profession.

The complaint is dealt with in the same way as it would be for a licensee and the application of the sections of the *Health Professions Act* are the same, so in a similar manner as I explained earlier for a complaint against a licensee, a complaint against a proprietor will be done in a similar way.

To circle back and reiterate the direct response to the question, section 32(2) simply indicates that the registrar may initiate an investigation even in the case where there is no complaint, so under the volition or motion of the registrar, they may initiate an investigation. There are a number of things that may compel that. The registrar may receive advice from the advisory committee or by other means that may introduce the need to launch an investigation or initiate an investigation and that simply means that it doesn't necessarily have to come after a complaint.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for circling back to the question that I asked, but he didn't really answer the

question that I asked. As he said, the registrar may, on their own motion, absent a complaint — so deal with a matter of misconduct. When I look at the matters contained in the definition of "misconduct", (a) through (f) — I had asked the question with respect to misconduct that would deal with five. How would a registrar, absent the expertise with respect to compounding, prescribing, dispensing, manufacturing, sale, supply or distribution of drugs, devices or natural health products — on their own, absent a complaint, on their own motion — launch this proceeding? I don't understand how that could occur.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The reason this clause exists is because we don't want the registrar — or the act, at least — to rely solely on the issuance of a complaint for the initiation of an investigation. There may be a number of other ways that the registrar learns of what could be potential misconduct. Therefore, this section is necessary for them to have the ability to initiate an investigation without a complaint. It is not to imply that the registrar is going out and conducting inspections themselves and determining that there is misconduct. If there is a complaint that isn't a formal complaint, if the registrar learns of something that could require an investigation other than a formal complaint, we want to have the ability in this act for them to initiate an investigation. That is what the point of this clause is — that we don't want the act to rely strictly on a formal complaint. If there is something other than a formal complaint that comes to the registrar's attention, they can still initiate an investigation without a formal complaint.

I would also note that this type of provision is common in other regulatory legislation, and it is something that we determined was appropriate here.

For the reasons I have explained, obviously the registrar — I know the member had questions about the capacity or expertise of the registrar herself or himself. Obviously they don't have the direct expertise related to the profession, or the pharmacist field, but they do rely on the advisory committee for certain advice as well.

Section 32(2) is aimed at providing another mechanism for the initiation of an investigation and it simply means that we aren't relying solely on a complaint for the launch of investigations into misconduct of a proprietor.

Clause 32 agreed to

On Clause 33

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This section deals with the discipline committee and the orders thereof. This section is identical to the actions that a discipline committee can take against a licensee and simply relates to the actions they can take against a proprietor of a licensed pharmacy or a licensed rural dispensary — very similar to the actions that can be taken against a licensee or a rural permit holder — just to provide the context of this section vis-à-vis the previous one that dealt with licensees.

Clause 33 agreed to

On Clause 34

Clause 34 agreed to

On Clause 35

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This section obviously relates to an earlier question as well about the public notice of disciplinary action taken. This relates to the access to the inspector's report question that came up earlier. Section 35 requires a publication of an order of a discipline committee that may be the result of an inspection complaint. So the result may be published.

Obviously this section is also identical to the publication provisions set out for the licensee under section 30. In both section 30 and section 35, for the licensee and proprietors respectively, these sections allow for the publication of a decision that is made by the discipline committee, which is, to the degree possible, independent. As I noted earlier, the discipline committees that are provided for in section 25 of the act do have the powers to make decisions, and those decisions have direct impacts on the rights of individuals.

For example, a discipline committee can decide that a licensee must carry on their business in a particular way or can cancel their licence altogether. Again, this is a familiar concept that can be seen in the *Health Professions Act* and other professional licensing legislation. Just as the regulations under the act provide details about who can be members of a discipline committee for a particular profession, this new act provides for regulations to do that in respect of these discipline committees.

By virtue of the fact that the decisions would have implications for the way the business of the proprietor is conducted, or whether or not their licence is cancelled altogether, they would need to make that public so that people can understand the type of discipline that has been handed down to either the proprietor under this section or the licensee under the previous section 30.

I think this section 35 explains, to a certain degree — or completes the explanation to a certain degree — that I provided earlier with regard to the making public of certain actions, especially disciplinary actions taken under this act.

Clause 35 agreed to

On Clause 36

Clause 36 agreed to

On Clause 37

Clause 37 agreed to

On Clause 38

Clause 38 agreed to

On Clause 39

Clause 39 agreed to

On Clause 40

Clause 40 agreed to

On Clause 41

Clause 41 agreed to

On Clause 42

Clause 42 agreed to

On Clause 43

Clause 43 agreed to

On Clause 44

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I would like to provide a little background information for members for this particular section. This deals with offences. These types of offences

listed in section 44 are consistent with Alberta's legislation, on which this act is largely based. Under section 44(1)(a), the fine amounts for an individual are consistent with Alberta's legislation, as listed here. Under 44(1)(b), the offence amounts and regime in other jurisdictions are quite varied, and since Alberta, on whose legislation this bill is largely based, doesn't distinguish between an individual and a corporation, these fine amounts for the corporations are similar to Ontario.

Prince Edward Island also includes fines for officers, directors and representatives of corporations. Section 44(2) reads: "If an offence is committed on more than one day or is continued for more than one day, the offence is considered to be a separate offence for each day on which the offence is committed." This provision encourages overall compliance with the act by both individuals and corporations, and addresses the issue of committing an offence, despite the cost of a fine, if the profits to be gained are still greater than the cost of the fine.

So, Madam Chair, I think that information is helpful for members in considering section 44.

Clause 44 agreed to

On Clause 45

Clause 45 agreed to

On Clause 46

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Section 46 is a long one and relates to the various ways and the various regulations that can and will be developed out of this act. As it says in the lead-up: "The Commissioner in Executive Council may make regulations ..." in the following ways — and the list is very long. It goes all the way to (v), so it's a long list. I wanted to bring members' attention to section 46(hh), which relates to a question that I was asked yesterday and that I didn't provide an adequate answer to, and I wanted to take the opportunity today.

The member asked if there was a statute of limitations on when a person can make a complaint with regard to when the subject of the complaint actually occurred.

As members will note, section 46(hh) reads: "limiting the time for the making of a complaint or the investigation of conduct that may constitute misconduct under Part 3". The statute of limitations, to use that term, is addressed in two areas under the bill. There is a regulation-making power under this particular section, 46(hh), which will set out in regulation the time for the making of a complaint over the investigation of conduct that may constitute misconduct under part 3 of the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. Both these refer to the complaints and disciplinary action that may be brought against the individual as a professional, licensee or proprietor.

Further, under the offences section of the bill, section 44(6) states that: "A prosecution of an offence under this Act must not be commenced more than two years after the date of the alleged offence." If someone still wishes to take civil action — for instance, a lawsuit — for damages under the *Limitation of Actions Act*, they can still do this. There are varying limitations set out within that act, however, that have no bearing on the complaints and discipline process within the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*.

I think that response provides a more adequate answer to the question that was asked yesterday with regard to the potential of the statute of limitations and I wanted to put that on the record for all members.

As well, I should note that there is a considerable number of regulation-making powers for this act. However, the profession of pharmacy, the provision of pharmacy services and the pharmaceutical industry are fast-paced and rapidly changing entities with significant and potentially lethal implications both for the individual and the population as a whole. Keeping pace with this change requires the flexibility of setting as many rules as possible for regulation of pharmacists, rural dispensaries and drugs in regulations, standards, codes and other tools that are more responsive to this change and can be more easily amended than a statute.

This industry is also predicated on the vast amounts of information and detail. Managing that information also requires a significant number of regulation-making authorities to capture the level of detail required to properly regulate the industry, and hence the lengthy list of regulation-making powers under section 46.

To explain some of them, I should note that section 46(b) refers to a person selling a drug to a prescriber or a wholesale dealer from supplying a business or corporation. Under section 46(c), this will allow for the appointment of out-of-territory expertise from a college of pharmacists and/or a pharmacy owner. That's, of course, very important, given our previous discussions on the need to rely on some outside expertise with regard to various provisions and actions under this act.

Section 46(d) is a general provision, should there be any additional needs or functions that arise. Section 46(e) is a general provision that should as well, if there is anything else we've missed.

Section 46(f) refers to the overall duties of the registrar to issue licences, maintain the information in support of those licences, collection of fees, documenting the decisions of the discipline committee and the actions taken to effect those decisions, performing any duties directed by the discipline committee, performing any other prescribed functions or any function required to administer this act.

So that will be an important regulation to be sure. Section 46(g) outlines types or categories of pharmacy licences that include, but are not limited to, mail order, satellite, institutional or hospital, retail, wholesale, rural dispensary, on-line or Internet, lock and leave, compounding, and repackaging.

I believe sections (h), (i), (j) and (k) are self-explanatory. However, I would like to note that section 46(l) provides — I should note that examples of specialty designations for pharmacies include, but are not limited to nuclear, nutrition support, oncology, pediatric, psychiatric, and diabetic.

Under section 46(m), some specialty designations require specific equipment, such as ventilation systems and storage conditions, and specially-trained staff to perform the specialty pharmacy services.

Sections 46(n) and (o), I believe are fairly self-explanatory, so I won't provide additional comment on those.

Under section 46(p) — of course this relates to imposing requirements and standards for the operation of licensed pharmacies. Drafting these requirements and standards for licensed pharmacies and rural dispensaries will require the expertise of other pharmacy regulators and the Yukon Medical Council, and will be done in cooperation with the Yukon pharmacy and medical communities.

As we have noted previously in this act, the development of the legislation and the future development of regulations will require considerable cooperation with our partners and stakeholders in developing the necessary regulatory tools to enact this bill, and we look forward to working with those groups, including the Yukon Medical Council, in the development of those regulations.

Under section 46(r), there is a reference to paragraphs 12(2)(a) and 17(1)(b). Section 12(2)(a) refers to the specific information, for example, the date, duration or interim licensee, and timing that a licensee or rural permit holder will be required to provide to the registrar when they will be absent from the pharmacy or rural dispensary for longer than eight weeks.

Section 17(1)(a) refers to the contact information that an owner must provide for notices of service and the duty to notify the registrar of any changes. I think that is relevant, Madam Chair, because of course we had significant discussion about that eight-week period and whether or not certain parameters would be set out in regulation with regard to that. I believe that this regulation, once it is developed, will provide some clarity for all members and the public about what exactly that will look like.

Under section 46(s), there is reference to subsection 12(3) and (4), and I should note that those sections and subsections refer to the direct supervision of a pharmacy by a pharmacist and a rural dispensary by a rural permit holder.

Of course, 46(t) is fairly self-explanatory, but very important, of course, as a code of ethics will be an important feature of the regulatory toolkit in terms of developing the ethical or moral outlines for the field itself, and the code of ethics is an important component to that regulatory toolkit.

Section 46(v) reads that it's "respecting requirements for the identification of a pharmacy or rural dispensary under section 16 ..." I should note the requirements for identification of a pharmacy or rural dispensary may include specifics concerning signage. Section 46(w) includes but is not limited to requirements for signage, lighting, ventilation, refrigeration, security of drug storage, required space for overall area of the pharmacy or rural dispensary, required space for dispensary secure areas and restricted access, maintenance and cleanliness.

Obviously the development of the regulations under that section will require the input of pharmacy owners and pharmacists. Again, we look forward to working with our partners and stakeholders in the development of that regulation.

Section 46(z) reads: "...respecting requirements for the availability of records and substances for the purpose of section 26 ..." This includes requirements to ensure the authenticity of electronic prescriptions and electronic signatures, and the security of the data system to manage them. Electronic signatures are currently an area of debate within the medical and pharmaceutical communities in various jurisdictions with the advent of electronic health records and health information systems.

For example, Alberta allows generation of electronic prescriptions, but requires a hard copy with a manual signature; transmission, receipt and storage of the prescription may then be electronic. These trends will be taken into consideration when developing the regulations that apply to prescriptions. So naturally, this is an example of a regulation that will require further consultation with our partners and stakeholders, as we develop the regulations under this subsection.

Under subsection 46(aa), I should provide some explanation. This provision provides flexibility, should additional names or clarifying terms be required, especially for identifying specialty designations of a pharmacy.

Section 46(gg) — I should note that this also includes setting out the grounds for notification of the licensee and the owner. I've already spoken to section 46(hh) and provided some explanation to that subsection earlier in my comments. I believe sections 46(mm) through to (qq) are relatively self-explanatory, but nonetheless very important. Under section 46(rr), I should note that this includes pharmacy services provided by pharmacies external to the territory and whether they must comply with the regulations of the Yukon or in the jurisdiction in which they are physically located.

Section 46(ss) — I should add a note that, currently, the triplicate prescription program manually tracks the prescribing practices of physicians for controlled substances only. It is not the prescription monitoring program referenced in this provision. A new prescription monitoring program will be put in place through the drug information system and will allow monitoring of various drug prescribing, dispensing and purchasing patterns that will apply to all prescribed drugs, not just controlled drugs. This information is captured through pharmacy databases versus the individual physician records. I discussed yesterday, to a certain extent, the development of electronic information systems that will be developed as well.

Under section 46(tt), I should provide the additional comment that, should additional expanded scope activities for pharmacists be adopted, it must be done through a staged approach. As such, additional regulations may be required under this act and may need transitional provisions to complement the staged approach for developing all the other pieces to support implementation. That is important because, as I explained yesterday, there are a number of practices under the expanded scope provisions that are not currently being undertaken in Yukon. While we do envision expanding the scope of practice over time, it will be done in a staged way, as I indicated yesterday as well. Renewing and extending prescriptions, changing drug dosage and formulation and

making therapeutic substitutions would be among the first expanded-scope practices that we would consider, but naturally, over time, we will add to the scope that pharmacists can practice within and include at a future time, hopefully, things like prescribing for minor ailments and conditions, initiating prescription drug therapy, ordering and interpreting lab tests and administering a drug by injection. Those types of scope increases will happen over time, I'm sure, and will require significant consultation and input from the public, from pharmacists and from those in other medical professions, including physicians. I know that any time we expand scope of a health professional, there is interest across the medical profession and from many throughout the medical community. Their input will be sought and considered prior to developing any further expanded scope for pharmacists in the Yukon.

As I noted, this particular subsection provides the ability for us to conduct a staged approach to expanding the scope of pharmacists and allows for transitional provisions that may be necessary to implement such an expanded scope for physicians.

I believe that thoroughly explains what is contemplated under section 46, and I look forward to any additional questions that may arise as a result of those comments.

Ms. Stick: I just have one question and it goes back to 46(x) in this section — "respecting the supply of drugs that must be kept in a licensed pharmacy or a licensed rural dispensary". We have heard of drug shortages across the country at times, and some jurisdictions looking at it becoming mandatory for pharmacists — or rural dispensaries, I guess — to notify physicians when drugs are not available in a pharmacy.

Was this contemplated at all in this legislation?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, indeed, the member is correct. That is something that was contemplated in the creation of this act. This particular subsection of section 46 allows for the regulation-making power with respect to that issue. Should we undertake to make that a regulation under this subsection, we would obviously consult pharmacists, pharmacy owners and others in the development of it. It is something that, for the reasons explained by the member opposite in her question, will be of great interest to members of the public as well.

Clause 46 agreed to

On Clause 47

Clause 47 agreed to

On Clause 48

Clause 48 agreed to

On Clause 49

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'll just provide a little bit of information about this section of the bill.

Section 49(1) and (2) allow for the Yukon Medical Council to forward information to the registrar of pharmacists and the registrar of pharmacies any information concerning the conduct of a physician that may constitute misconduct under either the proposed *Pharmacy and Drug Act* or the *Health Professions Act*. The term "medical practitioner" is utilized to include those physicians who may have been registered as a rural permit holder in the past but have

relinquished this designation. Of course, this contemplates the necessary consequential amendments to the *Medical Profession Act* that will be made in this bill as well.

Clause 49 agreed to

On Clause 50

Hon. Mr. Dixon: First of all, I would like to thank the registered nurses who took part in the consultation and provided the input that they did. As a result of the consultation, there were some additional changes made to the *Registered Nurses Profession Act* that are seen here under this particular section. This consequential amendment will authorize registered nurses to continue to be authorized to dispense drugs once the current regulation under the *Pharmacists Act* is repealed. This dispensing service provided by primary health care nurses in community health care centres will not be disrupted.

As I noted previously in comments, I believe, earlier today and yesterday, the ability for nurses to do these kinds of activities was previously contemplated under the *Pharmacists Act* and is now being transplanted into the *Registered Nurses Profession Act* to ensure the consistency of these services that are available to many Yukoners in communities.

Madam Chair, I did want to conclude my comment on this section by saying that I certainly appreciate the input of the nurses in the consultation process, and it was through that consultation that this particular consequential amendment became apparent. Without their input, it's possible that we may have overlooked that, so I certainly appreciate those who provided that input, as it was integral to the bill as we see it today.

Clause 50 agreed to

On Clause 51

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This clause will permit up to one year for an owner and/or licensee to ensure that they can meet the requirements for a licensure.

It simply contemplates the ability for this new act to come into force with the future regulations as well, and allows the period of time for existing licensees and existing proprietors to come into compliance with this new act and the regulations that will be pursuant to the act, as well as the regulations to come under the *Health Professions Act* and the rest of the pharmacy initiative.

I'm confident that they will be able to transition in this period of time, given the considerable input and participation that we've had from the pharmacy community. I don't anticipate this to be a problematic section, given the need to transition to a new system. I know that transition can sometimes be difficult, but I'm confident that this is a sufficient amount of time to transition to this new regulatory system.

If, in the course of our consultation on the regulations and the other codes of ethics, standards of practice, et cetera, it's determined that more time is needed, we'll simply work with the community on a go-forward basis with regard to the implementation of the regulations.

As I've noted before, this act will come into effect, along with regulations, and that will hopefully happen in the near future over the course of the next months and years.

Clause 51 agreed to

On Clause 52

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This is obviously a very short section, but it is an important one. It repeals the *Pharmacists Act* in order to regulate pharmacists and rural permit holders under the *Health Professions Act*. It is proposed that the repeal come into force when the pharmacist regulation is finished and the supporting implementation pieces are in place.

As I said, whether it's the pharmacists themselves, whether it's physicians who are rural permit holders, or whether it's registered nurses who conduct activities under the *Pharmacists Act*, all of that will then be transferred and that *Pharmacists Act* will be repealed. When this bill comes into force and the *Pharmacists Act* is repealed, it will be a significant transition to a new regulatory system that includes all of the provisions we've discussed today.

Clause 52 agreed to

On Clause 53

Clause 53 agreed to

On Clause 54

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Since the regulations for the *Health Information Privacy and Management Act* are not developed and it is not determined when they will be completed, this provision allows for compliance with those parts of the *Health Information Privacy and Management Act* and regulations that are in force.

Also, I would like to note that that's the final section of this bill and, as we conclude Committee of the Whole, I just wanted to use my last opportunity to thank our officials from both Community Services — Charlene — and from Health and Social Services — Brian — for joining us today and providing me with the support to answer the questions from all members of the House.

Thank you to those who have joined us today, and to those who aren't in the Legislature and are listening in on the radio or otherwise, for the input they provided to this work. It's a significant amount of work and we look forward to moving forward with it.

Clause 54 agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I move that Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Dixon that Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, be reported without amendment.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

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.

Bill No. 88: *Pharmacy and Drug Act* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 88, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Dixon.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I move that Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It is a pleasure to rise today at third reading for Bill No. 88, the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, which is the final reading of this act before it passes.

Obviously, we have had a good discussion — today and yesterday — through Committee of the Whole debate and have gone through the various provisions of the act thoroughly and discussed them at length. This bill will go a long way toward improving the safety of Yukoners in a number of ways.

Bill No. 88, the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, supports this government's priority to enhance public safety by creating industry standards and a framework for the safe operation of pharmacy facilities in Yukon.

Pharmacies are regulated in all Canadian provinces and this new legislation will provide a strong regulatory framework consistent with other jurisdictions. The new legislation will improve recruitment and retention of pharmacists in Yukon by creating a welcoming environment for entry-level pharmacists and provide standards that attract pharmacists currently registered in other jurisdictions.

We believe that by modernizing pharmacy legislation, we are indeed improving the quality of life of Yukoners. Work on this new bill began last April when an advisory committee was appointed to help us modernize this legislation. I want to acknowledge the outstanding support we have received from this group that has worked closely with us in developing the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. The external advisory committee included two members from the Yukon Pharmacists Association, one pharmacy owner, a member of the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, a member from Health and

Social Services Community Nursing, one member from the Yukon Hospital Corporation, two members from the Yukon Medical Association — one of whom was a community physician with a rural permit and the other was a physician from Whitehorse. The group also included a member of the public from a community that has a rural dispensary. I believe that individual was from Watson Lake.

These people met several times over the past number of months with our internal working group, which included officials from Community Services and Health and Social Services. They have reviewed and provided their input on policy issues associated with this new legislation, as well as the continuing work on modernizing the regulation of pharmacy professionals.

I am pleased to note that the collaborative approach used to draft this complex legislation reflects what will be part of a new model of collaborative, patient-centred health care for Yukon. The *Pharmacy and Drug Act* as we see it today will regulate the operations of community pharmacies and rural dispensaries. It enables the regulation of other categories of pharmacies should the need arise in the future, as we noted in section 46, which outlines the regulation-making powers held within this bill.

To summarize, the legislation proposed today will address the following areas: it will require a licence to provide pharmacy services in Yukon and provision of those services only by qualified individuals; and it will also establish a registrar of pharmacies — a staff member of the Yukon government — and a pharmacy advisory committee to ensure oversight and compliance with the standards, codes of ethics and other requirements outlined in the act.

The pharmacy advisory committee will be established to advise the Government of Yukon on specific operational standards for licensed pharmacies and licensed rural dispensaries and criteria for licensing. If requested by the registrar of pharmacies, the committee may review a licence application or advise on limits and conditions to be imposed on a license, as well as outline what to do about complaints of misconduct. This new legislation will ensure a patient or someone acting on their behalf must be able to, with reasonable ease, contact the manager or a pharmacist for assistance.

This new legislation sets out rules and responsibilities for pharmacy and rural dispensary owners, referred to as "proprietors" in the bill, as well as for managers of pharmacies, who are known as "licensees" in the bill, and who must be licensed pharmacists or physicians who are permitted to prescribe and dispense medications. It also outlines clear obligations that prohibit the proprietor from directing or influencing the management or operation of a pharmacy or rural dispensary that will cause the licensee to contravene their obligations under the bill and compels the licensee to report its potential influence to the registrar.

The bill also establishes a duty for the proprietor to report to the registrar any licensee who the proprietor believes is contravening any provisions of the proposed act. It obligates a licensee to manage the facility and ensure that due diligence is

exercised in dispensing drugs in a pharmacy or rural dispensary in accordance with the standards of operation of licensed pharmacies or the standards for operating licensed rural dispensaries, as well as complying with the professional standards of practice and a code of ethics.

Like pharmacists, all proprietors — regardless of whether they are pharmacists or not — will be held accountable for any misconduct defined under the bill. The bill allows for the government to temporarily manage or wind down the operations of a pharmacy, should a disciplinary or other matter arise. The registrar may apply to the Supreme Court to appoint a qualified administrator to oversee the required process.

Of note, any person providing pharmacy services at the pharmacy or rural dispensary will now do so under the management of a licensee who is responsible for the following: compliance with all applicable legislation, standards for the operation of the facility, standards of practice, and due diligence with respect to dispensing of drugs, counselling and maintaining accurate and current records.

Under the bill, a licensee who plans to be absent for more than eight weeks from the territory must notify the registrar and arrange for management and supervision for the pharmacy or rural dispensary during their absence by an interim manager approved by the registrar. The details around how this will be conducted will be set out in regulation pursuant to section 46 of the bill.

Unless otherwise specified, a manager of a licensed pharmacy must ensure that a pharmacist is always present on-site and supervising pharmacy services when open to the public. This holds true also for managers of licensed rural dispensaries.

Codes of ethics will be established and must be followed for the operation of both licensed pharmacies and licensed rural dispensaries. Inspectors will be appointed by the registrar of pharmacies. They will have the authority to investigate, inquire into, inspect, observe or examine the operation and records of a pharmacy or rural dispensary during regular office hours, without a court order.

A complaint and discipline mechanism is in place and this conduct is defined in this bill. Records are kept and information sharing is maintained in accordance with Yukon regulations for patient safety and support of collaborative care.

Consequential amendments to the *Medical Profession Act* and the *Registered Nurses Profession Act* ensure that doctors and nurses who prescribe pharmaceuticals can continue to practise their professions.

Protecting Yukoners is top of mind with this bill, Mr. Speaker. A complaint and discipline model in the legislation will provide that a discipline committee may caution a licensee or proprietor, suspend or cancel their licence, impose limits or conditions on a licence, or order that limits or conditions be imposed on the operation of a licensed pharmacy or a licensed rural dispensary. Pharmacists and rural permit holders will need to be familiar with the standards

established in their workplace, as well as any professional standards. For example, there are requirements to maintain confidentiality and cooperate with inspectors. Non-pharmacist and rural dispensary staff will need to be supervised to ensure public safety. The staff may alert the registrar if they believe the standards in the workplace are not being met by the pharmacy owner or the licensee.

The act before us references the national drug schedules, which have been endorsed by the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities, known as NAPRA, which are used in most provinces, in Yukon and in the Northwest Territories. The national drug schedules consist of three separate schedules within which there are four categories of drugs. They identify where and how a particular drug can be sold. For instance, in non-pharmacy retail outlets, only drugs that are not on the schedules may be sold.

The new legislation will support expanded scope of practice activities for pharmacists, which will be identified in the pharmacist regulation that is currently under development. It will also clarify the roles and responsibilities of the owner and the managing pharmacist or rural permit holder and bring the pharmacy standards in Yukon up to date with other jurisdictions.

Since the bill allows for an expanded scope of practice — I know a number of members spoke at second reading about their desire to see continued efforts toward developing collaborative care and we heard some excellent comments from members about how this has been done and will continue to be done.

The *Pharmacy and Drug Act* and its regulations will be consistent with the pharmacist regulation under the *Health Professions Act* and the ATIPP, as well as the *Health Information Privacy and Management Act* when it comes into effect.

The *Pharmacy and Drug Act* is the first step toward a greater initiative to modernize pharmacy regulation in Yukon. Work has also begun to draft regulations to implement the proposed *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. Pharmacist regulations that will govern pharmacists and rural permit holders under the *Health Professions Act* are also being drafted. Those regulations are very important, Mr. Speaker, and that work is being done as we speak through collaborative consultations with stakeholders, including the Pharmacists Association, pharmacy owners and the rest of the external advisory committee that I mentioned earlier.

As with the bill that's before us today, we will be seeking the input of the external advisory committee in developing those regulations as I noted. When they are ready, we will again be seeking public feedback. The *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, together with these two sets of regulations, will all come into effect at the same time. Combined, they will provide Yukoners and those working in pharmacy professions with a robust and modern regulatory framework that supports increased public safety and this government's vision of a more collaborative health care model.

Developing legislation is an arduous process, so I would like to mention how important the collaboration has been of

members of the advisory group and other stakeholders to the creation of Yukon's modernized pharmacy and pharmacist legislation. I would personally like to thank all those members of the advisory group and especially those who have and continue to provide substantial amounts of time and effort into developing these pieces of legislation and regulation. Their hard work, skills, commitment and ability to collaborate as a team is exceptional and we certainly are appreciative of their work.

I would also like to thank the other jurisdictions who have provided their valuable experiences and insights in supporting the Yukon team through the development of this act. As I noted throughout debate, Mr. Speaker, we modelled this legislation after Alberta and our colleagues in Alberta provided significant assistance to us in the development of this legislation. They will without a doubt continue to provide exceptional support to us as we develop the regulations, which are similarly modelled after theirs.

The *Pharmacy and Drug Act* is the result of significant collaboration with the Yukon health community and public consultation and I thank those Yukoners for their input into this most important bill.

I also wish to thank the various departmental officials from Community Services, as well as Health and Social Services, for their work in preparing this new legislation, which will help to meet Community Services' vision of a vibrant, healthy and sustainable Yukon community.

Those officials who were with us today earlier are to be commended for the assistance that they provided not only to myself but, through me, answers to the questions raised by the various members in the debate we had in Committee of the Whole. There were a significant number of issues we dealt with through today and yesterday, in terms of the development of this legislation and why various provisions were included.

I noted just a few moments ago that we did model this legislation after Alberta, and we do anticipate that further assistance will be required from the Alberta College of Pharmacists in the implementation of this bill and in the creation of the subsequent regulations that will be necessary to enact it. We thank in advance those folks for their assistance.

Obviously there are significant new provisions for licensing in the act, but a number of things have been exempted from the act that are worth noting. The act does not restrict the practice of dentists, nurse practitioners, optometrists or physicians who practice under an enactment; persons authorized to sell a drug by law, such as a pharmaceutical company authorized under federal legislation, to sell to prescribers such as a dentist; a wholesaler from supplying drugs; drugs sold under the *Food and Drugs Act* or its regulations, which may be sold for agricultural or veterinary purposes without a prescription; a manufacturer from carrying out their business; or a member of the Canadian Armed Forces or a visiting force from doing anything in the course of their duties, such as dispensing, that a pharmacy officer may do.

It does, however, prevent anyone from operating a pharmacy without a licence. The regulations also provide for

the exempting of persons, or classes of persons, from the requirement for a licence, and this is where veterinarians and institutions could further be exempted.

I would like to close by again thanking those officials for their hard work in developing this bill. Often we focus on the policy folks who do the hard work to provide the policy provisions in the act but, of course, the legislative drafters from the Department of Justice — the lawyers in the Department of Justice who provided a significant amount of advice as to how this can be applied and how this bill will apply vis-à-vis other pieces of legislation — were certainly appreciated, and the public officials in the government who have provided input in a variety of ways.

I would also like to thank the members of this House for the thorough and excellent debate we had on the bill in Committee of the Whole. I appreciate the questions raised by members opposite and I appreciate the support that we hope to receive in third reading today.

I look forward to voting in favour of this bill, Mr. Speaker, and seeing Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, passed in this House. With that, I commend this bill to the House.

Ms. Stick: On behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition, we will be supporting Bill No. 88, entitled *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. This is an important piece of legislation that creates a framework that will require a lot of work in the coming years. I want to thank everyone to date who has worked on that, including officials, volunteers, citizens and professionals.

It is very obvious in the act that a lot of work and a lot of thought has gone into this, so a thank you for that, and a thank you also going forward to those who will be asked again to help with the creation of regulations, standards and codes of ethics. There is lots of work to be done.

I would encourage the committee and this government, as this is supposed to be a move — and is a move — to a more collaborative and patient-centred care — if any of these committees or groups or advisory groups that are to help move this forward, they include, at a minimum, at least one person who is the patient voice because, without that, it is not patient-centred. To me that is one of the most critical things — that that voice be heard when looking at this legislation and looking at regulations and standards that are yet to come.

It is a large piece of legislation. I thank the minister and I thank his officials who have been able to answer our questions clearly so that we could understand it and support this legislation.

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

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I do not have anything else to add. I simply wanted to indicate that I think I have covered what I need to cover in my various other speeches on this bill, so I look forward to seeing this bill read a third time and pass the House prior to the end of today.

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.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 16 yeas, nil nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion for third reading of Bill No. 88 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 88 has passed this House.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 16, entitled *Third 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. 16: *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 16, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2014-15*. We are in general debate in this department.

Department of Education

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, may I take the opportunity to first of all introduce the director of finance from the Department of Education, Cyndy Dekuysscher, who will be ably assisting me during the discussion of the supplementary estimates.

I'm pleased to rise in the House today to highlight some of the items from the Department of Education's second supplementary budget for 2014-15. This supplementary budget request reflects how we continue to develop and deliver programs and services to meet the strategic goals of the Department of Education.

The department is requesting a total of \$722,000 for operation and maintenance expenditures for the Public Schools branch, Advanced Education and Education Support Services branches and their programs. The Public Schools branch will be a total of \$645,000.

Yukon schools continue to provide quality and accessible educational opportunities to Yukon students and to keep pace with current educational practices. We are engaging students in their education through educational technology, experiential learning, mentoring and tutor programs and many other opportunities. Technology-assisted learning is one of the ways with which we engage students, and \$250,000 is requested for additional costs for home education and distributed learning, as well as travel and contract costs associated with work on the B.C. curriculum.

\$70,000 is requested for additional proposals received by the Department of Education for special payments, which support programs like the 2014 fall/winter experiential program at the Yukon Wildlife Preserve. \$32,000 is requested to support the rural experiential models hosted in Dawson City and Carmacks, as well as the continued rollout of the blended differentiated learning approach in Watson Lake.

The Department of Education is proud to also provide professional development to its teaching staff through the summer academy, which is a great opportunity for teachers and administrators to connect and learn about new developments in the field of education that support success for every learner.

\$110,000 is requested for additional costs incurred at the 2014 summer academy. A decrease in demand for student boarding and accommodations in the 2014-15 school year resulted in a lapse of \$50,000, and the money was identified to offset other new budget demands, such as \$66,000 for Kwanlin Dun First Nation's home tutor program and \$22,000 for operational bridge funding for the Yukon Literacy Coalition. The Yukon Literacy Coalition had requested funding from the federal government, and this funding was

used to bridge the time between when the funding was requested and when it was received.

A total of \$159,000 is requested for the Advanced Education branch to support the delivery of immigration, labour market and training programs and services for Yukon.

On October 27 last year, the Department of Education entered into a two-year agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada to enhance the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications of accountants in the Yukon. \$80,000 is requested to support Yukon's commitments under this agreement.

Through the *Canada-Yukon Job Fund Agreement*, the Yukon and Canadian governments are working together to assist individuals who want to improve their job skills or who need support entering the job market. The *Canada-Yukon Job Fund Agreement* provides approximately \$1 million per year to support training opportunities that will help Yukoners find or upgrade their job. \$14,000 is also requested for a cash-flow adjustment for anticipated expenditures and is 100-percent recoverable from the Government of Canada.

The Education Support Services branch reported a net decrease of \$19,000 under finance and administration. However, \$225,000 is requested for increased student transportation costs including the Handy Bus services.

We continue to work closely with our colleagues at the Department of Highways and Public Works on projects such as the Teslin School lease. In July 2014, the Department of Highways and Public Works entered into a lease agreement with Teslin Tlingit Council for the lease of the Teslin School. The Department of Education currently holds the budget for this lease, and \$249,000 is the amount remaining after the Department of Education paid the lease up until June 2014. That money needs to be transferred to Department of Highways and Public Works. The term of the lease is 10 years, commencing July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2024, with the possibility of renewal for an additional five years.

The total supplementary budget requested for the Department of Education's capital expenditures is \$1.551 million, which represents costs for facility construction and maintenance and instructional programs. \$2.225 million is requested to re-acquire the Teslin School building, which Yukon government does not legally own, but has assumed all of the benefits and risks of owning under the Teslin School capital lease. The original cost of the school has been written off and the loss reported and recognized in period 8.

There were \$97,000 in surpluses identified for transfer to the Department of Highways and Public Works for capital maintenance repair projects. The Property Management division has requested these funds to complete two flooring replacement projects and snow removal at Yukon College.

In 2015-16, we will be replacing the boilers in the old wing — the 1981 wing — in Porter Creek Secondary School to improve energy efficiency. The Property Management division has requested that design money be moved forward from the 2015-16 capital budget for the Porter Creek Secondary School boiler replacement project and \$20,000 was requested for that purpose.

Funding of \$705,000 has been deferred to 2015-16 under instructional programs due to the delayed implementation of the new student information system. \$597,000 of these funds are requested to be deferred for the implementation and teacher training on the new system, which is expected to begin in the spring of 2015. \$108,000 of these funds are requested for a school van replacement for the Wood Street Centre School in order to continue to safely transport students and staff on extended school trips outside of Yukon. A replacement 24-passenger activity bus is being purchased. The delivery was expected by March 25, 2015; however, it was delayed until April of this year.

The supplementary budget continues our support of programs and services that serve Yukon learners of all ages to succeed not only in school, but in all of our communities.

That is all I have to say as an opening. I look forward to questions from the opposition.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I thank the minister for that summary.

I too would like to welcome Ms. Dekuysscher to the Legislature and thank her for the work she has done in preparing the statements. I would also like to take the opportunity to welcome the Member for Porter Creek North and congratulate him on his appointment as Minister of Education. I hope he finds his stint in Education as rewarding and fruitful as many educators — many people — have found. Education is an extremely exciting field and I would welcome him to that. The minister comes with a reputation as a straight shooter and a team builder and I'm sure the education system in the Yukon can take good advantage of those skills. So I welcome Minister Graham.

Today we're debating the Supplementary No. 2. I haven't had a briefing yet but I appreciate the minister's rundown. I may have missed a few of the items so I may be asking a few questions on some of those, if I could ask him to bear with me on that. I will be saving the majority of my remarks for when we debate the mains.

I just have a short preamble I would like to read into the record. I would like to recognize the importance of all the partners in education — the First Nation governments, parents, the teachers and the Department of Education. Our *Education Act* envisioned all the partners working together in partnership, in cooperation and respect. Indeed, research has shown us that the teacher/student relationship is of paramount importance. This is where education occurs and where we must direct our support, our resources and our energies. For each budget item we discuss, we must ask: How will this make a difference for our students? How will it improve their opportunity to learn successfully?

Research has shown that the closer to that student/teacher interaction to classroom the decisions are made, the more effective and relevant those decisions are. We must work to ensure that decision-making relies on, is informed by, and in response to teacher, school and community input. School- and community-based decision-making is key to student success. The relationship between the partners, First Nation governments, Department of Education, parents and teachers

is critical to that learning. I encourage the minister to use his tact and his diplomacy and his team-building skills to develop an education team that's working together for all our children.

I just have a couple of quick questions that came out of the minister's statements. One of them — he made mention of the Handy Bus. I wonder if the minister could elaborate on this as I was under the impression that the funding came from Health and Social Services.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The Handy Buses that the department runs are through Takhini Transport — the contractor who we lease with — but we also utilize from time to time taxi services in the City of Whitehorse for transportation of people with disabilities as well as the municipal Handy Bus system, so we make use of whatever services are available in the event of a person with disabilities needing transportation to school.

Mr. Tredger: While we're talking about transportation — I believe it was the Premier, but somebody mentioned that there was a move to use the City of Whitehorse bus system more and more. It could have been the minister referring to the students in schools using the city bus system as a means of efficiently and economically moving them around the school. Can the minister give us an update on that? Have funds been expended in terms of planning for such a move in the next school year?

Hon. Mr. Graham: At the present time we are providing some students with school bus passes on the city transit system. We're still looking at the results of this trial as well as determining what the actual costs are going to be, because we know that increased use of the public transit system will decrease, hopefully, the use of private vehicles as part of our sustainability effort. I know, as former municipal councillors, the Member for Riverdale South and I both support Whitehorse transit as much as we possibly can, knowing the amount of money that it's costing.

The city, in cooperation with the department, allows us to operate a program that offers free passes to secondary school students within the City of Whitehorse, and about 550 students currently participate in the program but the program is strictly voluntary. They ride the transit system to and from school, and they are no longer eligible to maintain a confirmed seat on a school bus. That's the part we're taking a close look at. We're trying to determine if students are simply using the transit passes when it's convenient and using the school bus system when it's more convenient to them to do so.

So there are a number of things that we're taking close look at before we commit ourselves completely to going with the city transit system. As well, you have to understand that the city needs some lead time to bring their fleet up to the required number to accommodate a huge influx of high school students in the city.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you for that answer. I too am a fan of public transportation and I know, as a principal, we were looking at it some time ago and I think it's a way of achieving efficiencies as well as working with our greenhouse gas emissions and moving toward encouraging people to use public transportation. If there are more students riding the

buses as the minister suggested, there will need to be more buses and more things. I would encourage the minister to continue on this path and to plan and hopefully we'll see more and more students sharing the buses on Whitehorse transit.

The minister mentioned the Yukon Literacy Coalition. I know they've been operating for a couple of years now. Do we have a report and a workplan for them as to where they're going?

Hon. Mr. Graham: At the present time, we fund the Family Literacy Centre. The rest of the coalition is being funded by a grant from Ottawa. This year we provided bridge funding, which was the \$22,000, because the Literacy Coalition wasn't certain they were going to receive the money from Ottawa, so we agreed to fund them \$22,000 as bridge funding.

The Family Literacy Centre is currently working with the Public Schools branch to establish their accountability indicators, which will indicate how well they're doing with Yukon learners. We're currently discussing future funding arrangements and we hope to be able to put together a three-year plan with the Yukon Literacy Coalition for funding the Family Literacy Centre in the future.

One of the things we're working on is the Yukon literacy strategy, and it was due to be completed last year but has been delayed in order to receive more input from Yukon First Nations. I know the finalization of the strategy could be delayed even longer in order to work toward the Yukon First Nation involvement.

The Yukon Literacy Coalition, the Yukon literacy strategy working group and the First Nation education committee held a joint meeting and they're working to complete that literacy strategy. I had a report as early as about three weeks ago, and there was a great push on to get that literacy strategy in place before this session. It wasn't done, but I expect it in the very near future.

You'll see in the coming budget briefing tomorrow that, in 2015-16, the Yukon Literacy Coalition will receive about \$280,000 from us. That's in addition to the \$22,000 that was bridge funding.

Mr. Tredger: I did confuse the two terms and I appreciate following up on that. The Yukon Literacy Coalition does do very good work. I've visited their centre at the Canada Games Centre, and I've also visited them downtown here. Some of the work they're doing is quite phenomenal. They help a lot of students and a lot of organizations. I was interested in the Yukon literacy strategy and I thank the minister for his update on that.

Again, literacy in the Yukon — as the minister well knows from his experiences at the college and in the Yukon — is a critical skill for many of our students to participate to the best of their ability in our economy. Thank you and I look forward to updates on our Yukon literacy strategy. I just have one more question and then would suggest we go to line-by-line debate.

The Premier had mentioned a new K to 12 curriculum and it is a massive undertaking. It is going to take a lot of time and planning. I wondered whether any planning had come out

of this — any dollars had been spent in sort of pre-planning to get to the stage where we are now, whether the consultation looked at the risks of changing the curriculum, the potential target dates for various components of the curriculum — and if any of the supplementary budget had been allocated to the planning of this undertaking?

Hon. Mr. Graham: There are no funds in the current supplementary budget for the project as outlined by the Premier. I just want to tell all members — and I know we'll get to discuss this at length in the future — I took a look at what we have done in education even over the last 10 years. I looked at the education reform project; it has been eight years since that happened. I looked at the *One Vision, Multiple Pathways: Secondary School Programming* project, and I think it has been about six or seven years since that one was done. I looked at the *Helping Students Succeed* project, which was done in 2008. That was the vision, goals and priorities for Yukon First Nation education. Then, six years ago, the Auditor General's report came out and the New Horizons strategic plan, which is the newest — came out five years ago.

We have taken all of those plans together, because what we want to do is undertake a comprehensive look at what we are doing in Education before we embark on this curriculum project. We have done a number of things as a result of all those programs, but we feel that this is where we should be heading in the future. As I said before, it is not something that we are going to rush off and do in the next year or two, but it is something that to me was clearly indicated, after looking at all those reports.

The comprehensive review, I guess, will begin with a summarization of all of those reports — what we have done, what we have yet to do — and then we will begin to discuss with our various partners in the system, as you have noted: First Nations, school committees, the Yukon Teachers Association, school administrators, school councils, and the students themselves. It is amazing how much these students have to tell you about the education system and their place in the education system.

As well, I've had some conversations with Yukon College. Yukon College has great expertise in the curriculum development field and they even have more expertise in selling the curriculum that they developed as equivalent to, or better than, existing curriculum in other jurisdictions. By saying that, I mean we've managed over the years at the college to gain acceptability in a number of universities in southern Canada for programs that we've developed locally. The college will also be involved in this project.

We will expect to outline basically where we're going in the next few months and then we'll begin our consultations with our various partners, but we also don't feel that we should just run out there and start saying, "What do you think should happen?" We need some kind of proposal before we go out and begin those conversations with our partners, so we'll develop that proposal after taking a more complete look at the things that have happened over the last 10 years.

I realize that's probably a little more information than you wanted, but I thought this was a good time to do it.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you and I do appreciate that. As an educator, listening to the minister go through some of the things that have happened in the last 10 years — as an educator it seems that we get a new wave of looking at things every couple of years and I was very concerned when I heard talk of a completely new K to 12 curriculum. This is a massive, massive undertaking and jurisdictions much bigger than ours have struggled with that. We do have an advantage in that we're a smaller jurisdiction and we have very engaged partners. I appreciate the minister's decision to do a comprehensive review rather than a new curriculum first and then review it later, which often happens to educators, and I thank him for that.

Having said that, I have no further questions in general debate and I'm ready to move on to line-by-line debate.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate?

We're going to proceed then to line-by-line debate — page 4-4.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Education Support Services

Mr. Tredger: Just on Education Support Services — I know the names have been changing somewhat over at the department. Is Education Support Services what we used to know as "Special Programs"? Maybe you could tell me what Education Support Services is.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Education Support Services include the deputy minister's office, finance, human resources, student transportation, policy. Am I missing anything?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Graham: I think it's the administrative role of the department.

Education Support Services underexpenditure in the amount of \$19,000 agreed to

On Public Schools

Mr. Tredger: In Supplementary No. 1, we added \$293,000 and in this one another \$645,000. Can the minister explain where the bulk of that almost \$1 million went in public schools? How it was spent?

Hon. Mr. Graham: It was all extremely well spent — \$250,000 was spent to support additional costs for home education and distributed learning. This has taken a massive jump in the last two years. It was interesting because I had a long conversation with a fellow who teaches in the distributed learning area. He informed me that when the school system went through the exercise — shall we call it — with the Catholic high school, the number of people accessing distance learning increased dramatically. So we don't know if it is something that is going to continue on — that dramatic increase in the distributed learning. However, this was what it cost us during that period of time.

There was another \$125,000 requested for inclusion in Supplementary No. 2 to assist with various legal fees related to both the section 23, minority language educational rights and the response to the appeal the CSFY filed in the Supreme Court of Canada, and \$110,000 was requested to support the

additional costs incurred for the summer academy, as I stated in my introduction, and \$66,000 was to support Kwanlin Dun First Nation in their home tutor program. That is the whole \$645,000.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you for that answer. The distributed learning — does that include Aurora school?

Hon. Mr. Graham: It includes Aurora Virtual School as well as the home schooling reimbursement of \$1,200 to the families for home schooling. It includes all of the course costs that we are paying because we have to purchase the courses from B.C., but it does not include staffing.

Mr. Tredger: The Aurora school has been operational for a few years now and achieved some successes. Has any evaluation or any study been done to see how effective it has been and the success rate of the students who depend on Aurora school? As well, I understand that the Aurora school is supporting the blended learning and some of the other programming in our rural communities. Has there been any assessment of that effectiveness versus other options?

Hon. Mr. Graham: It was only started in the 2013-2014 year so it has only been going on for a couple years. There has not been a formal evaluation of the program. However, anecdotal comments I've heard from — as I said, I know one of the instructors there fairly well and meet with him a couple times a week, and his anecdotal summary was that it's working, and the people who are attending surprised him to a tremendous extent and, as I said, the difficulties with the Catholic high school resulted in a large increase in the usage, probably accounting for a great deal of this money.

We are making some changes. We just recently discussed possible changes involving both the Individual Learning Centre and the Aurora Virtual School so we'll be prepared to come forward with some changes in that area in the very near future.

These things contribute that flexible learning environment for students, especially for students who learn at different rates or who are bullied or teased at school, so in that sense this is a wonderful thing. I'm a great believer in evaluation and we will be taking a close look at the program, but we have to give it a chance to see how it's going. Possibly I'll suggest to my deputy that we look at it within the next year or two as a formal evaluation process.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that. The distributed learning has potential for great successes, but we have to ensure that we use it as effectively as possible. I have heard some concerns about the ability to mark and the relationship between the markers and the students. When one thinks about it, if we're used to one-on-one instruction or a teacher being right there, and when they're virtual instead of real, it may create some problems.

I thank the minister for his answer and I look forward to seeing that program expand and be the best that it can be.

Public Schools in the amount of \$645,000 agreed to On Advanced Education

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'll perhaps go through and just let you know exactly what it is.

The foreign credential recognition program is an agreement between Employment and Social Development Canada and the Government of Yukon to enhance the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications of accountants that come to the territory, so it's only starting with the one occupation — that is, accounting.

The term of the agreement was November 3 of last year to October 31, 2016. The \$63,000 was an internal transfer from Yukon College, and it was an internal transfer from the seat purchases under Yukon College and reflects the revised cash flow for the labour market development agreement. The Canada-Yukon job fund requested a cash flow adjustment to reflect anticipated expenditures, and that \$14,000 is 100-percent recoverable from Canada.

We also had a manager's increase, a market adjustment of 1.75, to salaries for management categories, and that was a \$2,000 expenditure.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that. I did have one question on the labour market, and I'm trying to wrap my head around how that works. I know there was a prospective employee who was looking to bring in a skilled worker, and he raised some questions about how to get a labour market analysis. I wondered if the minister could shed any light on that — how it's done, and whether the employer pays for it or whether Advanced Education pays for it.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'm not sure, and maybe I would defer to the former Minister of Economic Development to request —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Graham: I'm sorry, Madam Chair, I do not have an answer to the question but I will endeavour to get one.

Advanced Education in the amount of \$159,000 agreed to On Yukon College

Mr. Tredger: I have just a question — with the increasing emphasis on skills training and Yukon College, I'm wondering how \$63,000 lapsed.

Hon. Mr. Graham: This is a simple internal transfer. At the beginning of each year, they get funding for seat purchases in various programs. If the estimates are off and they are unable to fill a certain seat purchase, then they return the money. So there are two different entries here, both for \$63,000. One is an internal transfer from Yukon College and one is an internal transfer from Advanced Education.

Mr. Tredger: Are there situations where our community campuses or Yukon College, because they didn't get enough students, would have to pay for courses and therefore have a shortfall?

Hon. Mr. Graham: You are usually talking about two different things. If Yukon College is offering a course in a community, many times what happens is that they'll negotiate an agreement with Advanced Education for payment of that particular course. The student funding, which is what we're talking about here — seat purchases — is either done through an apprenticeship program or it's done through the student financial assistance. They are two different things.

Yukon College underexpenditure in the amount of \$63,000 agreed to

Total Operation and Maintenance in the amount of \$722,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

On Public Schools

On Facility Construction and Maintenance — Teslin School Capital Lease

Mr. Tredger: I know the minister referred to that in his talk. I just wondered if he could repeat it for me.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I think we have to go back to 1966, when the Teslin School was built. I am not 100-percent certain, but I am quite sure of the date, and it was evidently built at that time on federal government land that hadn't been transferred to the Yukon, which was later transferred to Teslin Tlingit Council. Through the years, we have paid either a lease or a payment to Teslin.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Graham: Sorry, we just started. The Yukon government does not legally own the building, but substantially all of the benefits and risks associated with owning the building have been transferred to YTG under this lease agreement that we now have with the Teslin Tlingit Council. This meets the criteria of a capital lease and capital leases must be accounted for as an acquisition of an asset to the Department of Education and an assumption of an obligation by the Department of Highways and Public Works. The request is for re-acquisition of Teslin School. The original cost of Teslin School has been written off and a loss has been recognized in period 8 as well.

If you understand that, I think you should come over and explain it to me, but essentially, as I understand it, the land that the building is sitting on is owned by the Teslin Tlingit Council. We have just entered into a 10-year lease and it will cost us — I think — \$249,000 this year, give or take. It is a 10-year lease, so it will be paid from 2014 to 2024. It is a source of income for Teslin Tlingit Council because they still own the land that that building was built on in the 1960s.

Mr. Tredger: So for the period between 1966 and when we started to pay this lease, it was just an arrangement that we were on their land?

Hon. Mr. Graham: This is why I thought we had been paying this lease for some time, but the original agreement was between the federal government and the Teslin Tlingit Council. It expired on June 30, 2013, which is why we have now picked up the lease, so that kind of explains what happened.

Ms. White: Just to follow up the questions about the lease agreement — when we first went through the election and we were trying to learn how to read budgets and things, we were always told that zeros meant there was nothing coming in the future, so to have a zero under the Teslin School capital lease, knowing that the agreement was coming to an end, why wasn't it put as a dollar so that it was forecasting that there would be a change in the upcoming budgeting year — or that process?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, departments don't typically budget a dollar for this type of a lease agreement where we have no idea what the lease agreement is going to be. It took some time for the department to negotiate this lease with Teslin Tlingit Council because it's something that we hadn't been doing for the last 40 years or however many years. It is something that we've just recently taken over and Cyndy tells me that we don't normally put a dollar figure in there until we know what that dollar figure is, so that would be the reason.

Ms. White: So just to follow up on that. When you look at the *Financial Administration Act* — we have the Yukon Liquor Corporation, for example, when it talks about revenues and they don't put a projected amount; they put a dollar. It's a placeholder for money in the future. So knowing that the lease was expiring — and we're just trying to figure out because it seems like if we knew that was coming down in 2013, that a dollar would have been put in as a placeholder to say that we're broadcasting that in the future this will have a dollar amount. So we're just trying to figure that out and trying to understand how to read things into the future if something can have like, a zero, and then it can have a \$2-million expenditure.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, the \$2-million expenditure was a capital lease acquisition. That's different from the lease payments that will be going out the door every year. The \$2,225,000 was not an actual cash transfer to anybody. It's a simple accounting transfer. It's like the \$63,000 between Advanced Education and Yukon College. They're offsetting money transfers. The original cost of the Teslin School, which I will assume is the \$2,225,000 we had on the books —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Graham: The original cost of the Teslin School was written off in period 8 as a loss, so that was substantially less, as you can imagine, than the \$2,225,000, which is the current appraised value of the building.

Ms. Hanson: Madam Chair, I think my colleague was attempting to clarify. I'm not arguing or disputing the dollar amount that the minister has indicated — that the Department of Education has entered into in terms of a lease agreement with the Teslin Tlingit Council — but simply that the convention in the *Financial Administration Act* is that it's the responsible, prudent fiscal management approach to indicate that, if there is a plan to make an expenditure of dollars — it's basically a place marker so it doesn't look like the government is into ad hoc, sort of out-of-the-blue expenditures, but simply that you know that you are planning to or you have been working on a lease arrangement or whatever else, and you simply are saying we don't know exactly what the amount will be.

So, for the purposes of avoiding the opposition jumping to a conclusion that may be incorrect, as I think the minister has attempted to outline this afternoon, there has been a process here that has been followed. We're simply asking to follow the convention so that we too don't get caught in matters that really can be explained — that would be much

easier to explain than simply — it looks very ad hoc. Every time you see a zero and you see several millions afterward, it's like, so where the heck did that come from?

I simply request that the department and the government employ what the *Financial Administration Act* has indicated should be done, which is to use a dollar.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I never thought we would be debating an accounting transaction here, but I have to tell you that I don't know. At the time the 2014-15 budget was being prepared, I'm not sure where the Teslin School lease payment was. If a year and some-odd time ago the department had some idea about the Teslin lease, then I'm sure they would have included it.

What we will do is undertake to take a very close look at it and give the opposition a written analysis of the situation.

Facility Construction and Maintenance — Teslin School Capital Lease in the amount of \$2,225,000 agreed to

On Facility Construction and Maintenance — Capital Maintenance Repairs

Mr. Tredger: In *Supplementary Estimates No. 1*, we added \$309,000, and now we're taking out \$97,000. Can the minister explain if there were projects that weren't carried out or whether we were underbudget on them or whether this is being deferred to future budgets?

Hon. Mr. Graham: No, this is just managing the Property Management Division's maintenance budget. They managed to come in underbudget on a few capital repair projects and, because they came in underbudget, there was funding that wasn't required. Property Management Division, during the maintenance projects that they had worked on, requested those surplus funds — this \$97,000 — be transferred to them so they could carry out two other projects that they felt needed to be done — in terms of replacement projects at various schools in the territory.

The \$97,000 transfer is simply that we had the money in our budget. The projects that they had completed were underbudget. We agreed to transfer the money to them so they could do two flooring replacement projects at two schools and there were some snow-removal problems at Yukon College that they needed a little bit of money for as well, so we agreed to that. That's why we transferred the money back to them.

Mr. Tredger: So that \$97,000 will show as money in one other budget — as an input in one other budget?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Yes. That is exactly what will happen. The money was transferred to Property Management and they undertook the two replacement projects at two schools that were identified as having inadequate flooring.

Facility Construction and Maintenance — Capital Maintenance Repairs underexpenditure in the amount of \$97,000 cleared

On Facility Construction and Maintenance — Porter Creek Secondary School — Boiler Replacement

Ms. White: I just want to highlight the difference between, for example, the boiler replacement or the school van replacement. Those are unexpected expenditures because, I'm imagining, something happened. The reason why I was trying to figure out the dollar amount is because that was

planning, so I just wanted to highlight the difference between the two and the reason why I had the question before. It was just to highlight that I imagine this was an emergency replacement and maybe it wasn't on a list to be replaced. Maybe I can hear more about it now that I've stood up.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The \$20,000 in request for Porter Creek Secondary School boiler replacement is simply planning money that we advanced from 2015-16 back to 2014-15 so they could do the planning last year in order to replace the boilers this summer. That's why the money was transferred.

Facility Construction and Maintenance — Porter Creek Secondary School — Boiler Replacement in the amount of \$20,000 agreed to

On Instructional Programs — School-Based Information Technology

Hon. Mr. Graham: The new student information system has experienced delays. Specifically, the delay was caused because we had a great deal of difficulty signing a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Education in British Columbia. Before the memorandum could be signed, the privacy impact statement, as we have in our new legislation, needed to be finalized. We finally signed an MOU in August of 2014, but implementation and training was therefore put off until this month — April 2015. There was \$597,000 transferred to 2015-16. The remainder, \$108,000, was transferred to the school van replacement project so that it could be done in advance.

Instructional Programs — School-Based Information Technology underexpenditure in the amount of \$705,000 cleared

On Instructional Programs — School Van Replacement

Instructional Programs — School Van Replacement in the amount of \$108,000 agreed to

On Total of Other Capital

Total of Other Capital in the amount of nil cleared

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$1,551,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$2,273,000 agreed to

Department of Education agreed to

Chair: We are going to move on to Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Do we require a recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes.

Recess

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

Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Madam Chair, it's my pleasure to introduce the 2014-15 EMR supplementary estimates. Before I do that, I would like to welcome two officials from Energy, Mines and Resources to the Chamber here today. First — no stranger to the Chamber — the acting ADM of Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources, Ms. Shirley Abercrombie, and Ms. Manon Moreau, who is making her first visit, I think, to the Legislative Assembly. She's the acting ADM of Energy, Corporate Policy and Communications. So if we could get members to welcome them, that would be great.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Kent: Madam Chair, this supplementary budget reflects adjustments made to the 2014-15 budget as EMR works to manage Yukon's natural resources and ensure integrated resource and land use.

For this supplementary budget, EMR requests an overall increase of \$2.884 million for operation and maintenance expenditures and a decrease of \$485,000 for capital expenditures. Under O&M, these are the following significant changes: a \$200,000 internal transfer from Corporate Services to the Energy branch to fund the 2014-15 costs for the residential energy-efficiency incentive program; a \$1 million contribution agreement with Kluane First Nation for energy-related initiatives; \$213,000 for Assessment and Abandoned Mines — this increase reflects adjusted workplan for Mount Nansen, as per the amended type 2 mine sites agreements with Canada. This amount is 100-percent recoverable from Canada.

There's a \$400,000 decrease from Oil and Gas Resources. This is for the well B-62 abandonment project. Initial work has been completed and additional work will be finished in the summer of 2015. This funding has been moved into the 2015-16 budget. We have \$2.08 million to Compliance Monitoring and Inspections. That's for the Ketz River mine, specifically inspection and maintenance of the facility. This funding is security from the company, which is 100-percent recoverable from a third party.

Under capital, \$485,000 in funding remaining is moved to the 2015-16 budget in order to complete road realignment work on the Dome Road.

That concludes my comments with respect to the 2014-15 supplementary estimates, but this is the last opportunity that I have really to speak to the 2014-15 accomplishments of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

I would like to thank all of the individuals within the department for everything they do, on behalf of Yukoners, on a daily basis. We have individuals who work across the territory, making sure that a number of aspects that affect the daily lives of Yukoners are taken care of.

One of the important aspects of the work that Energy, Mines and Resources does is to provide land for Yukoners. The Yukon government continues to work with the City of Whitehorse to identify a comprehensive list of Commissioner's lots that can be made available through future sale. Currently in Whistle Bend, approximately 94 single-family lots, 16 duplex lots and seven multi-family lots are for

sale over the counter. An additional 50 residential lots will be released this summer through lottery.

Over the past year, Yukon government has sold approximately 130 hectares of new Crown land for agriculture and is currently preparing another 370 hectares of land for sale through the planned land area review process in a number of areas throughout the Yukon.

The Agriculture branch has initiated the process to develop agriculture lands identified in the West Dawson and Sunnydale local area plan, which was completed in 2013.

Vacant land inventory research is being carried out in Dawson and other Yukon communities and the Land Management branch has worked closely with the municipalities of Haines Junction and Teslin to develop the Willow Acres and Sawmill Road subdivisions.

Land administrators continue to harmonize and streamline the land and subdivision application and development process. Transfers of both the rural land development program from the Department of Community Services, as well as the rural portion of the agreement for sale program from the Yukon Housing Corporation have put the development and sale of planned lots within one department.

The Land Management branch has entered into land development protocols with all Yukon municipalities. These enable each community to identify lands for future development. Lots continue to be available in Dawson City, Haines Junction, Carmacks, Destruction Bay, Teslin, Faro and Watson Lake.

Amendments to the Mount Lorne zoning regulation in March 2014 allow the subdivision of privately owned, rural residential and agricultural lots. This could result in an additional 93 rural residential lots over the next few years. So far, 22 subdivision applications have been approved for this area.

A draft feasibility study has been completed for the Teslin connector road to support development of industrial lots west of the airport. The report is being reviewed by Teslin Tlingit Council, the Village of Teslin and Yukon government joint steering committee.

Land Management branch continues to improve on-line information, such as the lands viewer software, lottery information, availability of lots and land policies, and ensures that it is up to date, clear, accurate and easily accessible to the public.

Development of a Tagish local area plan is well underway in accordance with provisions in Carcross-Tagish First Nation's final agreement and self-government agreement.

The Yukon government has actively pursued strategies and activities to support our economy through resource development. The Premier and I, along with several members of Yukon's mining and exploration industry met in February of 2015 with key Canadian economists and business leaders in Toronto to discuss and promote business opportunities in the Yukon. One key project is the initiation of a mineral development strategy for Yukon.

The Premier, two of my Cabinet colleagues and I attended the mineral exploration roundup in January of 2015

to meet with industry reps and showcase Yukon's commitment to our mining industry.

We are also assisting the mining industry by providing double the value for filed mineral exploration work on claims for the next year. This started February 1, 2015. The extra credit to claim holders will assist in keeping their claims in good standing. The Mineral Resources branch licensed the Alexco Resource Corporation's Onek and Lucky Queen ore projects in the Keno Hill mining district. Victoria Gold's project was also licensed, enabling the initiation of construction. Quartz mine licences for phases 5 and 6 of Minto mine were also issued.

Through the Growing Forward 2 program, a five-year funding agreement continues to support various projects, including ongoing agriculture marketing activities at the Fireweed Community Market here in Whitehorse. The Forest Management branch established a three-year project to examine opportunities for the forest industry. An annual industry workshop will contribute to this effort.

Wood supply continues to be developed in Haines Junction, Whitehorse, Dawson and Carmacks. Additional timber harvest plans have been prepared to meet wood supply demands. In support of future resource development, this government has continued research as well. A database link was developed between FORESTAR, which is a client permitting system, and geographic spatial data in March 2014. It is available to all Yukon government departments and to the public in the Yukon Geological Survey corporate spatial warehouse.

The southcentral Yukon vegetation inventory project was completed March 31, 2015. The southwest — or in the Haines Junction area — contract was awarded and progressing on schedule to be completed by September of this year. A vegetation inventory is a fundamental dataset or information source for making sound forest investment and forest management decisions. The Forest Management branch completed aerial and ground field monitoring in key areas last summer.

These contribute to the 2014 *Forest Health Report*. The second year of a five-year monitoring plan for the mountain pine beetle has been completed. In 2014, the Gunnar Nilsson and Mickey Lammers Research Forest hosted the Yukon Envirothon, with over 170 high school students participating.

The forest management implementation agreement of 2012 with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations establishes a vision for achieving forest-based social and community economic development objectives in the First Nation's traditional territory. The objectives are being met, including the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations traditional territory inventory contract and preparations for a timber supply analysis.

A feasibility study to determine whether a southeast Alaska and Yukon economic development corridor could increase telecommunications and transmission capability to Yukon and Skagway is nearing completion. The investigation of engineering constraints is complete. The final report

suggests that the transmission line is technically feasible; however, coupling to the telecommunications line will not be.

There is no economic case for buying power from a hydro facility at West Creek at this time; however, there may be an economic case for Yukon to sell power to the municipality of Skagway for distribution to the cruise ship industry until such time that West Creek is constructed. It's my understanding that the West Creek project still requires flow testing and other aspects before that work can be done.

Yukon government has undertaken strategic initiatives in implementing both the climate change strategy and the *Energy Strategy for Yukon*. Implementation of the microgeneration policy, which was completed in 2013, is providing opportunities for residential and commercial electricity customers to generate electricity.

The microgen production incentive program was launched in 2014 and 10 solar electric systems have been installed since March, totalling 24.4 kilowatts of capacity. They are expected to generate more than 24,000 kilowatt hours per year.

As of January 2015, over 7,400 clients had participated in the Energy Solutions Centre's good energy rebate program, contributing to the program's projected lifetime savings of approximately 19 million kilowatt hours of electricity, 11 million litres of displaced oil consumption and 35,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

The program has been running for more than eight years. On January 1, 2015, the Energy Solutions Centre launched a major new expansion to its programs, aimed at increasing the energy efficiency of new and existing Yukon homes through the improvements to building envelopes. The program is called the residential incentive component.

In 2014, the public had a chance to review and contribute to a draft IPP policy. This policy will enable small producers to generate power and contribute to present and future territorial power demands. It's expected to be finalized this year.

Championed by the Energy Solutions Centre, the Old Crow community energy plan is in the final stages of development and should be released in 2015. Development of another plan is underway for the Village of Haines Junction and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

Madam Chair, there are a couple of other 2014-15 accomplishments that I would like to highlight; however, 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

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 16, entitled *Third 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.

Mr. Elias: 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 196

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, April 15, 2015 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Government House Leader Vuntut Gwitchin
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
Wednesday, April 15, 2015 — 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 National Oral Health Month

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise in the House today on behalf of all members to acknowledge that April is National Oral Health Month in Canada.

In the spring every year, the Canadian Dental Association celebrates dental health month to promote the importance of good oral health. Dental health is an important issue for Canadians because dental problems can reduce a person's quality of life by affecting their physical, mental and social health. Dental problems can be a sign of oral cancer, a disease that approximately 3,200 Canadians are diagnosed with annually.

Oral diseases are also linked to other health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and stroke, certain kinds of pneumonia and even premature and low-birth-weight babies. Brushing and flossing, following a healthy diet and visiting a dentist regularly are all part of ongoing oral care for healthy teeth and gums.

Yukon Health and Social Services helps ensure Yukon children have a good start on having a healthy mouth and body for a lifetime. Since 1969, the Yukon children's dental program has provided diagnostic, preventive and restorative dental services to Yukon children at no cost to the family. The school-based program has ensured the dental health of at least a generation of Yukoners and continues to do so today.

I urge all Yukoners to look after their dental health and the dental health of their children and, if they have any undiagnosed oral pain, visit a dentist to have it diagnosed, because as we know, there is more to dental health than having a nice smile.

I would like to extend thanks on behalf of Yukon government to all the professionals working in the field of dental health in the territory. Thank you.

In recognition of Parkinson's Awareness Month

Hon. Mr. Hassard: It's a pleasure to rise today to ask all colleagues in the House to join me in recognizing April as Parkinson's Awareness Month.

Many of us have only become aware of this disease because of the work done by Canadian actor and Parkinson's activist Michael J. Fox, but every day 10 people are diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. In fact over the next 10 years, the

number of Canadians diagnosed with Parkinson's disease is expected to double to more than 63,000 people.

Parkinson's is a chronic, degenerative neurological disease that is characterized by a loss of dopamine in the brain. There is no known cure. Symptoms include: resting tremor; slowness of movement; stiffness or rigidity of muscles; difficulty with balance and walking; and changes in voice, volume and speech. Other changes can include depression, loss of sense of smell, sleep disturbances and cognitive changes.

The average onset age is 60, but it can affect people as young as 30 or 40. Parkinson's can take time to diagnose. There are no X-rays or tests to confirm the disease. It is a matter of ruling out other conditions and tracking symptoms.

Currently, Mr. Speaker, there is no cure for Parkinson's, and people can live for years, treated with medication. Some people can benefit from surgery; others manage through a combination of physical and occupational therapy, speech therapy and exercise. One of the challenges is that the disease progresses at different rates for every person diagnosed. Most caregivers for people with Parkinson's are family members, and caregiver stress can double when caring for an individual with a neurological condition, particularly if the condition is accompanied by cognitive impairment or behavioural issues, which are common.

Fifty percent of people living with Parkinson's experience memory limitations, and 40 percent, thinking and problem-solving limitations. It is not an easy disease.

Yukoners are not exempt from this disease. It touches families and individuals here as well. I ask my colleagues to take a minute to recognize what these folks are facing.

In recognition of Irritable Bowel Syndrome Awareness Month

Ms. McLeod: I rise today to talk about a topic that is often met with amusement or embarrassment, and yet, irritable bowel syndrome, or IBS, is a serious problem for many Canadians. According to the Canadian Society of Intestinal Research, between 13 and 20 percent of Canadians experience IBS at any given time, depending on the criteria used to assess the symptoms.

The risk of developing IBS throughout our lifetime is as high as 30 percent.

Here at home, we have no identified numbers of Yukoners with IBS but, by extrapolating the national average, between 4,800 and 7,384 Yukoners could be experiencing IBS.

The Canadian Society of Intestinal Research offers a 30-second IBS test on its website. IBS is a chronic condition. It is often debilitating. Its symptoms include abdominal pain, bloating, constipation and altered bowel behaviours. No matter how you try to disguise it, IBS is unpleasant and painful. No one knows the cause or causes of IBS, but some of the theories include the following possibilities: chronic alcohol abuse, antibiotic use, stress, food allergies or poor eating patterns and gastrointestinal infection, among other things.

We do know that hormones play an important part in triggering a bout of IBS. The good news is that there is no reason to believe that people suffering from IBS have an increased risk of inflammatory bowel disease or colorectal cancer. There is no cure for IBS as yet, but the condition can be managed with dietary and lifestyle changes. By following their individualized treatment plan, many sufferers experience a marked improvement in their condition.

In closing, I would like to invite all of my colleagues to learn more about IBS. It is a serious condition that affects many Canadians.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I have two documents for tabling today. Both are reports.

The first is the Yukon Law Foundation annual report for the year ending October 31, 2014, which I'm tabling in accordance with section 83(2) of the Yukon *Legal Profession Act*. It's the annual report from November 1, 2013 to October 31, 2014.

I also have for tabling the *Workers' Advocate Office — 2014 Annual Report*.

Mr. Barr: I have for tabling a letter dated April 14, 2015 from the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Hon. Mr. Hassard: I have for presentation the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees.

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

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Hon. Mr. Kent: I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to responsibly develop Yukon's oil and gas industry, provide jobs and opportunities for Yukoners who are here and currently working in other jurisdictions in this industry, and work to become a net contributor to Canada by:

(1) developing a robust and advanced oil and gas regulatory regime;

(2) being open to applications for hydraulic fracturing in the Liard Basin, less than two percent of the Yukon area, but only with the support of affected First Nations;

(3) continuing a public dialogue to inform and educate Yukoners about oil and gas; and

(4) performing the research and scientific and economic studies outlined in the recommendations from the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing so that additional baseline data and information is available.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to foster more efficient, globally competitive capital markets, increase protection for investors and strengthen national capacity to identify and manage capital markets-related systemic risks by signing onto the cooperative capital markets regulatory system.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to consult First Nations and industry stakeholders to develop a new biomass strategy that may include:

- (1) the development of a pilot district heating system;
- (2) private sector opportunities to heat Yukon government buildings;
- (3) reducing the reliance on oil and propane fuels; and
- (4) the development of opportunities for the local forestry industry.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2015-16 budget to invest \$500,000 to support the development of the new Conrad campground on Tagish Lake's Windy Arm, in partnership with Carcross-Tagish First Nation.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2015-16 budget to invest in 911 service, including:

- (1) \$334,000 to move the 911 call centre to the new Emergency Response Centre; and
- (2) \$733,000 to support hiring and training of additional 911 call centre staff, who are necessary to allow for the expansion of basic 911 service to all Yukon communities.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to support the Watson Lake Daycare Centre Society to make improvements to their playground.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to extend the current exemption from compliance with the new energy efficiency standards in section 9.36 of the National Building Code until March 31, 2016 in order to allow time for the development of regulations implementing

recommendations made by the advisory committee, which include specific provisions to ensure log-home construction continues to be an affordable option for Yukon families.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue moving forward with the planning and construction of a new 150-bed continuing care facility that is designed to provide for future expansion in recognition of Yukon's growing seniors population, while at the same time continuing to enhance homecare for seniors in order that they can stay in their homes and home communities as long as possible.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to enhance the suite of energy incentive programs by adding:

(1) a program that will assist Yukon apartment and condominium owners in retrofitting their buildings to improve energy performance and reduce energy consumption, costs and emissions;

(2) a program that targets the lighting efficiency of commercial buildings by encouraging owners to upgrade to energy-efficient and long-lasting LED lighting systems.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to restore and repair St. Paul's Anglican Church in Dawson City.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to support the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation in developing a complete United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization nomination dossier that meets World Heritage Convention requirements.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to implement the new northern wellness project with the Public Health Agency of Canada with the goals of:

(1) improving wellness and preventing illness associated with modifiable risk factors;

(2) building capacity at the community level to create enabling environments and opportunities for residents to improve their health and well-being;

(3) reducing disparities in health status and removing barriers to engaging in healthy living activities and behaviours; and

(4) promoting a healthy living cultural norm by emphasizing fun, learning connections, engagement, personal development and community pride.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to use the 2015-16 budget to allocate \$920,000 for new ambulances and fire trucks, including:

- (1) \$310,000 for two new ambulances; and
- (2) \$610,000 for two new fire trucks.

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

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to subsection 22(2) of the *Human Rights Act*, does appoint Geneviève Chabot as a member of the panel of adjudicators and, pursuant to subsection 22(2.01) of the *Human Rights Act*, does designate Geneviève Chabot as deputy chief adjudicator.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to subsection 17(1) of the *Human Rights Act*, does appoint Russell Knutson as a member of the Yukon Human Rights Commission for a term of three years, effective April 30, 2015.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to subsection 22(3) of the *Human Rights Act*, does remove Heather McFarlane and Elaine Cairns as members of the panel of adjudicators.

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; and

(2) recognize that without the act or its regulations in place, landlords and tenants lack formal terms of reference on which to base their relationships, including the dispute resolution processes.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to retain the name "Sarah Steele Building" when it reopens the downtown alcohol and drug treatment centre.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to table the new formula it is using to calculate Yukon's visitation statistics.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: YESAA process

Ms. Hanson: This Yukon Party government has refused to recognize that its stance on Bill S-6 is hurting Yukon. In desperation, they have thrown a Hail Mary pass and proposed a bilateral agreement with Yukon First Nation governments. The government cites the Yukon *Oil and Gas Act* as a precedent. In fact, in 1997, the Yukon NDP

government and First Nation governments negotiated and signed a bilateral agreement before oil and gas was devolved from Canada to Yukon. Key benefits were negotiated with First Nations to get their support for the bilateral agreement.

In 2012, this government then breached that bilateral agreement by unilaterally deleting section 13 of the *Yukon Oil and Gas Act*, removing the requirement for consent of First Nations prior to developing oil and gas. Why would First Nations trust this government and agree to a bilateral agreement when the government has shown they have no qualms about reaching agreements when it suits them?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As the Premier has stated on previous occasions in this House, we believe that Bill S-6, the federal legislation that was introduced in the Senate and is currently in Committee in the House of Commons, is good for Yukon's economy and will strengthen Yukon's environmental and socio-economic assessment system. We certainly stand by that and we also hear the concerns that have been expressed.

Again, as the Premier has previously stated, governments in Yukon have a job to do. That is what our government has proposed. We have outlined a workable way through the division that exists — Yukon and First Nation governments negotiate a bilateral accord to implement the bill. This has happened in the past and we believe it can be successful in the future.

This bill, Bill S-6, is being supported by industry organizations such as the Yukon Chamber of Mines and the Klondike Placer Miners' Association but, as I've said on occasion in this House as well, the YESAA assessment process is about more than just mining projects.

It is about municipal projects, it is about tourism developments and it is about individual landowners and projects that they would like to see proceed. It is about oil and gas and agriculture and forestry as well. It is a very broad and sweeping assessment process that does a great job and these amendments I think will improve the process even further.

Ms. Hanson: The lesson is that trust is something that is earned. It is not something to ask for at the final hour on the courthouse steps. YESAA and the *Yukon Oil and Gas Act* have a similar history. They both stem from agreements negotiated in good faith at a time when relationships actually meant something to the Yukon government. Now they have both been breached by this government. The minister did not answer my question when I asked it the first time, so I will try again.

With the track record of breaching agreements to which they have a legal obligation, why does this government expect Yukon First Nations to trust them and now agree to some sort of ill-defined, bilateral agreement over Bill S-6?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned in my previous response to the member opposite, our government has proposed what we feel would be a workable way through the division that exists and that is to have Yukon and First Nation governments negotiate a bilateral accord to implement the bill. It is something the Premier has stated. We have done this before and can do it again and find our own solutions together moving forward together.

Just with respect to Bill S-6 and some of the comments made in this Chamber and publicly by the Leader of the Official Opposition with respect to the operating mine in Minto and that it will shut down if there is litigation around Bill S-6 — I did reach out to the general manager of that mine over the weekend and mentioned what the Leader of the Official Opposition has said. He said to me that: "It was absolutely incorrect. I did say if regulatory changes did not take place soon, there would be no mining in the Yukon. I did not mention the Minto mine in this respect and further was speaking as the VP of the Yukon Chamber of Mines. I can assure you I would not have said that in any way, shape or form."

Let's talk about trust; let's talk about that. The member opposite should be ashamed for mentioning a publicly traded company, not only on the floor of this House but in the community, when it comes to what the general manager of that company said. Again, he did give me permission to read that into the record here today.

Ms. Hanson: Just before the consent clause was removed from the *Yukon Oil and Gas Act* by this government, the government received a letter from the Kaska explaining the implications of the action. They said — and I quote: "...what will you have achieved? You will have incurred our deep enmity and otherwise irrevocably damaged a relationship that is supposed to be trust-like, not adversarial. You'll have destroyed any doubts which many exist regarding your government's profound lack of respect for our recognized title and rights, and you will have erected a completely unnecessary, but potential insurmountable boundary to any new oil and gas development..." History is repeating itself. What was said then applies equally to Bill S-6.

When will this government acknowledge that the proposed bilateral agreement is just another desperate attempt to divert attention from their efforts to gut Yukon's environmental and regulatory processes?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, I will reiterate that the government believes that Bill S-6 is good for the Yukon's economy and will strengthen the Yukon's environmental and socio-economic assessment system. We stand by that, but we have proposed to First Nation governments that we would like to negotiate a bilateral accord to implement the bill.

When it comes to working with First Nations, this government has a tremendous track record. We're currently in reconciliation talks with Kaska First Nations — the three from British Columbia and the two from Yukon; Ross River and Liard First Nation. I can go up and down these benches, Mr. Speaker, and each and every one of the ministers on this side of the House could speak at length to the cooperation and partnerships that are going on between their departments and First Nations. I believe there's a 30-page document we have that outlines partnerships and collaboration with First Nation governments across the board.

Again, just to close, I would reiterate that the general manager of Capstone Mining is quite disappointed with the fact that the member of the Official Opposition would say the

things that she has, both inside this House and outside, with respect to the closing of the Minto mine.

When you're talking about publicly traded companies, you're also talking about shareholders. Again, I think we all, as legislators, have to be careful of what we say, not only on the floor of this House, but out in the public, when it comes to publicly traded companies.

Question re: Robert Campbell Highway improvements

Mr. Tredger: Let me quote the last few budget highlights of the Yukon Party government: 2012 government budget — \$7 million for the reconstruction of the Campbell Highway from kilometre 10 to kilometre 190; 2013 budget — \$8 million for the reconstruction of the Campbell Highway from kilometre 10 to 190; 2014 budget — \$9 million for reconstruction of the Robert Campbell Highway kilometre 97 to 107; 2015 budget — \$9 million for work terminating at kilometre 190. Guess what starts near kilometre 190? The Wolverine mine road.

Will the minister admit that his government's Campbell Highway investments were first and foremost for the benefit of the Wolverine mine and not the people of Watson Lake, Carmacks, Ross River and Faro?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I certainly found the Official Opposition's position with respect to this expenditure quite interesting yesterday. Mr. Speaker, when the Yukon Party government was first elected and their first budget presented in 2003-04, they started to make significant investments in the Campbell Highway. There were investments made between Carmacks and Faro, and then there was a functional plan done from kilometre zero to kilometre 190, which is the Wolverine cut-off. Again, that functional plan has served as a placeholder for additional investments in the Campbell Highway over the past number of years.

In the fall capital update that was announced by the previous Minister of Highways and Public Works, there is a functional plan being conducted from kilometre 190 to kilometre 414, which will help inform the next series of updates to the Campbell Highway.

The Campbell Highway is an important access, not only for industrial traffic, such as mining trucks and other industries that take place along that corridor, but it is important for the travelling public, as well as tourism opportunities that exist within that region of the Yukon.

These are significant investments that this Yukon Party government has made and previous Yukon Party governments have made all along the Campbell Highway. Again, I think for the member opposite to suggest that we're only doing it for industrial purposes is completely inaccurate.

Mr. Tredger: With the Wolverine mine shuttered after a short period of production, Yukoners laid off, Yukon businesses lining up in a court process to have their debts paid, and no royalties paid, the public wants to know whether the millions of dollars spent by the Yukon Party government to subsidize this mine was money well-spent.

In budget after budget, investments stop at kilometre 190. It is clear that upgrading the Campbell has been about one thing — improving access to the mine. Now that the mine has shuttered after a rather short period of production, does the minister believe that the millions spent for upgrading the Robert Campbell to the mine was money well-spent?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I indicated in my previous response, there have been significant investments made on the portion of the Campbell Highway between Carmacks and Faro by previous Yukon Party governments, starting with the initial budget that was introduced by the Yukon Party that was first elected in 2002 with the 2003-04 budget.

The Campbell Highway is an important access, not only for those mining companies that exist there — of course, the traffic that used to travel on there from the former Wolverine mine, which is now in temporary closure — but also the Cantung mine, which comes down the Nahanni Range Road. Members will be aware that Selwyn Chihong is planning to use the Campbell Highway as well, as an access for their proposed mine.

So, Mr. Speaker, not only industrial traffic, but travelling Yukoners and tourists will be able to take advantage of the investments that this government has made in the Campbell Highway over the years, and will continue to make. It is an extremely important access corridor for a variety of reasons, and that is why we continue to invest in infrastructure that members opposite continue to vote against.

Mr. Tredger: Yesterday the minister declared the Campbell Highway a public highway important to the people of Watson Lake, Carmacks, Faro and Ross River. While the Yukon Party committed millions on improving the road to the mine, problem roads used by communities have received scant attention. The average daily traffic count shows that public use of the Campbell Highway near the mine has averaged about 30 daily drivers. There are sections of the Campbell used far more by locals that have received little attention. The section between Ross River and Faro is a critical link between the communities, but the road is in terrible shape.

With the mine shuttered, does the Yukon Party government plan to carry on and spend \$10 million on upgrades for the benefit of the mine, or will it reallocate funds to address other critical highway needs that the people of Ross River and Faro have been requesting for years?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Perhaps the member didn't hear that in my first response I mentioned that, in the fall capital update provided by the previous Minister of Highways and Public Works, there is the Campbell Highway functional plan, which takes in from kilometre 190 to 414. Kilometre 414 is approximately the Drury Creek station, which is well past the section of the highway that the member opposite is referencing. The first functional plan up to kilometre 190 was completed a number of years ago and serves as a placeholder.

Mr. Speaker, when you read the news release put out by the New Democrat Official Opposition yesterday, you would read it to suggest that a \$7.25-million investment was for 180 kilometres of reconstruction. I should probably inform the member opposite that the most recent tender that closed with

respect to the Campbell Highway was for six kilometres of reconstruction. The low bid on that came in at \$2.696 million.

Again, I would encourage the member opposite, when the House rises in June, to take a drive. Take a drive on the Campbell Highway and check out where we are at. We are still three construction seasons away from the Nahanni Range turnoff. That is at kilometre 107.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's easy for individuals on this side of the House to figure out how long it would take to complete those reconstructions on that highway.

Question re: Mining sector development

Mr. Silver: For many years, the Yukon Party insisted that the upturn in mining in the territory was a direct result of their actions taken. Now that the mining industry is in decline, the government is trying to shift the blame to world mineral prices. The government is trying to have it both ways: take credit during the good times and assign the blame during the bad.

Here's what the owner of the Eagle Gold property near Mayo said this winter — and I quote: "Everybody is a bit uneasy about the Yukon these days." He said that the mining industry is uneasy because the Yukon government's efforts to streamline the permitting process had been met with so much opposition. He also said that investors fear it is impossible to open a mine in the territory right now.

Mr. Speaker, this is happening under the Yukon Party's watch. Does the government accept responsibility for the fact that investors are now saying it is impossible to open a mine in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Kent: When it comes to the mining industry in the Yukon, we are very proud of what we've accomplished, whether it's with respect to the hardrock industry or the placer mining industry.

We are currently in a world economic downturn when it comes to this industry and that's why we feel this is the time to make strategic investments in infrastructure. It's time to train Yukoners for jobs and opportunities. It's also time to take a look at our permitting regime. That's why we've launched the mine licensing improvement initiative. This is on top of amendments that we made to timelines in the water licensing process last year. We're embarking on a mineral development strategy with our First Nation partners and industry. This is something the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board and the Yukon Chamber of Mines are participating in. We want to emerge from this global economic downturn in better shape than we went in and be a world-class destination for mining investment globally.

Mr. Silver: The chickens are coming home to roost, it seems. The Yukon Party spent years crowing about how it was responsible for a mining boom in the Yukon. Now investors fear that it is impossible to open a mine in the territory due to the uncertainty created by this government.

The president of Victoria Gold told local media in January that the mining industry is uneasy because the Yukon government's efforts to streamline the permitting process have been met with so much opposition. He went on to say that it

would be naïve to include the opening of his mine in any short-term economic forecast, yet that's exactly what this government continues to do.

Here's a quote from the Yukon Party during the good times: "We will take credit for becoming a mining hot spot in Canada." Mr. Speaker, why is this government now unwilling to accept the major role it has played in making the Yukon an undesirable to invest in?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The simple answer is, because it's not correct. We are working extremely hard over a number of fronts to ensure that we emerge from this current global economic downturn in better shape than we went in.

The Premier and I recently travelled to Toronto and met with a number of investors accompanied by several chief executives from junior mining companies that are active in the Yukon, including the one that the member opposite referenced. On top of investing in infrastructure and training, and trying to streamline our permitting and licensing process, we are also — through the Department of Economic Development — active with the Yukon Mining Alliance. The Chair of that organization is the individual the member is referencing.

That organization is a public/private partnership that seeks investment in many of the major financial centres around the world, including New York, Toronto and centres in Europe and Asia.

We are working hard to ensure that when the cycle returns, we are well-positioned to take advantage of that and we are the number one mining jurisdiction in the world.

Mr. Silver: It is quite interesting to watch the government try to shift the blame to world mineral prices. When times are good, the Yukon Party dismisses the role that mineral prices played in the success of our mining industry. They said it wasn't a factor. They said it was all the Yukon Party's doing — that they single-handedly made the Yukon a hotspot for mining. Now the shoe is on the other foot and the government refuses to take any responsibility for this downturn. Investors are saying it is impossible to open a mine in the Yukon right now. We are dropping like a rock in the Fraser Institute's survey on mining. Thirteen percent of the Yukon is under a full staking ban because of this government's unwillingness to work with First Nation governments. The Wolverine mine recently closed and another court battle with Yukon First Nations is on the horizon.

Does the minister accept any responsibility for these events that have occurred under his watch?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I think the government is being very proactive in trying to address the concerns that are raised by industry and we have heard in the financial centres around the world — whether it is Toronto, New York or other places — that we do need to improve our mine licensing. When it comes to the Yukon's responsibilities, it is the *Waters Act* and the *Quartz Mining Act* and the associated licences with those two different pieces of legislation. We are working through the mine licensing improvement initiative. We are embarking on a new mineral development strategy. We are investing in things

like the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining and capital construction at not only the Whitehorse campus of Yukon College, but throughout the Yukon through the mobile trades trailer.

Of course the government can play a role when it comes to investment attraction and we recognize that there are some things that are in our control that we need to address and we are going to address them, so that when this current global downturn in the mining cycle reverses itself, we are very well-positioned to emerge as one of the leaders globally for attracting mining investment and ensuring that it is a first-class destination for everything from early stage prospecting to mine development and production.

Question re: Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act implementation

Mr. Barr: Yesterday Yukon's Information and Privacy Commissioner wrote a letter to the deputy minister of Community Services regarding her concerns with Bill No. 87, *Personal Property Security Registry (Electronic) Amendments Act*. Bill No. 87 creates an on-line database that stores personal information that is managed by a third party. The Privacy Commissioner has a problem with the government's decision to exclude the proposed new registry from the ATIPP act — Yukon's access to information law.

Why didn't the minister consult the Information and Privacy Commissioner about Bill No. 87 before excluding it from Yukon's access to information system?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Earlier this session we had a chance to table the act in question — the PPSRA — that will be debated in the course of the Sitting. I look forward to getting into the details of the bill in debate in Committee of the Whole and in second and third reading. I am very proud of the work that has been done by the Department of Community Services in drafting this bill and bringing it forward to the Legislature. I think it will go a long way to reducing significant red tape on Yukon businesses and Yukoners who are borrowing money to leverage against their personal property. I think it's a good bill that will do a remarkable job of reducing red tape for Yukon businesses and Yukon borrowers.

With regard to the specific questions raised by the member opposite — of course we'll get into that when we debate the bill clause by clause, but we did consult the Information and Privacy Commissioner and sought input. That input will get consideration as we move forward.

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, there was no consultation whatsoever. Yukon's access to information law already applies to the current registry. The information isn't changing, just the place it's stored — so why the change? The new registry is similar to the Panorama system that's used by Health and Social Services. That database, located in British Columbia, is managed by a third party, just like the registry proposed in Bill No. 87.

When a public body like a government department has control of data, that data should be subject to the ATIPP act. Even though the Panorama data is stored in B.C., Health and

Social Services still has control of it. Why should the personal property security registry be any different?

Mr. Speaker, this exclusion just does not add up. In light of the Privacy Commissioner's concerns, will the government remove Bill No. 87's ATIPP exclusion clause?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: No, we will not remove that clause. This is a very simple matter that we'll, I'm sure, get into in detail during debate on the bill. We're moving this system to a system that's used by a number of jurisdictions in Canada. It's called ACOL system, the Atlantic Canada On-Line system. The reason why ATIPP doesn't apply is because we won't own the data and Yukon government can't be responsible for that data in that sense.

I look forward to getting into this at length in Committee of the Whole debate on this particular bill, but I should note that, while we appreciate the input the Information and Privacy Commissioner has provided through the letter that was tabled earlier today, I am confident the bill is good as it is, and we look forward to passing it in this House during this session.

Question re: Mine closure security

Mr. Tredger: Here's a timeline about Yukon Zinc. In November 2013, Yukon Zinc requests flexibility to the security payment schedule. EMR agrees to suspend payments temporarily. In March 2014, EMR sets a new payment schedule. On October 31, Yukon Zinc misses a \$350,000-payment. On January 31, 2015, Yukon Zinc misses another payment for \$450,000. The pattern makes it clear: The minister made a decision to take a soft line with the company and hope they would come into compliance.

What have we learned? Would the minister have acted differently? Would he have taken a stronger position with this non-compliant mine instead of offering opportunity after opportunity to meet its obligations?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, when it comes to compliance monitoring and inspections, we normally follow a triple-E model, which is educate, encourage and then enforce. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we did set up a payment schedule with Wolverine mine to get them back into compliance with their security. We do hold \$7.8 million for security, which is being held right now by the Yukon government. These missed payments that the member opposite is talking about are something that has concerned us, especially since the mine has obviously gone into temporary closure.

Professional staff at EMR is responsible to ensure that Yukon's Zinc Corporation meets its obligations and we have since taken legal action in regard to the failure to make the security payments.

Mr. Speaker, I think it would be speculative to stand here today and say to the House what we would have done had we known then what we now know today, but again, with compliance monitoring and inspections we try to first educate and encourage companies to come into compliance followed by enforcement and that is just as important with the Wolverine mine as it with other individuals. We certainly

recognize that mining is important to our economy and the impacts this closure has had —

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

Mr. Tredger: The minister is ultimately responsible. He is supposed to represent Yukon's interest. He provides direction to his department. He would have known about the missed payments. He would have been privy to many conversations. He would have had many decisions to make when the company first missed payments, including whether the company should be fined. But he didn't stand up and insist the company live up to its agreement. We know where this has gotten us. The closure caught workers, the public and businesses by surprise and now those who are owed money are waiting in line at the courthouse.

When did the minister know the mine would not meet its security payments and why didn't the minister show leadership and insist that the company live up to its agreements?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Of course as the minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources, I am ultimately responsible for what happens at the mine and we tried to keep Yukoners working while we looked for the additional security payment through an agreed-to payment plan. The mine missed payments that were outlined by the member opposite in his initial question and we've since taken legal action in regard to the failure to make these security payments.

I think it's important again for me to reiterate and for Yukoners to know that we do hold almost \$8 million in security with respect to this mine and staff of EMR are regularly on-site now, inspecting what the company is doing. The company is still on-site. They're actively managing the care and maintenance through their staff. The professional staff at EMR is monitoring the work that they're doing. As I've mentioned previously, we've reached out to individuals in the Ross River Dena Council to offer them a visit to the mine site to see exactly what is being done there.

We're looking through legal means to secure the outstanding security payments that are due and we're working with the mine to ensure that the environment and human health are protected.

Mr. Tredger: The minister is responsible to Yukoners. It won't be the first time the Yukon Party was influenced by Yukon Zinc. Sometime in 2009, the chief operating officer of Yukon Zinc wrote to the Yukon Party Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources about concerns with inspections at Wolverine mine. The minister wrote back in agreement. I have the letter for tabling which reads: "We are also interested in streamlining processes to make them more efficient." At the company's request, the minister transferred responsibility for mining licences, water licences and securities transfers over to Energy, Mines and Resources in an MOU.

In the lead-up to the missed payments, did the minister have any direct discussions with the company?

Hon. Mr. Kent: It is difficult for me to comment on the letters that the member opposite is reading. I don't have copies in front of me and, just given the time that we have in

Question Period, I'm sure there wasn't time for him to read out the entire text of the letter, but I will look forward to reviewing that, prior to future Sittings here.

Again, with respect to this mine, we recognize that the temporary closure is having an impact on Yukoners, both those who worked at the mine site, as well as the businesses that supported them. We tried through education and encouragement to keep the mine operating and bring the mine back into compliance. Obviously they missed security payments. I think it is important to restate that we do hold almost \$8 million in security with respect to this mine and I believe there is another \$2.5 million that is outstanding. I am not sure of the exact figure, but I can get back to members with that.

This is something that — mining is an important industry in the territory. It is a cornerstone of our economy, whether prospectors or producing mines, such as the one that we're talking about here, and it is important for us to ensure that we try as hard as we can, for those Yukoners who are working there and those businesses that are supporting those mines, to be successful. That is where we're at with respect to this.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Silver: I would like to ask my colleagues to help me in welcoming a woman who is no stranger to the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing. She is a post-doctoral fellow from Duke University and also a resident of beautiful Atlin, B.C. — Dr. Kate Neville.

Applause

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 912

Clerk: Motion No. 912, standing in the name of Ms. Moorcroft.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Copperbelt-South

THAT this House condemns the Government of Yukon's decision to proceed with hydraulic fracturing against the will of Yukoners, the recommendations of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing and the concerns of the scientific community.

Ms. Moorcroft: Let me say at the outset that I do not lightly condemn the Government of Yukon decision to proceed with hydraulic fracturing against the will of Yukoners, the recommendations of the select committee and the concerns of the scientific community.

In fact, it saddens me that the Yukon Party does not stand with science, with First Nations and with the public in its determination to proceed with hydraulic fracturing. Above all, the Yukon Party government's actions in support of hydraulic fracturing have eroded public trust.

As the vice-chair on the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing, I was honoured to hear the thoughtful comments from citizens at public hearings held in 12 communities and to hear from scientists, government officials, industry, regulators, health practitioners, and boards established under the land claims agreements as the committee conducted its work.

As I will outline this afternoon, the Yukon public and Yukon First Nations are opposed to the Yukon Party plans to allow industry to develop oil and gas in the Liard Basin using the controversial and harmful practice of hydraulic fracturing. That opposition has been expressed frequently in person, in writing, in song and in costume. At some of our hearings, we had the caribou come to town.

The Yukon Party is opening the door to fracking in Yukon, despite Yukoners' opposition. If it's not safe for Yukon; it's not safe in the Liard Basin. As Yukon First Nations and others told the committee, you can't extract two percent of the land mass. The Earth is a system. Water systems are connected, and whatever harm we do cannot be undone.

The most recent opposition I will note, following the government's announcement that it will proceed with hydraulic fracturing in the Liard Basin, is that a group of Kaska members have formed the Kaska Society for the Protection of our Lands and Resources to fight against the government's plans.

The Yukon NDP stands with the Yukon public, who are opposed to hydraulic fracturing. The Yukon NDP stands with First Nations, which are opposed to fracking. The Yukon NDP stands with science. The scientific evidence does not exist to prove that hydraulic fracturing is safe — in fact, quite the opposite, as I will show.

We cannot support development of an oil and gas industry that would use enormous volumes of our precious water resources to inject a cocktail of harmful chemicals underground in order to extract shale gas, with a vague notion that it will bring economic benefit to the Yukon.

There has been no assessment of potential infrastructure costs, there has been no assessment of potential health and social services costs, and there has been no assessment of potential environmental costs. There's no evidence that hydraulic fracturing produces long-term employment for the local economy. Indeed, we heard from the Fort Nelson First Nation that development of oil and gas using hydraulic fracturing in the Liard Basin — at the other end of the same basin that this government wants to develop — has not benefitted that First Nation. We've heard there have been harmful effects, in fact, on the communities, on the land and on the habitat.

In the mining industry, 67 percent of jobs are held by workers from Outside. This is for an industry that has been

ongoing in Yukon for over 100 years. There are questions about whether the Yukon would see any significant job creation, as the access road for Kotaneelee starts in Fort Nelson, not in Yukon.

The Yukon NDP supports the principles of science. As the MLA for Mayo-Tatchun said yesterday in his tribute to the bridge building competition, we need young, enthusiastic citizens, trained in scientific methods, with a can-do attitude. The keys to learning are engagement, presentations of real challenges, research, sharing and collecting of information, putting forth hypotheses, building and testing those hypotheses, and bringing information learned to the next project.

Those words are quite relevant to the work of the select committee. Its mandate was to gain a science-based understanding of the technical, environmental, economic and regular aspects of hydraulic fracturing, and to determine whether allowing hydraulic fracturing is in the public interest.

Mr. Speaker, I will argue that the Yukon Party government has had a consistent agenda since 2011 in support of hydraulic fracturing — a pro-fracking agenda that preceded the establishment of the committee, a pro-fracking agenda that operated during and in spite of the work of the select committee, and now a pro-fracking agenda that is found in the Yukon government response of April 9 to the select committee report that was issued on January 19.

The Yukon Party agenda was demonstrated by, for example, its legislation to remove the requirement for First Nation consent before development occurred from the Yukon *Oil and Gas Act*, from the Premier's statements supporting the oil and gas industry at the Denver Gold Forum during the time the committee conducted its work, from the leaked Energy, Mines and Resources PowerPoint presentation on the government response to the select committee report.

Mr. Speaker, it is the Yukon Party government's pro-fracking agenda in the face of opposition from a majority of the Yukon public and opposition from Yukon First Nations that this motion condemns.

I will speak about the select committee's recommendations and the Yukon government response. A thorough read of its response shows that the Yukon government hasn't actually accepted all of the recommendations of the select committee, and rather, that they have changed the meaning or watered down the intent. The recommendations must be met before fracking is even considered in Yukon. The report says nothing of going ahead with fracking and responding to a stripped-down version of the recommendations.

Considering science — with hydraulic fracturing, the Earth is the laboratory. There is no modelling. There is no other planet that we can use. Tests are being done where hydraulic fracturing is taking place. There are known harms associated with hydraulic fracturing and more science is emerging weekly. I will refer to a few recent examples of studies on air pollution and note concerns about water, habitat and climate change.

I will refer to the Council of the Canadian Academies' report, *Environmental Impacts of Shale Gas Extraction in Canada*. This expert panel was established through a motion from energy ministers for Canada and for all jurisdictions to look at harnessing science and technology to understand the environmental impacts of shale gas extraction. That report concluded, among other things, that not enough is known and that regulatory regimes are not robust and are not based on sound science, contrary to what is asserted by members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, western science does not have years of data. It does not have generations of data as First Nations have and which have led First Nations to oppose hydraulic fracturing. Yukon First Nations, in their oral traditions, their passing down of stories and their culture, have generations of knowledge about the land and the water, the animals and their habitat, and because of that knowledge, they oppose hydraulic fracturing.

We stand with Yukon First Nations. As legislators, we have a moral and a legal obligation to respect the law and to respect land claim agreements. In submissions to the committee from First Nation citizens, leadership and elders in the form of resolutions, letters, petitions and, above all, the testimony at public hearings, we heard, without exception, opposition to hydraulic fracturing occurring on the traditional territories of any Yukon First Nation.

The Yukon public has not given social licence for hydraulic fracturing. The industry recognizes that they want and need social licence but government is not willing to do so.

Social licence can be translated quite simply as meaning widespread support of the public. I would suggest that 7,000 names on a petition submitted in this Assembly in opposition to hydraulic fracturing shows that there is not support or social licence for hydraulic fracturing. The Yukon NDP respects and agrees with the public's position informed by science and the experience of other jurisdictions that hydraulic fracturing has not been proven safe and should not occur here in the Yukon.

I will go through some of the select committee report — and I want to note that we agreed to work toward reaching a consensus in meeting our mandate. The committee, however, could not reach consensus to make recommendations on the following matters: whether or not hydraulic fracturing can be done safely; whether or not hydraulic fracturing should be allowed in Yukon; whether or not social licence from the Yukon public is necessary before considering hydraulic fracturing in Yukon; and whether or not to proceed with specific regulatory development of hydraulic fracturing.

The committee did agree on a number of recommendations that “should be addressed before hydraulic fracturing is considered.” This is where the government and the members opposite are fundamentally in disagreement with what the committee has recommended.

The committee's intent in the wording of that initial outline on the recommendations is that those recommendations should be met before development occurred. The government has made the decision that they are

going to open up the Liard Basin and then they will do all these other things.

There are 21 recommendations. They are in great depth. They deal with many matters, and I will touch on some of them this afternoon.

The government's response was to say that they have accepted the report, and I will show how they have changed the meaning and watered down the intent, primarily by determining that they will proceed now before considering the concerns that are raised and the recommendations that are made. Those speak to water, to greenhouse gas emissions, to land and seismic activity, to human health and social impacts, to economic impacts and to matters of regulations.

I will speak to a different vision that the Yukon NDP holds — one that respects the findings and recommendations of the select committee report, one that supports a diverse local economy that does not shortchange the rights of future generations to enjoy the environment that we hold dear today and that we are privileged to enjoy.

As a mother and a grandmother, I want my children to be able to drink the water from the Yukon River. I am here to work for the well-being of future generations — as First Nations say, “to work for the rights of future generations for seven generations to come”.

As I have stated before in this House, the animals, the fish, the birds, water and trees — the Earth itself is alive. We do not have the right to destroy life for a short-lived fossil fuel economy. I am determined that while holding office as an MLA, I must act for social justice and for environmental justice. That is why I stand today to speak for this motion.

The Yukon Party is opening the door to fracking in the Yukon, despite Yukoners' opposition. I think it is important to go back to the beginning. We need to look back to February 3, 2012, when a government press release told an unsuspecting public that, during the twice-yearly disposition process, 12 areas of interest were targeted by oil and gas companies — all of them in the Whitehorse Trough, a 4,113-square kilometre area of land between Carmacks and Carcross. It is the most populated stretch of land in the territory. More than 75 percent of Yukon's population lives there. This was to be the catalyst of what can only be viewed as Yukon's oil and gas awakening.

The government set a 60-day consultation period. Meetings were held in different communities throughout the Whitehorse Trough so that Yukon citizens could provide comments on any environmental, socio-economic or surface-access concerns that they might have. I imagine that that first meeting didn't go quite as planned when, after the presentation by Oil and Gas Resources branch staff, they were bombarded with questions from the floor. That first meeting was to set the tone for the next two months.

On March 5, I attended the meeting in Mount Lorne, where more than 80 community members listened to the presentation from staff. We were told about Yukon's world-class regulations already in place and that is an assertion, I will repeat, that has been contradicted by the Council of Canadian Academies. We were told that we had nothing to

fear from an industry that had been doing this work for years. The community was not convinced.

During the question and answer portion, people asked thoughtful questions that showed the depth to which they had been researching the issue of hydraulic fracturing. It is certainly an issue that I have had a considerable amount of research time for since the establishment of the select committee.

Mr. Speaker, by the time the first public meeting was held in Whitehorse at the Transportation Museum, the department had changed their format. It was no longer an information session with a question and answer period. It was now an open house. Oil and Gas staff stood in front of colourful panels to answer questions as the public moved through the room, angry and disturbed because there was no oral presentation. There was no public question and answer period. There was no being heard by one's neighbours. Citizens felt they were being ignored and that their opinions were being silenced by the format. Some attendees of the open house speculated that the format had been changed to avoid the heavy fire and opposition that had been raised in Mount Lorne and in many previous communities.

By the next week, the format was once again changed back, in time for the meeting at the Hootalinqua fire hall in the riding of Lake Laberge. The hall was packed. People were standing along the walls and at the back of the room. Audience members sat patiently through the presentation, where they were told by one official that if the rules weren't followed, he could be counted on to head out to enforce the rules, baseball bat in hand.

You can imagine the response to that comment. Talk about overreacting to the public's right to participate in our democracy and to participate in critical decisions that government has to make about the future. People asked questions and raised concerns, and over and over again were told not to worry — world-class regulations were already in place. Yukon was ready for this industry.

The meetings were then taken north to Carmacks to a packed house. The presentation was met with similar disbelief and concern as all the others. No one in the community of Carmacks was buying it.

In the background of those 60 days, an organic group of activists had come together to create Yukoners Concerned about Oil and Gas Exploration/Development. They attended every meeting with a petition in hand. This was the beginning of the ongoing work that this group of passionate, informed and steadfast citizens continues to pursue today.

By the time the final meeting was held at the High Country Inn, hundreds of people were now following the proceedings and they came out and filled the space.

Speaker after speaker raised concerns over the development of hydraulic fracturing in the territory. They held nothing back. They spoke of their distrust of government, the weakening of democracy and their fears for our water and environment.

If one thing was clear, Mr. Speaker, it was that the people were unified when they said no to fracking. On April 12, the

government issued a press release from the minister then responsible that removed the Whitehorse Trough from potential development. In the release, he said that what we heard during the public review period is that many Yukoners have concerns and questions about oil and gas exploration and development in the Whitehorse Trough, and the recent public review was our first real opportunity to hear from Yukoners on the possibility of oil and gas exploration rights being issued in the Whitehorse Trough.

In a follow-up media interview, the then minister also said that what we heard is that there are a lot of Yukoners who have concerns and questions.

Mr. Speaker, one only has to ask: What has changed? Yukoners still have concerns and questions. There is still widespread public opposition to fracking. The Yukon Party government is pursuing its own agenda and is breaching the public trust, replicating the Peel consultations. It's more than disappointing that all of the hard work of the select committee process appears to have just been a formality, because it's clear that work was ongoing behind closed doors concurrent with the work of the select committee.

In my outline, I referred to the fact that scientific inquiry into hydraulic fracturing is ongoing. I should provide a brief definition of hydraulic fracturing. It's a drilling process that injects, under high pressure, a mixture of chemicals and water into shale rock deep below the surface of the Earth, causing fractures, or cracks, in the shale in order to extract oil and gas. Some of the chemical mixture is returned after the rock has been fractured.

The science tells us that between 20 and 80 percent of the mixture doesn't return to the surface and it's unknown where it does go. That uncertainty, in and of itself, is reason for caution. Hydrogeologists presented to the committee on the connections and pathways between waterways and the potential for destruction of water.

Another aspect of hydraulic fracturing that's important to recognize — and again, the Council of Canadian Academies, or CCA, report referred to that — is that there is about a 60-year history of hydraulic fracturing using horizontal drills. However, the modern, multi-stage, hydraulic fracturing is a different approach and a more recent approach that CCA indicates has been used in Canada for about 10 years. Under that method of fracking, the vertical drill goes down to a kickoff point, and then it goes horizontally, and a number of explosions occur along a long length of pipe to inject the chemicals and water and to cause fractures so that the shale can be returned.

That is not a procedure that has been widely studied for the long-term impacts that it can have when, as I said, it has only been in use for about a decade.

The incredible volumes of water that are used and the damage to water systems are one of the deepest matters of concern. Water is vital for life. Damage to streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, oceans — none of that is in the public interest. What we destroy, we can never replace. Looking at aerial photographs of areas with widespread fracking shows

just how barren the land becomes after hydraulic fracturing. Nobody knows yet what long-term damage it may cost.

The select committee mandate was to gain a full science-based understanding of the technical, environmental, economic and regulatory aspects of hydraulic fracturing and current Yukon legislation and regulations. It was also to facilitate an informed public dialogue, to hold public hearings in Watson Lake and Old Crow and other communities — ultimately we determined to hold hearings in 12 communities — and to consider whether hydraulic fracturing could be done safely if properly regulated.

The committee was then directed to present its findings and recommendations on whether allowing use of hydraulic fracturing was in the public interest.

We had presentations and we held public proceedings in this Chamber for four days, inviting a number of presenters to bring forward information to facilitate that informed public dialogue. The committee met with Yukon government departments of Environment, Justice, and Energy, Mines and Resources, the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board, the Yukon Water Board, the Energy Committee from the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, the Yukoners Concerned About Oil and Gas Exploration/Development group, the Yukon Conservation Society, and Dr. Brendan Hanley — and the committee conducted a fact-finding mission to Alberta.

To facilitate the informed public dialogue, we had a number of industry, regulatory and scientific presentations. Those included hydrologist, Gilles Wendling, who noted that multiple pathways exist for gas to escape a well and well leaks can be immediate or occur after a number of years. He noted the connections between ground and surface waters were complex and that in Yukon we are still developing our understanding of water resources and how they behave.

The BC Oil and Gas Commission focused on how the industry is safely regulated. The BC Oil and Gas Commission said it does not assess cumulative greenhouse gas emissions or monitor health effects directly.

The Pembina Institute spoke to the gaps in knowledge that include naturally occurring radioactive materials and the disposal of NORMs, of gaps in knowledge about greenhouse gas emissions. The overlapping infrastructure that occurs with this oil and gas development fragments the landscape, increasing the footprint and cumulative effects. Regional and land use strategies should be in place prior to development — that was their suggestion, and that's a recommendation that the committee heard from First Nations and from citizens in many presentations, both written and oral.

We had industry representatives from EFLO Energy Incorporated, Northern Cross (Yukon) Limited and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. I'm only going to refer to the EFLO presentation because the proposal from the government is to develop oil and gas in the Liard Basin, which is where the Kotaneelee is located. The EFLO presented that there would be economic benefits from the development of the Kotaneelee field through the creation of jobs, taxes, royalties and spinoff benefits and the local

production and use of natural gas. They did, however, note that small-scale hydraulic fracturing to meet only local needs is not feasible.

Mr. Speaker, hydraulic fracturing cannot be small scale, and it is a complete fantasy that hydraulic fracturing would be done in order to provide local energy sources. That development would not occur without it being used for national and international markets — markets that, I note, are flooded at the moment.

Bernhard Mayer, a professor of geoscience, noted the general lack of scientific information about the impacts that hydraulic fracturing could have on groundwater.

Rick Chalaturnyk, a professor of geotechnical engineering, provided information on the geology of shale gas plays, on how well casings are constructed and tested, and how monitoring of well casings can be done at a technical level. He and many others have noted, though, that well casings fail and that a high percentage of well casings will fail over time.

Mark Jaccard, a professor of resource and environmental management, discussed some of the macro-economic issues of natural gas and fossil fuel markets. He advised against public funding of large infrastructure projects and suggested avoiding reliance on the tax revenue from natural gas projects due to the likelihood of a boom-and-bust scenario. He noted that a small jurisdiction like Yukon should be exploring renewable or zero-emission options as part of its energy system.

Donald Reid, an associate conservation zoologist with the Wildlife Conservation Society of Canada, focused his presentation on the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on wildlife in the Yukon. He noted that the use and potential contamination of water, the air pollution and infrastructure development and the noise produced by fracking are some of the impacts that could negatively affect wildlife habitat. In light of climate change, he questioned the ethics of contemplating new hydrocarbon developments.

That is only a brief snapshot of the scientific evidence that was presented to the select committee, and I want to, as I noted earlier, provide a bit of information from a fairly recent study. The March 2015 *Journal of Environmental Science and Health* published an article where researchers took six-hour average measurements of air pollution, instead of the traditional 24-hour average. They found that pollution levels tend to spike at certain times of the day and under certain weather conditions, which previous studies had ignored. The study found that the closer people lived to drilling sites and other gas-production facilities, the more likely they are to exhibit symptoms of toxic exposure.

The study was based on observed conditions in Washington County, Pennsylvania — population 28,000 — using emissions reports from nearby fracking sites and weather conditions over 14 months. The researchers also compared illness reports to the weather conditions and time of day. They found that residents living in the area would have toxic-level exposures more than enough to account for their reported illnesses.

The most common health effects reported for residents living near fracking sites include shortness of breath, coughing, chronic fatigue and skin burning. There are many others. There are new scientific reports being released on a regular basis.

Industry asserts that there is no harm caused by hydraulic fracturing, and regulators insist that any harms can be managed or mitigated by robust regulations. But scientists told the committee, “Do not believe anyone who tells you there is no harm caused by hydraulic fracturing.”

I am going to turn again to the CCA report on the environmental impacts of shale gas extraction and what they had to say about regulations. They said that shale gas developments pose particular challenges for governance because the benefits are primarily regional, although adverse effects are mostly local and cut across several layers of government. The Canadian regulatory framework governing shale gas development is evolving. Many aspects are not based on strong science and remain untested. Evolving regulations are not robust.

There have been specific problems with water use for oil and gas activities in the Liard Basin. The BC Oil and Gas Commission 2012 annual report issued a number of active short-term water-use approvals at various times during the year, and those were held by 50 companies. The massive draw of water used for fracking in the Liard Basin took so much water from tributaries that there was risk of a drought.

On August 2, 2012, the BC Oil and Gas Commission issued a directive suspending water withdrawals for short-term water use by the industry, due to low stream flow conditions. Several larger rivers and lakes less affected by the drought were exempted. On November 14, the suspension was lifted for all rivers in the Peace River drainage area, but it was maintained for smaller rivers in the Fort Nelson and Liard River drainages. The water suspension was lifted completely on January 23, 2013.

Mr. Speaker, I think that action alone of the BC Oil and Gas Commission, which had to suspend water withdrawals because of its harmful effect on the tributaries of rivers in the Liard Basin, should convince the government that they're heading down the wrong path.

I spoke at the outset about how we stand with First Nations. In the select committee's report, there is a summary of what we heard from Yukon First Nations. The Council of Yukon First Nations has adopted a resolution in opposition to hydraulic fracturing, and there are several member nations of the Council of Yukon First Nations that signed on to that. I'm going to refer to the First Nations' participation and what they said. We met with some First Nations in-camera; we met with others at committee public proceedings; we received submissions in writing; and we heard from many First Nation citizens at the public hearings. We offered translation services where they were requested and, in the community of Old Crow, there were translation services provided in Gwich'in. First Nation elders were invited to give an opening prayer in a number of communities.

The committee's first public hearing was held in Watson Lake, and Liard First Nation elders and citizens spoke of their opposition to hydraulic fracturing. They spoke about the need to protect fish, wildlife, people and the water for future generations. That theme came back repeatedly throughout our hearings.

The Daylu Dena Council is part of Liard First Nation and the Kaska Nation, and they don't recognize the British Columbia/Yukon border dividing their traditional territory. I would note also that the Gwich'in Tribal Council does not recognize the boundaries dividing Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Coming back to the Daylu Dena Council — its seat of governance is in the Liard Basin — that council described their experiences interacting with the oil and gas industry and the BC Oil and Gas Commission. They expressed concerns about industry practices and they noted shortcomings with the BC Oil and Gas Commission. Those concerns included timber use, sump sites, multiple access roads and a lack of planning and baseline data. The submission highlighted the potential negative impacts on water and wildlife from hydraulic fracturing. Now the government has said that they will not proceed without support from First Nations — and I'm going to quote: “Based on the many uncertainties that still exist, Daylu Dena Council is not supportive of hydraulic fracturing in Yukon.”

Mr. Speaker, the committee then travelled to the community of Old Crow and held a public hearing. In Old Crow, we heard from Jeffrey Peter, Paul Josie, William Josie, Vicky Josie, Erin Linklater, Tammy Josie, Brandon Kyikavichik, Bonnee Bingham, Robert Bruce, Esau Schafer, Danny Kassi and Fanny Charlie.

Mr. Speaker, I've read those names into the record today because in motion debate last week I referred to the submissions and I quoted from the submissions made by Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation citizens to the committee, and I neglected to include all of their names. I would urge the public to go to the Legislative Assembly website and to the Select Committee on the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing website where they can listen to the public hearings. They can read the transcripts, but people can also hear what people said. It was moving testimony.

I have spoken to many Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation citizens and leadership since the government announced its decision to proceed with hydraulic fracturing and they put the government on notice that they don't like what the government is doing. They don't agree with the government's decision to frack in southeast Yukon. They told me that the Gwich'in Tribal Council, like the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, remains opposed to fracking.

The Teslin Tlingit Council was one of the First Nations that passed a resolution opposing hydraulic fracturing in their traditional territory and they noted that they have a responsibility to protect land, water and the cultural way of life of the Teslin Tlingit. They mentioned chapter 14 of the final agreement, which makes the Government of Yukon responsible for the protection of water supplies. They

expressed their concerns about uncertainties plaguing all facets of the hydraulic fracturing process, including regulations and management. They spoke about the Government of Yukon and that it needs to reconcile First Nation interests through the exercise of consultation in ways that are in keeping with the honour of the Crown.

The Teslin Tlingit Council noted recent aboriginal rights and title legal decisions and they cautioned that the Government of Yukon should risk inviting further legal challenge. But it seems, as we've seen ever since this government took office, that they are inviting legal challenge from First Nations. We see that with Bill S-6 — with the amendments to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*.

I have to ask whether the Yukon government's submission to the federal government to add a provision for binding policy direction from the Government of Canada — binding policy direction that could then be delegated to a Yukon minister — was sent off to Ottawa because the government wants to be able to proceed with hydraulic fracturing.

In Dawson City, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation leadership voiced their opposition to hydraulic fracturing. They spoke about the resolution they had passed. They noted that fresh water is the most valuable for their ecosystems — animals and homelands — and that it should not be exposed to industry without their consent. They said to the committee that the right thing for you to do is to go back and to recommend a ban on hydraulic fracturing. They referred to the Government of Yukon's *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* and the risk of inviting further legal challenges if the Government of Yukon proceeded with hydraulic fracturing when Yukon First Nations oppose it.

The Ross River Dena Council noted that the Kaska Nation has pristine land. The Ross River Dena Council and the Kaska people live in Yukon, B.C. and the Northwest Territories. It includes many Kaska nations, all of which are opposed to fracturing. The chief encouraged the government to look at economic alternatives, such as adventure and cultural tourism, instead of — and I quote: “really harmful ways of making money that's through extraction of minerals and gas and trees.”

The Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation also passed a General Assembly resolution in opposition to hydraulic fracturing in its traditional territory and in Yukon.

The Selkirk First Nation said, at the public hearing in Pelly Crossing, that hydraulic fracturing was too controversial and that there should be a very long wait before it is considered. Elders spoke about the need to have clean water now and for future generations.

The First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun also provided the committee with a copy of its annual General Assembly resolution in opposition to hydraulic fracturing. It calls on the Government of Yukon — and I quote: “...to prohibit any fracking in the Na Cho Nyäk Dun traditional territory.”

A youth councillor submitted a petition to the committee, urging the Government of Yukon to ban hydraulic fracturing

in Yukon. Their opposition is based on harm to traditional ways of life, including fishing, hunting and harvesting; threats to water, land and air resources; and few and short-lived jobs and economic benefits.

The people who attended in Mayo also pointed out the really obvious fact that the committee travelled to Mayo to hear from the citizens of Mayo and to hear from the Na Cho Nyäk Dun government — among others — about the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing and what the public had to say. That hearing was held on the same date that the Peel River watershed land use plan was being challenged in Yukon court in Whitehorse. The majority of the leadership and many of the elders and citizens of Na Cho Nyäk Dun travelled to Whitehorse and couldn't be at the public hearings, but they did make their voices known and they did make their opposition known.

The Carcross-Tagish First Nation made a submission to the committee as well, opposing hydraulic fracturing, and they noted that aboriginal drumming and a folk protest song enlivened the public against fracking and that Carcross-Tagish First Nation leadership, elders, members and staff made 29 witness statements. The witness statements from Carcross-Tagish First Nation reflected an indigenous perspective, respectful of the sacred obligations that Carcross-Tagish First Nation carries for Mother Earth, the lands, waters, air, animals, birds — all the resources — and the next generations yet to come. Climate change was also a theme, with a call for renewable and green technologies in place of hydraulic fracturing.

I spoke at the beginning about the CYFN resolution and opposition. The CYFN member nations are Carcross-Tagish First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, Kluane First Nation, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, Selkirk First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Teslin Tlingit Council and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. Of the First Nation responses, the Gwich'in Tribal Council referenced the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolution of August 2013 to oppose hydraulic fracturing, and the Gwich'in Tribal Council itself resolved at its 2014 Annual General Assembly to declare the Gwich'in settlement region to be a frack-free zone. The Gwich'in Tribal Council called on the governments of Yukon and Northwest Territories to prohibit any fracking in the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Yukon First Nation leaders, citizens and elders have told us the land of their traditional territories is their home, their food basket, their medicine chest, their spiritual place. It has inherent value and should not be destroyed. Yukon First Nations ceded most of their land in exchange for agreements that provide for meaningful involvement in government decision making on the use of the land and the resources in the future. That was a vision of public governments and First Nation governments working together — working in collaboration, consulting with each other and listening to each other — that are entrenched in law. We need to respect that.

I am condemning the Yukon government's decision to proceed with hydraulic fracturing in the Liard Basin, because they are not respecting those agreements. Those agreements

provide for regional land use plans, and we see what happened with the government refusing to accept the final recommended regional land use plan for the Peel River watershed. Government came out with their own plan and forced the First Nations to go to court to uphold the honour of the Crown and to uphold the provisions of the treaties that are in those land claims agreements.

The *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* is another creature of the land claims agreements that deserves to be respected, not flouted.

The Yukon government has said they need the support of the affected First Nations. The Yukon government used to be obligated by law to seek the consent of Yukon First Nations in the *Yukon Oil and Gas Act*. In the 1990s, the territorial government wanted to pursue a transfer from Ottawa of control over Yukon's oil and gas resources. At the time, such a transfer required the formal support of affected Yukon First Nations. In 1996, the Yukon NDP government of the day and Yukon First Nation representatives entered into negotiations and produced a bilateral agreement that set the terms for the devolution of this legislation.

The legislation was devolved and the Yukon government of the time recognized that affected First Nations had aboriginal rights, titles and interests in the Yukon that were affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. In recognition of this, the legislation had a section that Government of Yukon would not issue any new oil and gas dispositions in First Nation traditional territories that had not signed a final agreement without their consent.

Section 13 allowed the Kaska to have a say on the development on their land. In 2012, the Premier, in one of his first moves in office, unilaterally deleted the consent provisions contained in section 13 from the *Yukon Oil and Gas Act*. The Liard Basin is situated firmly in Kaska territory. It seems that this government was planning as early as 2012 to go ahead with fracking in the Liard Basin and was already laying the groundwork.

The government's actions around the *Yukon Oil and Gas Act* are very similar to their actions on Bill S-6 and YESAA. Both stem from agreements negotiated in good faith at a time when relationships actually meant something to a more honest and open Yukon government, and now they both have the reputation of having been breached by this Premier.

Just before the *Yukon Oil and Gas Act* was amended, the Kaska sent a scathing letter to the Premier. In it, they outlined their opposition to the unilateral changes that took away their consent. They told the Yukon government what the changes would mean for Yukon industry and relations, and they said — and I quote: "... what will you have achieved? You will have incurred our deep enmity and otherwise irrevocably damaged a relationship that is supposed to be trust-like, not adversarial. You'll have destroyed any doubts that may exist regarding your government's profound lack of respect for recognized title and rights, and you will have erected completely unnecessary but potential insurmountable barriers to any new oil and gas development in our traditional territory, for so long as your government remains in office."

It seems that history has a way of repeating itself, doesn't it, Mr. Speaker?

What the Kaska told the Yukon government about the *Yukon Oil and Gas Act* amendments is the exact same thing that Yukon First Nations are telling this government about the amendments to YESAA contained in Bill S-6. I refer to the four controversial amendments that were added on after the consultation period and the five-year review of the YESAA. I do acknowledge that there are a number of amendments that were agreed to by First Nations.

I would also like to note that the Fort Nelson First Nation Chief Gale and Lands Director Lana Lowe spoke about the negative consequences of hydraulic fracturing on the B.C. side of the Liard Basin. Fort Nelson First Nation said that they did not receive adequate economic compensation and benefits for their citizens. Fort Nelson First Nation reported that crime, violence and social disruption had increased with the industry coming to their territory. They spoke about harmful effects on wildlife and habitat.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I want to go to the Government of Yukon's response to the *Final Report of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing* that was issued on April 9. They assert that their work is underway to implement actions so that they can proceed with hydraulic fracturing. They want to address the recommendations while they are going ahead with encouraging development. They say they will meet their legal obligations to consult with affected First Nations, but I go back to the fact that the committee report said that, of the recommendations that we could agree to, those needed to be addressed before the government considered hydraulic fracturing.

The government has said that it will require the involvement and support of affected First Nations on any future oil and gas development within their traditional territories that requires hydraulic fracturing. I've spoken this afternoon of the position of Yukon First Nations, including the Kaska, whose territory includes the Liard Basin. I think the government needs to be very cautious about proceeding, because they do not have support from First Nations.

In its response on water, the government is going to collect additional baseline groundwater and surface water data. Here I want to note that we don't have very good data as of yet and we don't have long-term data. The Yukon government proposal — or not proposal — their decision is that Water Resources, Oil and Gas Resources and the Yukon Geological Survey are collaborating with the University of Calgary on a Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, NSERC, project to develop baseline monitoring techniques to assess potential impacts on groundwater and surface water of oil and gas extraction.

They said that they will seek expert advice to confirm our baseline information is adequate in comparison to other jurisdictions. Well, Mr. Speaker, how low are they going to set the bar?

In other jurisdictions, we have certainly seen the damage that has been caused. They are not saying that they will

confirm a long-term set of baseline data. They say they are going to have it be adequate in comparison to other jurisdictions. I want to exceed what other jurisdictions have done — that is what I would like to see happening in the Yukon. When the government says they will seek expert advice to confirm their baseline data, I am deeply concerned that their view of who to consult for expert advice will be the industry, which is promoting the development of oil and gas and the use of hydraulic fracturing, and the regulators, who assert — in complete contradiction to the science — that they have robust regulatory regimes in place to protect the environment. They don't exist — those robust regulations.

The frack fluid impact on groundwater is unknown. The impact on permafrost is unknown. Throughout the Yukon, there are regions of both discontinuous permafrost and other types of permafrost in the northern regions. That is something that there is not enough scientific evidence on to understand whether hydraulic fracturing could be safe.

I want to refer to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the rights of indigenous peoples for free, prior and informed consent before developments take place. That is an obligation that the Yukon government should pay attention to. Canada is signatory to that UN declaration.

There is also the issue of non-compliance by industry and I want to make a brief mention of what is occurring in Alberta, where Jessica Ernst, who has spent 30 years working in the oil and gas industry as an environmental specialist, documented what she calls non-compliance by Encana Corporation, one of her former clients, with Alberta environmental regulations — a whistle-blower, in other words. Her belief is that Encana knowingly injected chemicals into the drinking water in Rosebud, Alberta, about 100 kilometres northeast of Calgary. When the select committee made its fact-finding trip to Alberta, we heard from residents about their health concerns.

Ms. Ernst has filed a lawsuit for what she alleges was a violation of her freedom-of-expression rights under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, because the Alberta regulators sent a cease-and-desist letter to her that accused her of making criminal threats against the regulator, for speaking out about what she believed to be harmful activities.

Now the Supreme Court of Canada is being asked to rule whether the province's energy regulator is allowed to violate a citizen's fundamental freedoms. We are talking about huge implications on not just the environment, but on the rights of citizens.

There is a group in Cochrane, Alberta, that has organized and written letters to all levels of government. They have joined provincial groups to educate people about hydraulic fracturing. They have met with industry representatives, but their concern is that it may be too late. Their concern is also that nobody knows what long-term damage fracking might do.

In referring at the outset to this government's decision — before they even struck the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing — to proceed with

supporting the oil and gas industry, I mentioned a number of actions that it has taken that show their purpose.

A recently leaked memo from Energy, Mines and Resources discussed the need to enter into an oil and gas agreement with the Liard First Nation. There was also a leaked PowerPoint presentation to caucus about hydraulic fracturing. There is much more that I could have said about hydraulic fracturing. I could have read into the record quotes from the presenters to the select committee.

I want to encourage people who are interested to go to the Yukon Legislative Assembly website for themselves and read the transcripts of the many experts' presentations at the committee's public proceedings.

I also want to encourage people again to listen to the testimony of the public at the hearings that were held in the 12 communities in the Yukon. There were over 700 people who presented to the committee, and the committee also received 435 written submissions. More than 95 percent of those submissions were opposed to hydraulic fracturing.

When all is said and done, the Yukon Party government has not respected the findings and recommendations of the select committee. It appears they never intended to. We do agree that public dialogue needs to continue. This government may never again regain the trust of the Yukon public. They have destroyed it through too many actions: the Peel River watershed final recommended land use plan being rejected; the unilateral changes to YESAA that they have proposed; and now the action to support oil and gas development and hydraulic fracturing in the Liard Basin.

The government cannot assert that, because it is only two percent of the land, that really it is just a small thing. It is not really anything anybody needs to worry about. The science does not bear that out.

When I spoke with the Chief of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation this week, his message was that they stand behind the resolution to oppose hydraulic fracturing, not just in Eagle Plains, but throughout Yukon. When I spoke with elders in the community, they said, take notice, Yukon government; we are not happy about your decision to proceed with hydraulic fracturing in the Liard Basin. We do not support it and Yukoners and First Nations will stand up against it.

We do urge the Yukon government to listen to Yukon First Nations. As I mentioned, a group of Kaska members have formed the Kaska Society for the Protection of our Lands and Resources to fight against the government's plans to frack. We urge the Yukon government to refrain from its pro-fracking agenda in the absence of widespread public support — or social licence, as it's called. We urge the Yukon government to refrain from its pro-fracking agenda in view of the scientific evidence and we urge the Yukon government to refrain from fracking in Yukon because of the opposition of First Nations.

It is possible to have a strong and diverse local economy that values the environment. As Yukon First Nations and community members have told us, a subsistence economy is legitimate. The wealth of the territory includes its people and its environment. We can have a strong and diverse local

economy that includes a knowledge-based economy, technology, education, arts and culture, trapping, forestry and small business development. But Mr. Speaker, hydraulic fracturing does not belong in our territory. It does not advance the economy and it's the wrong thing to do.

I commend this motion to the House and I urge members to support it.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I would like to thank the Member for Copperbelt South for bringing forward this motion for debate today here on the floor of the House.

I would also like to thank her for her role on the select committee, along with the Member for Klondike, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and the three government members, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, the Member for Watson Lake — who was the chair of the committee — as well as the Member for Copperbelt North. It was a tremendous amount of work that they put into developing this *Final Report of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing* and I commend them for that.

I know as politicians and MLAs and Cabinet ministers we all have very busy schedules. There are a number of commitments, not only in our ridings, but also in the broader community. For them to take the time that they put into this and the work they did I think on behalf of all MLAs in this Legislative Assembly — we owe them a debt of gratitude. It was a tremendous amount of work on an issue that is subject to considerable debate and is a concern to many Yukon citizens, whether they are for it or against it.

With respect to the motion itself, of course the government will not be supporting this motion today. There are a number of problems with the wording and I think that even if there were some amendments that we could make to the motion to make it more palatable, it would take away too much from the meaning of the motion. So rather than doing that, we will just simply not be supporting the motion as it is crafted by the Member for Copperbelt South and the NDP Official Opposition.

Last week, the Yukon government came out with our response to the *Final Report of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing*. On top of that, we also made an announcement that we will be open to applications for potential hydraulic fracturing in only one area of the Yukon. That is the Liard Basin and that would only occur with the support of the affected First Nations. Of course those affected First Nations are the five Kaska nations — the three in British Columbia as well as the two Yukon First Nations, the Ross River Dena Council and the Liard First Nation. There is also the Acho Dene Koe, a First Nation based in the Northwest Territories in the community of Fort Liard that is — I don't have the number, Mr. Speaker, but I am assuming it is the closest community that we have to the area in question.

We believe that this is appropriate because there is an established industry in that part of the Yukon and infrastructure exists. There have been producing conventional natural gas wells in the Liard Basin going back to the 1970s.

They were significant producers. I believe two of them were rated in the top-30 wells in Canada at peak production. Again, with that and the delivery infrastructure and the processing infrastructure that exists, we feel that this area is an appropriate area to focus on with respect to this type of shale gas development that we are looking for.

This area, as I have mentioned, is less than two percent and my understanding is that it is actually 1.3 percent of Yukon's total land area. This is also about bringing Yukoners home to work and live and, in many cases, reuniting families who live apart because work can only be found elsewhere. I have mentioned in reports to local media recently that although our resources are managed by us, they are owned by Canada.

My colleagues and I believe that we must be a contributor to the country and cannot rely only on the hard work of British Columbians and Albertans and residents of Saskatchewan to do the heavy lifting when it comes to responsible resource development. We must play our part, and I believe a strong and robust energy sector is an opportunity for us to do that, on top of all of the other industries that we have in the territory. We are a relatively small jurisdiction population-wise, but we have strong industries in mining, both hardrock and placer. We have strong tourism numbers and continue to see growth and investment by our government in that particular industry. There is the knowledge sector. There is the public sector that plays an important role here in the territory as well. I feel that through those industries — on top of other industries that I am responsible for as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, such as agriculture and forestry — we can be a net contributor to this country and hold our own and make a difference when it comes to generating wealth and being able to make those investments in health care, education and infrastructure, which are not only important to us, but important to Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

With respect to the First Nations' support, we are already in reconciliation talks with the Kaska First Nations — again, the five mentioned: three British Columbian and two from Yukon — and are also initiating talks with the Acho Dene Koe. These are the two affected First Nations in regard to the Liard Basin.

The Yukon Party supports all responsible regulated resource industries and is committed to creating the conditions that bring jobs for Yukoners right at home, right here in our territory.

In responding to this motion this afternoon — and I guess my time for a response is unlimited, but I certainly won't go on for any longer than necessary because I am interested in hearing from other members. With respect to the New Democrat Official Opposition, I think that as early as 2011, in the 10-day Sitting that we had after the election that started this, I believe the Member for Mayo-Tatchun raised the issue of hydraulic fracturing during that time. Certainly, I don't believe that it would come as a surprise to any Yukoner that the New Democrat Official Opposition is opposed to this practice.

Of course there was a mail-out that many Yukoners received from the NDP Official Opposition with respect to their opposition to this type of activity. In that 2011 Sitting, the Member for Klondike at that time was very bullish about the opportunities with respect to the oil and gas industry in the territory and, since then, has changed his mind. At the time, he mentioned that developing LNG is better for the environment than diesel; it is good for our business community; it would bring new investment into the Yukon and one day could grow to rival mining as our biggest resource sector.

So I am anxious to hear from him as well. He will have the time — perhaps when he has his chance on the floor, he'll be able to talk about why he has changed his mind with respect to the opportunities that exist with oil and gas development here in the territory. Mr. Speaker, I'll just mention — through you — to the Member for Klondike that I don't plan on taking up the rest of the afternoon, so he will have his time to explain why he has abandoned oil and gas as an opportunity for future economic growth in the territory.

I am going to take a bit of time to walk through some of the aspects with respect to Yukon geology, water, seismicity, air quality, human health, the economic analysis, and the regulation of hydraulic fracturing, and then I am going to get into a little bit more detail than the Member for Copperbelt-South did with respect to our response to the select committee. We are accepting and addressing all of the select committee report recommendations and moving forward with actions on each and every one of them.

When it comes to Yukon geology, there are eight basins in the territory with oil and gas potential that encompass approximately 15 percent of Yukon's total land base — 85 percent of Yukon is not prospective for oil and gas exploration or development. Of that 15 percent of Yukon land with oil and gas potential, Yukon First Nations own 1.6 percent of those lands as category A. For various reasons, 7.8 percent of the land with potential is currently not available for disposition — either permanently, such as parklands, or for an extended period of time, such as the Whitehorse Trough. That is another important thing that Yukoners need to know with respect to our position, which is that not only are we only focusing on the Liard Basin for shale gas opportunities, but we will continue to not issue oil and gas dispositions of any kind in the Whitehorse Trough and then focus on conventional opportunities in the other basins that exist mainly in the north Yukon. I guess it's really focused around two of those areas: the Eagle Plains Basin and the Kandik Basin at this time.

Approximately 5.4 percent of the total area of Yukon is available for oil and gas exploration or development. The unencumbered portion of the Liard Basin, which is open to consideration for hydraulic fracturing again, as we've mentioned, is approximately 1.3 to two percent of the Yukon land area.

Shale and tight oil and gas or the unconventional resource potential has not been assessed in Yukon, but four basins are geologically promising: Liard, Eagle Plains, the Peel plateau and onshore Beaufort-Mackenzie.

A total of 76 wells have been drilled in five of the eight basins. Oil and/or gas in conventional reservoirs have been discovered in two basins: Eagle Plains and Liard. They are the only basins with active dispositions. Assessments of conventional resource potential are available for all basins. Again, the Liard oil and gas basin — we've mentioned how much of the total land area it covers. Of that 1.3 percent, approximately one percent of Yukon's land area is available for dispositions in the Liard Basin.

There has been over 25 years of gas production from conventional reservoirs. There is the gas pipeline that delivers gas to Fort Nelson in British Columbia. The Liard Basin in northeastern British Columbia is a proven world-class shale gas resource. That same basin, of course, extends into the Yukon.

An unconventional target in the Besa River Shale — there may be others — approximate depths to the Besa River Shale, based on limited drilling, range from approximately one kilometre to greater than four kilometres.

Not much is known about the groundwater conditions either in the Yukon. There is limited surface water quality and quantity data available. This basin is 177 kilometres to the east of Watson Lake and 400 kilometres to the southeast of Ross River. That, of course, is straight-line distance.

When it comes to the Eagle Plains oil and gas basin — that area covers approximately 4.4 percent of Yukon's land area. There are discoveries of oil and gas in conventional reservoirs.

There are two unconventional targets at Ford Lake and Canol shale formations — and there may be others. Approximate depths to Ford Lake Shale, based on limited drilling, range from one kilometre to 3.2 kilometres. Approximate depths to Canol shale, based on limited drilling, range from one kilometre to 3.7 kilometres. Groundwater conditions are not well-known, but permafrost is locally thick and extensive. This area is approximately 65 kilometres from Old Crow and 180 kilometres north of Dawson City.

Those are the two basins that I wanted to highlight with respect to the geology — again, largely because Eagle Plains does have the conventional work underway that Northern Cross (Yukon) is talking about, and then, of course, significant — the Liard Basin is the area of the Yukon that we would like to focus on shale gas opportunities, providing there is support of the affected First Nations.

I'm going to talk a little bit about the water. Long-term monitoring of Yukon's surface water quality and quantity occurs across the territory. The *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan* was released in June of 2014. One of the six priority areas is to better understand and manage Yukon's groundwater, with emphasis on enhancing and formalizing the existing groundwater program in Yukon and developing a regulatory framework to manage the groundwater.

A hydrogeologist has been hired to work on groundwater-related issues and lend expertise to existing water programs. The Yukon government is collaborating with the University of Calgary on an NSERC project to develop monitoring techniques to assess potential impacts of oil and gas

extraction, including hydraulic fracturing on groundwater and surface water. A portion of this project will look at well integrity and the potential transport of hydraulic fracturing fluids and fugitive gas migration into groundwater.

In 2013, Yukon government enhanced its existing water monitoring program in the Eagle Plains region. This baseline program includes new hydrometric stations on Eagle River and McParlon and Dalglish creeks and collection of water quality data from 15 creeks and tributaries in the region.

In 2014, Yukon government enhanced its existing water monitoring program in the Kotaneelee region. This baseline program includes new hydrometric stations on the Beaver and La Biche rivers, collection of water quality data from the Beaver and La Biche rivers, and information on Yukon surface water is available on-line at www.yukonwater.ca.

The Yukon Water Board and Department of Energy, Mines and Resources are participating in the coordinated on-line information network — or COIN — initiative to make baseline data regarding water use more easily available for oil and gas project assessments.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to seismicity — another concern that we've heard associated with the hydraulic fracturing activity — earthquakes can occur across Yukon, but the larger ones tend to occur in two regions: in the southwest Yukon and in the northeast Yukon. Yukon is locally seismically active with concentrations of seismicity of magnitude greater than 5 occurring in southwest Yukon and in northeast Yukon along the eastern side of the Richardson Mountains. Between these areas, earthquakes do occur but are generally less than magnitude 5.0. Seismicity in Yukon is currently monitored by two seismometer arrays comprising 13 stations, installed and maintained by the Geological Survey of Canada and the University of Ottawa. Seismometers in Alaska, B.C. and N.W.T. also monitor Yukon earthquakes. The enhanced array of instruments will improve our ability to pinpoint active faults and provide data on the background level of seismic activity in different areas of the territory. Installation of two more arrays, comprising approximately 50 stations, will commence in 2015 — in fact this year, Mr. Speaker. These arrays belong to a research consortium called the USArray and Colorado State University. The University of Ottawa, USArray and Colorado State arrays are temporary, mostly to be removed by 2019. 2015 to 2019 is sufficient time to determine the locations of active structures and establish a seismic baseline in areas of oil and gas activities.

With respect to air quality, Yukon's air quality is available on-line through Environment Canada's National Air Pollution Surveillance, or NAPS, website. YG will continue to collect long-term air quality trend data for Yukon at the monitoring station located in Whitehorse. Three studies on greenhouse gas emissions over the full life cycle of natural gas are available on the Yukon Energy Corporation website as a result of their work to convert the backup in peak diesel generators to natural gas-fired generators. Obviously the source would be liquefied natural gas at this time transmitted from the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

"Measurements of methane emissions at natural gas production sites in the United States" was published in September 2013 in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*.

This work reports direct measurements of methane emissions at 190 onshore natural gas sites in the U.S. The measurements indicate that, while completion emissions are lower than previously estimated, the data also show emissions from pneumatic controllers and equipment leaks are higher than Environmental Protection Agency national emission projections. Estimates of total emissions are similar to the most recent EPA national inventory of methane emissions from natural gas production. These measurements will help inform policy makers, researchers and industry, providing information about some of the sources of methane emissions from the production of natural gas, and will better inform and advance national and international scientific and policy discussions.

The results of a recently released three-year human health impact study that was conducted in northeast British Columbia can be found on Government of British Columbia's website. There are some key findings from this B.C. study. There is some possibility for elevated air concentrations to occur at some locations. There is a low probability that health impacts would occur in association with these exposures. The elevated air concentrations were rare or occurred in remote locations and are not expected to result in negative health effects. A review of existing regulatory and policy frameworks related to oil and gas activity in place in British Columbia was completed. Overall, the review found that the existing regulatory framework in B.C. is both extensive and protective of human health. There are some areas that warrant further consideration, including: emergency planning; flaring, venting and fugitive emissions management; hydraulic fracturing; information management; and environmental monitoring.

Economic analysis, of course, will be undertaken by the Department of Economic Development with respect to the potential economic impact of developing shale resources in the Liard Basin. There will be an analysis done to assess the size of the shale resources. Currently the Yukon Geological Survey has relatively decent information on conventional gas reserves, but there is little information on the shale gas reserves, although, when you look at the EFLO Energy website, they estimate that shale gas reserves in the Kotaneelee are 3.9 trillion to seven trillion cubic feet. Again, that is a number that dwarfs the conventional production that has occurred at that site since the 1970s, but the experts who work on the Yukon Geological Survey, in partnership with the Department of Economic Development, will be conducting a more detailed analysis of the shale resources.

They will: rely on current cost estimates for development by basin; use multipliers to assess economic potential; model all fiscal impacts of development, such as the royalties and the taxes, et cetera; assess short-, medium- and long-term effects; consider scenarios for various levels of development and

global conditions; and include analysis on export potential as well as any domestic demand.

Of course, when we are talking about these numbers that are put forward by companies like EFLO Energy, that is well in excess of what we could use domestically in the territory, but, that said, we would become a net exporter of natural gas to other areas across North America and perhaps even internationally, depending on what happens in British Columbia with their liquefied natural gas activities and export facilities on the coast.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the regulatory environment that exists for oil and gas activities, which will of course also extend to any potential shale gas opportunities.

There are several regulators, agencies and processes that are involved in regulating oil and gas activities. Each one contributes to ensuring the safety — each one, pardon me, contributes to ensuring the integrity of the environment and protecting human health. The key statutes that are involved are the *Oil and Gas Act*, the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, the *Waters Act*, the *Environment Act*, as well as *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Hydraulic fracturing requires well operation approval under the drilling and production regulations of the *Oil and Gas Act* as well.

The Yukon government is committed to using the FracFocus Chemical Disclosure Registry as well, and I will get into a little bit more detail on that when I read through our response to the 21 recommendations.

First Nations have worked with Yukon since the late 1990s to develop all oil and gas legislation and regulations and have the option to adopt Yukon legislation for their category A lands. I think it's important again for Yukoners to note that, when we talk about oil and gas development in the Liard Basin, it's not just going to be a blanket assessment. Like any other project, each proponent will have to develop a project proposal and submit it to the YESA board as well as for consideration to the Yukon Water Board and the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board of course will have a role. There will be a requirement for a socio-economic benefit. I should say that as well as a part of the royalty structure that we've received from the development at the Kotaneelee fields, I think the number is between \$45 million and \$50 million of royalties received by the Yukon government, of which \$10 million was transferred to Yukon First Nations.

I know I haven't had the opportunity to talk about it during this current Sitting of the Legislative Assembly, but those are dollars that Yukon governments of all stripes, whether it is NDP or the Liberal government or Yukon Party government, has used to invest in important things for Yukon, such as education, hiring teachers, hiring nurses, investments in infrastructure and other health care investments. Again, these dollars have been used for the benefit of Yukoners. I can't state that enough.

The Yukon Chamber of Commerce put out their news release yesterday and I'm just going to read from it. It was for immediate release Tuesday, 14 April 2015. The title is *The Yukon Chamber supports Yukon government position on*

hydraulic fracturing. Again, this news release is available publicly and I would encourage all members and indeed all those interested to look at this news release. They are very pleased obviously that the government — pardon me, this is a quote from Peter Turner, president of the Yukon chamber. At the end of the news release he says: "We are pleased that the government will act on our previous concerns about the Select Committee having left incomplete part of their mandate: to identify potential benefits of hydraulic fracturing in terms of potential oil and gas royalties to be paid to the federal, territorial, and First Nations governments."

It goes on to say, "The Chamber had previously pointed out that conventional gas extraction in the Liard Basin had contributed more than \$45 million in royalties. This provides at least one data point that could be used to forecast the potential for future royalties." He added that "Yukoners have a long tradition of self-reliance, and we encourage all efforts to explore options to make our territory more energy independent." That is a direct quote from the president of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce. This is a news release from the Yukon Chamber of Commerce that was released yesterday.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to talk a little bit about our acceptance and how we're addressing the select committee report and the actions we're using. It's a fairly straightforward document that I tabled earlier this week — I believe it was on Monday, Mr. Speaker. I delivered a copy to you personally before it was made public on Thursday afternoon, and then tabled it at my earliest opportunity during that time of normal daily proceedings on Monday.

The first select committee recommendation is that the Government of Yukon should have the support of the Yukon First Nations whose traditional territories are affected before allowing hydraulic fracturing. Of course, we agree. I mentioned that we are open to applications for potential hydraulic fracturing in only one area of the Yukon, the Liard Basin, and that would occur only with the support of affected First Nations.

I think we are broadening that somewhat by also adding the non-Yukon First Nations — the three Kaska First Nations, as well as the Acho Dene Koe — but I can't see that any members would argue with adding those First Nations to the discussions, as they have asserted traditional territory that covers the Liard Basin.

Some of the actions that we're going to undertake with respect to this recommendation include: we will initiate discussions with affected First Nations regarding information needs related to understanding the risks and benefits associated with hydraulic fracturing; initiate discussion with affected First Nations regarding models of engagement, including potential partnerships and agreements; continue to discuss a common regulatory regime for oil and gas on First Nation and public lands with the 1997 MOA working group; and continue to seek First Nation involvement when negotiating benefit agreements, as required by the *Oil and Gas Act*.

The second recommendation brought forward by the committee was that the Government of Yukon should consider options for continuing an informed public dialogue among Yukoners about the issue of hydraulic fracturing and the oil and gas industry, more generally. Again, the YG response was that we agreed with that recommendation, and the actions we will take are: We will develop an engagement strategy that will provide opportunities for public dialogue; include information to enhance knowledge on the management and regulation of Yukon's oil and gas industry; and improve the understanding of the risks and benefits of this industry. The strategy will include Yukon First Nations, stakeholders, industry and the public.

Further to that, we will continue to participate in a Natural Resources Canada energy and mines ministers markets and trade working group, which is creating a public portal with facts around shale oil and gas resources. We will be open to formation of partnerships and use of mechanisms that can enhance communication and broaden knowledge of the oil and gas industry.

With respect to the public dialogue and the informed public dialogue, I've mentioned on the floor of this House that, on a go-forward basis, one thing that, as a government and as Yukoners, we need to ensure happens is that there is zero tolerance for misinformation.

Through this public dialogue, we will be able to ensure that we get the proper information out there in response to situations or instances where incorrect information is being portrayed as correct. I think we owe that, as legislators, to the Yukon public so that they can make an informed decision with respect to this practice.

The third recommendation is that the Government of Yukon should make all relevant environmental data open, transparent and available to the public. Again, our response is that we agree. The actions that we will undertake — we currently collect water quality, water flow and wildlife data across Yukon, including in areas with oil and gas development potential or activity, and we make information about the data publicly available on-line.

The Yukon government is a partner in the federal national air pollution surveillance program and operates an ambient air pollution station in downtown Whitehorse to monitor air quality. Yukon air quality data is available on-line through Environment Canada's NAPS website. We will examine options for improving access to baseline data.

The Yukon Water Board and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources are participating — and again I mentioned this earlier, but I am going to read it in again — in the coordinated on-line information network — or COIN initiative — to make baseline water data and information regarding water use more easily available for oil and gas project assessments.

We will continue to maintain and improve Yukon Water and Waterline, two on-line data catalogues regarding water use.

The fourth recommendation is that the Government of Yukon should respect First Nation final agreements and its

ongoing obligation toward non-settled First Nations in addressing any issue relating to hydraulic fracturing. Again, we agree with this recommendation. As the Yukon government, we will consult affected First Nations on any proposed hydraulic fracturing projects that might arise in their traditional territories and we will continue to incorporate local and traditional knowledge in relation to development of any oil and gas project. Again, that incorporation of local and traditional knowledge also underpins the Yukon environmental and socio-economic assessment process. I think that is an important action to note and I would just add that other bit as an aside. It is not contained in one of our actions, but it is certainly something that the YESA people and the individuals who work there take very seriously when they are conducting their assessments.

Recommendation 5 is that the Government of Yukon conducts a thorough study of the potential economic impacts of developing a hydraulic fracturing industry. The study should include an assessment of potential infrastructure, health and social services and environmental costs related to the industry. The thorough economic analysis should include, but not be limited to, the following: an estimation of marketable oil and gas reserves in each basin — again our focus will be on the Liard Basin with respect to the shale reserves, and continuing unconventional reserve estimates in the other basins as well; an estimation of the necessary capital investment for production in each basin; an estimation of operating and regulatory costs; an estimation of tax revenue and disbursement; the effects on Yukon's gross domestic product; wage and employment analysis, including the economic impact of a fly-in/fly-out industry; and a comparison of the impacts of a hydraulic fracturing industry in contrast to a renewable energy industry.

That concludes the select committee recommendation that we agree with and the actions that will be undertaken with respect to this.

The Department of Economic Development will undertake an economic analysis that assesses the potential economic impact of developing shale oil and gas resources in Yukon. An assessment of shale resources will be conducted to determine the extent of the oil and gas resources in the territory. The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources will continue again to participate in the Energy, Mines and Resources' conference markets and trade working group, which is focusing on shale and tight-resource developments.

The sixth recommendation of the select committee has to do with water — that baseline groundwater and surface water data be collected for an appropriate period of time in order to ensure that comprehensive data is available. In agreeing to this recommendation, our actions include that the government currently collects water quality and quantity data across the Yukon, including areas with oil and gas development potential and makes information about the data publicly available on-line.

In 2014, additional hydrometric stations were established to monitor surface water in the Eagle Plains Basin and Liard Basin. In light of the select committee's recommendations, the

government will be assessing our baseline data inventory, with a view to seeing where additional data collection may be needed and how it is verified. We will then seek expert advice to confirm our baseline information is adequate in comparison to other jurisdictions. We will undertake to fill any gaps in our data.

The Yukon government, through Water Resources, Oil and Gas Resources and the Yukon Geological Survey is collaborating with the University of Calgary on a Natural Sciences and Research Council of Canada, or NSERC project, to develop baseline monitoring techniques to assess potential impacts on groundwater and surface water of oil and gas extraction.

In addition, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources will consult with land and water boards in the Mackenzie Valley of Northwest Territories regarding the use and effectiveness of their guidelines for the monitoring of surface water and groundwater response to vertical and horizontal hydraulic fracturing operations in the Mackenzie Valley. We continue to examine the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers' guidelines and to follow developments in other jurisdictions.

The Department of Environment will continue to collect seasonal baseline groundwater data in the Eagle Plains Basin and will also seek to expand the groundwater network in the Eagle Plains Basin and Liard Basin. As well, the Department of Environment will continue with long-term surface water and hydrometric monitoring, including hydrometric stations on the La Biche and Beaver rivers in the Liard Basin.

The seventh recommendation of the committee is that a better understanding of the impacts and interactions of hydraulic fracturing fluids on groundwater be developed. Again, our action in agreeing with this recommendation is that we are collaborating with the University of Calgary on an NSERC project to develop monitoring techniques to assess potential impacts of oil and gas extraction, including hydraulic fracturing on groundwater and surface water. A portion of this project will look at well integrity and the potential transport of hydraulic fracturing fluids and fugitive gas migration into groundwater. Yukon government's association with this project will enhance our government's ability to establish Yukon-based guidelines and standards on oil and gas activities, including hydraulic fracturing.

The *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan* was released in June 2014. One of the six priority areas is to better understand and manage Yukon's groundwater, with an emphasis on enhancing and formalizing the existing groundwater program in Yukon and developing a regulatory framework to manage groundwater. A hydrogeologist has been hired to work on groundwater-related issues and lend expertise to existing water programs. We will continue to participate in the advisory group on Canadian Water Network's hydraulic fracturing consortium. The overall goal of this group is to develop a national research consortium for hydraulic fracturing and water, and to advance decisions for hydraulic fracturing and water.

Select committee recommendation 8 is that requirements related to water intensive practices are adhered to, even if non-water options for shale formation fracturing are to be considered. Our actions — again agreeing with this recommendation — are that we will consult with an external advisory group or specialists who will review our regulatory system and identify any necessary improvements. YG will prepare a policy for the regulation of hydraulic fracturing, which would outline the goals of safe hydraulic fracturing and the regulatory approaches to meet the goals. We will continue to work with the National Energy Board as well as the BC Oil and Gas Commission through our services agreements so that we enhance our regulatory approach.

Recommendation 9 is that adequate seasonal thresholds are established to ensure the usage of fresh water does not exceed watershed capacity. The actions that we are taking with respect to this recommendation are that we are aware that other jurisdictions have developed regulatory tools, and we will review tools used in other jurisdictions, such as the Northeast Water Tool used by BC Oil and Gas Commission, to provide guidance on water availability across northeastern British Columbia and support decision-making processes for water use approvals and licences.

The Yukon Water Board and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources are participating in the COIN initiative to make baseline data regarding water use more easily available for oil and gas project assessments, and we will consult with an external advisory group or specialists who will review our regulatory system and identify any necessary improvements.

There are two more recommendations that have to do with water. Recommendation 10 states that companies be required to make public the chemicals and chemical compounds that would be used, including case numbers, volumes, percentages and concentrations prior to any hydraulic fracturing activity. Of course the government agrees with this.

This is something that I've heard many Yukoners talk about. It's an issue of concern to many who are following this issue and following the debate. In agreeing with that, proponents will be required to publicly disclose information on the fluids used in the hydraulic fracturing operations prior to permitting. YG has made a public commitment to use FracFocus, which is a chemical disclosure registry set up by the BC Oil and Gas Commission. We will continue to consult with an external advisory group or specialists who will review our regulatory system and identify any of the necessary improvements.

Recommendation 11 is that research be conducted to demonstrate whether well integrity can prevent migration of liquids or gases in the long term. Our action in agreeing with this select committee recommendation is that we will monitor the research result and endeavour to collaborate in relevant research whenever possible. I would reference the collaboration with the University of Calgary on the NSERC project to develop monitoring techniques to assess potential impacts of oil and gas extraction, including hydraulic

fracturing, on groundwater and surface water as another action we will take with respect to this recommendation.

When it comes to greenhouse gases and other air emissions, the committee, in recommendation 12, asked that air quality baseline data be collected for an appropriate period of time in order to ensure that comprehensive data is available. Actions that we are proposing in our agreement with this recommendation is that our partner in the federal NAPS, or National Air Pollution Surveillance program, and operates an ambient air pollution station in downtown Whitehorse to monitor air quality. Yukon air quality data is available on-line through Environment Canada's NAPS website.

This monitoring station is located in Whitehorse, so the government will assess our baseline data inventory with a view to seeing where additional data collection may be needed and how it is verified. We'll seek expert advice, including advice from Environment Canada, to confirm that our baseline information is adequate in comparison to other jurisdictions and undertake to fill any gaps in our data. We have access to over 25 years of Yukon baseline air monitoring data from Environment Canada. The Council of Yukon First Nations is operating an air monitoring station north of Whitehorse at Little Fox Lake.

YG will review monitoring parameters in other natural gas producing areas such as northern B.C. and Alberta to inform what the appropriate monitoring stations and baseline parameters would be for oil and gas development in Yukon. YG will consider establishing two additional full monitoring stations in locations to be determined based on the review findings and input from our experts.

Recommendation 13 is that research be done to develop a method to effectively measure and monitor greenhouse gas emissions over the full lifecycle of natural gas. In our response, we agree with this. The actions that have been undertaken already include the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Conservation Society jointly commissioning two natural gas lifecycle studies in 2011-12 when investigating the use of liquefied natural gas for power generation. These studies can be found on the Yukon Energy Corporation website. One was authored by the Pembina Institute. I can't recall — and it doesn't reference here I don't think — the authors of the other two, but, looking back in Hansard, that would be made available.

So there were two done by the Energy Corporation and the Yukon Conservation Society, and a third one commissioned by the Energy Corporation when their supply options changed from southern Alberta to southern British Columbia. All these reports are available on the Yukon Energy Corporation website.

Research continues to be undertaken by others, and we will monitor the research result and endeavour to collaborate in relevant research whenever possible.

Recommendation 14 is that research be conducted regarding fluid and gas leakage specific to the unique permafrost conditions in Yukon. Again, in agreeing with this, we've proposed three different actions. Fluid and gas leakage

research continues to be undertaken in areas with permafrost, and government will monitor the research results and endeavour to collaborate in relevant research, whenever possible. YG will continue to monitor wellbore integrity in historic wells in the continuous permafrost of northern Yukon, and we will seek expert advice to review our regulatory system and identify any necessary improvements.

Recommendation 15 is that steps be taken to ensure that volatile organic compounds are not released during development and production. Again, in agreeing to that, the actions we intend to undertake are: regulatory directions that will apply to all oil and gas activities are being developed for flaring, venting and fugitive emissions. YG will continue to monitor mature regulatory regimes to evaluate their effectiveness in managing the release of volatile organic compounds. We will seek expert advice to review our regulatory system and identify any necessary improvements. We will set acceptable levels, based on the research and expert advice.

With respect to land and seismic, select committee recommendation 16 is that baseline data on wildlife and wildlife habitat be collected for an appropriate period of time in order to ensure that comprehensive data is available and that the impacts of hydraulic fracturing on wildlife be studied. In agreeing with this recommendation, we're proposing the following actions. The government currently collects wildlife data across Yukon, including areas with oil and gas development potential, and makes information about the data publicly available on-line. The government will assess its baseline data inventory, with a view to seeing where additional data collection may be needed and how it is verified. We will then consult with an external advisory group or specialist to confirm that our baseline information is adequate in comparison with other jurisdictions, and we will undertake to fill any gaps in our data.

YG will continue to survey and monitor the Porcupine caribou herd. We have deployed a number of cameras on old seismic lines in north Yukon to determine wildlife use along these cut lines. We will continue to study baseline disturbance and recovery of linear features, as required under the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan*, to inform our general understanding of impacts.

Recommendation 17 is that baseline data on seismic activity be collected for an appropriate period of time in order to ensure that comprehensive data is available. Again, I mentioned this earlier, but the actions spelled out in our response to the select committee report is that a seismic array comprising 13 seismometers is currently in place in Yukon to measure seismic activity. This is part of a broader array that monitors earthquake activity across western Canada and Alaska. YG is working with a consortium of university researchers to significantly expand this seismic array over the next few years to over 40 instruments. This enhanced network will allow greater resolution on the locations of active faults in Yukon and will provide more baseline information on the magnitude of naturally occurring background seismic activity.

The government will assess our baseline data inventory with a view to seeing where additional data collection may be needed and how it is verified. YG will then consult with an external advisory group of specialists to confirm our baseline information is adequate in comparison to other jurisdictions, and we will undertake to fill any gaps in our data. YG will explore opportunities to link into British Columbia seismicity studies related to oil and gas activities in northeast B.C. near the Liard Basin of southeast Yukon.

We're getting close to the end of the recommendations here, Mr. Speaker, after which I'll wrap up my remarks for the day and turn the floor over to others.

Recommendation 18 is that the impacts of seismic activity in Yukon be studied to evaluate the seismic risks caused by hydraulic fracturing and to avoid the development of flow paths to fresh water. The actions the government is proposing are that we will work on expanding seismic baseline data and obtaining more knowledge on earthquakes in the territory through collaborations with universities and other governments. Research on seismic risks is underway in other jurisdictions with extensive oil and gas activity. We will continue to monitor the research and include important learnings into our regulations, guidelines and practices.

Mr. Speaker, recommendation 19 is that the impacts of hydraulic fracturing on Yukon's permafrost be thoroughly researched. This would include research on the interaction between groundwater and surface water, regional and local scale pathway assessments and evaluation of permafrost degradation at wellheads. The two actions that we are proposing in agreement with this recommendation — the first is that a number of research organizations, including the Yukon government, currently monitor permafrost in Yukon. This data is accessible on-line via the Yukon Permafrost Network. Yukon government will identify opportunities to expand and enhance its monitoring network through collaborations with other researchers, particularly those working in the Liard Basin area. We will monitor the results of permafrost research underway in other jurisdictions, such as N.W.T. and Alaska, and will endeavour to collaborate in relevant research whenever possible.

The final two recommendations, I believe, of the select committee are with respect to human health and social impacts. Recommendation 20 is that health-related baseline data be collected for an appropriate period of time in order to ensure that the data is available. In agreeing with that recommendation, the actions we are proposing are that, in light of the select committee's recommendations, the government will assess its baseline data inventory with a view to seeing where additional data collection may be needed and how it is verified. Of course, we will review the results of the recently released three-year health impact study conducted in northeast British Columbia. That's the document that I referenced earlier during my remarks.

The final recommendation is that Yukon's chief medical officer of health be mandated to conduct a thorough human health risk assessment where hydraulic fracturing development is proposed in Yukon. Our action with that, of

course, is we will work with the Yukon's chief medical officer of health and expert advisors to determine an appropriate approach to assessing potential human health implications.

Mr. Speaker, I thank members of the Legislative Assembly for their indulgence in allowing me to read the recommendations and the responses, because there was an awful lot of work put into that by officials within Energy, Mines and Resources, particularly the Oil and Gas branch and the Yukon Geological Survey. Environment officials, Economic Development officials, officials from Aboriginal Relations in Executive Council Office — among others — put an awful lot of work into preparing this response to the select committee's final report regarding the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing.

To conclude my remarks for this afternoon and turn the floor over to others, I will just reiterate that we are accepting and addressing all of the select committee report recommendations and moving forward with the actions that I have outlined on each of them. We are open to applications for potential hydraulic fracturing in one area of the Yukon — the Liard Basin — and that would occur only with the support of affected First Nations.

I have talked about the area in question — the size of that land mass. We have heard from Yukon Geological Survey officials that that area is a world-class basin for this type of development, and we see this as our opportunity to diversify our energy sector and diversify our economy. I have mentioned our resources are owned by Canada, but we manage them, and I think it is our responsibility as Yukoners to manage them in a responsible way and develop them in a responsible way, so that we can contribute to this great country, and not simply rely on the heavy lifting done by residents of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, among others. Obviously, when it comes to this type of development, they are carrying the heaviest load for Canadians.

Regarding First Nations' support, we are in reconciliation talks with the Kaska and are also initiating talks with the Acho Dene Koe. Those are the two affected First Nation government groups that have the territory associated with the Liard Basin. The Yukon Party supports all responsibly regulated resource industries and is committed to creating the conditions that bring jobs and opportunities for Yukoners. I think that is a very important point because, with the stances taken by the various major political parties here in the territory, we certainly see opportunities that exist with shale gas development. We feel that oil and gas can play an important role in economic diversification for our territory. To add that industry to other natural resource industries, such as forestry and mining, and complementing that with investments in agriculture and significant investments in tourism and the knowledge economy and other sectors, I think will only help to make the Yukon what we all hope it can be someday, which is a net contributor to the country when it comes to transfers of royalties and income taxes and other things.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks with saying that, of course, we won't be supporting this motion. As

you are hopefully able to understand from my remarks, the Yukon government has respected the recommendations of the select committee. We are taking action and addressing those recommendations. The statement in here — that this House condemns the Government of Yukon's decision to proceed with hydraulic fracturing against the will of Yukoners — is a very broad statement. I feel we have seen the Yukon Chamber of Commerce and their members come out in support of our position. There are a number of Yukoners I talk to on a daily basis who will be surprised at how flippantly the member opposite has treated them, as perhaps being non-Yukoners, with respect — just because they support this type of economic activity in our territory.

I think that, through our actions, we will be able to respond to the concerns of the scientific community as well. We will not be supporting this motion, and I look forward to hearing from other members of the New Democrats. For a number of years they have been very outspoken and strong in their passion and their non-support of this type of activity — I would argue the oil and gas industry in particular. I am particularly looking forward to hearing from the Member for Klondike, the Leader of the Liberal Party, as to why he no longer supports oil and gas and shale development opportunities here in the territory. That will be a very interesting point put forward.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Kent: The Member for Klondike will get his chance to speak. I am just wrapping up my remarks. We still have an hour and a half of debate. With that, I will conclude my remarks for today and I look forward to hearing from the — he may want to take a drink of water. Then I will sit down and we can go from there.

Mr. Silver: I would like to begin by thanking the Member for Copperbelt South for her motion today, and I am happy to stand here and to speak to it today because it is very timely. I will be supporting the motion today. I kind of figured that we were not even going to get the chance to vote on this, but it looks like we might — we'll see.

I was one of the six members of the select committee, and over the course of the last 18 months, I heard from hundreds of Yukoners on the issue of fracking. I was very surprised by how little support I heard for it, both in the formal hearings and on the streets. Combined with many unanswered questions about the effects of fracking in the environment and human health, I concluded that Yukoners do not support fracking.

There is simply no social licence for the process — for hydraulic fracturing. That fact, combined with the Council of Canadian Academies' report on fracking — that the many questions it raised are not enough to put the brakes on the practice. The message received from other jurisdictions where fracking is prevalent — do your homework before, not after you start.

Despite last week's announcement by the government, Yukon is probably still many, many years away from fracking, even under the newly announced Yukon Party

approach. If the government is genuine about following the 21 recommendations of the select committee, that work would take years to complete and would be done by the next government's mandate, if at all. Although I was taken aback by hearing — the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources went through all of the 21 recommendations and kept on saying "adequate". I don't think there was one person on that committee who wanted an adequate response to these recommendations. I think we want a robust response to these recommendations.

As the members of the committee all know, there are too many unknowns to support fracking in the Yukon. While technologies used in extracting shale gas are understood, more research is needed to explore the environmental, health and water impacts that will result from this process. I am glad to hear that the government has agreed to undertake that research, but I do not know why they have put the conclusion out in front of that work.

A massive effort in targeting science is required to understand all of the health and environmental impacts of shale gas development. Currently, data about environmental, health and water impacts in the Yukon are just not known.

I want to talk a little about social licence. I sat on the select committee on hydraulic fracturing, and it was loud and clear to me that Yukoners do not want fracking at this time. If the Yukon Party has as many fracking supporters as they seem to be implying, then why didn't they come out to the hearings? We do see an awful lot of contentious issues as we debate here in the Legislative Assembly and as we go out into our ridings. This wasn't one of them. It was pretty much unanimous.

This government is taking great creative licence with its reading of the report, suggesting that the committee is implying support for the process of fracking. Last week, we contacted the Liard First Nation to discuss with Chief Morris his views on opening the Liard Basin to fracking. Given the media reports — so have many journalists as well, Mr. Speaker — as the minister had said in Question Period on Monday, it goes beyond just the Liard First Nation and he reiterated that today, but the affected First Nations include the five Kaska nations — three in British Columbia and the two in the Yukon, which are the Ross River Dena Council and the Liard First Nation. So far there has been no word that the Kaska will even support oil and gas development, so I am curious what negotiations, if any, have taken place with regard to an agreement on fracking development with the Kaska. The government has been silent on those efforts — if there are any efforts or if any work has been done. At this time, there is little buy-in or social licence from Yukoners regarding fracking. Gaining social acceptance would be essential before fracking could ever proceed.

I would like to say a few words about conventional oil and gas development in the territory. Conventional gas development would be welcomed by a Liberal government. It would provide Yukoners with jobs and help support our local energy needs.

Just this week, Northern Cross said that fracking would not affect projects at Eagle Plains because it does not need it to proceed. We continue to support the work Northern Cross is doing and even asked questions last fall about roadblocks that this government is throwing up in front of that project.

The government has its own natural gas resources and this government should be promoting the development of this resource. If mines are looking for more power, we could supply it right here in the Yukon instead of getting jobs out of the territory and going to Fort Nelson. Developing LNG is better for the environment than diesel, and I stand by my words. It is good for our business community and it will bring new investment into the Yukon and one day could rival mining as our biggest resource sector.

The development of our conventional oil and gas industry and the accompanying liquefied natural gas industry would provide a huge boost to our economy. As major mines prepare for production, one of the main factors in their decision is the high cost of energy. Currently, these options are limited to diesel and possibly electricity, but with demands for electricity continuing to increase, that may not be an option either. That brings us back to the potential for natural gas.

There is a great deal of work being done in the Eagle Plains area to develop this resource and we wish them well in their explorations.

I still support the potential for an oil and gas industry here in the territory and it does not have to include fracking, as Northern Cross just pointed out this week. I don't know what this Yukon Party government is talking about, as far as a flip-flop on behalf of the Liberals.

On the subject of flip-flop, another interesting fact about the government's announcement last week merits a mention here today. Let's look back to 2012, Mr. Speaker, when the former Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources took away the veto unsigned First Nations had over oil and gas in their traditional territory. Now the government has given it back, and that is very significant. It's also a significant flip-flop on the part of this government.

During the committee's discussions, the Yukon Party argued that First Nations' consent was not required to proceed. I guess the minister disagrees with the amendments his own colleague brought forward in 2012. I'm glad to see the government now believes that consent of First Nations is now required.

I believe that it was Chief Gale from the Fort Nelson First Nation who warned that you cannot crack the door open on this industry and expect to be able to keep ahead of it. Once they're in, they're in.

We also heard from Dr. Chalaturnyk that development permits are as important as regulations. I worry that the Yukon Party is rushing toward an extraction method that, once started, cannot be put back into the box.

There was much deliberation about how we constructed our recommendations in the select committee. We were split 50-50 as to whether or not fracturing could be done safely. This is important to note, as the recommendations are based on this extremely important point. The recommendations that

followed were based only on what we could come to an agreement on, and it followed the logic of, if we are going to move forward, the following would absolutely have to be done beforehand.

The Liberals were the only party that went into this committee without a predisposed position on hydraulic fracturing. We support an oil and gas industry, but we cannot support fracking. The social issues, the traffic, the lack of an economic case, the environmental considerations — the list goes on and on, before we even get to social licence.

If the Yukon Party wants to finally cut the cord from Ottawa, I would suggest that this focus on this extraction method is the wrong focus.

My concern with the latest developments on this issue is that the government is planning to disregard the work done by the select committee over the last year and a half, and ignore what we heard from Yukoners. A massive effort in targeting science is required to understand all the health and environmental impacts of shale gas development. Currently, data about environment, health and water impacts are neither sufficient nor conclusive.

The Yukon Party government is making it clear that they intend to go forward with hydraulic fracturing, despite what Yukoners told the select committee. I am disappointed by this decision, but I'm not surprised. As with the Peel, the Yukon Party went through the motions and is now doing, through the courts, what they wanted to do from the beginning.

Yukoners made it clear that there was no social licence to move forward on fracking. A Liberal government would not issue permits for fracking, given what I've heard from academic experts, from Yukoners and from First Nation governments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank my colleague from Copperbelt South for this motion today. I am in support of it.

Mr. Tredger: I too was on the hydraulic fracturing committee and I thank the government for allowing me to be there. I was humbled and honoured to be a part of the Yukon community to listen to citizens who came forward who didn't normally want to come forward, but felt that they had to.

The citizens were knowledgeable, they were informed and they were very concerned. Some of them spoke from experiences that they'd had in Alberta. Some of them spoke from research that they'd done. They all expressed a desire to be responsible stewards for our land and almost universally they said "We do not want fracking in the Yukon".

The committee heard from First Nations — First Nation governments, First Nation elders and First Nation citizens. Their presentations were well-researched, they were based in science and traditional knowledge and they were based in a deep understanding of our interaction between the water, the land, our economy and our life. Their world view included not just the current age, but future generations.

Many of the presenters expressed a concern that the committee would not be heard and that the recommendations would not be followed. This decision by the Yukon

government — the Yukon Party government — to go ahead with fracking shows that their concern was justified. Despite the best efforts of all committee members, they are going to ignore the recommendations — the 21 recommendations put forward, agreed to by all of us, and agreed that they must be addressed before contemplating hydraulic fracturing. What we heard again, and again, and again from other jurisdictions is “do not rush into this”, yet we’re going to rush ahead and get the evidence as we go.

Hydraulic fracturing has become a grand experiment. It’s experimental. Will it really provide economic benefit and, if so, who for? It’s an experiment in which we’re going to take millions of gallons of water out of circulation, contaminate it, pump it down the Earth and hope that it stays there forever. It’s an experiment in which we’re going to industrialize our landscape, change our way of life. It’s an experiment, and we don’t know what effect it is going to have on the animals, the birds, the water systems and our land.

We heard from many experts, and again and again, their comment was, we’re not sure. We know there are harms. We think we can mitigate most of them. We also know there are harms that we cannot mitigate. Some of the activities are irreversible in our lifetime. We don’t even know enough to know what they might be.

You know, sometimes — over the last week or two — I thought the Yukon Party government was acting more like an ad agency for the oil and gas industry than a government committed to stewardship of our land and responsible development of our resources.

The Council of Canadian Academies stressed that the lessons provided by history of science and technology concerning all major energy sources and many other industrial initiatives show that its substantial environmental impacts were not anticipated. We cannot mitigate what we can’t measure, what we can’t expect. We don’t know many of the consequences. Each day, we’re hearing more and more from established areas — jurisdictions that have had fracking for five, 10, 15, 20 years — and they are scrambling, trying to mitigate the risks, trying to assess what the risks are and trying to determine who has been harmed, who has benefitted and what we are doing to our environment, and for what purpose?

There is a lot of material out there. As I said, being on the committee, I was humbled. I only hope that, in speaking about fracking, I can convey a small part of the knowledge that was shared with me, a small part of the understanding of our relationship to our land and our water. One way I can do that is to share some of the stories that I heard, both as a committee member and as an individual.

The committee spent much time and identified many potential harms. They are noted there. Many of them, as I said earlier, have no way of being mitigated. The engagement of local citizens is necessary, not only to inform local citizens of local development, but also to identify what aspect of quality of life and well-being residents value most.

My fear is that, in the headlong rush to pursue hydraulic fracturing in the Yukon, we are going to irrevocably damage our relationships one to another. It will be extremely divisive,

because the Yukon Party government does not want to take the time to follow the recommendations — does not want to take the time to work with people, to find out what really matters, how they want to develop the resources and where we go.

Water — there were a few ah-ha moments when I was on the committee, and one of them was that, despite all we hear about oil companies or gas companies working to reduce the amount of water and recycle water, somewhere between 80 and 40 percent of it stays in the ground. It contaminates millions of gallons, and 40 to 80 percent remains in the ground, where it is capped and sealed and out of circulation, hopefully forever. Despite what we hear, the usage of water in the Horn River Basin and in all other basins is growing exponentially. Again — the Council of Canadian Academies — not enough is known about the fate of chemicals in the flowback water to understand potential impacts to human life, health, the environment, or to develop appropriate remediation.

Mr. Speaker, there are many ways for wells to leak, for gas and water to escape. There are many pathways to contamination — some known, some yet to be known; some can be mitigated and others cannot.

I heard an elder in Fort Nelson describe how they used to go out berry picking, and they used to go along and there would be water coming up, and they knew the pathways. They would stop and use the water to make tea. She said they can’t do it any more. The water is unsafe to drink.

We heard from hunters, both First Nation and non-First Nation, in northeastern B.C. who can’t hunt near Fort Nelson any longer. They have to go 300 or 400 miles to get a moose because the moose are contaminated. They have lesions and sores. I had an opportunity to visit a farmer near Cochrane who had expressed concern about fracking on his land. He took me and he showed me his water tank. He said, “Look at that water.” I said, “Wow, it’s clear.” He said, “Yeah, that’s the problem. There’s no algae growing in it. It won’t sustain life.” That same farmer’s cattle were experiencing a severe drop in fertility rates. Many of the calves were being stillborn. I asked him, “How can this happen?” He explained to me about confidentiality agreements, and it meshed with what we were hearing from scientists — very hard to get verifiable data from the industry.

What he said is that there wasn’t a farmer in the nearby area whose water was good any more, but they didn’t complain because the regulator had suggested they work it out with the industry. The industry had had them sign a confidentiality agreement and agreed to provide them with water.

A friend of mine in northwestern Alberta, in the Peace River area, grew up there. When he was young, some of the wells were good, some of the wells were bad, and everybody knew which farms had good water and which ones didn’t. He said it’s now all the same, and everybody drinks bottled water and has special water for their cattle.

The Toobally Lakes area of southeastern Yukon is rich and diverse. It’s a major flyway. It’s a staging ground for

migratory birds — undiscovered potential in many ways. It's a traditionally rich area. We have much to learn from the traditional knowledge of the Kaska, as well as current data, before we can even consider the uses of the land and taking land out of circulation.

The land and the environment will change with fracking. Conventional oil and gas is much like mining. They go to one area and, in the case of the Kotaneelee fields, produce for many, many years.

In fracking, it's a continuous process. This has implications for royalties. It also has implications for the necessary infrastructure.

Another story I heard — somebody drove south. We're talking about impacts on the land. They said that from well this side of Fort Nelson, all the way through to Fox Creek, the highway was covered with mud — mud that was dragged out from our wetlands, from our bogs, caught on trucks and vehicles. One can only imagine what the backcountry looked like if that much mud had been dragged onto the road. What did it do to the habitat? What did it do to our stream crossings? What is going on with that much mud?

I want to talk a little bit about boom-bust. I'm running out of time too. I grew up in northeastern Alberta when the oil industry was coming there. We were going through the same questions — the excitement of potential jobs, the opportunities provided. What I saw was industry — especially in new areas, like the Yukon will be — came in waves. So the town of Bonnyville couldn't keep up one year, and the next year it was empty because there had been a drop.

A businessman one year was encouraged to buy a new truck to keep up with the outside people coming in so that he could supply the rigs in the area. So he borrowed the money and invested. When the inevitable bust came, he was left with a lot of debt.

A lot of people talk about jobs. The majority of jobs will be in camps. Watson Lake thinks that there will be jobs in Watson Lake, but access to the Kotaneelee fields is via the Liard loop, very close to Fort Nelson. That's where the service industry will be located. If Yukoners want jobs in the Kotaneelee, either they will have to move to Fort Nelson or they will have to go to fly-in camps. Are those the jobs we're talking about? There are more people living in camps outside of Fort McMurray than the 100,000 living in Fort McMurray. This is a transient industry.

I will go to my final page. I apologize — there's a lot that I want to say. There are a lot of things I would like to talk about. Right now, the First Ministers are talking about climate change and how to lessen our dependence on oil. The world is awash in oil and gas. We don't need more oil and gas. We need less. We cannot continue to burn oil and gas at the rate we have.

Two-thirds of the known resources must stay in the ground and yet, for some strange reason, instead of looking for alternatives, we are proposing that we develop a novel source, the last thing this world needs at this time.

Speaker: Order please. Minister of Economic Development, please.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: I would like to begin by thanking the Member for Copperbelt South for bringing this motion forward today. As well, I would like to thank all of the MLAs who took the time to sit on the all-party committee and travel throughout the Yukon, collecting comments from all the territory's residents.

I believe that this can be a very passionate conversation, but I would prefer to just try to stick to the facts.

It was this government that recommended the all-party committee to look into the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing, and this government has also accepted all 21 recommendations of that select committee. We understand the importance of all of the recommendations. We agree that the affected First Nations need to be in agreement, as well as considering options for continuing an informed public dialogue among Yukoners.

We agree that the Government of Yukon should make all relevant environmental data open, transparent and available to the public. We also agree that we need to respect First Nation final agreements and ongoing obligations toward non-settled First Nations.

The fifth recommendation put forward speaks to economic impacts and, as the minister responsible for Economic Development here in the Yukon, as well as a former business person, this recommendation hits a little closer to home for me. It reads — and I quote: "THAT the Government of Yukon conduct a thorough study of the potential economic impacts of developing a hydraulic fracturing industry. The study should include an assessment of potential infrastructure, health and social services and environmental costs related to the industry. The thorough economic analysis should include but not be limited to: an estimation of marketable oil and gas reserves in each basin, an estimation of the necessary capital investment for production in each basin; an estimation of operating and regulatory costs, an estimation of tax revenue and disbursement, the effects on Yukon's gross domestic product (GDP), wage and employment analysis including the economic impact of a fly-in, fly-out industry, and a comparison of the impacts of a hydraulic fracturing industry in contrast to a renewable energy industry."

The next six recommendations pertain to an equally important subject: water. Data collection of ground and surface water, a better understanding of the impacts and interactions of frack fluid on groundwater, that requirements related to water-intensive practices are adhered to, that companies be required to make public the chemical and chemical compounds that would be used, that adequate seasonal threshold must be established to ensure the usage of freshwater does not exceed watershed capacity, and finally, that research be conducted to demonstrate whether well integrity can prevent migration of fluids or gases in the long term.

Four recommendations pertain to greenhouse gases and other air emissions — data be collected on air quality, research be done to develop a method to effectively measure and monitor greenhouse gases, and that research can be conducted regarding fluid and gas leakage specific to the unique permafrost conditions found here in the Yukon. As well, steps need to be taken to ensure that volatile organic compounds are not released, ever.

Land and seismic issues were taken under the next four recommendations: collection of data on wildlife and wildlife habitat; collection of data on seismic activity and the impacts of seismic activity to be studied to evaluate the seismic risks caused by fracking. As well, the impacts of hydraulic fracturing on permafrost need to be thoroughly researched, including the interaction between groundwater and surface water.

Finally, recommendation 20 was that health-related baseline data be collected, and recommendation 21 is that the Yukon's chief medical officer of health be mandated to conduct a thorough human health risk assessment anywhere that fracking development is proposed.

We are open to applications for potential hydraulic fracturing in the Liard Basin, and a core principle guiding this Yukon Party government since the 2011 election has been to develop the Yukon's economic strength so that our economy can stand on its own. Who knows? Maybe someday we can contribute to the general wealth of Canada.

Since 2003, the Yukon has been managing the territory's land and resources, while the Government of Canada retains ownership. This means that any major resource development in the Yukon will benefit Canada the most. The oil and gas industry holds a huge potential for making Yukon a net contributor to Canada. As you know, I have spoken on more than one occasion in this House about the importance to me personally of allowing Yukoners the opportunity to work here at home. So many Yukoners have to travel outside of the Yukon, especially in the winter, to find work. Most of those travel to northern B.C. and Alberta. Wouldn't it be neat if maybe some of those workers — many who are young — could stay home and work here in the Yukon? This is a very real possibility, if we can kick the oil and gas industry into gear.

This government supports all responsible, regulated resource industries and is committed to creating the conditions that bring jobs for Yukoners here at home.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to thank the Member for Copperbelt-South again; however, I will not be voting in favour of Motion No. 912.

Mr. Barr: I would also first like to express my thanks to the Member for Copperbelt South for bringing forward this motion today. I will be supporting this motion, along with those we have heard so far today.

Today we are debating an extremely important motion that highlights one of the government's most arrogant policy decisions to date. We are debating the question of why the Yukon Party government is bringing fracking to Yukon

despite the opposition of Yukon First Nation governments, the scientific community and Yukoners themselves.

This House has not yet explored the significant question of whether Yukon's emergency preparedness infrastructure is prepared to deal with some of the significant public health challenges that could arise from hydraulic fracturing incident.

When fracking projects are underway, we need to understand that water, sand and potentially dangerous chemicals are being injected under the Earth's surface in a bid to dislodge and fracture shale rock formations. An act of fracking projects chemicals like carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulphide, sulphur dioxide and other particulate matter into the air and it can be carried for miles. The potential health impacts are substantial and they are real.

We have heard of air quality concerns today and how the Yukon Party government says they are going to be addressing these issues. One comment I recall is "fugitive leaks", which was one term used. It made me think of that TV show, *The Fugitive* — the one-armed man. They were always after the fugitive. Only he was actually a good guy, but here the fugitive leaks we are talking about are not good guys.

I would like to cite an experience of an Ohio woman who was exposed to a hydrogen sulphide gas leak that was not properly contained — and I quote: "It was only when I woke the next morning that I realized something had changed. I had unexplained muscle spasms and terrible neck pain. I saw three doctors and spent four months recovering. Then a neighbour told me about the 3:00 a.m. hydrogen sulphide gas leak from a nearby fracking operation that sent her whole family to the emergency room with aches and pains the same day I got sick." Is this the kind of reality to which we want to subject the communities of the Liard Basin? Should Yukoners in local communities like Watson Lake and Lower Post have to worry about being able to sleep safely at night with this kind of risk in their backyards?

I keep hearing some of the quotes that: "Well, this is only two percent of the Yukon's whole area." I read an anecdotal message just recently about that announcement that the Yukon Party states that it is only two percent. The response from the person was: "Well, that is very interesting, but it is 100 percent of where I live." Let's put that into perspective and maybe the Minister for Energy, Mines and Resources would like to move down there in the two percent and raise his family, as this person objects to doing. I certainly wouldn't wish that on anyone myself, or expect that the collateral damage of anybody's health or well-being or the animals or what-have-you is something that is okay. Where do we draw the line?

I will just continue on. Fracking just isn't safe. The scientific evidence that forms an important pillar, if you will, of the fracking committee's final report tells us there is no safe way to frack. What about our first responders, Mr. Speaker? What is to be said about the Yukoners who will be on the front-line of a hydrogen sulphide leak? A leak of hydrogen sulphide from a fracking project, for example, is a significant public health crisis that requires immediate emergency response using specialized equipment and trained

personnel. At present, the Yukon would not have the capacity to respond to a hydrogen sulphide leak. Our first responders are strong and capable individuals, many of whom, in my riding, are neighbours and friends. It would be doing their bravery and their sacrifice a disservice to implement fracking at a time when the personal safety equipment and the specialized training needed to safely deal with a leak are not in place in our territory. I would hope that we don't have to go there to begin with. Nobody was able to provide the Legislature's special committee with the evidence that this can be done safely or that regulations can resolve the scientific community's criticism — no one.

I also have heard some of the members opposite stand up and state that the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes has been out front, singing songs — *Hit the Road Jack* was one of them actually — along with that, there were several hundred in that demonstration — and that I have a predetermined agenda of someone who has made my mind up. I would like to recall when the Whitehorse Trough was first coming forward with the threat of hydraulic fracturing in the early part of this mandate in 2011.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Barr: Sorry, 2012 — and it was the people of Tagish who held the first meeting and the room was full. Since then, the meeting room was full of Yukoners who were just getting to hear even the word “fracking”. From that time on — over about the next year and a half — I attended every meeting. I spoke with people about what this might do. What is this fracking? After listening over the next year and a half, yes, I was out front, saying and singing, “Hit the road, frack”, with hundreds of people behind me. I will continue to do so and I will not be behind any doors singing songs and then singing a different song when I come out.

No, I will not. I would represent the people in my riding who, I believe — if I thought about it, there would be probably 95 percent of all the meetings I was at, all the meetings on the street in my riding. I'm elected to represent those people, so my song will continue to be what it is, reflecting the wishes of my constituents. As it has progressed over the last few years, the Yukon New Democratic Party does not support hydraulic fracturing. That's great, because that does align with where I stand now and I am proud to say that. I am here standing today saying that this is about future generations, and we are hearing about other solutions to economy, which involve renewable energy infrastructure that we do not hear from the member's opposite. We hear about, “Let's continue with fossil fuels and let's continue destroying our environment” — and not moving forward in a way that I hear people wanting in this territory. You don't have to go very far to hear somebody say, “Well, what about geothermal, what about solar, what about wind?” Why are we not doing this? This is what people want. They do not want hydraulic fracturing.

Thank you for listening.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order please. The member in his statement earlier made reference to the minister moving to a particular area. This is a direct personalized comment and is in fact out of order. I didn't stop you at the time. You only did it once but you are in fact out of order. I would like to remind all members to take this into consideration. Use generalities and do not direct it to a specific person or member in identification.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It is a great honour for me to get up here and speak today as the Minister of Environment and talk about this.

I, first of all, would really like to — and I'll keep it shorter than most. I do want to thank the Member for Copperbelt South for bringing this forward and I will agree with the Minister of Economic Development that this topic can get very heated throughout the Yukon.

I had the opportunity to go to one of the meetings in my community, and I think the members who were on the all-party committee should be commended for their hard work that they did on this. I will note again that this government will be accepting all the recommendations from this select committee and, of course, anything moving forward with the support of the First Nations.

The select committee's final report includes a number of recommendations that are relevant to my department. Specifically it recommends that more baseline data be collected on water, air emissions and wildlife. The department shares the select committee's interest for baseline data.

We currently collect water, wildlife and air quality for general monitoring purposes and also to ensure we have background data, should specific development projects be proposed. Baseline data is collected across the Yukon, including in areas with oil and gas development potential. For example, in 2013-14, additional water quality monitoring stations were established in the Eagle Plains and Liard Basin areas.

In light of the select committee's recommendations, we will further be assessing our baseline data inventory — making it, of course, public — to determine where additional data collection may be needed. We will also seek expert advice to help us understand this baseline information.

The Yukon *Environment Act* was amended and updated in 2014 to help ensure it continues to support sustainable development while recognizing the importance of a healthy, natural environment. The act provides Yukon with authority to regulate in the areas of air, waste, spills and contamination. This is consistent with what our neighbouring jurisdictions regulate as well.

The *Waters Act* provides Yukon with the authority to manage the use of or unauthorized deposits of waste into the water. Water licences are issued by the Yukon Water Board; however, the terms and conditions of these licences are inspected by the Yukon government — EMR for mines, and Environment for everything else. We are confident we have the regulatory tools required to manage the possible range of

impacts that are identified by the select committee. As part of our response to the select committee, we have said that we will seek the advice of a third party — credible, external expert — to help us understand how we can best apply our existing tools and to help us determine the appropriate amount of baseline data to collect, prior to development.

There are two prospective basins where unconventional oil and gas extraction could be considered. I think we have heard it many times in the House today — Liard Basin and Eagle Plains Basin. Only Liard Basin has been identified for an area for potential shale gas development opportunities and, of course, the Department of Environment has collected baseline data in both areas as follows. When it comes to the air quality, the Department of Environment collects ambient air quality for the Yukon and makes it available through our Environment Canada National Air Pollution Surveillance website. Permittees regulated under the air emissions regulations can be required to conduct their own monitoring, and air dispersion modelling activities determine whether they exceed Yukon ambient air quality standards or other recognized national standards.

Both the *Oil and Gas Act* and the *Quartz Mining Act* provide regulators with the ability to require monitoring and reporting of air pollutants in their approvals. The department is reviewing the monitoring parameters in other natural gas producing areas such as northern B.C. and Alberta, taking into consideration existing impacts to local air sheds and to inform what the appropriate monitoring stations and baseline parameters would be for oil and gas development in the Yukon.

When it comes to water, surface water samples are collected at three locations for water quality. Samples are analyzed for numerous chemical and physical properties, metals, hydrocarbons, and nutrients. Samples are also sent to the University of Calgary for baseline chemical and isotopic analysis of water, gases and other potential constituents related to oil and gas development. Two hydrometric stations were installed in the Kotaneelee area that will collect ongoing water level and stream flow data.

I do want to talk a little bit about the Yukon government and our investing \$3.35 million over the next three years to deliver on actions identified in our Yukon water strategy. Some of the examples of the work underway are: the installment of six new hydrometric stations in 2014 and 19 are planned for 2015-16; installment of the two water quality monitoring stations in 2014 and three are planned for 2015-16; adding new wells to the groundwater network; collecting baseline data; and developing a comprehensive groundwater program.

We are holding a Yukon water forum on a regular basis for water managers across the territory — from municipalities and First Nations — and working with our communities to develop more community-based water monitoring programs.

In closing, the Premier just came back from the climate change summit. The effects of climate change are perhaps most profound in the north, as we northerners deal with this reality every day. We are a small jurisdiction — less than

40,000 people — about the size of a single neighbourhood in many of the large cities across Canada. The Yukon accounts for less than one percent of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. Canada is, I think, 1.6 percent of the world's emissions. For us in the Yukon, consuming carbon is not a luxury; it is a necessity. It heats our homes and transports essential goods and services to feed and support our families.

We as northerners are focusing on adaptation and mitigation efforts: permafrost research, microgeneration, independent power producers policy and energy rebates. We are all for this — you just have to look — almost 100 percent of our electricity comes from hydro power.

Looking at CO₂ emissions and climate change, this building is going to undergo a complete skinning, and that is going to help work us toward that. We are always pleased to take part in the national discussions and have an opportunity to demonstrate leadership and contribute our knowledge and experience to adaptation efforts. While there are many perspectives to be considered when it comes to this, we are not going to condone a course of action that leads to an increased cost of living for northerners. I believe the pan-territorial approach to climate change recognizes this. I think it is key for us. Also, I think it is key if we have an industry in the Yukon that will help support us, so we are not contributing CO₂ emissions from the transportation of services and supplies from the south — I think that will actually help reduce our CO₂ emissions.

I want to commend the Department of Environment for their hard work on this file and many other files. I do want to thank the Member for Copperbelt South for bringing this motion forward, and I thank everyone for the opportunity to speak in the House today.

Ms. Stick: I would like to rise to speak in support of Motion No. 912 and would like to thank my colleague for Copperbelt South for bringing this motion forward and to thank her for her work on the select committee, along with the other members. I know how hard individuals worked on this and how much time was put into it, and I thank them for that.

I would like to speak to the health impacts of hydraulic fracturing. As a critic, it is important and it should be important to all Yukoners. When I talk about health impacts of hydraulic fracturing, I am speaking about the direct and the indirect impacts this form of development has on environmental public health. Now, environmental public health is the branch of public health that looks at all aspects of natural and human-built environments that may affect human health. As Yukoners, we know our environmental public health is closely linked with the protection and the preservation of our environment. This government knows this and has said so in their own research.

I would like to quote from this government's very own document, entitled *Pathways to Wellness: a Background Paper*. This report was released in June 2012 and it says — and I quote: “A healthy environment begins with clean, safe water, air and land — we are fortunate that there is little pollution and few contaminants in the Yukon. Our ability to

interact with nature on a daily basis gives us a clear advantage over most other Canadians. The natural environment and our connections to the land, water, animals and plants are a fundamental component of building and sustaining good health.”

It's important, Mr. Speaker, and the research that this government has done speaks to the importance of environmental public health. This understanding of the connection between our environment and health — it's there — yet this holistic approach to environmental health is missing. It's not to be seen from the Yukon Party government's response to the select committee.

Environmental public health is defined by the World Health Organization as those aspects of human health and disease that are determined by factors in the natural and in the built environment. As recently as 2015, it states — and I quote: “Environmental health addresses all the physical, chemical, and biological factors external to a person, and all the related factors impacting behaviours.” It talks about assessment and control of environmental factors and how it could potentially affect health.

Environmental health concerns include, but are not limited to: air quality, safe drinking water, climate change and its effect on health, hazardous materials management — including hazardous waste management, contaminated site remediation, the prevention of leaks from underground storage tanks and the prevention of hazardous materials released into the environment. It talks about liquid waste disposal, noise pollution, occupational health, industrial hygiene, radiological health, solid waste management and toxic chemical exposure in workplaces and in the air, the water and the soil.

We know that hydraulic fracturing will have serious implications for environmental public health here in the Yukon. But because comprehensive and longitudinal studies on the health impacts of hydraulic fracturing across all of these areas is either non-existent or in its early days, we simply do not know for certain what impact hydraulic fracturing activities in the Liard Basin will have on the health and well-being of Yukoners. We do not know for certain, Mr. Speaker.

The largely unknown health effects of hydraulic fracturing are a barrier facing many jurisdictions — those that are already into fracking, those considering it or ending it.

One of the most recent and robust analyses of these unknown health impacts was released in December 2014 by the New York State Department of Health in their public health review of high-volume hydraulic fracturing for shale gas development. This review is a result of over 4,500 hours of combined effort by more than 20 Department of Health senior research scientists, public health specialists and radiological health specialists.

In this study, they said it is unlikely that we will know all the negative and positive — if there are any — impacts of high-volume hydraulic fracturing. The overall weight of evidence from the cumulative body of information contained in the public health review demonstrated that there were significant uncertainties. It's a new field. Many talk about

how long fracking has been going on, but the health impacts have not been studied. It's a new science.

The Physicians, Scientists and Engineers for Health Energy committee undertook a review of a small body of empirical research. They said that really this research hadn't started until approximately 2009, so they reviewed between 2009 and 2014 — what the data was saying. Thirteen of 15 of the original research studies indicated potential public health risks or actual adverse health outcomes. Forty-five of 47 papers they reviewed indicated potential public health risk — sorry, I just said that. Twenty-one out of 30 of the original research studies indicated potential association or actual incidences of water contamination. Twenty-one out of 22 research studies on air quality indicated elevated air pollutant emissions. It indicated that there were many gaps and many unknowns. Do we really want to go forward without that knowledge?

I had the opportunity to travel with the select committee to Alberta on their tour of fracking facilities and communities, and I had the opportunity to listen to a wide variety of industry representatives, government officials, health officials and more. At the end of that trip, I was glad I was not on that committee because I understood what they were facing ahead. But for me the most memorable part of that trip was listening and talking to citizens directly impacted by fracking near their homes and their communities.

There was a range of health concerns including: unexplained loss of hair; mental health concerns brought on by constant noise pollution; light pollution; air pollution from constant flaring; high amounts of truck traffic at all times of the day and night; and the stress of living in a previously quiet rural setting and suddenly having fracking on their land.

We heard from parents concerned about their children's health and the things that they were seeing in their own family and the impacts of this industry on them. There are just too many unknowns, too many uncertainties, too many potential risks and possible adverse outcomes on human health associated with hydraulic fracturing.

The Yukon *Final Report of the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing* acknowledges that additional research is needed to gain a better understanding of the health and social impacts of hydraulic fracturing and the related costs. This is acknowledged and backed by two specific recommendations. Recommendation 20 states: “THAT health related baseline data be collected for an appropriate period of time, in order to ensure that data is available.” Recommendation 21 states: “THAT Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health be mandated to conduct a thorough human health risk assessment where hydraulic fracturing development is proposed in Yukon.”

I have spoken briefly on the vast array of public health concerns surrounding the unconventional, the controversial, the intensive and the relatively brand-new method of natural gas extraction.

Yet the Yukon Party government's response to these is off-target. The response to the select committee's final report

downgrades those recommendations. The response indicates a possible deviation from the collection of specifically Yukon health-related data related to hydraulic fracturing to a simple assessment of what is currently available and possibly even an ad hoc approach to fill in the missing data. It is my understanding that it would take four to five years for a government to be able to collect the appropriate data, to manage that data, to store it and use it appropriately.

Perhaps, in view of this absence of appropriate Yukon baseline data collection, the government's response also includes a reference to reviewing the results of the recently released three-year health impact study conducted in northeast B.C. It is not surprising the minister selected this study, as it concludes there is a low probability of adverse health effects from exposure to contaminants associated with oil and gas. However, this study looked primarily at the long-term inhalation exposures to chemicals of potential concern that can be released from gas processing plants, compressor stations and storage tanks. It has received a lot of criticism for concluding a low probability of adverse health effects, even as it acknowledges that there was a lack of baseline data for groundwater in the region and, as such, failed to address questions about the impact of water pollution on human health.

We've heard over and over about the incredible amounts of water that are used for fracking and then left in the ground. Yukoners deserve to have health impacts studied across the full range of environmental health factors — not just one or two or even three. The potential risk to human health of not doing so is simply too great, and we don't know. The absence of a clear link between fracking and adverse health outcomes, due to a lack of information, does not equal evidence there will be no adverse effects.

Mr. Speaker, as the NDP critic for Health and Social Services, I am very concerned by the government's twisting of recommendations 20 and 21 that doesn't meet what the recommendations say. I'm alarmed by this government's apparent commitment to proceed with fracking in the Liard Basin before we can properly and unequivocally ensure the health and well-being of all Yukoners.

I support this motion. I support what Yukoners have said about their concerns — how they do not want fracking in the Yukon. Social licence, what Yukoners say, needs to be listened to. I will support this motion. Again, I thank the Member for Copperbelt South for bringing this forward and speaking so eloquently to it.

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

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to thank all members for their contributions to the debate today. I appreciate that the tone this afternoon has been respectful even though, as we have heard, hydraulic fracturing is a politically divisive issue, and I think that's understating it.

I also want to repeat that a vast majority of Yukoners who presented to the committee — and Yukon First Nations — have all expressed their opposition to hydraulic fracturing.

I want to thank all of the members of the committee. I intended to do that in my opening remarks. First, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin was the only member of the committee with previous experience on an all-party select committee. His contributions were valuable, particularly when the committee, of necessity, had to deal with the challenge of taking on duties that no select committee had entered into before.

I want to thank the Chair, the MLA for Watson Lake, and the MLA for Copperbelt North, who were the two other government members on the committee. The MLA for Klondike and my colleague, the MLA for Mayo-Tatchun, were the other two opposition members of the committee, and I appreciate that the government established a committee with equal representation from the government side and the opposition.

I appreciated the opportunity to travel in Yukon with the MLAs and get to spend some time with colleagues. I know that we all learned a lot. I also wanted to thank Ms. Lloyd, Ms. Kolody and Ms. Brown, who did great service supporting the committee in their duties as legislative clerks and in administration.

As I said in my opening speech, the committee was unable to reach agreements on the fundamental questions of whether or not hydraulic fracturing could be done safely, if properly regulated. The government and the opposition were deadlocked, but thanks to the hard work of all committee members, we did agree to disagree on whether hydraulic fracturing could be done safely and we did agree on 21 recommendations that were carefully crafted.

We said, about those recommendations, that all recommendations should be addressed before hydraulic fracturing is considered, but the Yukon Party government approach is to go ahead with hydraulic fracturing in the Liard Basin before doing the necessary research. There are too many uncertainties about the damage hydraulic fracturing may cause to the environment, the air, the water, the soil and the permafrost. There are too many uncertainties about the effects on human health and the costs to the health and social services systems. There are too many uncertainties about the costs of operations and regulatory oversight.

There are too many unknowns about potential infrastructure and capital investment costs. The oil and gas corporations that have been operating in British Columbia and Alberta have been receiving massive government subsidies, both directly and indirectly. Infrastructure costs associated with the practice of hydraulic fracturing are high, and there are no examples of oil and gas companies internalizing the harmful and expensive environmental degradation and remediation costs. In fact, as I have said, scientists have advised Yukon legislators against investing in those infrastructure costs. Industry needs to bear the full cost.

We know with this government that there will not be an adequate royalty regime in place to ensure that some of the benefits make it into the hands of Yukoners. We saw most

recently the massive money sink that was the Wolverine mine. I don't want to think what would happen with a brand-new fracking industry in Yukon under this government.

There is no evidence that fracking produces long-term employment for the local economy. There are questions about whether the Yukon would see significant job creation, as the access road to Kotaneelee starts in Fort Nelson and, as other members have said — and the Member for Mayo-Tatchun focused on — the boom-bust economy is one that defines the oil and gas industry.

Industry and government have also failed to account for the impact the practice has on other more sustainable industries like tourism, outfitting and agriculture. There is no reason to think that this government would give those impacts any thought, either.

With hydraulic fracturing, we will not see a diversification of our economy. We will still be tied to a fly-in/fly-out industry that is subject to the whims of global commodity prices. We are seeing in Alberta what the effects of a reliance on those industries can be.

The government has said that it will only proceed with First Nations' support, and in the Liard Basin, there are the five Kaska nations as well as the Acho Dene Koe in the Northwest Territories.

I wonder how the government will gauge support of affected First Nations. Will there be a requirement for a referendum? Will all First Nations that claim parts of the Liard Basin need to express their support — the Ross River Dena Council, the Liard First Nation, the three Kaska First Nations in B.C. as well as the Acho Dene Koe in Northwest Territories? This government's decision to allow fracking in one basin brings into play trade agreements and NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement. As an example, Quebec, like Yukon, had a de facto moratorium on fracking. When Quebec decided to put in force a ban on fracking along the St. Lawrence Seaway, but at the same time it determined that it could occur on Anticosti Island, the Quebec government was sued by Lone Pine Resources under chapter 11 of NAFTA. The lawsuit is for \$250 million. Having part of the Yukon open to hydraulic fracturing and other parts not could well trigger similar lawsuits — for example, by Northern Cross (Yukon), CNOOC.

Mr. Speaker, for energy needs, we in the Official Opposition have been talking about the need to invest in renewables. We have spoken about the need to diversify the economy and the hazards of going into a boom-and-bust fracking economy.

I would like to close by once again expressing what an honour it was to travel around the Yukon and to hear from hundreds of people who gave thoughtful, considered and informed presentations. I think the one that meant the most to me was when Vuntut Gwitchin Elder Fanny Charlie spoke at the Old Crow public hearing as translated by Robert Bruce. What she said — and I quote: "...what she heard is going on here ... she agrees with what everybody was saying. She doesn't want any involvement with development and fracking and stuff like that. This is for future generations, for the

younger people. She's happy with what she heard mostly young people talking, and that's for their future. She just wishes if this Committee could take in what the young people are talking about, that there be no fracking, no development and oil and gas. That was her comment."

We're familiar, in learning with First Nations and interacting with First Nations, with the great respect that they have for the elders, and to see the elder demonstrating that respect for the youth as way of showing just how deep the commitment is to all life and to future generations of human life will be something that I will always remember, and I think those words should guide our decision. I ask members to support the motion before us.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Disagree.

Mr. Elias: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: 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, 11 nay.

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

Motion No. 912 negatived

Motion No. 893

Clerk: Motion No. 893, 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 follow through on its commitment to develop a mental health strategy.

Mr. Silver: I don't have a lot of time here, but I might as well start.

On April 2, I raised the issue of mental health services, a topic that I have been hearing a great deal about in the

community. Way back in 2011, the Premier committed to spend new federal money designing a mental health plan. In 2012, a former Yukon Party health minister told a local radio station the government was planning a mental health strategy. In 2014, the former minister told Yukoners — and I quote: “We’re working on a mental health strategy and when it’s available I will be only too happy to present it to this Legislature.”

As the clock strikes 2015, Yukoners have a new Minister of Health and Social Services but still await a mental health strategy. We are only one of two jurisdictions in Canada without such a strategy, which shows where mental health lies on this government’s priority list.

In 2013, the government released a needs assessment for the newly built hospitals in Dawson City and Watson Lake. The report said — and I quote: “That the implementation of a territorial mental health prevention and treatment strategy be a priority that includes local support workers who maintain contact with those in need...”

A full 18 months after receiving that report, the recommendations have not been acted on. Just over a year ago, the government released a report called *A Clinical Services Plan for Yukon Territory*. One of the Yukon’s key findings was quite blunt — and I quote: “Mental health services are in a significant deficit outside of Whitehorse.”

The report warned — and I quote again: “Not addressing...mental health services in Yukon...risks failure for a clinical services plan.

“Central to a clinical services plan of value to the residents of Yukon Territory is the expanded resourcing of ADS and mental health services, especially in the communities. There is no greater need.”

Finally, the report went on to say — and I quote again: “No provider or service interview conducted during the study was silent on the enormity of the problem with, and impact of, the management and challenges of mental health services in Yukon Territory.

“The full spectrum of mental health issues is prevalent and generates a huge burden on available resources and family members.”

“...not a single interview during this study was silent on the critical need for expanded and re-tooled MHS to be central in service planning.”

Mr. Speaker, there has been no response from the government in the year since it received this \$200,000 report on how it plans to address this lack of mental health services in rural Yukon. The overwhelming message from the government’s own report is that things need to change.

Unfortunately, the new Minister of Health and Social Services stood in this House last week and continued to defend the status quo. “We are doing a good job,” he said, and refused to acknowledge that more needs to be done.

I want to spend some time speaking about the rural communities.

Speaker: Order please. The hour being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

Debate on Motion No. 893 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled April 15, 2015:

33-1-158

Yukon Law Foundation Annual Report — November 1, 2013 to October 31, 2014 (Cathers)

33-1-159

Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees — Fifteenth Report (April 14, 2015) (Hassard)

The following document was filed April 15, 2015:

33-1-110

Workers’ Advocate Office — 2014 Annual Report (Cathers)

33-1-111

Integration of Inspection Services, letter (dated June 4, 2009) from Hon. Brad Cathers, Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, to Raymond Mah, Chief Operating Officer, Yukon Zinc Corporation (Tredger)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 197

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, April 16, 2015 — 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 Tourism and Culture; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Justice; Yukon Development Corporation/ Yukon Energy Corporation
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Education
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Highways and Public Works
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Community Services; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Environment
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, April 16, 2015 — 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: To start, the Chair wishes to inform the House of a change that has been made to the Order Paper.

Motion No. 886, standing in the name of the Minister of Justice, has been removed from the Order Paper at the request of the minister.

The Chair also wishes to inform the House that Motion No. 925, notice of which was given yesterday by the Member for Watson Lake, was not placed on today's Notice Paper as it is the same as Motion No. 898, which is already on the Order Paper.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Yukon Schools' Athletic Association annual wrestling tournament

Hon. Mr. Graham: It is indeed a great pleasure for me today to rise in the House on behalf of all members to pay tribute to the Yukon Schools' Athletic Association annual wrestling tournament, which took place yesterday on April 15 at the Canada Games Centre. For my colleagues in the Legislature who didn't have the chance to witness more than 550 students come together in friendly, but often serious, competition, let me paint you a little picture.

Competitors came from 16 schools across Yukon to test their skills on the mat. This year the tournament just continues to grow, as students from St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction were also welcomed to the competition. Eighteen mats were in action to accommodate about 1,400 wrestling bouts in one day. The Canada Games Centre was filled with crowds cheering on their classmates, friends, siblings and children. When the last wrestler was pinned, participants received medals in about 85 weight classes.

The overall team banner for total score was awarded to Christ the King Elementary, and the best performing team, with the highest points per wrestler, went to Ghùch Tlâ Community School of Carcross.

Fresh from competition, I would like all members to join me in welcoming here today several competitors: Gage Albertini, Bryn Studney-Amos, Brandon Nadeau, Miles Telfry, Zared Netro, Zakayla Netro, Paris Legault, Payton Mason, Eugenie Champerval, Paige Stockley, Joshua Rafter and Konrad Simpson. Welcome, all of you, to the Legislature.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Graham: The competitors I have just named are accompanied by Ted Hupé and his staff from Holy Family who have accompanied the students here today. Thank you, student athletes, for your good sportsmanship, for your hours of training for the competition, and for giving it your all. I know everyone, even those who didn't get a medal, was a winner yesterday.

My thanks also to the volunteer referees who kept the young wrestlers safe. It's encouraging to me, as a referee myself, to see former elementary school wrestlers and coaches return to help out.

Thank you to the Yukon Schools' Athletic Association and the team at Holy Family Elementary School, working with coordinator Ted Hupé, for undertaking this logistical feat to provide Yukon students with an opportunity to engage in an inclusive and rewarding sport.

Wrestling is an easy sport to understand and everyone can do it. No one is too big or, as you can see from some of the competitors, too little to compete.

Olympic wrestler Dan Gable said, "More enduringly than any other sport, wrestling teaches self-control and pride. Some have wrestled without great skill – none have wrestled without pride." Students develop a strong physical base, self-confidence, discipline, perseverance and respect for their opponents. These qualities transfer from the mat to their lives.

The wrestling tournament illustrates how Yukon school sports programs provide excellent experiential learning opportunities to all of our students. Physical activities like wrestling help students develop important skills and keep them engaged and energized. Students don't just grapple with their opponents; they grapple with winning and losing, goal-setting and problem-solving. The skills they learn in sport and in friendly competition are truly skills for life.

Yukon schools demonstrated what can be achieved when we work together by bringing together so many students from across the territory for this wrestling tournament. Congratulations to all of the students who competed, representing their schools and communities and showing the true spirit of sport.

I would just like to take the opportunity, as I have mentioned a couple of times, about the difficulty that Ross River students are experiencing in their day-to-day school because of the problems with their building. I would like everyone here to know that there were four students, I believe, from Ross River School who trained throughout the spring break with their instructor on almost a daily basis so that they could stay in condition to come to this wrestling competition. I think it is an absolutely wonderful example of, first of all, a teacher showing that kind of dedication and the students showing the dedication to their sport as well.

Again, thank you to all the coaches for training, encouraging and supporting these students, to the staff who organized this great event, to the families who have cheered on our students at home and in the stands, and to the volunteers — not only the referees, but the on-site

coordinators. Mr. Speaker, I'm already looking forward to next year's competition, so thank you very much.

In recognition of Law Day

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Today it gives me pleasure to rise in recognition of Law Day, which celebrates the 33rd anniversary of the signing of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Law Day recognizes the anniversary of the proclamation of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which was signed on April 17, 1982.

In honour of this milestone, the Canadian Bar Association introduced Law Day in 1983 as a way to commemorate the *Canadian Charter of Rights of Freedoms*, which built on the foundation of the *Canadian Bill of Rights* brought forth by Prime Minister John Diefenbaker in 1960.

Prime Minister Diefenbaker stated that a bill of rights was needed to take a forthright stand against discrimination based on colour, creed or racial origin. The *Canadian Bill of Rights* protects numerous rights, including the right to life, liberty and security of person, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, equality rights, rights to fundamental justice and rights to counsel. Those rights are reflected in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which we are celebrating here today.

I would be remiss if I did not note the flaw in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which is the failure to include an important part from the Diefenbaker bill of rights, that being the right to own property and to have that protected in a constitution, which was also supported in the Legislative Assembly through a motion passed on November 24, 1982, moved by Andrew A. Philipsen, after whom our Law Centre is named.

That motion read: "that the Legislative Assembly of Yukon support the resolution passed unanimously by the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia on Tuesday, September 21, 1982, respecting an amendment to Section 7 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* so that it would read as follows: '7. Everyone has the right to life, liberty, security of the person and enjoyment of property, and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice', and urge the legislative assemblies of all other jurisdictions and the Senate and the House of Commons of Canada to adopt similar resolutions."

I will also quote briefly from Mr. Philipsen of that day in recognition of his commitment and of the importance of this matter. Mr. Philipsen noted that it is of paramount importance that the Assembly express support for the inclusion of property rights in the Canadian Constitution and that section 7 of the present *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is seriously deficient in not including within its provisions the right to the enjoyment of property.

It is also important to note and acknowledge that the *Canadian Bill of Rights* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* were not the foundation of the principles of legal rights within our Canadian democracy. They owe their existence and their roots to other important and revolutionary

legal documents, notably the *Magna Carta*, which celebrates its 800th anniversary this year, having been created in 1215.

The *Magna Carta* and its companion document, *The Charter of the Forest*, set the very groundwork for many concepts that continue to define democratic life today. As symbols of justice, they also act as powerful reminders that those who govern do so only by the consent of the people.

The *Magna Carta* is widely viewed as one of the most important legal documents in the history of democracy as there are many enduring principles of liberty that still resonate with and inspire people today. Some examples of the principles that never lose their relevance are key concepts of the *Magna Carta*, which include: nobody is above the law of the land; the right of habeas corpus, being the freedom from unlawful detention without cause or evidence and the right of trial by jury. Early women's rights were acknowledged within the *Magna Carta*, although have been wisely expanded significantly since that time. The reference in the *Magna Carta* included that a widow could not be forced to marry and give up her property.

The companion document to the *Magna Carta*, *The Charter of the Forest*, which was originally issued in 1217, held up the values of universal human rights, which set out protections for the common man and the protection of the commons, which set clear limits to the privatization and importance of stewardship for shared resources.

I should note that the *Magna Carta* actually began its life as a peace treaty — a treaty that has motivated countries, people, whole movements and effected change. This document holds a place in our collective hearts as a first in a series of instruments that are recognized as having special constitutional status. I should note that even democracies such as the United States use the *Magna Carta* as an important part and building block of the American constitution.

This year on June 12, 2015, the *Magna Carta* will be coming to Canada and will remain here in various locations until December 29, 2015. The document will be in Ottawa-Gatineau from June 12 to July 26. It will be in Winnipeg from August 15 to September 18, in Toronto from October 4 to November 7, and in Edmonton from November 23 until December 29.

Today we also celebrate educating the public about the legal system, the legal profession, as well as the legal institutions that form the cornerstones of Canadian democracy. Law Day empowers the public at large through a variety of celebrations and activities that bring awareness to the importance of our evolving law, the history of our law and the administration of justice.

This year, Law Day celebrates the 30th anniversary of section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* coming into force. That section guarantees that the rights of individuals are equal before and under the law and that individuals have the rights to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability. All Canadians play an important part in upholding

the charter, and I would thank some of those who play an important role in this in the Yukon, including: Yukon First Nations, for providing responsive programs and services to support citizens and families who are engaged in the justice system; Yukon Legal Services Society, which is Yukon's legal aid provider, for ensuring that low-income, vulnerable and disadvantaged Yukoners have access to justice by providing quality legal services for matters mandated under the charter and by providing advice and representation in areas such as employment insurance, social assistance benefits, and landlord and tenant issues through its Neighbourhood Law Centre; the Yukon Human Rights Commission, for their dedication to addressing human rights and promoting equality and diversity through research, education and enforcement of the Yukon *Human Rights Act*; members of other boards and committees for hearing and reviewing justice-related matters; and the many organizations like the Yukon Public Legal Education Association, the Law Society of Yukon, transition homes, and women's shelters — and the list goes on — who provide legal information and services, facilitate increased access to the justice system and advocate for the legal rights of Yukoners.

In addition to the people I have mentioned, those who protect the rights under the charter also include the RCMP for their work in preventing and investigating crime, maintaining peace and order in enforcing laws, and Department of Justice staff who play a very important role in making sure that Yukon's justice system is accessible, administered well — and their work in continuing to enhance and improve programs and services for individuals navigating the justice system.

One of the most recent examples of this includes the partnership of the Department of Justice and the Women's Directorate through our recent announcement of funding for a new women's legal advocate position that will help meet the needs of women navigating the legal system and ensure that they are made better aware of the supports available to them as well as their rights within the system. The women's legal advocate position is intended to provide timely support and legal information to help women understand their legal options, their rights, the implications of certain choices and justice system processes. This initiative will also provide legal system training for service providers working with women to help victims of crime get access to initiate legal consultation and increase collaboration between agencies.

Navigating the justice system can be difficult, especially when trying to address matters that may require consideration of criminal, family, child protection, poverty, mental health and human rights law. We are optimistic that this new position — I should note and acknowledge the work done by the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues in developing the proposal for that position, which flowed out of the recommendations from *Sharing Common Ground* — will be an important complement to the supports available for women and will help those navigating the justice system to better understand and be in a better position to address matters that may require consideration of criminal, family, child

protection, poverty, mental health and human rights law. We look forward to working in the next steps of this initiative.

I should also note that on May 1, the Yukon branch of the Canadian Bar Association will host and celebrate the 25th annual Law Day Charity Fun Run and Walk in Whitehorse. Co-founded by Justice's very own Deputy Minister Tom Ulyett and local lawyer Dan Shier, this run continues to not only bring the community together to celebrate Law Day, but also provides a charitable donation to local organizations that are helping to make the Yukon a better place.

This year's event's proceeds will benefit the Yukon Association for Community Living. For more than 50 years, the Yukon Association for Community Living has been advocating for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. The Yukon Association for Community Living works hard to ensure that people with intellectual disabilities have the right and ability to live in our communities as respected and responsible citizens. I encourage Yukoners to run or walk in support of this worthy organization and in honour of Law Day. The run and walk this year will start at noon from the visitor information centre and follow the Millennium Trail along the Yukon River. Registration is available at Sport Yukon until April 29 and on race day at the visitor information centre.

Sincere thanks to the Canadian Bar Association for planning this annual event and thank you for the opportunity to pay tribute to Law Day. In closing, let me express my personal thanks to the many people, throughout the 800 years since the Magna Carta's inception, who have contributed to the principles that we all benefit from here today and the protection of the rights within Canadian society that too often we take for granted.

Mr. Silver: It is with great pleasure that I rise today on behalf of the Liberal Party and the Official Opposition to pay tribute to Law Day and the anniversary of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Law Day was created by the Canadian Bar Association as a national day to mark the one-year anniversary of the signing of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. It also provides an opportunity for those in the legal profession to educate the general public on Canada's legal system. It was 33 years ago that the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* was signed into effect, enacting one of the strongest and most far-reaching pieces of our constitution. It was also on this day that patriating the Canadian Constitution formally took place, another landmark moment.

Canadians pride themselves on our diversity, multiculturalism and far-reaching rights that we have given to all our citizens. Prior to the enactment of the charter, unfair laws could have been enacted by a legislature with no formal complaint process. The charter ensured that individuals would be protected regardless of the values of the government of the day and still sees many existing laws get challenged in the Supreme Court. The charter puts our individual freedoms into the Constitution.

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* has become the hallmark of what a modern bill of rights should look like and has been used by many other countries as a basis for their own charters. This piece of legislation would not have been possible if it were not for the efforts of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and his then Justice Minister, Jean Chrétien.

Mr. Speaker, it is an absolute privilege to stand before you today and to pay tribute to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and to thank those who made it possible.

In recognition of World Hemophilia Day

Hon. Mr. Nixon: On behalf all members, tomorrow is World Hemophilia Day and I would like to take this opportunity to ask my colleagues in the House to stop for a minute on Friday and think of all those individuals who live with inherited bleeding disorders.

The World Federation of Hemophilia reports that 6.9 million people have a bleeding disorder and 75 percent of them don't know it. How many of those 6.9 million might live here in the Yukon? Yukon is not exempt from this disorder and there are citizens living here with hemophilia.

Hemophilia is a bleeding problem. People with hemophilia do not bleed any faster than normal, but they can bleed for a longer time because their blood doesn't have enough clotting factor, the protein in the blood that controls bleeding. They can also experience spontaneous bleeding in joints, muscles or other parts of their body. There are various types of bleeding disorders.

Hemophilia is quite rare, affecting one in every 10,000 people, and the most severe forms affect almost only males. Women can be affected if conditions are right: a father with hemophilia and a mother who is a carrier. A person born with hemophilia will usually have it for life. Typically it is not something that can develop later in life if a person is not born with the disorder.

The theme for this year's annual recognition day is "Building a family of support". Work internationally is aimed at building that family for individuals living with bleeding disorders. Families come in many shapes and sizes, but they all share the ability to support and advocate. World Hemophilia Day provides us an opportunity to talk with extended family and friends, colleagues and caregivers to raise awareness and increase supports for those living with an inherited bleeding disorder.

Tomorrow in 122 countries individuals and groups will rise to raise awareness of hemophilia and other inherited blood disorders. This is all part of a critical process to ensure better diagnosis and access to care. Ultimately it is about improving people's lives. I hope we all pause tomorrow. Thank you.

In recognition of International Day for Monuments and Sites

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I rise today to pay tribute to the International Day for Monuments and Sites, sometimes referred to as World Heritage Day.

In 1982, it was suggested that a day be established to celebrate the diversity of heritage throughout the globe. This project was approved by the International Council on Monuments and Sites at their symposium in Tunisia. This international council is made up of a network of experts, including architects, historians, archaeologists, art historians, geographers, anthropologists, engineers and town planners. It has over 9,000 members in 144 countries, including Canada.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the council. Canada is an active member of the International Council on Monuments and Sites. In fact, two Yukoners sit on that Canadian board, including our own manager of Historic Sites in the Department of Tourism and Culture.

The purpose of this international day is to raise awareness of the world's diversity of cultural heritage and the efforts to try to preserve it for current and future generations. There are many proclaimed days across the world that pay homage to culturally significant sites. Here in the Yukon, we pride ourselves on making cultural heritage a regular part of our lives and, of course, there are many sites of significance to celebrate here at home.

The Yukon government has designated nine Yukon historic sites over the years that are considered to have heritage significance at a territorial level. The most recent historic site designation was the Old Log Church and Rectory, which has merited designation at both the territorial and municipal levels. The heritage aspects of this site will be managed through a cooperative arrangement between the Yukon government and the City of Whitehorse.

From built heritage, such as the Sign Post Forest in Watson Lake and the Old Log Church, to historically significant sites, such as Herschel Island Territorial Park, Fort Selkirk and the Dawson historical complex, to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Kluane National Park and Reserve and Tatshenshini-Alsek Park, Yukon is home to a diverse range of heritage sites that Yukoners can experience and enjoy each and every day.

Our historic sites are designated at the municipal, territorial or federal level.

Mr. Speaker, an important initiative that is currently underway is that of the application for a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation for Tr'ondëk-Klondike. This project is being led by a community-based advisory committee, chaired by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in heritage director, and includes representatives from local residents, including a Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizen, the Klondike Visitors Association, Chamber of Commerce, Dawson City Museum, City of Dawson City, Government of Yukon and Parks Canada.

The Yukon government is very pleased to support the continued work of the advisory committee and the important work being undertaken, as we speak, by the various stakeholders to evaluate and consider the economic, social, cultural and financial impacts associated with gaining status for this very important and culturally rich area.

I am very pleased to report that, due to the great work of many individuals throughout the years, this project is on track.

An economic impact study and a cultural study have been completed with other contracts and thematic studies to support the nomination also underway.

As I mentioned before, we are pleased to support this important work and congratulate the work of the committee thus far and the many stakeholders engaged in these important discussions.

We are very privileged in Yukon to be surrounded by rich heritage legacies and to have the ability to enjoy these sites year-round and to share them with visitors to our territory. I encourage all Yukoners to explore some of these significant sites in Yukon that contribute so much to our quality of life.

Mr. Barr: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition to pay tribute to World Heritage Day, which will be held on Saturday, April 18.

On World Heritage Day, we celebrate the diversity of human culture and commit to preserve and protect the shared wealth of humankind. World Heritage Day originated with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, which passed a resolution at its 22nd session in November 1983 recommending that member states examine the possibility of declaring the 18 of April each year International Day for Monuments and Sites.

The world is watching in horror as significant artifacts of human history are at risk. The remnants of ancient Mesopotamia have been under siege for over a decade with the U.S. invasion of Iraq and later by militants driven by ideology. One of the consequences of the haze of war is the destruction and plunder of cultural treasures. Where there is war and conflict, there is a great risk that the past will be obliterated along with the human carnage.

There are 1,007 properties on the list of world heritage sites. These include the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, the Tiwanaku spiritual and political centre of the Tiwanaku culture in Bolivia, L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site of Viking settlements in western Newfoundland, the Great Wall of China, the great training and education centres in Timbuktu, Mali — I might add that I was going to go there when I was in Mali. It was recommended that you don't travel at that time as there was a changeover in government and people were losing their lives going to Timbuktu. So I chose to stay and I'm here today because of that decision.

Auschwitz and Buchenwald — Nazi concentration and extermination camps — these sites tell amazing human stories; the relationship to the land and the environment; of great feats of determination and engineering; and of the human propensity for good and for evil.

It is an opportunity that, on April 18, along with colleagues from both sides of the Legislature Assembly, I will be attending in Dawson City the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon convention. The City of Dawson and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation are working on a plan to nominate the Klondike as a world heritage site. The world heritage site would include the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in fishing camp, the Chilkoot Trail, the Klondike goldfields and the historic Dawson region. The designation awarded by

UNESCO would mean Klondike sites would benefit from millions of dollars in annual grant money, as well as draw more tourists to the area.

World heritage means more than preserving historic sites. The world's languages are our heritage and many languages — indigenous languages — are at risk of being lost forever. With that, it is a loss of a people's voice and a way of being.

Mr. Speaker, I want to end with some words from Wade Davis, the world-renowned ethnobotanist who lives in northern B.C. He has been a defender of the Sacred Headwaters of the Skeena, Nass and Stikine and has been the National Geographic explorer-in-residence.

Mr. Davis says, "Just as there is a biological web of life, there is also a cultural and spiritual web of life — what we at the National Geographic have taken to calling the 'ethnosphere.' It's really the sum total of all the thoughts, beliefs, myths, and institutions brought into being by the human imagination. It is humanity's greatest legacy, embodying everything we have produced as a curious and amazingly adaptive species. The ethnosphere is as vital to our collective well-being as the biosphere. And just as the biosphere is being eroded, so is the ethnosphere — if anything, at a far greater rate.

"Some people say: 'What does it matter if these cultures fade away.' The answer is simple. When asked the meaning of being human, all the diverse cultures of the world respond with 10,000 different voices. Distinct cultures represent unique visions of life itself, morally inspired and inherently right. And those different voices become part of the overall repertoire of humanity for coping with challenges confronting us in the future. As we drift toward a blandly amorphous, generic world, as cultures disappear and life becomes more uniform, we as a people and a species, and Earth itself, will be deeply impoverished." Thank you.

Mr. Silver: I rise on behalf of the Liberal caucus to also pay tribute to World Heritage Day. April 18 marks World Heritage Day, a day to celebrate significant cultural and historical places around the world. Here in the Yukon, we are fortunate enough to have some incredible treasures.

Whether it's the natural beauty of our mountains or some of the historic relics that sit along our rivers and valleys, Yukon's heritage is constantly around us. Yukon is fortunate to have a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Kluane National Park. Of course, the Klondike region is on the consideration list.

Speaking of the Klondike, I would be remiss in my duties if I didn't mention all of the amazing institutions that tell the story of our special corner of the world. Whether it be the story of Dawson and the gold rush found at the Dawson City Museum or the traditions that pre-date the stamperders at the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre or the many tours of historic sites maintained by Parks Canada, Dawson, Klondike and Tr'ondëk — major pillars of Yukon heritage.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like welcome Chase Blodgett, who is one of many transgender Yukoners. Chase is a transgender man, meaning he was assigned female at birth, but identifies and lives as male.

Chase has chosen to come today by himself to represent the isolation that transgender people encounter on a daily basis due to systemic discrimination. Because of their gender identity, transgendered people can be denied access to health care, housing and employment.

Many lose friends and families. Many fear for their safety. PFLAG, the Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, reports a high risk of suicide for transgender people. As our understanding of the full range of human sexuality and gender identity increases, Yukon should follow other jurisdictions in Canada by adding gender identity and expression as protected grounds in our *Human Rights Act*, as recommended to this Assembly's Select Committee on Human Rights by the Yukon Human Rights Commission.

Acknowledging the anniversary of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, as the Minister of Justice did a few moments ago, gives us pause to consider that, as our knowledge of discrimination and human rights grows, so does our commitment to respecting human rights and to improving human rights law. While Chase is standing alone in the public gallery, many Yukoners have indicated their support for recognizing trans rights in our *Human Rights Act*, as evidenced by the 130 signatures in the petition I will table today.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Chase asked me to acknowledge the 100-player league of the Whitehorse Women's Hockey Association, which passed the first policy of its kind in all of Canada, formally welcoming male-to-female and female-to-male transgender players into their league. It is time for us as policy makers to follow community leaders and make the Yukon a safe place for transgender and gender-non-conforming individuals.

I ask all members to join me in welcoming Chase Blodgett.

Applause

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: The Chair has for tabling a report from the Chief Electoral Office of Yukon, entitled *Annual Contributions to Political Parties in the 2014 Calendar Year*. This document is tabled in accordance with section 398 of the *Elections Act*.

Ms. Hanson: I have for tabling excerpts from the meeting minutes of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Monday, March 30, 2015.

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

Reports of committees.

Are there any petitions to be presented?

PETITIONS

Petition No. 20

Ms. Moorcroft: I have for presentation the following petition to the Yukon Legislative Assembly:

This petition of the undersigned shows

THAT the undersigned ask the Yukon Legislative Assembly to urge the Yukon government to advance equal rights for transsexual, transgender, and gender-variant people by:

(1) introducing to the Legislative Assembly amendments to Yukon's *Human Rights Act* to explicitly include gender identity and gender expression under section 7 of the act as prohibited grounds for discrimination;

(2) supporting full equality and respect for trans people accessing Yukon government jobs, programs and services; and

(3) using public education to fight intolerance, discrimination and violence against trans people.

Mr. Speaker, there are 130 signatures on the petition for tabling.

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

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to support the Whitehorse Curling Club to install an energy upgrade of outdated, inefficient surface lights and install a separate meter for the ice plant.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to support the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association to develop a four-season, multi-use park on Winze Lane in Whitehorse.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to follow the recommendations of the current and previous Information and Privacy Commissioner and the example of other Canadian jurisdictions by amending the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to include a provision that would require a public body to disclose information that is determined to be clearly in the public interest.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to release an up-to-date accounting of the outside legal costs for the Peel land use plan court case.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Hydraulic fracturing

Ms. Hanson: This week the Premier attended the Quebec Summit on Climate Change and signed the *Declaration of the Premiers of Canada*. This declaration recognizes the scientific consensus calling for a significant reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions. It also recognizes that northern regions are particularly vulnerable to and disproportionately affected by climate change. The document commits the Premier to take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and yet, Mr. Speaker, this government has just announced its intention to allow fracking in the Yukon.

Does the Premier not see how contradictory it is for him to sign a declaration to take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Yukon while launching fracking in the Yukon, which will significantly increase Yukon's emissions?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I have in fact just returned from the climate change summit in Quebec City where we had the opportunity as three northern premiers representing 40 percent of Canada to talk about the fact that the north is a very low emitter of greenhouse gases. In fact, Yukon is probably around a half of one percent of Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, Yukon is, I'm told, the third lowest emitter per capita in this country, but, in fact, truly we are feeling the effects of climate change here and around the territory.

This government continues to invest in emission reductions. We continue to invest in renewable energy and we continue to invest in technology and innovation. We know that carbon fuel is not a luxury. It is a necessity in this territory and truly across the north. This government will not support any action that will increase the costs to Yukoners because we all live in an area right now where it already is very expensive.

We're certainly willing to talk with other jurisdictions about mitigation and about adaptation, but we're not prepared to increase the cost of living for all Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: Right, let somebody else do it. Earlier this month, the Yukon Party government finally came clean on its pro-fracking agenda. This agenda is anything but clean.

Analysis of life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions for fracked gas has shown them to be as dirty as coal. Fracking wells also leak 40 to 60 percent more methane into our atmosphere than conventional natural gas wells. These fugitive emissions are potent greenhouse gases.

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns that continued emissions of greenhouse gases will accelerate global warming, climate change and threaten sustainable development, and it cautions two-thirds of known and proven resources should stay in the ground, including Yukon.

Why is the Premier taking the irresponsible road to opening Yukon to fracking, when it runs contrary to the scientific consensus that fracking contributes to —

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

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I have to say that the government, through the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, has been very articulate in what this government's plan is. We are accepting all the recommendations of the select committee, and we are opening up the opportunity for applications for potential hydraulic fracturing, but that would only be with the support of the affected First Nations.

We're talking about the southeast corner of Yukon, in the Liard Basin, where we've had an oil and gas industry for almost half a century, from which there have been royalties of \$45 million, which have been shared — approximately \$10 million of that has gone to First Nations.

This government supports responsible development; this government supports the ability to have Yukoners come home and be involved in a responsible oil and gas economy. This government will continue to focus on ensuring that there is prosperity and growth for all Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: Fracking is not responsible development, and this Yukon Party government has been pursuing a pro-fracking agenda from the very start. They appear to believe that aggressively extracting fossil fuels from under the Earth will make Yukon a net contributor to Canada. Let me be clear: If we open the Yukon to fracking, the only net contribution that Yukon will make to Canada will be to increase our nation's greenhouse gas emissions. It is time for this government to get serious about climate change.

In 2009, they took a small step in their climate change action plan by committing to Yukon-wide emissions targets by 2011, but they later abandoned that commitment, all the while checking it off as a completed action in their 2012 annual report. Why has the Premier abandoned Yukon-wide emissions standards targets? When will this government get serious about tackling climate change?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As the Premier mentioned, we are accepting and addressing all 21 of the select committee report recommendations and moving forward with actions on each one of them. We are open to applications for potential hydraulic fracturing in only one area of the Yukon, the Liard Basin, and that would occur only with the support of affected First Nations.

This government has been clear with respect to reducing greenhouse gas emissions over the years, and we're taking action. Just yesterday we announced a commercial energy-efficiency program with respect to multi-unit residential buildings as well as commercial lighting. That's on top of a residential energy-efficiency program that we announced last year.

There are several initiatives being undertaken by the Department of Environment. The Department of Highways and Public Works will be reskinning this building in this current fiscal year so that we can make our own buildings more energy efficient, and of course the work on the new F.H. Collins — it is being built to a LEED silver standard, I believe.

The new buildings that we're developing are being built to high energy-efficiency standards. The existing buildings we're retrofitting to higher energy-efficiency standards and we're working on climate change across all departments in the government.

Question re: Corrections programming

Ms. Moorcroft: Last Tuesday, the Minister of Justice responded to the Auditor General's report by standing and saying — and I quote: "The focus it should be noted is about rehabilitation." The Auditor General found that Yukon is missing opportunities to rehabilitate offenders and it is not adequately preparing them for successful reintegration into the community. The Auditor General report found that more than half of the offenders in his study sample had not been offered all of the core programs. Effective corrections core programs can help people change their behaviour, reduce the chances of re-offending and in turn help make Yukon safer.

How can the minister claim his government is focused on rehabilitation when more than half of the offenders sampled in the Auditor General's study did not get the programming they needed?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It's really unfortunate to hear the way that the Member for Copperbelt South is choosing to characterize the situation. As I noted in responding to her previous questions about the Auditor General's report, these reports are very helpful and useful to help identify where there is room for improvement.

As was noted by the department in response to the Auditor General's points, it also should be recognized that the period of time when the review was conducted was a period when they were transitioning to the new correctional facility. That was a very challenging time for the department in terms of the work that they were doing in making that transition, but again, as I noted to the member, some of the issues identified by the Auditor General have already been acted on, as they were previously identified through internal quality review mechanisms.

Those other areas that need further work we are committed to working on. I have confidence in the department and the work that they are doing to address those matters. I will support the department in doing that good work and we are committed to continuing to improve Yukon's rehabilitative systems and programs, but the member should recognize in fact what a dramatic improvement has been made since the days she was Minister of Justice.

Ms. Moorcroft: It's one thing to find a report helpful and it's another thing to actually do something. I'm asking the minister to make a commitment here. Building a new facility is not an excuse for not offering programs.

Part of the Department of Justice's responsibilities is ensuring that when people are convicted of sexual assault or domestic violence they undergo a risk assessment before they are released into the community. The Auditor General found that only one in four offenders convicted of sexual assault and only one in three of the offenders convicted of domestic violence had the necessary risk assessments completed before

their release. One missed risk assessment is too many. The fact that the majority of sex offenders in the study did not undergo additional risk assessments before their release is unacceptable.

What is the minister doing to ensure that no more sexual violence and domestic violence risk assessments will be missed?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, as I noted previously in responding to the member opposite, there have been significant improvements made in the work that is done by Yukon Corrections and Yukon Justice since the days when the member was Minister of Justice, for example. Through the correctional reform process and through *Sharing Common Ground*, the bar has been raised further. In some of those areas where the new standard was set — clearly during that period of time, in files reviewed by the Auditor General in 2012, there were issues where we were not meeting the new standards that had been set out.

Again, as I noted to the member, some of these issues have already been identified through internal quality review processes and are being acted upon. Those remaining ones that are outstanding will see further work on them. I should remind the member that significant work has been done — and positive work in areas such as the Community Wellness Court and the domestic violence treatment option, which are new and recent innovations in correctional reform in the Yukon — and truly the staff and all who were involved in those processes deserve a pat on the back for the excellent work they're doing and the success they're achieving, and the fact that — not only in other Canadian jurisdictions, but internationally — people have taken a look at the good work that's done through the successful Community Wellness Court. It's truly a testament to all those involved for their success.

Ms. Moorcroft: The minister can talk all he wants about his government's focus on safety, but the numbers are clear. Three out of four sexual assault and two out of three domestic violence offenders did not get the risk assessment needed before going back into the community. The government is not doing what it needs to do to protect victims and communities.

The minister has just acknowledged, as the Auditor General reported, that the government is not meeting the standards of the *Corrections Act, 2009*. Will the government commit to ensuring that, from now on, all those convicted of sexual assault and domestic violence will be given the necessary risk assessments, without exception?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the member and remind her of the fact, as she acknowledged, that the *Corrections Act, 2009* set out a new standard. In the time since then, we have raised the bar in the level of what is expected within the Yukon correctional system, a significant improvement since the member's time as Minister of Justice.

I would again congratulate staff, particularly those for some of the programs, such as the Community Wellness Court, domestic violence treatment option, and through the

expanded victims services that are available within the Department of Justice. I should acknowledge the work of my predecessor in expanding those services. There has been a significant increase in the services that are offered within the Yukon's corrections system and I would like to acknowledge the work of all involved in doing that.

I do recognize that, in the 2012 report done by the Auditor General, there were areas where we were not meeting the new standard that we had set out and, again in those areas, as I noted, staff are working on them and will have my support in ensuring that those issues, which have not already been addressed, will be focused on and we will take appropriate steps to continue to raise the bar in the standard of rehabilitative programs and services that are offered.

Question re: Mining sector development

Mr. Silver: Under the watch of this government, the Keno mine closed in 2013 and we had the second-lowest GDP of any place in Canada. In 2014, spending on mineral exploration dropped 22 percent. Across the border in the Northwest Territories, we saw a 32-percent increase in spending that same year. We began 2015 with news of Wolverine mine being closed, leaving many Yukon companies owed more than \$4 million in unpaid bills. After insisting that we were a mineral hot spot in Canada, the Yukon Party has changed its tune and now blames low mineral prices for the downturn that we are currently experiencing. As we head into an election cycle, the Yukon Party has sprung into action, announcing that by 2016, a mineral development strategy will be in place.

Why did the government wait until three-and-a-half years into its mandate to begin working on this plan?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I'm proud of the work that we have embarked upon when it comes to the mineral development strategy. This is on top of a number of initiatives that we started throughout our mandate. Of course the member didn't reference the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, which has been established to train Yukoners for job opportunities in the mineral sector. Whether it is placer mining or hard rock mining opportunities, there are a number of different opportunities that Yukoners are being trained for right now — not only Yukoners in Whitehorse, but Yukoners in the communities through the mobile trades' trailer. The member opposite didn't reference all of the significant investments that we have been making in infrastructure — such as highways, airports and telecommunications, as well as energy infrastructure — including our plans for our next generation hydro, as well as plans to upgrade the power line from Stewart Crossing to Keno City to ensure that there is enough power capacity for that important industrial corridor, including the mine that the member opposite referenced.

There are some incredible success stories that have been built out of the latest exploration boom. Again, through the work of the mine licensing improvement initiative and the mineral development strategy, we want to emerge from this current downturn in the world metal markets in better shape

than we went in and, once again, claim our spot as one of the top mining jurisdictions in the world.

Mr. Silver: The facts remain the same — that we are not turning exploration projects into actual mines. Exploration has dropped off ever since this government came into office, in actual fact. Two mines have closed and the one that the government kept insisting was going to boost our GDP, never ever opened. Another problem the government was well aware of when it came into office was the overlap between the Water Board and other regulatory agencies. Finally, after years of inaction, the government has started a mine licensing improvement initiative and is trying to address this problem.

Why did this government sit on the sidelines until 18 months before an election to try to fix this particular problem?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, what the Member for Klondike is not telling Yukoners with his question is what we have done with respect to licence improvements. There have been improvements made to the Yukon *Waters Act*. There have been timelines instituted for the adequacy phase with respect to type A licences for quartz projects. Through the work of the mine licensing improvement initiative, we will continue to address some of those overlaps that exist between the licensing and permitting issues. We are doing so in partnership with First Nations, moving forward to ensure that we can come up with a licensing and permitting system that is responsive to the needs of industry, but of course protects the environment in the long run, which is one of the utmost purposes that we are looking for.

The member opposite mentioned exploration projects — I think that coming out of the last exploration rush we have seen projects like the Coffee gold project that is owned by Kaminak Gold Corp. — Wellgreen platinum has moved forward with their activities. In fact, Mr. Speaker, early estimates for exploration this year are in the \$100-million range, which is up from \$80 million in 2014. Again, these are estimates that are put together based on announcements by companies at this point, but we see those numbers trending in the right direction and we are proud of the work that we do to support the mining industry.

Mr. Silver: The fact remains that the government came into office after a summer of record mineral exploration in 2011 and not a single mine has opened up in three and a half years since. In fact, two mines that it inherited have closed under its watch. Exploration has declined every year that this government been in office. One thing that is on the rise under this government is court action. The government's legal battles between First Nations have seen 13 percent of the Yukon removed from staking until at least 2017. Another legal battle with Yukon First Nation governments is on the way unless this government backs down on its changes to Bill S-6.

So I will ask this question: What involvement will First Nation governments have in the development of these two new initiatives that are finally underway?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: One thing is for certain in three and a half years, which is that in three and a half years, this Liberal leader and the Liberal Party has opposed and voted

against every initiative that this government has put forward and fundamental industries within this Yukon economy. What we know for certain is that he has flip-flopped on a number of issues through three and a half years. What we know for certain is that he has no position on anything and he has no plans for anything.

Question re: Renewable energy strategy

Ms. White: The timing is more than a little ironic in that the Yukon Party government made their bold push for fracking on the eve of climate change talks initiated by the premiers of Ontario and Quebec that the Premier attended.

Yukon citizens, Yukon businesses and Yukon First Nations are showing real, concrete leadership in investing in exciting renewable energy projects. The Kluane First Nation has a geothermal well and is actively pursuing district heating in a year-round greenhouse. They are working to install three wind turbines to offset their reliance on fossil fuel for power generation, and every single year they install solar panels on more of their government buildings.

If renewable energy investment was a race, Kluane First Nation would be crossing the finish line before the Yukon Party even left the block. When will the Yukon government show the same leadership as Kluane First Nation when it comes to investing in diverse sources of renewable energy?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Of course we are looking at renewable energy options within the Yukon government — not only the work of the Yukon Energy Corporation's studying wind at Tehcho near Stewart Crossing as well as Mount Sumanik here in Whitehorse. That work is underway on wind. We are engaged on next-generation hydro talks. There are transmission line opportunities that will expand not only the distribution of electricity throughout the territory, but the options for bringing on additional renewable sources throughout the territory. I find it ironic that perhaps the Member for Takhini-Kopper King missed the debate with respect to the supplementary budget, but actually the Yukon government has provided a \$1-million investment to the Kluane First Nation to assist them in their renewable energy project. Unfortunately, she missed that during the debate earlier this week, but again we are partnering with Kluane on these renewable energy options and we are excited to be partners with that very progressive First Nation.

Ms. White: It is fantastic that this Yukon Party government is able to ride on the coattails of the leadership of the Kluane First Nation. Other jurisdictions have put lots of incentives in place to encourage homeowners to become energy producers and sell back to the grid. Yukon citizens are showing real leadership in investing in solar on their homes despite the limitations in the microgeneration policy. I understand that there are 11 people who are connected and selling back to the grid.

The incentives that are in place are clearly too low. These 11 people have tied into the grid and haven't made the change because of the financial incentives. They weren't that compelling. They did it because of their personal convictions to combat climate change.

Will this government commit to review the microgeneration policy incentives to empower more Yukoners to produce renewable energy and possibly sell it back to the grid?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Unfortunately the member opposite has not checked with our residential energy incentive program that provides up to \$5,000 for individuals who are accessing the microgeneration program. I know a number of individuals who have taken advantage of that as well.

We're excited with the work that we're doing to assist Yukoners. One of my neighbours around the corner is reskinning her house, putting in new windows and a new roof based on accessing that program, the residential energy efficiency program. Part of that was to assist those individuals who want to add microgeneration capabilities to what they're doing. We're coming out with an independent power producers policy program sometime this year, after consultations last year. I would encourage the member opposite to do a little bit more research before she brings questions to the floor of this House.

Ms. White: I will take that for what it's worth.

There are innovative approaches on renewable energy that Yukon businesses are getting behind. Northwestel, in partnership with the Cold Climate Innovation Centre saw solar panels installed on one of their towers as a pilot project. With a projected four-a-half-year return on investment, the project was a great success. Northwestel now has five towers across the north with solar panels and it plans to extend it to six more towers shortly.

The Yukon government's big idea is a megadam with connection to B.C. at a cost of billions of dollars to be built anywhere between 15 and 30 years from now if — and there is a big if to this Mr. Speaker — the public can agree on which river valley should be flooded. So we need action now. That's what I'm looking for — action from this government.

Why is this government shooting for far off megaprojects to fulfill our renewable energy needs and neglecting investments in projects that can meet our needs here today?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I think we need a little bit of a context here. In the Yukon, if we look at all of the electricity consumed — and that includes all of those communities that are not on the grid and get all of their power from diesel — 95 percent of the electricity consumed in this territory comes from renewables. If you look at on-grid, over 99 percent of all electricity consumed is from renewables. We will put that up against anywhere in this entire country. This government, over the years, with vision has expanded with Mayo B, has expanded with another wheel at Aishihik Lake, and we are now moving forward with a vision to ensure the prosperity of Yukoners for generations to come with our next generation hydro project.

That is the difference between this government and the opposition: vision.

Question re: Rural infrastructure projects

Mr. Barr: One can't help but wonder how this government goes about setting priorities for recreational

investment in Yukon. It seems like election photo opportunities always end up coming before the actual needs of Yukon's communities. While Whitehorse gets an artificial soccer field in Whistle Bend with no real needs analysis, the winter has come and gone and the Carmacks arena remained closed for most of the season.

Why is the government failing to support the infrastructure needs of Yukoners in the communities?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I have to take umbrage with the question put forward by the member opposite. We have made investments in each and every community throughout this territory when it comes to recreational infrastructure as well recreational programs.

I would suggest that, if you look at our recreational infrastructure that we have available to us in the Yukon, I would put us right at the top in terms of the country. We have access to an incredible array of recreational infrastructure throughout the Yukon.

I know the member opposite referenced the specific case of Carmacks. Obviously there's an unfortunate situation in that community where they've had some failing infrastructure. We're working very closely with the municipality to address those needs. I've written a letter to both the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes to explain what is going on with that. I encourage them to talk to the town council in Carmacks and ask how Yukon government has been working hand in hand with that community to address their needs. We've been providing resources, we've been providing expertise and we've been discussing what their vision for the future is in that particular community.

I have to just fundamentally disagree with the member opposite in his preamble. We've invested significant amounts of money in all recreational infrastructure throughout this territory, and we're very proud of that record.

Mr. Barr: We have talked.

Carmacks isn't the only Yukon community that's falling short on infrastructure support. The government is scrambling to finish projects this year, as our initial Building Canada funding expires. Not only is the Yukon Party government failing to prioritize community needs, this government is having trouble directing the completion of multi-year projects on time.

These are projects like water, sewer and road upgrades in communities like Haines Junction, Mayo, Pelly Crossing and Teslin that have been long anticipated. Why has the Yukon Party government let so many projects drag on to the point that their federal funding may expire before finally making a sustained attempt at project completions?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Again, I'm surprised at the line of questioning here. I should note that each and every one of those investments that we've made — each and every one of those important infrastructure investments we've made in Yukon communities — the member opposite voted against. He chose to take his partisan angle and vote no to those investments, instead of supporting the remarkable

infrastructure investments we have made, whether they be in drinking water or —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Dixon: So, Mr. Speaker, I expect that the member opposite will continue to vote against these investments. I know that they find it very humorous, the types of investments that they voted against. I know they take great pleasure in voting against those investments in Yukon communities.

We take them seriously and we take this job seriously. We try to ensure that Yukon's infrastructure needs are addressed, whether they be in the communities, whether they be in Whitehorse or whether they be in roads that connect us all together.

We'll continue to do what we've been doing, which is to ensure that Yukoners' infrastructure requirements are met, whether they be drinking water, whether they be waste water or whether they be recreational infrastructure. I encourage them to vote for the budget and, of course, all the significant investments that are made therein.

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. 17: *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 17, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 17, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 17, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I have to say something that I have repeated myself many times in this Legislature, and that is that Yukon is in a very enviable financial position. It is a position that I and my colleagues are very proud of.

I have spoken previously and at some length at 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 for our proposed expenditure initiatives.

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

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. White: I would like to take this opportunity to invite two people into the gallery today. We have Stu Neatby and Siân Madoc-Jones. They are joining us today. Thank you so much for coming.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: In its basic form, planning and budgeting is all about decision-making. It is all about identifying priorities and 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 as both a planning tool and a control tool. Decision-making is an ongoing and evolving process. It remains not only the prerogative, but the obligation, for our government to consider emerging issues and priorities and to recommend effective and appropriately resourced solutions and actions to the Legislative Assembly.

I will speak at some length about this in my Committee speech for Bill No. 18, which is the *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, but it seems apropos to pause here for a moment and reflect on observations in the Standard & Poor's report in September of 2014. Standard & Poor's has once again confirmed Yukon's double-A rating and, in doing so, made a number of observations that reflect our government's commitment to strong financial management. Standard & Poor's recognizes our government's commitment to strong budgetary processes. If I may, in its report, Standard & Poor's confirms Yukon's double-A rating, noting that our rating reflects — and I quote — a couple or three quotes I have: "...the territory's very low debt burden, exceptional liquidity, strong budgetary performance..." and "...the territory demonstrates strong financial management..." and the expectation "...that Yukon will continue to produce strong budgetary results..."

Despite the frequent criticism heaped on our government regarding our budgetary track record, it is fair to say that Standard & Poor's gets it. Our record has been strong and will continue to be strong as we support Yukoners through our current 2015-16 budget as well as future budgets.

This Legislature will have the opportunity to consider our 2015-16 budget in full as we debate Bill No. 18. Of course, this will take some time as the members opposite conduct their diligence in their review and critique of our 2015-16 budget. In the meantime, I am pleased to introduce Bill No. 17, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

This act provides for spending authority through to June 4, 2015 and will allow this Legislature to ensure the continued, uninterrupted operations of government while Bill No. 18 is under consideration. In addition, this act ensures appropriate authority is granted to departments, so that they can make some very significant payments and commitments, including: \$18.3 million for the comprehensive municipal grant; \$15.8 million representing the first quarterly payment

for the Yukon Hospital Corporation; and \$25.5 million for our annual contribution to Yukon College.

This act is not focused solely on operation and maintenance requirements. As Yukoners are well aware, we do have a shorter construction season than is experienced in southern jurisdictions. It is important for our contractors to get out there at the very first possible opportunity. This act provides for capital spending on a number of fronts, including: \$9.281 million to continue implementation of a number of projects initiated under Building Canada; \$10.4 million as the construction on the F.H. Collins replacement project progresses; and \$1.518 million to advance the Salvation Army redevelopment project.

I am sure that the members opposite appreciate how important it is for our contracting community to be at work, delivering these projects.

As I stated earlier, the Legislature will have a full opportunity to debate our entire 2015-16 budget when we convene for consideration of Bill No. 18. In the interim, this act ensures the continued and uninterrupted operations of government.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, this act requests spending authority, which in total is not to exceed \$353,979,000. The purpose of this spending authority is to defray the various charges and expenses of public services of Yukon for the period April 1, 2015 through June 4, 2015. Of this total amount, \$257,358,000 is provided for operations and maintenance and \$96,621,000 is provided for capital. The full details of these expenditures are included in the main estimates and will be fully discussed and debated during general and departmental debate on the 2015-16 main estimates.

I would also again like to acknowledge and thank all of the officials who worked on putting together this interim supply bill and of course, special recognition to all of those people within the Department of Finance.

Ms. Hanson: I rise to speak to Bill No. 17, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*. I would just like to make a couple of comments with respect to the interim supply. It is a mechanism for the government to ensure ongoing operations, pending legislative — legislative — approval, Mr. Speaker — of the budget.

I have to make a comment, Mr. Speaker. I find it quite saddening that the Finance minister, the Premier, has dismissed the notion of the parliamentary process and parliamentary democracy, and that in fact, in his comments, the references are simply that the Yukon Party with the majority are the decision-makers. In fact, in a parliamentary democracy, all members of the Legislative Assembly —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Elias: The Leader of the Official Opposition is suggesting that the Hon. Premier is dismissing parliamentary process. That's clearly a contravention to the Standing Orders.

Speaker: Opposition House Leader, on the point of order.

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, I did not hear the member opposite refer to any section of our Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly when he made the point of order, and what I heard was my colleague responding to a budget speech or a speech on this interim supply bill. I believe this is just a dispute among members.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition stated that, in her belief, the government was portraying themselves as the sole approvers and pointed out that it is in fact the entire membership of the Legislature. In her assertion, she said it was her belief, so she may believe that. It may be true; it may not be true. I don't know.

It's a dispute between members.

Ms. Hanson: All members of this Legislative Assembly, not just members of a majority government, are elected to represent the citizens of this territory. All members of this Legislative Assembly have a right and obligation to speak to the assertions that are put forward by the government and, in particular, we have an obligation as the Official Opposition, as the opposition, to hold the government to account for the decisions they do make and as those decisions are manifested, as we shall see, in the main estimates.

It is parliamentary tradition that the entire budget is tabled in a timely way so that the members of the opposition — all elected members — can do their due diligence.

If the Minister of Finance seriously believed in the legitimate role of all elected members of this Legislative Assembly, he would table this budget in February. He would not table it in April, after the beginning of the fiscal year, because what he's doing is he's setting it up on the assumption that a quarter of the expenditures that this government anticipates making is fait accompli.

The opposition is placed in a situation where it has no choice but to support the supply bill because it's necessary for the interim operations. But I want to put the Minister of Finance on notice: This does not imply that we support the contents of the main estimates, the operation and maintenance and capital estimates, for 2015-16. We will hold the government to account; we will hold the Minister of Finance to account throughout the course of debate.

It's ironic for the Minister of Finance to talk about — that he believes, in his words, in strong budgeting and planning. If he believed in strong planning, he would deliver on that and he would have tabled this budget before the beginning of the fiscal year — at least have had the appearance of respecting the parliamentary process.

As I said, my comments would be brief. Our support for the *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, Bill No. 17,

does not signify support for Bill No. 18, but it is done on sufferance.

Mr. Silver: It gives me pleasure to rise on Bill No. 17, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that we are already well into the 2015-16 fiscal year as we begin debate on the interim supply bill. The normal course of events is to begin the session in late March and to allow time to pass the interim supply bill before the fiscal year actually begins. That, of course, didn't happen this year for several reasons: the Yukon Party lost their newly minted chief of staff quite suddenly; we saw a major shuffle of Cabinet. It is interesting to note, on that shuffle, that the new minister responsible for housing — in the 2015-16 main budget, finally we see the remainder of the northern housing trust fund finally getting spent, with some of that money actually on affordable housing too. I want to congratulate the new minister on accomplishing something in his first 100 days on the job that the previous Yukon Party minister failed to do since 2006.

Speaking about that shuffle — and also combined with the musical chair routine with respect to the Premier's chief of staff position and the unexpected departure of the Deputy Minister of Finance — it is the main reason why we are starting so late and beginning second reading on an interim supply bill halfway through the first month of the new fiscal year.

It is interesting to see the Premier's explanation for the late start — somehow being related to March break, spring break. In a news release in March, the Premier stated that the Spring Sitting would start later than usual — April 2 — and I quote: "...to accommodate families who may be spending time together during the school spring break period of March 16 to 27."

It is interesting that that was not a concern last spring when the Legislature started on March 25, right in the middle of spring break. I would suggest that the real reason the session is late this year, of course, is that the government simply was not prepared. Between Cabinet shuffles, deputy changes and the departure of a hand-picked chief of staff from Ottawa, the government simply wasn't ready to table a budget on time.

It was easier to blame it on spring break than it was to admit that.

With regard to the content of the bill — the interim supply bill itself — it is merely housekeeping to allow the government to spend money until the main budget passes the House at the end of May.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I speak with my constituents often about issues that are important to them — issues such as a healthy economy, including resource extraction, tourism, private sector businesses, the knowledge sector and trades. Constituents of Porter Creek South speak to me about issues like health care and how they recognize that Yukon's health care is arguably —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: Leader of the Third Party, on a point of order.

Mr. Silver: I'm sorry to interrupt, but I would like to ask the rest of the House to help me in welcoming a constituent of mine, Tracey Caley.

Applause

Speaker: Minister of Health and Social Services, please.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Welcome, Tracey, to the gallery.

The constituents of Porter Creek South speak to me about issues like health care and how they recognize that Yukon's health care is arguably one of the best in Canada.

Now, I've commented before in this Assembly with regard to spending more of my time learning about health care on a global scale. I consider myself very fortunate to live in a place where the level of care is truly second to none. We are fortunate to have that, but we are not entitled to have that.

I recognize — just for one example — how fortunate seniors are in Yukon. Over the last 10 years, your Yukon Party government has increased the budget for home care across the territory, because we on this side of the House believe it is important to keep seniors in their homes and in their communities as long as possible.

Now, I know the members opposite have a difficult time believing this or perhaps understanding this. I've read their entertaining rhetoric in the paper and on-line. What's even more amusing is their inability to follow and have a true appreciation for a budget.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Leader of the Third Party, on a point of order.

Mr. Silver: I'm sorry to interrupt again, but I believe the word "rhetoric" has been eschewed as unparliamentarily in the past, and I would ask the member opposite to refrain from using it.

Speaker: Government House Leader, on the point of order.

Mr. Elias: On the point of order, I have heard the word "rhetoric" used many, many times during this Sitting alone, and I've been here for how many years now? Nine years — and it has been used quite regularly in members' use of language. I think this is a dispute among members.

Unparliamentary language

Speaker: Some interesting arguments. The use of the word "rhetoric" directed at an individual and their comments within statements in this House is out of order. Right now, my memory is not 100-percent clear as to how the minister phrased it formally. I will say that there is a point of order and ask the minister to please rephrase that statement without using that word and we will carry on. If I check the Blues tomorrow and find out that it was directed in a broader sense, then I may change the ruling.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'll rephrase that word from "rhetoric" to "comments" in general.

Based on the comments and debate from the members opposite, Yukoners know that in a Yukon governed by the NDP-Liberals, we would see no support for the increase in the budget for home care; we would see no increase in budgets for mental health services and services to people with disabilities. In fact, the Member for Riverdale South indicated that she doesn't see the correlation between —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order please. While the heckling is not necessarily unparliamentary, it is getting to a volume where I am finding it difficult to hear the person who is presenting, so I would ask you to bring it down a notch, so that I may hear what the person is saying. Minister, carry on please.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I was just saying that, in fact, the Member for Riverdale South indicated that she doesn't see the correlation between people with disabilities and mental health issues and I find that very odd. We clearly wouldn't see a healthy economy from the members opposite. Both parties have proven that in the past and history would repeat itself.

The members opposite have voted against investments in the resource sector; they have voted against investments in our tourism economy; they have voted against investments in the knowledge sector and the trades; they have voted against expanded services to people with disabilities; and they voted against expanded services for people with mental health issues.

The members opposite in fact have voted against the need for safe travel, through investments in road and airport infrastructure. They have voted against the need for predictability and stability in environmental stewardship, despite their cries for protection of lands. In fact, we have seen them vote against the need for economic stability and diversity throughout the entire territory. We have seen them vote against our party's confidence in the private sector to provide services to Yukoners and to visitors at places like Dredge No. 4 and the *SS Klondike*, at our museums and cultural centres, as well as health care initiatives.

The NDP-Liberals have even gone on record in this Legislative Assembly speaking out about their lack of confidence in government staff and the services that those good women and men provide on a daily basis. The NDP-Liberals seem to have no confidence in government staff; they seem to have no confidence in the private sector tourism companies; they seem to have no confidence in construction and mining companies — yet the NDP-Liberals want to govern this territory. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that makes no sense at all. In fact, I know that scares a lot of Yukoners.

Our government has confidence in the staff and services that are delivered by that staff. I have talked at great length before on how the economic situation was dire in 2002, when we took office. It was indeed the good women and men of

Yukon — those working in government, those working in the tourism sector, those working in construction and exploration and mining and other private sector jobs — who had the confidence in this Yukon Party government to govern the territory and bring it back on track.

Yukoners knew that this Yukon Party government, through hard work and deliberate strategic investments, would be able to restore confidence and investment to our territory. This Yukon Party government did just that. We delivered on our promise of a better Yukon to Yukoners and, by working together, we were able to deliver on programs and services to Yukoners, like no other government has been able to do.

It was the Yukon Party that committed to building Yukon's future, and we have delivered. Since 2002, the Yukon Party government has increased budgets in mental health services and services to people, especially children, who have disabilities, but we have particularly increased the home care budget by over 350 percent, so seniors can stay in their homes and in their communities longer. That is action. That is an investment in Yukoners. We committed to Yukoners on this very thing and, like our other commitments to Yukoners, we have delivered.

The interim supply bill before us speaks to a healthy economy. Our budget speaks to investments in the resource sector. It speaks to investments in tourism economy; it speaks to investments in the knowledge sector and trades. Simply put, this Yukon Party government budget speaks to putting Yukoners to work.

We truly have it all. We have resources beneath the ground that can support us for generations to come. We have a solid tourism product that the world wants to see. We have infrastructure that supports travel, trades, IT and other knowledge-based sectors. We have a private sector that is motivated and is very eager for growth and we have a Yukon Party government that can commit and deliver to Yukoners.

Recently I had a conversation with a couple of large local businesses. They reported to me that they appreciate the economic diversity that their Yukon Party government has created. They went on to say how clear it was to them that, although the resource sector is not quite as strong as it has been in the past, these local businesses still saw increased revenues for 2014 over 2013. That tells me that we're on the right track.

I've said before that this budget isn't about dollars and cents. This budget is about confidence; the confidence Yukoners have in this Yukon Party government to maintain a solid economy — the confidence Yukoners have in this Yukon Party government to keep them working; the confidence Yukoners have in this Yukon Party government to invest in health care, tourism, resource extraction and education, environmental stewardship and so much more.

Our territory managed to grow even through a difficult global economic crisis that affected millions around the world. Despite that we managed to continue to grow. That is a testament to solid leadership.

My point is this that we recognize that strong leadership has very tangible, very important consequences. Our

government has made a point of working to rebuild Yukon. Yukoners trust this government to manage finances in the good times and the lean times, something the other parties simply cannot report.

As the Minister of Health and Social Services, I'm reminded on a daily basis of the demands government has to provide services and programs to Yukoners. If we're ever going to have any realistic hope of providing these kinds of services that so many of us look forward to, then we're going to need a steady, reliable own-source revenue stream to fund those programs.

As the Minister of Health and Social Services, I see first-hand how much money we spend on health care and I often find myself thinking there must be a better way when it comes to health care. When it comes to lifestyle choices — whether it is smoking, excessive drinking or sedentary lifestyle — I firmly believe that we need to do more than say to people, "That's a bad choice." I think we have role to play in providing healthy, positive alternatives. It is because I believe that we need healthier, positive options for people that I support our government's efforts to build a new sports complex. We announced this project a year ago and we're continuing to work on it.

Just today we announced a new tobacco prevention resource called Kickin' Ash. It has been developed by the Yukon government to help prevent youth from picking up the smoking habit. Now it has been eight years since I quit smoking. I'm so glad to see this resource being offered.

Yukon has the third highest rate of smoking in Canada, surpassed only by Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Ninety percent of smokers report lighting their first cigarette or being addicted before the age of 18. Our goal is to help young people to resist the urge to start smoking so they can remain tobacco free and healthier as adults. Kickin' Ash was designed to help community organizations and schools address the issue of tobacco use by young people by giving youth, aged 10 and older, tools and knowledge aimed at preventing smoking.

This resource will be given a pilot run this summer by as many as 10 interested organizations. Feedback from these participants will then be incorporated, making it a community-driven resource. Grants of up to \$500 will be available to groups interested in participating.

Funding for the development of the Kickin' Ash resource was provided by the Yukon northern wellness project through the Public Health Agency of Canada. Information sessions on how to most effectively engage with youth using this program resource will be held in Whitehorse next month. Sessions may also be held in some communities, depending on the interest. Organizations interested in piloting the resource should contact the Health Promotion unit at 667-3507 or kickinash@gov.yk.ca. The deadline to apply to this is April 29.

My constituents appreciate having jobs and businesses, and I applaud this government for investing over \$312 million in our capital budget. As the Premier has said on a number of occasions, government can provide the foundation of infrastructure that businesses and corporations need in order to

grow the economy. As I looked at this budget, I thought of people in my riding of Porter Creek South who would be working because of items like the \$13.5 million for maintenance and upgrading of government buildings.

When I was first elected, as I have mentioned in this House on many occasions, a number of families affected by disabilities connected with me. One family in particular who had more than one child with a number of complex medical needs reached out to me. As I listened to them share their story, I realized that addressing the needs of just one child could overwhelm the family's finances and, as I said, they had more than one child with multiple disabilities. I often contemplate how a family would cope if they didn't live in a country like Canada or a territory like Yukon. How would they manage if they had to raise those funds themselves? Now I know first-hand the money to provide the specialists, the support workers and the special medications and the necessary equipment can be extremely expensive. That money has to come from somewhere, but it seems like the members opposite think that money just falls from the sky. I don't know if they have figured out that governments get money either by collecting it from taxpayers or by borrowing it. For me, a budget that focuses on putting Yukoners to work, a budget based on confidence, is a budget that continues to enable government to help families who have children — or adult children — with special needs.

I would like to reiterate the information I shared with members last week regarding the MRI that this government invested in. Not only did it open on time and on budget, but since the program started to provide patient care less than three months ago, it has operated as planned and conducted close to 400 MRI scans. This has improved access to care, ensured quicker diagnoses, reduced medical travel and any related costs and patient stress.

We also know that some patients have received an MRI exam in Yukon up to seven months ahead of scheduled appointments down south. Thank you to the Hospital Corporation. Thank you to the Hospital Foundation and those individuals and businesses that donated their time and money and the men and women who work at the hospital each and every day.

The budget has almost \$9 million from the new territorial investment fund that will resource chronic disease management, mental wellness, e-mental health supports and Yukon telepsychiatry programs.

This budget continues to provide funds for long-term care, including converting the old Oblate house into a small continuing care facility as an interim solution. It includes \$26 million for the new continuing care facility at Whistle Bend. We have \$7.8 million for the 15-bed McDonald Lodge continuing care facility in Dawson City. This budget has money to help shelter and house people with mental health needs. We have invested over \$10 million for the new Salvation Army centre and over \$650,000 in O&M funding for the transitional housing for persons with mental health conditions. We have \$21 million for the new Sarah Steele Building.

The Member for Klondike talks a good game about mental health. We are doing more than talking about it. We are investing in services for people with mental health challenges — shelter, housing, treatment, wellness. We are fulfilling our commitments to Yukoners.

In conclusion, not only do I look forward to my duties each and every day in serving the public, but I look forward to working with an incredible Yukon Party team — the premier, my caucus colleagues and our amazing staff who can deliver on its commitments to Yukoners time and time again.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It is a privilege to get up and speak today about the *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*. I do rise today to talk a little bit about some of the Department of Environment's ongoing work and plans for the fiscal year.

First, however I do want to note my appreciation and the good work undertaken by the department staff. Day in and day out, they do a great job. Whether you are out hunting or enjoying a relaxing weekend in a government campground, or marvelling over some of the Yukon's great environment, the Department of Environment staff have a role in making these safe, welcoming activities. Of course, this role is often done in collaboration with the First Nations, our renewable resource councils — I will speak about them a little bit — and with the land claims organizations such as the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board.

It is important that the department build and maintain strong and trusted partnerships, and we have done that because we recognize that stewardship of the department is improved through strong, effective partnerships.

I just want to talk a little bit about some of the work we are doing right now when it comes to climate change. In 2012, the *Yukon Government Climate Change Action Plan Progress Report* — we established additional greenhouse gas reduction targets and supporting actions for those key Yukon sectors that are collectively responsible for the majority of territorial emissions: transportation, building and energy efficiency, industrial and electrical sectors. We have heard some of this in the House earlier today.

The Yukon government supports made-in-Yukon innovations, including development and commercialization of the cold climate technologies — Yukon Research Centre — energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy incentives programs — Energy Solutions Centre, Yukon Housing Corporation — and expansion of renewable energy infrastructure for the Yukon — Energy Solutions Centre, the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation. Yukon government fosters collaborative opportunities for effective partnerships and sharing responsibilities, including Yukon's climate change committee partnership between the Yukon government Climate Change Secretariat, the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Research Centre's Northern Climate Exchange, and the Arctic Athabaskan Council plus the pan-territorial adaptation partnership — partnerships between Nunavut, Northwest Territories and us here in the Yukon.

Yukon government's *Climate Change Action Plan* outlines four climate goals, including: lead Yukon action in response to climate change; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; adapt to climate change; and to enhance knowledge and understanding of climate change. So the department is working on, and this government is committed to, reducing greenhouse gas emissions for Yukon and is working across government and sectors to achieve the targets in supporting the actions set out in the 2009 *Climate Change Action Plan* and the 2012 *Climate Change Action Plan Progress Report*.

The Yukon Development Corporation is conducting research and planning for hydroelectric energy generation in the Yukon to meet the expected growth and demand for electrical power. Programs include: the microgeneration production incentives program introduced by the Yukon to enable local renewable energy to supplement electrical generation in the Yukon by allowing customers who produce energy from renewable energy sources to be compensated annually for feeding surplus power back into the grid; the good energy residential incentives program introduced by the government supporting Yukoners in building or renovating homes to achieve energy savings; the commercial energy incentive program introduced by the Yukon government to assist Yukon apartment and condominium owners in retrofitting their buildings to improve energy performance and reduce energy consumption. I can tell you Mr. Speaker, my constituents are quite happy with these programs. I have received a lot of feedback and they like the direction this government is going.

The Yukon government recognizes that the impacts of climate change are having an immediate and significant impact on the Yukon and across the north. As a result, we're focused on effective adaptation efforts as well as climate change mitigation.

Yukon government efforts to address significant impacts of climate change in the Yukon include: researching our ecosystem changes; predicting the impacts of the mountain pine beetle, which is slowly coming from the south; mapping landscape hazards; flood-risk mapping; examining the impact of thawing permafrost on agriculture, our north Alaska highway — near and dear to my heart; and the Yukon water, of course. We can't forget water. It's important.

The Yukon government has co-led the creation of the Arctic adaptation exchange, an on-line information portal that enables the sharing of adaptation information across the Arctic. When I was briefed on this, I was very impressed with the department's hard work and this is something that globally will be sought after by many jurisdictions in many countries, I'm sure, as we move forward.

We also foster collaborative opportunities for effective partnerships, cooperation and sharing of responsibility, including partnerships in the pan-territorial adaptation partnership that I spoke about, adaptation and mitigation groups, and the adaptation national platform run by NRCan.

The Yukon government's *Climate Change Action Plan* demonstrates key initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas

emissions and responds to the changes in our climate that we're already seeing.

The Yukon supports work at the local, regional, national, and subnational levels and addresses climate change and simultaneously continues to ensure that economic opportunities are created for our residents through balanced sustainable development.

The Yukon government currently measures and verifies and reports on emissions from the Yukon government on the internal operations to help manage government greenhouse gas emissions. We also work closely with Environment Canada to improve reporting systems for calculating Yukon-wide greenhouse gas emissions. To enable this effort, we have conducted work to better understand the Yukon's broad emissions and where they come from and are able to communicate this information back to Environment Canada.

Yukon looks forward to continuing these collaborations between the jurisdictions. It is going to better able us to enhance our ability to capture our emissions data.

We also work hard to develop infrastructure that is both resilient to the changes in permafrost underlay and in reducing energy consumption through how much we have to spend on heating.

Government-funded new residential construction meets a made-in-Yukon standard for energy efficiency called SuperGreen homes. These super-insulated homes allow for greater energy efficiency and comfort during the long winter months. Over the last three years, the Yukon power system, which services most of the Yukon's population, was powered just about 100 percent by clean energy hydro.

We continue to work on ways to further develop our clean energy portfolio across the Yukon: the expansion of the hydroelectricity and transmission capacity at the Aishihik and Mayo plants; the linking of the existing electricity grid in order to increase the utilization of renewable electricity; implementation of the microgeneration policy, which was announced in 2013; and providing the opportunity for residential and commercial electricity customers to generate electricity through renewable energy sources and sell the surplus back — I spoke of that earlier. Earlier today, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources spoke a little bit about the independent power producers policy.

The Yukon government's *Climate Change Action Plan* does outline goals; it outlines changes and this is stuff that the Yukon government brings. Also, one thing that we are really proud of is the Yukon climate change youth ambassador to the United Nations international climate change negotiations event. This year it is going to be held in Paris. This program recognizes the importance of youth involvement in climate change issues. This innovative program enhances climate change knowledge and skills within Yukon youth.

That is a little bit of an update for you with the ongoing work that the department is doing and a lot of funds within our budget go toward this.

I want to talk a little bit about some of the other stuff in Fish and Wildlife. Right now, we are just winding up the bison hunting season so the bison management — we are

looking forward. I think we have just got the finals out on the status and activities. I don't want to go into that too much.

We also have the bison health monitoring project where we have the largest disease-free herd, I believe, in the world, or at least in North America. It is important that we monitor —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Ms. Stick: I would point to 19(b)(i). We are discussing the *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, and I would have thought it was this government's intention to pass it sooner rather than later. The member opposite does not seem to be addressing this particular bill.

Speaker: Government House Leader, on the point of order.

Mr. Elias: It has been historical practice in the Assembly that when we are talking about budget bills in second reading or in general debate, the speaker is allowed a great deal of latitude within the discussion as budgetary line items throughout a budget are quite broad.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: The problem with this point of order is that it is impossible to totally separate a single appropriation bill from the government's finances as a whole.

In second reading, there was a lot of —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

I'll choose the words; I don't need any help from the gallery. During second reading, any appropriation bill can always be cast broadly — and I mean that very broadly. That will change when you get into Committee of the Whole, when you are focusing on line-by-line reading. Although it is very difficult, or impossible, for the Speaker to know where the presenter is going and how they are going to tie it together, I have to say there is no point of order at this time.

Minister of Environment, please.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I just want to highlight a few more things and I won't take up too much more time.

I was talking about bison. I also want to talk a little bit about the ongoing work with our proposed wildlife regulation changes. I want to talk about this government's commitment and how committed we are to the renewable resource councils and the fishing management board. These are set out through the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and chapter 16 and it is key that we work with them, and we sure do appreciate them and their hard work. We really thank those volunteers — those people who put their name forward to sit on these boards to look at everything from wildlife change proposals to environmental issues. I think you do a great job.

Right now the department, through this budget, has been working on the chinook salmon run. We have the salmon subcommittee and some Alaska and Yukon reps here, so we have our people out there working. Work has been ongoing in

the department with the animal protection program transferred to Environment from Community Services.

We have heard the issue — and we have listened to the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes talking about recycling regulations. That is key in this department — working with that. We have a lot of remediation programs going out and ongoing. As always, they are busy with the Conrad campground and with the management of — being that the campgrounds are now parks — the territorial parks and all our other parks. I think they are working on implementation now of our extended season — the earlier opening of the campgrounds and recreational sites — and looking at the status of the habitat protection area that we have been doing.

I spoke a little bit about climate change and there is a lot that is involved in that and I do want to just pick up a little bit on our water strategy implementation that has been going on. We had a water forum earlier and we were analyzing and looking at the results from our water forum. I think we look forward to having an annual one, if not a bi-annual one, and getting all the municipalities, and First Nations and key stakeholders in water together to share results and talk about water.

I don't have much more to say on this. I just want to add a couple more points. I think it is important — one thing that makes a difference to literally thousands of people is the work to make possible the purchase of our angling or our annual campground permits.

I just want to pick up that I think that's a key thing. Yukoners love our campgrounds and they love fishing — whether they're getting a hunting licence and a fishing licence. I just want to commend the department for the hard work that they put forward on this budget and I look forward to getting into general debate.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It's a pleasure to rise today and speak to the second reading of Bill No. 17, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*. This is a part of our broader budget, which we had begun second reading on last week and completed last week.

The Department of Community Services has a number of appropriations in this bill and I look forward to discussing them with members, but let me provide a little bit of the context within which these appropriations are made and discuss some of the items that are held within this particular budget bill. As I said, this being the interim supply, it relates to our more broad main estimate bill that we discussed previously.

As I've noted previously, the Department of Community Services makes important investments in programs, services and activities that support healthy and sustainable communities. This budget and our previous budgets have prioritized investments for Yukoners and Yukon communities that will bring long-term benefits to the territory.

Ultimately the investments that I will highlight today support our government's approach to making Yukon a great place to live for Yukoners. The breadth of these programs,

services and support offered by Community Services is impressive. I would like to walk through, if I could, some of the various branches of the department that provide these great services.

In my second reading speech to the main estimates, I covered off a number of the branches but I didn't get to all of them and I wanted to ensure that each branch of Community Services is referenced specifically. I won't return again to Protective Services, although obviously that work done in the Protective Services branch is very important. It includes EMS, Wildland Fire Management, the Emergency Measures Organization, and the Fire Marshal's Office. I did cover off many of those last week so I don't want to speak too much about those.

Let me jump ahead to the building safety and standards branch. The building safety and standards branch is responsible for helping to keep Yukoners safe in their homes and the buildings they use for work, recreation and daily business. The branch accomplishes this through developing, interpreting, administering and enforcing building plumbing, electrical and mechanical standards in unincorporated communities, rural municipalities and rural areas of Yukon. In certain municipalities a lot of these functions are conducted by the municipality and so there is a lot of work that is done between and among the various orders of government.

Building safety and standards issues permits for and conducts inspections of building construction, plumbing, electrical, gas- and boiler-related work on buildings and facilities in rural municipalities, unincorporated communities and rural areas. This year, there is a significant amount of funding identified to support the branch operations of the building safety and standards branch.

With the Community Development Division of the Department of Community Services, the Community Affairs section exists. This budget bill reflects the significant investments that we at Community Services are making to support and build the capacity of local governments. The programs and services we offer help make Yukon communities great places to live, work, play and raise families.

Community Services supports the establishment and operation of effective local governments and works to foster effective working relationships between communities and the Yukon government. Communities rely on Community Affairs staff for their integrity and professionalism, which is evident in the successful partnership with the Association of Yukon Communities and work that has been accomplished with municipal governments and local advisory councils.

The government recognizes that municipalities make a major contribution to improving Yukoners' quality of life, and we are providing over \$25 million in the main estimates to directly support local governments in 2015-16. There is money as well in the budget item before us to this end. This includes, of course, money identified for the comprehensive municipal grants. We also provide significant funding for local advisory councils. We value their contribution to local governance.

Significant funds are also made through grants in lieu of taxes, also payable to Yukon's eight municipal governments. There is a significant appropriation in this budget identified as contribution to the operations of the Association of Yukon Communities.

Yukon's Community Services promotes good governance and sustainable and healthy communities, and we believe in supporting Yukon's municipalities.

The department's support for Sport and Recreation Yukon includes support for our athletes and ambassadors to major games and at local levels for building our sport and recreation facilities so our athletes and citizens have places to train, have great places to play, and ultimately live happier and healthier lives.

We have committed significant funding in this budget to repair and upgrade existing recreational facilities in our 12 unincorporated communities.

In 2014, I should note, the then Minister of Community Services announced support for the development of a new outdoor sports complex in Whitehorse. This facility is envisioned to include two artificial turf fields, an eight-lane rubberized track and bleachers. Community Services has formalized an agreement with the Yukon Outdoor Sports Complex Association so that we can move forward together on the work required to develop this important piece of sport and recreation infrastructure. We have awarded the design contract and are working with the City of Whitehorse on finalizing the location and working with the City of Whitehorse to achieve the necessary zoning requirements. This facility will provide opportunities for enhanced training and development for Yukon athletes. It will offer a new space for the territory's recreational community to host events during the summer months. Facilities like this provide sport development as well as social development and economic benefits to the community as a whole.

Yukon government will also invest considerably in the coming year to support the Yukon's participation in the 2016 Arctic Winter Games in Nuuk, Greenland. As we recently announced, we'll be providing \$100,000 to support the Arctic X Games, an alternate event that will be hosted in Yukon to provide a competitive opportunity for participants in sports that will not be reflected at the Arctic Winter Games in 2016. Yukon's leadership on the Arctic X Games has not gone unnoticed by our partner jurisdictions across the Arctic or by the athletes who will be able to compete at the highest level in both Greenland and Whitehorse in 2016.

I should note that the work to organize that event is well underway, with sport governing bodies meeting on a fairly frequent basis to ensure that their individual sport that will be hosted in the Arctic X Games are ready to go for the event next year. Obviously, we're hopeful that this event will be a resounding success, not only for Yukon athletes, but for Yukon volunteers, coaches, parents and others who participate in these types of activities.

This budget also includes a significant investment to support the 2015 Western Canada Summer Games, where I'm

confident that, again, our Yukon athletes will be ambassadors for our territory and for their sports.

During my response to the budget a few weeks ago, I had the chance to highlight some of those wonderful examples of Yukon athletes succeeding and representing Yukon in a number of national and international forums, and I would like to commend all athletes who do so.

We also recently announced a \$400,000 increase in the community recreation assistance grant funding for unincorporated Yukon communities. This funding increase begins in this 2015-16 year and helps our communities fund recreation, wellness and active living opportunities.

As I'm sure all members can appreciate, our investments in sport and recreation this year contribute significantly to making Yukon a great place to live and play.

I also wanted to talk a little bit about a branch of the Department of Community Services that doesn't often get perhaps as much attention as it deserves, but it is nonetheless a very important branch and one that often represent the heart of a neighbourhood or a community — especially in rural communities. That is the Yukon Public Libraries branch of Community Services. There are significant investments that are made in this budget to provide public library services in Yukon communities. These include funding to operate the Whitehorse Public Library here in Whitehorse on the waterfront and to support staff in our community libraries.

Circulation of physical materials remains at the heart of libraries and their use continues to expand. In Whitehorse, we estimate that over 150,000 items were borrowed in 2014-15 and that in the communities over 34,000 items were borrowed. Loans of physical materials are now complemented by the use of electronic resources such as the e-library, which continues to rise in popularity. An estimated 5,000-plus publications were borrowed electronically in 2014-15. The e-library is very successful, with some 2,000 e-books and audio books available for downloading. New titles in both English and in French are added to the collection each year. Since its launch in 2011, over 1,100 individual users have borrowed items from the collection more than 15,000 times.

Libraries play an important social role in our communities, as I mentioned earlier, and foster connections between people. Programs for all ages, public meeting rooms and Internet access are just some of the services offered by libraries. Our libraries provide a safe, welcoming and comfortable environment to relax, study, read or play. They are also a key pillar in making Yukon a great place to live.

There is a significant amount of funding noted in this budget bill for operation and maintenance funding allocated for our communities operations branch to manage public drinking water facilities, solid waste, waste-water disposal and other services that benefit unincorporated Yukon communities. This includes our recently announced increase to support recycling diversion credits, along with a significant increase to support solid-waste management.

I should note that my understanding is that, as a result of the enhanced diversion credits we provided, Raven Recycling will be reopening its public drop-off as a result of their

board's decision earlier this week. I had a conversation with the board's president yesterday and I understand from CBC's Twitter that was an announcement that was made earlier today as well. If Twitter has misled me, I apologize, but that's my understanding as of a few hours ago.

Also, Thursday's *Whitehorse Star* indicates that Raven is to restore full services as well. I thank the former Minister of Community Services, the current Minister of Justice, for sharing that copy of the newspaper with me.

Our O&M investment and operations also includes an increase to support community groundwater monitoring. In 2015-16, Yukon government is committed significant funds toward a new water delivery truck in Ross River, an important resource that serves the community.

Infrastructure development continues to be a priority of the department in 2015-16. Our department delivers infrastructure projects through our Infrastructure Development branch, along with our Community Affairs and community operations branches. One can find highlights of significant amounts in gas tax funded projects in this budget, including funding for the construction of a new lagoon for the community of Ross River, support for the Ross River solid-waste facility and upgrades to the Burwash sewage lagoon.

A new gas tax administrative agreement was signed on July 24, 2014, which provides up to \$163 million in funding from 2014 to 2024 for public infrastructure projects in Yukon communities. Eligible categories have been expanded and remaining money from the previous fund has been rolled into the new agreement. To date, over \$73 million in funding has been approved for 185 gas tax projects in various municipalities and First Nation initiatives through the gas tax fund. These initiatives are critical to our communities.

This budget includes comprehensive support for Building Canada projects across the territory. Some of the projects continue work that has been started in previous years and all the projects make a difference to our communities. Since 2007, federal, territorial and municipal governments have committed over \$265 million to core infrastructure needs in Yukon under the original Building Canada fund. The new Building Canada fund will provide approximately \$342 million to support Yukon infrastructure over the next 10 years.

We expect to see over \$29 million invested in Building Canada projects in 2015-16 in the Yukon. This funding, along with the gas tax, helps us to address our ongoing infrastructure needs, create jobs and improve the quality of life for all Yukoners. We are currently developing a new Yukon infrastructure plan and are engaging with key stakeholders across the territory. The staff from this branch have been in a number of Yukon communities already, with the remaining communities yet to have meetings scheduled. We have received significant input from municipalities, LACs, First Nations and a number of other stakeholders throughout the territory to develop the next set of plans for infrastructure for the territory.

Specific Building Canada fund highlights that will come in the coming year include: funding to support upgrades to the Carmacks waste-water plant; upgrades to the Dawson water

system, which includes funding for their force main — something that was identified as a priority by their mayor — Mayo water, sewer and road upgrades that will accommodate existing and future urban lot development; and water well upgrades in Mayo that will include a new well, water treatment and distribution of local drinking water.

Roads will be upgraded in both Pelly Crossing and Teslin. There is funding to support the replacement of three lift stations in Teslin as a part of upgrades to their water system. The Tagish Taku subdivision supply pumphouse and fill point will be constructed with funding support in this budget. There will be significant funding to support the construction of a new water treatment plant and pumphouse in Watson Lake — I believe the bids for that project have closed, although I am not sure if it has been awarded yet. There is significant funding to go to support the design and construction of a water treatment plant to serve the communities of Deep Creek, Horse Creek and Grizzly Creek. There is support for upgrades to the community water supply in Mendenhall, including well upgrades, storage tanks, filter and treatment systems and an addition to the facility to house new equipment.

There is significant money identified to support our efforts in building on our solid-waste action strategy to make infrastructure improvements to our territory-wide solid-waste management system. This will include upgrades to make our facilities more efficient.

In the coming year, Yukon will also invest significantly in flood- and erosion-control projects throughout the territory, including projects in Carcross, Mayo, and Liard River.

I realize my time is elapsing rapidly so I will conclude, but I did want to note that there are significant projects underway throughout the territory on community infrastructure. Just a few of those active projects that are underway currently: in Burwash there is a wellhead protection project underway; in Carmacks we are undertaking Carmacks waste-water collection systems improvements; upgrading roads and resurfacing and improving waste-water upgrades.

In the period of 2008 to 2016, the period that is of the previous Building Canada fund — I should note that it's often indicated by some members that Whitehorse is perhaps getting all of the attention and that communities are being ignored. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, between 2008 and 2016, communities other than Whitehorse received by far the bulk of the Building Canada funding in that previous Building Canada fund.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion for second reading of Bill No. 17 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 17, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

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. 17: *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 17, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I am pleased to be able to provide the Committee of the Whole with some introductory comments on Bill No. 17, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

I thought I would just briefly begin by responding to comments made by the Leader of the Liberal Party in his second reading debate regarding the former Deputy Minister of Finance. I thought what I would do for the record is just

clarify the message of congratulations I provided to Stephen LeClair soon after his departure. I said: "I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations to Stephen LeClair on his appointment to an important new position. Until recently, Stephen served as Yukon's Deputy Minister of Finance. He has left the territory to take up responsibilities as Ontario's first Financial Accountability Officer.

"Though I'm disappointed to see a person of his calibre leave the Yukon government, I wish Stephen all the best in Ontario and thank him for his service here.

"Stephen's new position makes him the first provincial parliamentary budget officer in Canada. As Financial Accountability Officer, he is responsible for providing independent analysis to the legislative assembly on the state of the province's finances.

"He was appointed Yukon's deputy minister of Finance in August 2014. Prior to that, he served as assistant deputy minister of the Economics and Fiscal Policy division with the Alberta Treasury Board and Finance ministry. He also served in a number of senior roles with the N.W.T. and federal governments.

"Stephen provided this message as he was leaving for his new position in Ontario:

"My short time in the territory has been wonderful and working for the Government of Yukon was all that I expected. I was privileged to work with people who take pride in the work they do. Their dedication made me proud to be a part of Yukon government. My early departure from my position came only because I was offered a unique opportunity."

Madam Chair, obviously the conjecture that was provided by the Liberal leader is nothing more than really grasping at straws. I took it more as really elementary schoolyard gossip and it was absolutely wrong.

This appropriation act will allow the public service to continue to make certain expenditures while the main estimates for 2015-16 are considered by the Legislative Assembly during this Sitting.

The interim funding requested is for the period of April 1, 2015 until June 4, 2015. The total amount for which approval is sought is \$353,979,000 and is made up of capital expenditure appropriations totalling \$96,621,000 and operation and maintenance expenditures appropriations totalling \$257,358,000.

The amounts required for this period have been derived by canvassing Yukon government departments to determine their expenditure requirements. The amounts are significant, largely owing to the fact that a large portion of commitments and expenditures are made during this period.

I look forward to debating this interim supply appropriation bill in this Legislature and for its quick passage so that the operations of Yukon government can continue.

Ms. Moorcroft: As the recorded vote at second reading on Bill No. 17, *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16* is put on the public record, the NDP Official Opposition supports the interim supply bill allowing for operation and maintenance and capital funds to be released for government operations during the period from April 1 to June 4, 2015.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate?

We are going to move on to clause-by-clause debate.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Clause 2 agreed to

On Schedule A

Schedule A agreed to

On Schedule B

Schedule B agreed to

On Schedule C

Schedule C agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Madam Chair, I move that Bill No. 17, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Pasloski that Bill No. 17, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be reported without amendment.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 17, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, 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. 84: *An Act to Amend the Public Lotteries Act and Related Enactments — Second Reading*

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 84, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Dixon.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I move that Bill No. 84, entitled *An Act to Amend the Public Lotteries Act and Related Enactments*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 84, entitled *An Act to*

Amend the Public Lotteries Act and Related Enactments, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It's a pleasure to rise today at second reading of Bill No. 84, amendments to the *Public Lotteries Act* and related enactments.

The purpose of this bill is to ensure that regulation of gaming in Yukon is in full statutory compliance with the *Criminal Code* of Canada. The *Public Lotteries Act* currently authorizes the Government of Yukon to conduct and manage interjurisdictional lotteries, such as Lotto 649. Other lottery activities and the Yukon's only gambling hall, Diamond Tooth Gerties, are currently regulated by the *Lottery Licensing Act*.

As you and members may recall, our government recently assisted Diamond Tooth Gerties with the purchase of new slot machines. There was announcement made in July of 2014 that we would be doing so. On July 15, 2014, the announcement was made that Yukon government was providing a one-time \$1.1 million contribution to the Klondike Visitors Association in Dawson City to replace aging slot machines at Diamond Tooth Gerties gambling hall.

As the minister of the day said, "Through this investment we are helping ensure that Diamond Tooth Gerties continues to be a key tourism asset for Dawson City, as well as a significant source of revenue supporting tourism promotion by the Klondike Visitors Association" and that "Revenue from slot machines at Diamond Tooth Gerties is also a major source of funding for the crime prevention and victim services trust fund." That was the then minister responsible and now Minister of Justice.

As was noted on July 15 of last year under Yukon's *Lottery Licensing Act*, which limits licensed gambling to charitable organizations, the Yukon government receives 25 percent of the KVA's slot machine revenue, which it directs to the crime prevention and victim services trust fund. This fund provides support to Yukon community groups for projects aimed at preventing crime and supporting victims, which I'll explain more about soon.

Associated with that assistance was a review of the legislative framework under which Diamond Tooth Gerties operates. In that process, it has come to our attention that legislative changes are required and that Diamond Tooth Gerties cannot continue to be licensed through the *Lottery Licensing Act*, Yukon's charitable gaming legislation.

Under the proposed amendments contained in this bill, Diamond Tooth Gerties' gaming operations, including slot machines, will be conducted by the Klondike Visitors Association as an agent of the Yukon government, but Diamond Tooth Gerties' day-to-day operations will continue just as they do at present. By moving legislative oversight of Gerties from the *Lottery Licensing Act* to the *Public Lotteries Act*, as this bill does, we will ensure that their gaming operations are fully compliant with the *Criminal Code*.

I would be remiss if I didn't take the opportunity to recognize the excellent work done by the Klondike Visitors Association, or KVA. This not-for-profit destination-

marketing organization promotes tourism to Dawson City and contributes to economic growth in the community and the territory. In addition to its first-class operation of Diamond Tooth Gerties, the Klondike Visitors Association also operates other important historic venues in Dawson City, including the Jack London Museum and Free Claim #6. It also hosts annual iconic events such as Thaw di Gras spring carnival, the Yukon Gold Panning Championships and the Yukon international outhouse race, which attracts thousands of visitors each year to the area and creates hundreds of jobs.

The KVA's mandate includes: destination marketing, operation of attractions, and presentation of special events that increase visitation and add to the quality of life in the community of Dawson City. The Klondike Visitors Association's owned-and-operated attractions include those I listed, as well as a few others. A few examples of the events that they host are the ones I just mentioned.

Bill No. 84, the one before us today, supports this government's priority of promoting diversification in other sectors of Yukon's economy, including tourism. For clarity, these changes affect only the structural legislative framework for the existing casino managed by the KVA. The functional operation of Gerties will remain unchanged.

I also wanted to mention that both the KVA and the Yukon Lottery Commission have been fully briefed on this bill and understand the need to make this regulatory change.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that the Yukon government's share of the net proceeds from the slot machines will continue to flow into the crime prevention and victim services trust fund, which has been supporting Yukon community groups since 1998. The crime prevention and victim services trust fund awards funding twice each year for eligible projects that are intended to reduce crime, prevent violence against women and children, address the root causes of crime, provide services and information to victims of crime, and provide information about crime prevention and victimization.

Most recently, in January 2015, the crime prevention and victim services trust fund awarded funding to the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations for their winter communications and outdoor skills training program and to the Carcross-Tagish First Nation for their building skills for life project. The crime prevention and victim services trust fund also provided support to the Town of Faro for its dinner nights and training, to the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society of Yukon, FASSY, for their community lunch program, and to the Ynklude Arts Society for its heart will speak program. The crime prevention and victim services trust fund is coordinated by a board of trustees. The board members include community members and representatives from the Yukon government, First Nations, women's organizations and the RCMP.

I would like to thank the various department officials from Community Services for their work in preparing this new legislation, which will ensure success of Community Services' vision of a vibrant, healthy and sustainable Yukon community.

That concludes my second reading comments for this particular bill. As I indicated previously, I believe it is relatively straightforward and will ensure that we bring ourselves into line with the *Criminal Code* of Canada, which of course is important, but also will do so in a manner that doesn't disrupt the operations of the Gerties gambling hall in Dawson City, which is managed by the KVA and which will continue to be managed on a day-to-day basis in a very similar fashion as it is today.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to thank the Community Services and the Justice officials who worked on this bill and who provided a briefing on the bill to the opposition.

The *Public Lotteries Act* amendment is designed to resolve the discovery of a conflict with the Canadian *Criminal Code* regarding the Klondike Visitors Association's ongoing operation of Diamond Tooth Gerties casino in Dawson City. It's good that this conflict was caught by a review of the legislative framework for gaming and that it is now being resolved.

The Yukon NDP is a steadfast supporter of Yukon institutions, like Gerties, that contribute to Dawson City's status as a key tourism attraction. These process amendments are necessary to allow the Klondike Visitors Association to continue operating under its current gambling licence.

The Yukon NDP will support this bill. I do have some questions for the minister that I'll put on the record now so that he can respond either in his closing remarks or in Committee of the Whole.

The minister referred to the fact that the Klondike Visitors Association had been briefed on the bill. I would like to know whether the Yukon government consulted with the Klondike Visitors Association in drafting the amendments, and what was the outcome of that consultation if it did occur.

Do the amendments change the relationship between the Yukon government and the Klondike Visitors Association? Does it create any additional burdens?

The question of casinos in the Yukon is, as I'm sure everyone knows, a controversial issue, so I would like the minister to make it clear and to put it on the record: Do the amendments open the door to the issuing of permits for more casinos besides Diamond Tooth Gerties?

Finally, I was pleased to hear the minister speaking about the revenues that flow to the crime prevention and victim services trust fund, which was enacted in 1998 when I served as Minister of Justice. I would like the minister to tell us what the Yukon government's share of net proceeds that flow into the crime prevention and victim services trust fund has been for the last couple of years.

Mr. Silver: I'm happy to stand to speak on Bill No. 84, the amendments to the *Public Lotteries Act* and related enactments — legislation. I would like to begin by thanking the Minister of Community Services for coming to speak to me personally on this piece of legislation, seeing as Diamond Tooth Gerties is in my constituency of Klondike. I would like

to also thank the officials from his department for the briefing on the bill itself.

Of course, as mentioned, the primary focus of the bill is to fix a legislative oversight that may have caused the closure of a beloved Dawson and Yukon institution — Canada's first casino, Diamond Tooth Gerties Gambling Hall.

I appreciate the haste with which the department officials were able to make the changes to the legislation and, of course, I will be in support of this bill. I think it's necessary to say as well how important the KVA is for tourism, not just in Dawson but in all of the Yukon. I would like to thank the staff at the KVA for not only just running the gambling hall itself, but also other events on a yearly basis around our community.

With that being said too, I'd just like to give a personal shout-out to the quality of entertainment at Diamond Tooth Gerties. Terri Terrai and her troupe need to be commended for the level of professionalism for Diamond Tooth Gerties and the singing and dancing. This is a professional troupe of musicians and artisans. Amy Salloway, as Diamond Tooth Gertie, is absolutely fantastic, not only as a performer but as an individual. Stephan Gallant, who does the musical production as well, is a comparable musician — world-class.

It's interesting that, when they leave Dawson, they're international. They go all over the world playing music. I know that every year they quite enjoy coming back to the Klondike, and it is quite a procession. The amount of work that goes into providing a show at Diamond Tooth Gerties is unbelievable. The dancers and Terri will show up and start working pretty soon here — probably within a week or so — and the amount of attention given to the show is unbelievable.

You can imagine how much it would take just to do the three shows per night, but as the season comes to an end, it is so important for them to be part of the community and to give back to the community. They personalize the very last show of the year, and in that personalization they involve members of the community. They come together and they have gags and the whole night is unbelievable. I don't think there is a person in town who doesn't show up to the final night at Gerties. If you can imagine how much work it takes to put together a show for the season, for the tourists and for the tourism industry, it is just as much work to then change all of those individual acts and add gags to them and special guests. It is just an amazing opportunity for folks in the community, including me — I am a regular special guest in the final show — and it is a wonderful treat to be able to work with such professionals.

On that note, Amy Salloway is our Gertie, but we also have a male performer, Jesse Cooke. He is what we call our "Mertie", our male Gertie. He is not the professional regular weekly male lead, but he does fill in on those off-days. The reason why I am bringing it up is that this is the opportunity for local musicians and artists to learn their own craft and to develop their craft and be able to share the stage with some of the best entertainers that Canada has to offer, and to learn and to grow their own talents as well. I didn't want to spend too much time talking about that, but I thought it was worth mentioning how important it is to have the KVA, how

important Diamond Tooth Gerties is to our community. I would like to end by thanking the minister for his quick work on changes to this legislation, and I will be supporting the bill.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would like to thank the Minister of Community Services for tabling this legislation. I would also like to acknowledge and thank staff of Community Services in the policy area for their work on this. As other members have acknowledged, this legislation was developed fairly quickly in response to an issue that was identified. I would also like to thank the staff of the Department of Justice that was involved in that work as well. This is an issue of — as the minister noted — addressing a non-compliance issue that goes back a few decades in terms of when it first started. Once the issue was identified, it was determined by government that we should move forward and address it in a timely manner because of the importance of being in compliance with the specific wording in the *Criminal Code*.

It was identified, as the Minister of Community Services noted, as a result of the investment that the Yukon government made last year in support of the Klondike Visitors Association. It was just shy of a year ago when I was up on Dawson for the Association of Yukon Communities conference that staff and members of the Board of Klondike Visitors Association, which runs Diamond Tooth Gerties, provided a tour to me and to department staff of the facility. They showed us and explained in great detail the issues with their aging slot machines and showed us with each machine.

They described the age of them and explained their challenges in getting parts for machines that in some cases were well past the point where they could receive parts for it from the manufacturer, not to mention that they were using very outdated technology because, as we noted in making the announcement — I thank the Member for Copperbelt South for acknowledging on behalf of the Official Opposition that funding from slot machine revenue is a very important source of funding for the crime prevention and victim services trust fund. Twenty-five percent of the KVA slot machine revenue is directed to the crime prevention and victim services trust fund and that fund provides support to Yukon community groups for projects aimed at preventing crime and supporting victims.

Through that one-time \$1.1-million contribution to the Klondike Visitors Association to replace the slot machines, it should be noted that that the annual amounts that come from that revenue are put into the crime prevention and victim services trust fund tend to be around \$250,000 per year, so this will, though not directly, go into Yukon government. The money that is then being invested into crime prevention and victim services will be certainly supported and enhanced through this investment in the slot machines and ensuring that Diamond Tooth Gerties gambling hall continues to provide quality entertainment to Yukoners and tourists alike and to remain one of the iconic tourism sites in Dawson City.

For more than 40 years, revenue from Gerties has gone toward preserving historic sites, producing local events and marketing the Klondike to the world and the new slot machines were intended to provide an enjoyable visitor

experience and of course to continue to ensure that remains a strong source of revenue, not only for the crime prevention and victim services trust fund, but in support of the other excellent work that Klondike Visitors Association does in marketing Dawson City as a destination and being a very important part of the fabric of that community.

With that, I will be supporting the legislation. I will thank the members opposite for their supportive comments toward the bill. I thank the Minister of Community Services for his work on this and again acknowledge and thank the staff of Community Services and Justice who were involved both in the preparation of the investment agreement to replace those slot machines and those who were involved in the development of this particular piece of legislation.

I would also like to finally note and thank and congratulate the Klondike Visitors Association board members and their staff for the good work that they do in running not only Diamond Tooth Gerties but the other activities operated by KVA, which include the Jack London Museum and Claim #6 during the summer season, as well as supporting annual events including the Yukon Gold Panning Championships, the Thaw di Gras spring carnival and the Great Klondike International Outhouse Race — all of which are an important part of attracting thousands of visitors each year to the Dawson City area.

With that I commend the legislation to the House.

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

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I would like to thank members for their comments so far with regard to this bill at second reading. I would like thank the Member for Copperbelt South for her comments with regard to the bill and for her questions. I would also like to thank the Member for Klondike for his comments on the bill and his reflections on the value of the Diamond Tooth Gerties facility to the community of Dawson. I too enjoy very much the entertainment that is provided at Diamond Tooth Gerties as well as the experience that it provides not only to tourists and visitors, but Yukoners like me who make the trip to Dawson a few times a year to take in the bright lights and entertainment of the Klondike.

I have to admit that I wasn't able to scribble down the questions that were asked in their entirety with regard to this bill, so I will have to defer some of those questions to Committee of the Whole. That will certainly allow us to have a more informal discussion, as Committee does, about those questions.

I did want to note that the two major groups that were consulted in the development in this bill were the Yukon Lottery Commission and the Klondike Visitors Association. In reference to the first, the commission's role in public lotteries is established through the Yukon *Public Lotteries Act* and regulations. As a gaming activity, the sale of lottery tickets is also subject to the *Criminal Code* of Canada that permits gaming under certain circumstances. The law assigns to the Yukon Lottery Commission the responsibility for conducting

and managing public lotteries in Yukon. The commission conducts and manages public lotteries through an agreement with Western Canada Lottery Corporation.

In addition to its responsibilities for public lotteries, the commission also allocates the profits from the sale of lottery tickets. Profits support the operations of the commission's secretariat, Lotteries Yukon, with the remaining profits shared with the Yukon government and distributed by the commission to numerous non-profits, local authorities and municipalities for art, sport and recreation in Yukon.

Whether it is a local music festival, a soccer team travelling outside the territory to a tournament or upgrades to trails for a community association, profits from the sale of lottery tickets have likely touched each of our communities in some way. I know that the commission is proud of those contributions that support, sustain and grow art, sport and recreation in Yukon communities.

The Yukon Lottery Commission obviously played a role in this and was consulted. We can get into the details of what was said and what the various thoughts are about the bill in Committee, but I will say that the input provided was valuable. The Klondike Visitors Association was also consulted and provided fairly simple input in response, but which I would be happy to describe at greater length in Committee.

There was a question about the amount of funding that has gone through the crime prevention and victim services trust fund. I think the minister indicated some of that answer, but we can provide further information in Committee. I should note that the fund provides support to eligible projects that include those that promote and provide services intended to reduce crime, prevent violence against women and children, address the root causes of crime, provide information about crime prevention and victimization or provide services and information to support victims. Non-profit organizations, municipal governments, First Nation governments and schools, councils or school boards are all eligible for funding under that fund. The fund can be used for wages, honorariums, rental costs, utilities, printing, advertising and program supplies, equipment and materials. Some of those items have some funding limits or restrictions.

The board of trustees reviews proposals twice a year in the spring and in the fall. The approval process is that proposals are reviewed by the Crime Prevention and Victim Services Trust Board of Trustees. Board members include community members and representatives from the Government of Yukon, First Nation groups, women's organizations and the RCMP. Approval of funding can take up to six weeks. The crime prevention coordinator can inform applicants of the status of their proposal upon request.

Last year, there were a number of successful groups that received funding. I listed some of them in my second reading response and I won't list too many more. They are available on-line if members are interested in them. The overall numbers in terms of the financial value of the contributions can be discussed later in Committee.

So I think I've at least touched on some of the questions and comments that have been raised by members, but will reserve the more detailed discussion for Committee in the near future and would, at this time, again thank members for their comments. This particular bill obviously isn't one that factored into our legislative agenda at any time. It was one where, from time to time, government is faced with these types of events or circumstances and have to respond quickly and nimbly. I would commend the public service, the members of the Community Services branch, as well as the Justice department, which have provided significant input to this bill. They were able to draft it, bring it together and have it ready for me to present to the Legislature in a very short period of time and they deserve to be commended for that rapid response and good and hard work.

So Mr. Speaker, with that, I would commend this bill to the House at second reading.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

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

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 84 agreed to

Mr. Elias: 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.

Is it the wish of members to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill No. 84, An Act to Amend the Public Lotteries Act and Related Enactments

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 84, entitled *An Act to Amend the Public Lotteries Act and Related Enactments*.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you very much Madam Chair. It is a pleasure to rise today at Committee of the Whole to discuss Bill No. 84, amendments to the *Public Lotteries Act*. I am joined today by Charlene Beauchemin from the Department of Community Services, who has become no stranger to this House, and Karen Wenckebach, a solicitor with the Department of Justice.

Madam Chair, I am pleased to rise to speak to this bill. It's being introduced in order to bring the regulation of gaming in Yukon into full statutory compliance with the *Criminal Code* of Canada. This bill will amend the *Public Lotteries Act* so that the regulation of Yukon's only gambling hall, Diamond Tooth Gerties in Dawson City, is placed under that act rather than the *Lottery Licensing Act*.

As you will recall, the government has been advised that Diamond Tooth Gerties cannot continue to be licensed through the *Lottery Licensing Act* because that act covers only charitable gaming operations and cannot be the tool to regulate slot machines. The government therefore is acting promptly to address this situation in ensuring that Diamond Tooth Gerties is regulated under the appropriate legislation.

Under the proposed amendments contained in this bill, Diamond Tooth Gerties gaming operations, including slot machines, will be conducted by the Klondike Visitors Association — the KVA — as an agent of Yukon government. However, these amendments will not affect Diamond Tooth Gerties day-to-day operations. The KVA will continue to conduct and manage Diamond Tooth Gerties' operations as it currently does and the public will not perceive any change.

Again, the sole purpose of these amendments is to address a regulatory anomaly around the legislative framework that governs the operations of a non-charitable casino venue.

As I noted earlier, the Klondike Visitors Association and the Yukon Lottery Commission have been fully briefed on this bill and understand the need to make this regulatory change.

The government recognizes the excellent work done by the KVA in Dawson City in promoting tourism in the Klondike Valley and Yukon overall and contributing to economic growth in Yukon. Under these proposed amendments, the government's share of the net proceeds from the slot machines will continue to flow into the crime prevention and victim services trust fund, which has been supporting Yukon community groups since 1998.

The crime prevention and victim services trust fund awards funding twice each year for eligible projects that are intended to reduce crime, prevent violence against women and children, address the root causes of crime, provide services and information to victims of crime, and provide information about crime prevention and victimization.

I look forward to getting into debate about the bill here in Committee and reviewing the questions that were put forward by the Member for Copperbelt South earlier, and I look forward to answering them in turn and providing the information, as necessary, for members of the House.

Ms. Moorcroft: I believe the minister's remarks have answered the first two questions that I put on the record at second reading, but I'll just ask him to confirm that the amendments don't create any additional burdens for the Klondike Visitors Association in the nature of its relationship with the Yukon government.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that it will not impose any additional burden on the Klondike Visitors Association. The best way to understand it is that we're simply picking up the current system and moving it under a different act. There's no change from the perception of the KVA; it's simply how we regulate them on the government side, under which act and the legislative framework under which they're regulated.

I should note that I know the member commented that I answered partly her questions raised in second reading about the bill. One of them was whether or not the KVA was consulted on the draft amendments. I wanted to note that we did review the draft bill with the KVA's executive director, Gary Parker, and there were no concerns raised from his perspective. This was simply a housekeeping initiative. Obviously, from the perspective of the individuals who have to do the work on that, it's a little bit more than simply that but, from the perspective of the KVA, there will be no change.

The bill also does not affect the relationship between Yukon government and the KVA or the Yukon Lottery Commission. The role of the Yukon Lottery Commission for interjurisdictional lotteries remains unchanged. KVA's operation will also remain unchanged. Its regulation is simply being moved under the proper legislative tool.

I think that covers off the questions asked by the member.

Ms. Moorcroft: The other issue I had raised at second reading was the question of casinos, which is known to be a controversial one in Yukon.

I want to ask the minister to make it clear and put it on the record: Do the amendments open the door to the issuing of permits for more casinos besides Diamond Tooth Gerties? I understand the matter was discussed at the briefing provided

to opposition members, but I just wanted to ask the minister to clarify that on the public record.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The simple answer is no. The legislation before us does not in any way increase opportunities for gaming or change the type of gaming that will occur or can occur in Yukon. The legislative changes will address only the existing casino managed by the KVA.

I would acknowledge that gambling and the ongoing activities of gambling halls, like Diamond Tooth Gerties, can sometimes be controversial and, from time to time, government is provided with input from various stakeholders in the community that they'd like to either see less or more activity in the territory.

We acknowledge that those discussions are always ongoing at the community level — that folks are always expressing their opinions about whether they would like to see additional gambling opportunities, perhaps in Whitehorse, or fewer or less opportunities throughout the territory. This bill doesn't deal with that ongoing discussion. This is simply a matter of us addressing a current issue based on a current suite of gambling that takes place at the Gerties gambling hall in Dawson City.

It's a localized situation. It's a targeted amendment to a targeted set of legislation to address those needs. Obviously, government will have to, in the future, consider whether changes are merited to additional legislation to provide for either additional or less gambling opportunities for Yukoners, but that's not a decision that has been made by the government and that's not reflected in this bill at all. It's simply a matter of dealing with Diamond Tooth Gerties and the Klondike Visitors Association.

As I indicated, Madam Chair, the way we're doing that is by making them an agent of government, which is a relatively simple change in terms of the amendments. The imperative here is that it brings us into compliance with the *Criminal Code* of Canada, which, as we learned, had not been the case for the past several decades. So it's simply a correction of the legislative oversight of this particular casino.

Ms. Moorcroft: I thank the minister for that. Finally, on the crime prevention and victim services trust fund, I'm certainly aware that the trust fund publishes its annual audited statements and that they're tabled in this Legislative Assembly. The minister indicated that all of the government's share from the Klondike Visitors Association's operation of Diamond Tooth Gerties is directly given to the crime prevention and victim services trust fund, and so I just wanted to confirm that there's no cap on the revenues that can go to the crime prevention and victim services trust fund.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member is correct — there is no cap. The bill speaks to a percentage of the amount.

I did want to note that it's not all of Gerties' revenue. It's only the revenue from the slot machines. Other table games — the roulette wheel, the poker and other card games that are played in Gerties, blackjack, et cetera — are not subject to that framework. It is just the slot machines that provide the funding to the crime prevention and victim services trust fund.

Over the past several years, as a result of Yukon government's portion of slot machine revenues in 2014, that amount was \$269,222.42; in 2013 it was \$277,841.80; in 2012 it was \$284,582.95; and in 2011 it was \$291,101.76. As the member correctly pointed out, those figures are available on an annual basis from the fund that publishes a report, which is tabled in the Legislature.

As well as the overall amounts, the individual projects that are funded are listed in that report and they provide a helpful summary of what the projects are intended to do. The projects tend to range anywhere from a few thousand to tens of thousands of dollars, but they depend on the type of project that is being applied for and they are based on an eligibility list that I have read in the House a few times, so I won't read it again.

Ms. Moorcroft: I want to thank the minister for his response and I have no further questions in general debate.

Clerk: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate?

We are going to move then to clause-by-clause debate.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I wanted to note that under section 2, the term "government gaming establishment" is used in a new section 17.01 and 17.03. The intent is that the definition will help to define YG's relationship with the KVA and will distinguish it from interjurisdictional lotteries, as per the Yukon Lotteries Commission. The existing term "public lottery" is replaced with the more descriptive "interjurisdictional lottery". The meaning of "interjurisdictional lottery" is the same as the existing public lottery and includes Lotto 649; however, this new definition will distinguish this type of lottery scheme from that of a gaming establishment.

The Klondike Visitors Association is given a special role in relation to the government gaming establishment. This definition ensures that the new provisions of the act will continue to operate as intended if the KVA changes its name or is succeeded by a different organization.

The term "licensed agent" is used in new section 17.01 to 17.03, amended section 18 and the consequential amendment to the *Crime Prevention and Victim Services Trust Act*. A licensed agent is the agent identified to the scheme on behalf of Yukon government and to "operate a lottery" will specifically mean the Klondike Visitors Association. A lottery scheme is already used in the act. This definition clarifies that its meaning is the one used in the relevant *Criminal Code* provision. Under 207.1(a) of the *Criminal Code*, only governments or agents of governments can operate slot machines and this must be done in accordance with legislation enacted in Yukon.

Under no circumstances can slot machines be operated under a charitable gaming legislative framework, which cuts to the core of why the bill was necessary. We had previously been permitting or licensing the activity of slot machines under charitable gaming, which obviously was contrary to the

Criminal Code. These definitions go a certain way toward providing the clarity necessary to put us into compliance with the *Criminal Code*.

I should also note that I realize that there are further changes that others would like to see made in the future with regard to some of the definitions — in particular, the Yukon Lottery Commission made some submissions around this. I just wanted to note that while we appreciated that input, we really wanted to focus on the issue at hand, and that was bringing the regulation of Gerties and the KVA into compliance with the *Criminal Code*. That is what this addresses here.

Clause 2 agreed to

On Clause 3

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Just briefly, throughout the act “interjurisdictional lottery” replaces “public lotteries”; existing section 11 uses the term “public lottery schemes” instead. That too is replaced. This change does not impact the existing law. It simply describes these sections that apply to a special type of interjurisdictional lottery that falls under the responsibility of the Yukon Lottery Commission, which includes Lotto 649 and scratch-and-win types of tickets.

Clause 3 agreed to

On Clause 4

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This section outlines what a government gaming establishment can do. The *Criminal Code* states that only a provincial/territorial government or its agent may operate certain lottery schemes and only under the authority of an act of that province or territory. This new section 17.01 provides the legislative authority required and allows the Yukon government to carry on a government gaming operation defined as the “conduct and management ... of lottery schemes in a particular place.” That place must be Dawson City and the government gaming operation must comply with the act and any applicable regulations. The restriction to a location in Dawson City and the latter section 17.02 will ensure the KVA will be licensed to operate Gerties under the appropriate legal framework and that no expansion of gaming will occur in Yukon. I reiterate this because it was a question raised, but I wanted to point to the direct section that clarifies my earlier comments.

I also should note that the new section 17.02 allows the minister to license an agent — the licensed agent — to conduct, manage and operate the government gaming establishment. This section sets out rules that govern the licences and who may have them. The amendments contained in this section stipulate that there can only be one government gaming establishment operated by KVA in Dawson City. Just as there is only one government gaming establishment, there can only be one licensed agent at any time. The KVA would be that one licensed agent. The KVA is specifically named in the act, but not the regulation, to provide certainty to YG and to the Klondike Visitors Association. If the KVA chooses not to be the licensed agent, it is unable to do so or it relinquishes its licence, the Commissioner in Executive Council can prescribe another person who can serve in that role. That can also be done if the KVA’s licence is revoked.

That’s important, because it provides the certainty that this is not expanding gaming at all, but provides the opportunity, should it occur, that gaming can continue in Dawson City specifically.

Section 17.02 also provides some flexibility in the event that KVA can no longer carry out its responsibilities for any reason. A licence can include any terms and conditions the minister considers appropriate. Terms will be similar to the terms set out in the current slot machine agreement between Yukon government and the KVA, such as the number of slot machines, the distribution of revenue and other related issues.

The KVA must run the government gaming establishment as set out in the act, the regulations and its licence. We are not anticipating the need for any regulations, as we believe that the conditions can be addressed in a licence. However, a regulation-making power will provide the ability to establish regulations, if required now or at a future date. Although we’re not contemplating regulations at this time, we insert these kinds of comments or provisions into the legislation to give us the flexibility, should something arise that we need to deal with. It gives us the flexibility and ability to deal with issues as they arise.

A licence can be modified, suspended or revoked at any time and for any reason, including the failure or inability of the licensed agent to carry out its legal responsibilities. This clause will address unforeseen circumstances that may bring into question the continued licence of the agent. Any licensed agent can, unless the regulation or its licence provides otherwise, relinquish its licence at any time. Any funds that the licence allows the KVA to keep out of the revenue or profit of the government gaming establishment are not public money or public property for *Financial Administration Act* purposes. This is added to clarify that KVA’s operations and its own finances will not be affected by these amendments.

Several points are set out in subsection 10 of this section of the act, section 4. Those include that a licence is no longer valid once it expires or is revoked or relinquished. Being a licensed agent does not make the KVA or another licensed agent subject to the FAA and the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, or the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*. An individual is not a public servant just because they work for the KVA or another licensed agent.

There is a new section as well — 17.03(1). That provides the Yukon government is not legally liable for the actions or omissions of agents, including licensed agents, where those actions or omissions relate to a government gaming establishment. In subsection 2(1), the limitation on liability extends to the government’s employees and agents, except that, as subsection 2 indicates, it does not protect agents from liability for their own actions or omissions or those of their employees or agents. In short, YG is not liable for the actions or its agent or employees of the agent.

There are couple of important things in this section that I wanted to highlight and I feel that I have just done so. The key one though, of course, is that all of this isn’t changed substantially from the arrangement that we’ve had with KVA up to date.

Even though they are becoming an agent of government, the relationship between Yukon government and the KVA at a practical or on-the-ground basis isn't changing, and the way Gerties is operating won't change as a result of these legislative changes, but it does allow the flexibility should the KVA, for some reason, be unable to continue to operate — if the KVA's board of directors all quit or something like that — there is provision for us to deal with the successor to the KVA, if necessary.

In any event, Madam Chair, as I've explained, this is localized around Dawson City. It's specifically mentioned that Dawson is the only place the gaming can occur and under this particular licence through the agent for government. Again, we aren't expanding gaming in the territory. In fact, we're explicitly outlining that it can only be done in a very clear and singular way.

Clause 4 agreed to

On Clause 5

Clause 5 agreed to

On Clause 6

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I just wanted to comment on this again because it came up earlier. The *Crime Prevention and Victim Services Trust Act* directs money that the government receives from the KVA's operation and lottery schemes to that special-purpose trust. This amendment ensures that, if the KVA ceases to be the licensed agent, any funds from a replacement licensed agent continue to be directed into the crime prevention and victim services trust fund.

Again, in the unlikely event — or hopefully unlikely event — that the KVA were to somehow evaporate or cease to exist, any successor that we deal with — the arrangement with the fund will remain the same. I think that's important for the trustees of the fund, who wanted that assurance to know that, even if something unforeseen happens, their arrangement won't change in the event of the KVA dissipating for some reason or other.

Clause 6 agreed to

On Clause 7

Clause 7 agreed to

On Clause 8

Clause 8 agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I move that Bill No. 84, entitled *An Act to Amend the Public Lotteries Act and Related Enactments*, be reported without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Dixon that the Chair report Bill No. 84, entitled *An Act to Amend the Public Lotteries Act and Related Enactments*, be reported without amendment.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 84, entitled *An Act to Amend the Public Lotteries Act and Related Enactments*, 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 MOTIONS

Motion No. 908

Clerk: Motion No. 908, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Speaker: It is moved by the Minister of Justice:

THAT Darius Elias, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, be appointed Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I will be very brief in my remarks. As members are probably familiar, this is a procedural motion and, due to the appointment of the previous Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole as a minister, he cannot continue to serve in that function. The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin is, through this motion, being appointed Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole.

Motion No. 908 agreed to

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 87: *Personal Property Security Registry (Electronic) Amendments Act*

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 87, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Dixon.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I move that Bill No. 87, entitled *Personal Property Security Registry (Electronic) Amendments Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 87, entitled *Personal Property Security Registry (Electronic) Amendments Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It is a pleasure to rise and speak at second reading to Bill No. 87, entitled *Personal Property Security Registry (Electronic) Amendments Act*. Hopefully today we can also get into Committee of the Whole on this bill.

I'm pleased to introduce this bill, Mr. Speaker. It is an interesting piece of legislation that I think will provide a significant benefit to commerce in the Yukon Territory. The purpose of this bill is to implement a modern, computerized

personal property registry to replace our current computer system, which is outdated and placing stakeholders at significant risk.

If you'll allow me, Mr. Speaker, I'll take a moment to provide some background.

Yukon's *Personal Property Security Act* and regulations, known as the PPSA, are critical to consumer and commercial borrowing and lending.

This legislation enables borrowers to use personal property, which is property other than land, to secure loans. While the average person may be unaware that the PPSA even exists, anyone who has ever borrowed money for anything other than a house has benefitted from this legislation. It is what enables lenders to register their interests in your personal property for money you want to borrow. For example, if you are trying to purchase a new car or truck — when companies are looking at credit worthiness, the PPSA registry is one of the tools they use in their review.

With the amendments made in this bill, Yukon will join six other jurisdictions, including Nunavut and Northwest Territories, in utilizing the Atlantic Canada On-Line computerized registry, which is becoming the industry standard in Canada for digital PPSA registries.

This modernization of Yukon's registry system will be a real boon for businesses that use it here in Yukon. This is because Yukon is the only jurisdiction in Canada relying completely on a paper-driven system, instead of an electronic or direct-user entry registry system. As it works now, lenders must complete registry documents by hand, which are then submitted to the Yukon government, where the information is data-entered by Corporate Affairs staff. This process invites risk of error and increased risk of liability to the Yukon government and is — needless to say — a burdensome task when it comes to handling that much paper.

This labour-intensive, manual-entry system also considerably slows down responses to any inquiries we might receive. Not infrequently, our registry will receive bundles of more than a thousand registrations at a time from a lender.

With the new on-line system, the process will be paperless and will eliminate the need for lenders to submit originally signed documents. Instead, once the ACOL system is in place, lenders who have made the necessary contractual agreements with the Yukon government will be able to directly enter data into the new on-line web-based registry.

These changes were previously planned to be included in a larger version of the *Personal Property Security Act* and regulations that were targeted for fall of this year. However, recent issues have given reason to address this antiquated computer system as soon as possible.

Malfunction of our system, when it occurs, means that lenders do not have timely access to the information that they require to make lending decisions, and this can have significant negative effects on borrowers and on commerce generally. As a result, to respond to this urgent need, we have drafted the essential amendments to the act so that we can adopt the ACOL computerized registry as soon as possible. The larger, more comprehensive project, which will include a

complete overhaul of the act, will be undertaken at a later date.

We are currently working on the necessary updates to the regulations, which will be brought forward as soon as possible. I note that more than 60 percent of PPSA registrations are currently submitted by lenders outside of Yukon, such as national banks and vehicle financial lending institutions. These lenders are familiar with electronic registry systems. In fact, many are already users of the ACOL system and are looking forward to seeing it implemented in Yukon.

This new web-based registry will reduce red tape significantly and provide businesses and financial institutions with a one-stop shop where both registry filings and searches can be done on-line. When we roll out the new on-line registry, we will be communicating with local and Outside stakeholders to inform them and to introduce them to the new system.

This bill supports the government's desire to utilize technology, to make more government services available on-line and to improve existing services. As I indicated, when we originally approached this piece of legislation, we had contemplated a more comprehensive overhaul of the system in general but, because of some significant challenges we faced with our current antiquated system that is tied directly to the act, we're compelled to accelerate our initiative and make some targeted changes that are included in this bill. This is not to preclude any more comprehensive review at a later date. I think indeed it may be warranted that, in future legislative sittings, we may want to consider a more comprehensive overhaul of this system, but I think that these strategic, targeted amendments to this act to allow for the implementation of a new electronic system, the ACOL system, will go a long way to addressing some of the more pressing issues faced by our system.

As I said, I believe that this bill will significantly enhance opportunities for commerce in the territory. Anyone who lends or borrows money against chattels in the territory will most certainly benefit from this, as they won't have to fill out the normal paperwork that they have up until this point, and it will shift that system to a completely web-based system. I think it's an excellent step forward, not only because it will make those lenders and borrowers have an easier time, but it will also make government administration much easier and it would reduce the risk for those clients of the system.

The discussions that I am sure we will have in Committee of the Whole will allow us to elaborate a little bit further, but I did want to note also that this is another example of the Department of Community Services policy staff stepping up in a fairly big way to expedite the development of a piece of legislation to meet a pressing demand and a need. I would like to thank the staff who have done this. This is a bill that we had initially planned to look a little bit different and to include a bit of a more comprehensive overhaul of our system but, because of the pressing challenges we have been having with our system, required us to move expeditiously.

Those staff really stepped up and provided the support and policy work that needed to be done to do this work. As

well, I would be remiss if I didn't also thank the Department of Justice officials, who provided a significant degree of assistance on this. Drafting legislation is never easy. It is usually an arduous task, and the drafters in the Department of Justice have done a fantastic job on this bill. It can be a relatively complex issue, but they are, of course, able to deliver and provide us with a bill that I think will significantly improve Yukon's administration and facilitation of commerce in the territory.

I look forward to hearing from members in the House about their thoughts on the bill and ultimately passing it during this Sitting of the Legislature.

With that, I commend the bill to the House.

Ms. Stick: I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to speak to this bill. First, I want to thank the officials for the briefings we did have on this bill, and for the work that they've done on this. The minister, I thought, clearly outlined the speed and initiative that staff has taken on this, and I thank them for that.

The Yukon NDP were prepared, with one amendment, to support this bill, because we see it as an important step forward for a way of streamlining and updating services to the public and to industry in the Community Services department. That's important, Mr. Speaker. When we hear the minister speak about the documents that have to be handwritten and then the data-entry and then getting stacks of them, it just doesn't seem reasonable that that's still how we would go about doing business. There are better ways.

Speed and streamlining should not impact our information privacy and protection. I think, in this day and age, with so much of what we hear with regard to electronics and safe storage and security, this is something that we should be concerned about. Our amendment shares the concerns raised by the Yukon's Information and Privacy Commissioner with regard to this act. I would just remind the members —

Speaker: Sorry; you said amendment. Are you proposing an amendment?

Ms. Stick: Not at this point, no, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: No? Okay, thank you.

Ms. Stick: I would just remind members of the purpose of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. It is in the very beginning. The purpose of the act is to make public bodies more accountable to the public and to protect personal privacy by: giving the public a right of access the records; giving individuals a right of access to, and a right to request correction of, personal information about themselves; specifying limited exceptions to the rights of access; preventing the unauthorized collection, use, or disclosure of personal information by public bodies; and providing for an independent review of decisions made under this act.

Those are very important. It is about our privacy and our personal information being held safe. We know that the Privacy Commissioner, as she outlined in a letter dated April 14, was not consulted on these amendments to this act. That is an important fact because that is part of her job — not all of it, but it certainly is to look at amendments and to look at

legislation with the view of protecting people's personal privacy and ensuring access to information, where appropriate.

The other tool that was available to the department is one that has been created called the "privacy impact assessment", and this tool can be used by departments to look at amendments, to look at acts, to look at new legislation or regulations and to evaluate the risks of non-compliance with the ATIPP act for any new or modified collection, use and disclosure of personal information.

There is a tool there that could have been used when looking at amendments to this act and, I would suggest, should have been used. The Information and Privacy Commissioner can review this, can make suggestions and can ensure that her job of protecting privacy, private information and access to information is done. I think that is an important part.

In the hurry to get this done — and I understand the need for that — it was overlooked. I believe the Privacy Commissioner has raised legitimate concerns over this exclusion, and she goes on in great detail in her letter as to the impacts of that.

We have seen a precedent to retain the ATIPP access to electronic personal property security registry. We have seen examples of that in Health and Social Services when looking at the Panorama program. We spent a great deal of time in the last Sitting, looking at the health information management — something act — I can't remember what the P stands for — sorry, Mr. Speaker. Health information management act — there's a P in there somewhere. Anyway, it doesn't matter. Everyone knows what I'm understanding.

We spent a lot of time on that, and it was really important legislation because, again, it was taking care of personal information, protecting that, allowing other bodies to manage it or store that, but protecting the personal privacy. It was a big part of that legislation.

The test in this legislation is whether the information is under the custody or control of the government. What the Information and Privacy Commissioner is considering is that ATIPP should apply to this legislation. Even though the information is stored outside of Yukon, it's still under government control. Nothing has changed about the information or how it's collected. The Yukon government can't be held liable for any perjury or inaccuracy regarding information submitted to the registry, whether it's paper or whether it's a web portal.

At the end of the day, we want to support this legislation. It's important; it's bringing us forward into the 21st century; it's streamlining; it's helping everyone involved in it. It's important.

So we support it, but we cannot ignore the lack of due diligence when there was not a consultation with the Information and Privacy Commissioner. What I'd like to see — in Committee of the Whole, we'll discuss amending this act before us to bring back the registry under the purview of ATIPP.

It will not create more of a burden for the department. It's not more work, but it is a protection. It's a protection of our personal information and, to me, that is critical.

I thank the staff for the work they've done on this. I thank the minister for bringing this forward.

I also thank the Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner for doing her job and for pointing out where, unintentionally — I don't know — something has been missed, and that is the step of her being able to look over the *Personal Property Security Registry (Electronic) Amendments Act*. She needs to be able to do her job, and we have to give her that opportunity. It will save us in the end from having to make amendments, from having to correct things that perhaps people did not consider or think about.

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

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It is a pleasure, again, to rise at second reading of Bill No. 87, entitled *Personal Property Security Registry (Electronic) Amendments Act*.

Of course, as I have indicated previously, this bill will go a long way toward improving commerce in the territory. As I've mentioned previously, the computer system that is part of Yukon's outdated and paper-based personal property —

Speaker: Order please. The time being 5:30 p.m., this House stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. on Monday.

Debate on second reading of Bill No. 87 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled April 16, 2015:

33-1-160

Annual Contributions to Political Parties in the 2014 Calendar Year (Speaker Laxton)

The following written question was tabled April 16, 2015:

33-1-8

Re: Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges (Stick)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 198

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Monday, April 20, 2015 — 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 Tourism and Culture; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Justice; Yukon Development Corporation/ Yukon Energy Corporation
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Education
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Highways and Public Works
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Community Services; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Environment
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Government House Leader Vuntut Gwitchin
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
Monday, April 20, 2015 — 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 National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise today on behalf of all members of the Legislative Assembly to draw attention to National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week in Canada, which is April 20 to 24 this year.

The fact is that Canada's rate of organ donation is lower than many other countries, including the United States. For such a caring country, this is a surprising fact. We know that more than 90 percent of Canadians support organ donation — so where is the disconnect?

There are many reasons behind this low rate of organ donation, most of which are actually myths. The Mayo Clinic lists some of these myths on its website. One for example is that donating tissues or organs is against a person's religion. The truth is that organ donation is consistent with the beliefs of most major religions, including Christianity, Islam and most branches of Judaism.

Age isn't even a factor in organ and tissue donation. Canada's oldest organ donor was 93 years old. Let the doctors decide if your organs and tissues could save lives. Unlike in the movies, organ donation will only be considered once everything has been tried to save your life and there is no chance of survival. Two doctors, neither of whom is involved in the transplant, must declare the death before an organ donation can proceed.

While the vast majority of Canadians support organ donation, most of us don't formalize that support and yet it is so easy to do. Fill out an organ donor registration form. The form can be found in most doctors' offices and on-line at the Health and Social Services website. Your name will be placed in the Yukon Organ Donor Registry and you will get a heart on your driver's licence to show the world that you are a donor.

Most importantly, talk to your family about your wishes. They need to know how you feel, because doctors will support the wishes of the family at the time of death. We don't do organ retrieval in Yukon, but that doesn't mean that we still can't be donors. Yukoners travel; some individuals are medevaced south for care. There are live donations that can benefit others as well.

According to Health Canada, 4,500 people are waiting for organ transplants today. On average, 230 Canadians die every year waiting for a transplant. While thinking about our own mortality may be uncomfortable, by choosing to be a donor, we can help save lives and improve the lives of others. Actually, as one donor, we can save or improve as many as 50 lives. Not only would this give our families comfort, but it would be a great legacy to leave.

In recognition of National Victims of Crime Awareness Week

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I rise today to pay tribute to the National Victims of Crime Awareness Week taking place across Canada from April 19 to 25 this year. National Victims of Crime Awareness Week brings attention to victims' issues and gives us an opportunity to share best practices, thank service providers and raise awareness regarding provision of meaningful support for victims of crime and their families.

This year's theme is "Shaping the Future Together" and it recognizes that many victims of crime are looking to move beyond victimization. With the help of devoted professionals and volunteers, they can access effective programs and services and work collaboratively to navigate the justice system and shape their own futures.

The support systems in place for victims — including Yukon and First Nation governments, health care providers, community organizations, the RCMP, volunteers, friends and families — can all help those who have been victimized to access and to navigate the justice and legal systems.

Yukon is fortunate to have a community of individuals and organizations that are committed to ensuring that the voices of victims are heard in the justice system, that they are treated with understanding and compassion and receive the support they need.

Successful collaborations between Yukon government organizations and service providers ensure that victims of crime receive accurate and timely referrals so that they may best access the options available to them while navigating the justice system.

I would like take the time to highlight a few of the examples of collaborative approaches and coordinated delivery of services that are aimed at improving response to victims of crime. The creation of the *Victims of Crime Strategy* in 2009 and its implementation has been a collaborative process from the beginning. It has strengthened existing partnerships and led to improvements in referral processes, joint training opportunities and coordination of services.

Another important collaborative initiative that is having a positive impact for victims of sexualized assault is the Yukon Sexual Assault Response Committee. This inter-agency group has led to important policy development as it established best practices and protocols that have made for more timely identification of service gaps and collection of data while providing support to front-line responders.

The Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court is a unique and successful example of a partnership between

justice and social service providers to deliver a coordinated response for offenders and victims of domestic violence. This therapeutic court is motivating offenders to take responsibility for their actions by entering an early guilty plea and receiving counselling and programming under court supervision without re-victimizing the complainant.

Project Lynx multidisciplinary team implements national best practices for working with child victims and witnesses, including: the development of child-friendly environments; developmentally and culturally appropriate forensic interviews and medical examinations; testimonial aids; case tracking; and research.

The final examples I would like to highlight are the important partnerships Victim Services shares with Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Women's Coalition. Supporting these organizations through funding for human resources only serves to strengthen the coordination and delivery of services for victims of crime and has recently announced this year, in partnership with the Women's Directorate, the creation of a new women's legal advocate position, which will again better help women navigating the legal system to be aware of their rights and the services available to them.

In recognizing National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, Yukon's Victim Services branch will be hosting a services for victims expo tomorrow at the Elijah Smith Building. The forum will run from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and will be an opportunity for service providers to celebrate collaborative community efforts and share information and experience with community partners and with the general public.

To everyone who is involved in the challenging but rewarding work of supporting victims through their journey, on behalf of government, I would like to thank them and encourage them to keep up the great work.

By working collaboratively, all levels of government, service providers and partner organizations can positively impact the way in which victims of crime shape their futures.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to pay tribute to National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, April 19 to 25. It is good to see that a victims expo is being held tomorrow, April 21, at the Elijah Smith Building from 11:00 in the morning until 2:00 p.m. Over the past 10 years, National Victims of Crime Awareness Week has been designed to raise awareness about the issues facing victims of crime and the services, programs and laws that are in place to help victims and their families.

Victim Services branch of the Department of Justice provides crisis support, information about victims' rights and the court process and links to other agencies, such as the Law Line, legal aid, the family law information services, law referral services, Many Rivers, the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society of Yukon, alcohol and drug services, First Nation counselling services, our transition homes — Kaushee's Place in Whitehorse and the Watson Lake and Dawson City shelters

for women and children fleeing abuse — the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon women's justice coalition.

The definition of "victim" is one that can be used to label. It can be used to shame and degrade a person and, at the same time, it can be used to give a victim of crime a certain status in the legal system. Current law and policy says that victims have the right to be treated with courtesy, caring and respect. Victims have the right to privacy, and victims have the right to expect that the justice system will do what it can to reduce their inconvenience and protect them from intimidation and retaliation.

We need to take a broad look at how we define and support victims of crime. Poverty, homelessness, racism, discrimination, colonialism, sexism, hunger, lack of services for addictions, children being disconnected and removed from their families — these are all causes of crime that have devastating consequences in our society.

We need to remember that many of the people who are convicted of crime have themselves also been victims of crime. Victims of crime and people convicted of crimes have frequently been victimized by lack of housing, by racism and discrimination, or by lack of access to a good education, or to health care, or to mental health services. These are problems that affect everyone and that the government must address. Victims of crime policies are designed to help people after they have been victimized. We should be trying to prevent the occurrence of crime by being tough on the causes of victimization and by being tough on the roots of crime.

The Yukon *Victims of Crime Strategy* also speaks about client-focused programs in the correctional system, including the clients who are sentenced to community service orders and probations. Government needs to deliver more correctional services and programs more often and work with First Nations to ensure those programs do meet all of our community needs.

This week, the "Walking With Our Sisters" exhibit of moccasin vamps continues at Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre until Saturday. Don't miss it if you haven't yet been there.

Yukon beaders contributed to this beautiful exhibit of moccasin vamps that honours the lives of missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada. The moccasin tops and the installation were deliberately left unfinished to represent the unfinished lives of these women and the family members they left behind.

Aboriginal women's groups in Yukon have documented 39 cases of missing and murdered indigenous women in Yukon and they have formed new partnerships with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in that work. "Walking With Our Sisters" has been displayed at many other locations in Canada since the fall of 2013. It is an opportunity for family and community healing as we walk around the exhibit and reflect on the loss of so many indigenous women. Outside the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, the sacred fire overlooking the Yukon River is being attended by firekeepers during the exhibit.

I would like to quote Native Studies assistant professor Robert Innes, who said: "It is easy to view native men as victimizers. Why? Because white people are already afraid of

them. If you fear someone, you're going to have a hard time empathizing with them as a victim. You might even have a hard time believing it."

We need to reflect on that. Governments are responsible for providing programs and services that treat victims of crime with courtesy, compassion and respect. I want to thank government and non-government workers who provide services for the children who have been assaulted or abused; for the women and the men who are victims of violence; and for all victims of crime. For National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, I urge Yukon government to continue to improve its delivery of programs and services for all members of society, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable people, who are likely to be the victims of crime and to commit crime. That's how we can respond to the root causes of crime.

Mr. Silver: I rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to also pay tribute to the 10th annual National Victims of Crime Awareness Week.

The 2015 theme is "Shaping the Future Together". The theme looks to highlight that victims of crime are working to move forward from being defined as merely victims and actually shaping their own futures. Mr. Speaker, sadly, the Yukon has the third-highest crime rate in the country, better only than the other two territories. Too often the focus is on the crime and we allow the offender to be too much of the story and we often forget that for every crime, there is an innocent person who has had their rights violated.

As mentioned, tomorrow Yukon Victim Services will be hosting a services for victims expo. Service providers and community organizations will be on hand to talk services partnerships. As a community, we need to stand together and to provide support to those who have been victimized and help them to move on.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Graham: I would invite all members of the Legislature to welcome to the Legislature here today the grade 11 social studies class from Vanier school, accompanied by their instructor, Jud Deuling. Welcome to the Legislature.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?
Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 20 — received

Clerk: Mr. Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly: I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 20 of the First Session of the 33rd Legislative Assembly, as presented by the Member for Copperbelt South on April 16, 2015.

The petition presented by the Member for Copperbelt South is comprised of 14 pages and appears in two versions. Both versions of Petition No. 20 meet the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

The version which the Member for Copperbelt South read into the record on April 16, 2015, and which comprises 13 of the 14 pages, will be entered into the working papers of the Legislative Assembly. The other version will be returned to the Member for Copperbelt South.

Speaker: Accordingly, I declare Petition No. 20 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 Petition No. 20 shall be provided on or before Thursday, April 30, 2015.

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 begin the process of developing a made-in-Yukon K to 12 education curriculum through consultation with all of our educational partners, including students, their parents, Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Teachers' Association and expert educators, Yukon College, representatives from business and industry, school councils and the general public.

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 of costs associated with the dismissal of four senior Government of Yukon officials.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Mine closure security

Ms. Hanson: On Friday, the Ketz River mine joined the illustrious company of Faro, Mount Nansen and Clinton Creek — all type 2 mines without operators that have been abandoned without proper remediation. Veris Gold, the Ketz River mine parent company, which has been in creditor protection since June 2014, has, as of April 10, abandoned their care and maintenance responsibilities at the mine.

The Ketz River mine is a type 2 site. The devolution transfer agreement between Canada and Yukon says that the federal government will cover the costs of mine cleanup at type 2 sites. However, since devolution, new work has been done at the Ketz River mine under the supervision of the Yukon government.

So, Mr. Speaker, the question is: What guarantee does the minister have that Yukon will not be on the hook for any of the cleanup costs associated with the Ketzka River mine?

Hon. Mr. Kent: On May 23, 2013, the Compliance Monitoring and Inspections branch of EMR issued inspector's directions requiring the company to take remedial measures to address concerns related to water quality and the stability and capacity of the tailings storage pond.

Again, members will remember last fall that, in response to the company's failure to perform the required work, security was seized, held on behalf of Yukon government, and measures were taken pursuant to section 35 of the *Waters Act*. As the member opposite mentioned, Veris Gold stopped funding the activities of Ketzka River Holdings on April 10, 2015. EMR is using the remaining security to carry out the essential care and maintenance activities on-site — for example, operating the arsenic treatment plant. Yukon has informed the Government of Canada that this type 2 site no longer has an owner and has initiated discussions that will include affected First Nations, pursuant to the requirements of the devolution transfer agreement.

Ms. Hanson: That still doesn't answer the question of how much Yukoners are on the hook, and there are clearly a number of unknowns here.

Let's get into the costs we know that Yukon has already covered. As the minister indicated, last year, the Yukon government conducted urgent repairs at the mine to ensure that environmental contamination didn't occur. To get the remediation done, the Yukon government seized a portion of the mine's security to pay for upgrades to the Ketzka mine road so it could get its equipment in.

Since then, the government has decided that the Ketzka mine road is a public road and has refunded that security. The Government of Yukon has off-loaded the \$1.2 million in road repairs to the Yukon public. Why does the Yukon government think it's fair to hit Yukoners with the tab for the Ketzka mine road repairs?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The member opposite is correct. We felt that, after that work was initiated — members will recall the tendering process. I guess the most important thing to update members of the House on is that the work we did last fall was able to accomplish what we had intended, which is to ensure that the tailings storage facility meets the needs and there's no threat of it overtopping during the spring freshet.

Again, we felt that work was necessary and we did seize the security used in amount of the security, but, in discussions with caucus and Cabinet colleagues and, subsequently, department officials, we felt that the amount spent on the public road should be transferred back to the security. We will be using that security to ensure that we continue to meet the remediation requirements of the mine going forward.

Ms. Hanson: It is robbing Peter to pay Paul. It is really obvious to all Yukoners that the government had no intention to upgrade this road before things went wrong at the mine. The Ketzka River mine shutdown is really a perfect example that the government has not in fact learned from its federal predecessors when it comes to responsibly developing mining

in Yukon. The Wolverine mine closure is just one more example of this government's failed approach that is leaving the public on the hook for millions.

When devolution occurred, Yukoners were promised a new, more sustainable approach to mining. The Yukon government was given the opportunity to create a modern mining framework under the devolution agreement by partnering with First Nations and industry. Instead, they have decided to go back to the old days and then, like now, the profits go south and the public takes the risk.

Why does this Yukon Party government continue to ignore the risks to Yukon by following this irresponsible approach to mining?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Unlike the Official Opposition, the government recognizes the important contribution that mining makes not only to Yukon, but to our economy. We recognize that we have a long and storied history of placer mining here in the territory. The NDP, of course, through campaign commitments in 2011, would have put that very industry in risk through increased royalties and taxes.

We recognize the jobs and business opportunities and other opportunities that come from the hardrock mining industry. We continue to invest in training. We continue to invest in infrastructure to support that industry. We continue to make investments across a number of different departments that would support a strong and robust mineral sector.

There is clearly a difference between the Yukon Party and the NDP Official Opposition when it comes to hardrock and/or placer mining. We support it; they don't.

Question re: Peel watershed land use plan

Mr. Tredger: We all know that Thursday afternoon is an obscure time to release unpopular statements on issues important to Yukoners, but this one has to take the cake. After announcing its intentions to appeal the Peel case days before New Year's Eve, the Yukon Party government has decided to quietly expand the scope of its appeal and hope that Yukoners don't notice. Rather than listen to the arguments made by the Yukon Supreme Court and respect its obligations toward the First Nation governments around the table, it is now doubling down on its attack on Yukon's land use planning process.

Why is the government expanding the scope of its wrong-headed Peel watershed appeal?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Certainly it is common practice to change legal counsel at an appeal stage of a court proceeding and that is exactly what we have done. We are not going to comment on the specifics of the case except to say that our goal remains the same, and that is that democratically elected public governments retain the authority to have the final say on public land.

Mr. Tredger: We know that the Yukon Party government is committed to this case — so committed, in fact, that they have gone outside the territory and hired Torys LLP, an expensive Bay Street law firm, to argue the Peel appeal on their behalf.

Yukoners have been clear. The government should respect the Yukon Supreme Court's Peel ruling. Instead, the

Yukon Party government is choosing confrontation and spending a small fortune in public funds on one of Canada's most expensive law firms. The government owes it to Yukoners to tell us how much this is costing the public.

How much public money is the Yukon Party government giving Torys LLP to argue the Peel watershed case?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Given the fundamental importance that we have with the final agreements and the significance of the Yukon Supreme Court's interpretation of them, it is in fact in the public interest to have all matters reviewed by the Court of Appeal. As we work forward with our new legal counsel, achieving certainty that is needed for land use planning is paramount. As I've already stated, assurances that publicly elected governments have a final say on public land is a priority.

We have, for the public record, given the amounts that have gone into this case up until the appeal stage. Once we are through the appeal stage, we will then update the public and the Legislative Assembly as to the costs at that time.

Mr. Tredger: It's disappointing to see the Yukon Party government choosing rhetoric and secrecy over the facts and public engagement.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Order please. Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Elias: I'm going to have to take issue with the member's characterization of the debate today because he's imputing false or unavowed motives to the members on this side of the House by using words like "secrecy" and "rhetoric".

Speaker: Opposition House Leader, on the point of order.

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, we've had this discussion. We've had it many times now during Question Period and you have ruled previously on this as recently as, I believe, Thursday. As long as my colleague was speaking of the government in general, not at a particular individual, I believe this is a dispute among members.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: The Opposition House Leader is right that I did rule last week on the use of the word "rhetoric" directed toward an individual. We've gone back, and the choice of that word has been used on many occasions and has led nowhere but to adding to the general discord of the House. It has been frowned upon because of that.

The idea that the government does things in secret is your opinion. They may not tell you what they're doing right away. Is that secret? I don't know. I don't really care. They choose to tell you about when they have made a decision on something when they've made a decision on it. That doesn't necessarily mean that they are imputing any wrongdoings.

You have a bit of a mixture here. I don't like the use of "rhetoric". It implies that there are unworthy intentions directed to deliberately mislead and create a position or

mislead the people. Refrain from using it. As for "secrecy", that's a dispute between members.

Please finish your question. I'm not sure what time you have left.

Mr. Tredger: One can only wonder how much money the government is spending on the Peel appeal. Imagine what our legal bill will look like when Bill S-6 ends up in the courts.

Yukon cannot go on like this. Endless court cases are expensive. They antagonize government partners and undermine the very economic certainty we need to succeed.

When is this government going to realize that they can't spend their way out of their conflicts with First Nations? When will they respect the government-to-government consultation obligations spelled out in Yukon's final agreements?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I will say for the members opposite and for the public, the importance of the overall goal is to ensure that democratically elected public governments retain the authority and the final say in final decisions on public land.

Question re: Liquefied natural gas facility

Mr. Silver: Last December, Yukoners learned that yet another capital project was mismanaged by this Yukon Party government and went over budget. Yukoners were informed, not by the minister, but by the president of the Yukon Energy Corporation, about the new LNG facility being \$6.4 million — or 18 percent — overbudget.

We could add this to a long list of projects that have cost more than they were supposed to under this government's not-so-watchful eye.

The new estimate cost, according to the president of the Energy Corporation, is \$42.9 million. Can the minister tell Yukoners whether this is, in fact, the final cost, or whether he, as minister, accepts responsibility for this major cost overrun?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, I have to point out to the Leader of the Liberal Party that he conveniently ignores that most capital projects are on time and on budget, or underbudget, and in the cases — for example, I draw the member's attention to the recent report of the Auditor General, which included the reference to the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, in which the Auditor General effectively gave government a gold star for management of the project.

Mr. Silver: I will give the minister a gold star for that as well, but we're not talking about the corrections facility today; we're talking about LNG and facilities therein. So if he could keep his answers to the question, that would be much appreciated.

We know the Yukon Party government, like their predecessor — they're very good at spending taxpayers' money. There are numerous examples all around us. I can give you some examples of cost overruns: the new ambulance station, the F.H. Collins school and the two rural hospitals being built in Dawson City and Watson Lake, both being very critical from the Auditor General of Canada. Despite repeat

promises to do better, the government keeps on going overbudget on these builds.

Will the minister at least take responsibility for the fact that this project — this project — is almost 20 percent over its original budget — yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, what I would remind the member of when he casts the assertion the government has not made improvement in this area, not only is it unfair to officials, it quite frankly does not reflect the facts. The most recent report by the Auditor General referencing government's capital construction — in that report, the Auditor General effectively gave staff a gold star for the good work that was done.

With regard specifically to the LNG project — that is managed by Yukon Energy Corporation, which is accountable ultimately to this Legislative Assembly, through the Yukon Development Corporation. In fact, that is one of the reasons why we have taken steps in the last three years to significantly strengthen the oversight and accountability of Yukon Energy Corporation.

The cost of construction of the LNG project is over the original budget. That is certainly not news that we're happy about, but I would remind the member that, in fact, strengthening the governance structure is an important part of what we are doing to prevent this type of thing occurring in the future and remind the member that, in fact, although he may not actually be aware of it, the Yukon Utilities Board ultimately exercises the oversight as the regulator for projects such as this one.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, \$6 million — just because Ottawa continues to send us over 85 percent of our budget is no excuse to be wasteful of it. This is just another example of a major capital budget that has gone way overbudget — simple. It is at least 18 percent, or \$6 million, overbudget and it is not finished yet. The Yukon Party claims that it manages Yukoners' money carefully and yet we have taken another hit from another cost overrun that has just come to light. The minister stands here today and takes no responsibility for millions of extra dollars needed to be found to see this project through to fruition.

How does the corporation intend to cover this \$6-million cost overrun?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It is a little bit interesting that the member has just now become aware of this and failed to ask the witnesses a question about this when representatives of the corporation appeared here in the Legislative Assembly last fall. They appeared to answer questions and yet the member was asleep at the switch, apparently.

Again, there have been cost overruns on this project. That certainly is not good news but, as I reminded the member in my previous question, strengthening the accountability and oversight of Yukon Energy Corporation is why this government in the past three years has taken a number of steps, including strengthening the protocol between government and Yukon Development Corporation, revising and updating the letter of expectation between Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation,

and we are taking the steps necessary to strengthen that oversight and accountability.

Again, I would have to point out to the member, the Leader of the Liberal Party, that it is passing strange that it took him until now to answer this question, rather than him actually asking the chair and CEO of the corporation when they appeared in the Assembly last fall.

Question re: Burwash Landing policing

Ms. Moorcroft: Earlier this month, an armed assailant attacked another person in Burwash Landing with an axe. The RCMP deployed officers from the closest station, 125 kilometres away, in Haines Junction. By the time they arrived over an hour and a half later, the suspect had fled.

The suspect in the axe attack is only in custody because they turned themselves in. An hour-and-a-half response time just didn't cut it.

If it took an hour and a half for the police to respond to an axe attack in Riverdale, this would be a major public crisis. Why doesn't Burwash Landing deserve the same level of police protection? Why isn't this government directing the RCMP to expand its operation to include a full-time police presence in Burwash Landing?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I would point out to the member is that, yes, the community of Burwash Landing is policed from the Haines Junction department and, during the summer, Burwash Landing receives additional support through the RCMP reservist program. I should note, as well, that response to Burwash Landing is supported in some cases from Beaver Creek in addition to the Haines Junction primary responsibility.

Since 2008, the Department of Justice has been funding RCMP reservists in Burwash Landing to address heightened policing needs during the summer, and this was the result of discussions between Kluane First Nation, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Department of Justice.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, why is it that Burwash Landing is deemed to require a permanent RCMP presence in the summer, yet somehow it isn't a priority for the rest of the year? Citizens need this. Community members have spoken out; the First Nation leadership has spoken out. Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay residents have the right to feel safe in their communities, just like any other Yukoner. It's that simple.

Mr. Speaker, when will the Yukon Party government put all Yukoners on an equal footing, listen to the community and use its ability to set policing priorities to request a permanent RCMP presence in Burwash Landing?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, again I would remind the member that the creation of this reservist program in the summer at Burwash Landing has responded to the period of highest demand. I would remind the member that — as she should be aware, considering her past time as Minister of Justice — there are many small communities across Canada that do not have a permanent police presence and receive police services via hub detachment similar to the RCMP detachment in Haines Junction. This includes many small

communities across British Columbia that fall into this category. Funding has been provided to address the highest demand period during summer months. As the member should be aware, Yukon's number of police officers per 100,000 population calculation compared to the rest of the country — we have some of the best access to police services of anywhere in the country. Providing more services anywhere — providing more officers in any area — does come at a cost. There's a capital cost as well. The member should be aware that good work is done by the Department of Justice and by the RCMP to assess those pressures and to make the best decisions that we can.

Question re: Gender equity

Ms. White: Income equality is an important indicator of equity and fairness in a society. When a society allows women to experience economic inequality, it places women at risk of being left behind on housing, mental and physical health, child care, education, social supports, food security, safety and employment.

Coming into equal pay would improve the safety, security and socio-political autonomy and well-being of women in Yukon. It would also have a positive impact on our economy. In short, no matter how you cut it, ensuring equal pay is not only the right thing to do; it is also the best thing to do for our society and our economy.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister responsible for Economic Development explain why neither equal pay nor gender-based economic equality are strategic goals in his department's current strategic plan?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, as the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission, I should note that of course we provide a range of programs throughout the Yukon public service and we do ensure that gender equity and equity of pay are provided through the Public Service Commission. Obviously when it comes to the private sector, there's a different discussion to be had. If the member opposite is suggesting that we impose some sort of new conditions on the private sector, that's something we have to have further discussion about. From our position as an employer — as the Public Service Commission — we provide payment equity as best we can throughout the public service and will continue to do so through the Public Service Commission.

Ms. White: It may be 2015, but when it comes to equal pay for equal work, it appears that Yukon's economy is still stuck in the past. Across Canada, women working full-time earn on average 20 percent less than men.

In Yukon, the *Yukon Bureau of Statistics Tourism Employment 2012* report shows that in the tourism sector, the average hourly compensation for female workers was over \$5 less than for their male counterparts in that same year. It is known that low pay, lower income and insecure employment drag down women's economic security and place them at greater risk of poverty and violence. The Women's Directorate gender equality indicators project website is due in October 2015.

Today is Equal Pay Day, which is why I am asking the questions. Will the minister honour Equal Pay Day with a commitment to publicly report on income equality, pay grade, employment type and status and job security for all territorial government departments as part of this project?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I am not aware that there are any issues of pay equity within the public service in the Yukon government. If that is the case, obviously we will move to address it. My understanding is that the Public Service Commission does provide equal pay for equal work regardless of gender throughout the public service in Yukon. If that is not the case, I will endeavour to look into it and determine what can be done, but to my knowledge we do subscribe to the tenet of equal pay for equal work, regardless of one's gender, and will continue to do so in the Yukon public service.

Question re: Tourism initiatives

Mr. Barr: It was my pleasure to attend the Tourism Industry Association's conference in Dawson and listen to tourism operators and industry analysts present the amazing Yukon opportunities that are within reach. I want to bring a few of these issues up in the Legislative Assembly today.

One presenter said that tourists are looking at authentic, unique experiences. Every circumpolar nation has northern lights, but only Yukon has Yukon First Nations. We need to showcase our vibrant aboriginal cultures. Our marketing and promotional initiatives need to do more to reflect this rich cultural heritage. The first round of the national advertising campaign was criticized for not having Yukon First Nation content.

How does the Minister of Tourism and Culture plan to make better use of Yukon's advantage of our unique First Nation culture and heritage to encourage more tourists to come to Yukon?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Thank you for the question. I too was very honoured to be able to present and to participate in this weekend's Tourism Industry Association's spring conference. It was a great opportunity to talk about some of the single largest investments in tourism marketing ever by this government in recognition of the significance of the contributions that this particular strategic sector, tourism and culture, contributes to our economy and the quality of life that we, as Yukoners, have come to enjoy. As the member opposite is very well aware, this particular Yukon Now campaign comprises some \$3.6 million. It is the single largest investment. It is representative of many years in the making. In fact, it even predates this government when it comes to tourism marketing investments.

Research-based, industry-led and market-driven are all of the fundamental pillars that drive our marketing campaigns. We know that the commercials — one of the pillars of this particular marketing campaign is commercials. It is but one of five commercials that was just recently aired in February. There are more to come and we certainly will continue to work with Yukon communities, including Yukon First Nations.

Mr. Barr: Yukoners know that our home territory is blessed with an abundance of wildlife and viewing opportunities. The chance to see grizzly and black bears, moose, caribou and migratory birds in the wild is a great attraction. Many participants at the TIAY convention think Yukon could do more to promote wildlife viewing opportunities to wildlife enthusiasts in order to grow our tourism industry.

Our neighbours in Alaska have measured the economic importance of wildlife. In 2011, over \$3.4 billion was spent in Alaska on viewing wildlife and hunting. Unfortunately, Yukon hasn't done this kind of analysis and there are a lot of gaps in our tourism data and research.

What plans does the minister have to market directly to birdwatchers and other wildlife enthusiasts to encourage more tourists to come to the Yukon as a wildlife viewing destination?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It was an honour for me to also be up there at the Tourism Industry Association conference. It was great to be a keynote speaker and talk a little bit about our wildlife viewing program and some of the successes, which I would just like to highlight — I think a tribute in the House not too long ago was about Swan Haven — an incredible thing.

Our wildlife viewing program works hand in hand with the department and a lot of people didn't realize this up there, but we do work hand in hand with the Department of Tourism providing information and always looking to move forward when it comes to wildlife viewing in the Yukon, so those tourists and those Yukoners who enjoy looking at our species — whether it's a grizzly bear, wolf or moose — have that opportunity.

Mr. Barr: I'm glad the Minister of Environment is coming forward with tourism. Three thousand jobs are in tourism, our largest private sector employer. The contribution of tourism to our GDP is estimated at \$250 million annually, or four percent of the GDP. Unlike other industries, Yukon tourism has been recession-proof and the predictions are for more annual growth. But how do we take it to the next level? The industry needs ongoing investment and vision from the Yukon government. Yukon and Canada have contributed \$3.6 million for two years of marketing initiatives within Canada. It was less than the industry requested, but it was a start.

We can build Yukon's tourism industry to greater heights. Is the Government of Yukon prepared to make a long-term funding commitment for marketing the Yukon to the rest of the country?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: It's unfortunate that the member opposite — if he thought that tourism and culture were such a strategic economic driver — is that in fact the member opposite would actually start voting in favour of some of the major expenditures, such as the marketing initiative that the member opposite has referred to.

I want to point out the fact that, from the very first year that the Government of Yukon was elected, in a very first budget, the total O&M for operation and maintenance for tourism and for culture was about \$14 million. Today it's

actually sitting at about \$26 million. That incorporates the single largest investment in marketing campaigns.

I want to share some of the preliminary results that we're actually experiencing from those television commercials and the digital storytelling initiative, as well as the content generated by Yukoners themselves. Those television commercials were played some 500 times on 24 television channels — an estimated 30 million viewers across the country and 60,000 views on YouTube. After the first month that that commercial was aired, there were more than 22,000 visits to the Travel Yukon website, almost double the website traffic from the previous February.

So we are very much committed to increasing investments in tourism marketing and culture in all sectors in the —

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

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 907

Clerk: Motion No. 907, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice:

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to section 4 of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, recommends that the Commissioner in Executive Council appoint Annette King as the Child and Youth Advocate for Yukon for a term of five years, effective May 1, 2015.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It gives me pleasure to introduce this motion. As members may know, Ms. King was the successful candidate in the Child and Youth Advocate position. This position makes her only the second Child and Youth Advocate since the position was created. First of all, I would like to ask members to join me in welcoming Annette King to the gallery, along with Tina Dickson, the office administrator for the Child and Youth Advocate, and Bengie Clethero, the Deputy Child and Youth Advocate. Please join me in making them welcome here today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Cathers: As members will know, the appointment of a Child and Youth Advocate followed a process that was an all-party review process of candidates. Annette King comes following time in the Department of Justice in Victim Services, and I'm sure that she will do an excellent job in the Child and Youth Advocate position.

I would like to congratulate her on her appointment and ask all members to join me in supporting the passage of this motion here today.

Mr. Barr: I too would like to rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition to welcome and support this

motion, and welcome Annette King to this position and look forward to meeting with you and discussing how we can be partners in moving things forward. I would also very much like to extend the thanks to Bengie Clethero and Tina Dickson, and Andy Nieman, the previous Child and Youth Advocate, for all the work they have done to bring us to this place where we are today.

It's a very important role and office that has been long awaited in the Yukon, and we look forward to your great work as we move forward over the next five years.

Mr. Silver: I'll be very brief. The Liberal Party will absolutely be supporting this motion. I just want to take an opportunity to thank Ms. King as well. Being on the committee that hires ombudsmen and child and youth advocates, et cetera, you find yourself in a humbled position, to sit there and interview people whose resumés just blow you out of the water. In this case, that was no exception.

Again, thank you very much to Ms. King for accepting the position. We look forward to working with her in the future.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: As the former Minister of Justice, I felt that it was important to say a few words here this afternoon, as I have worked fairly extensively with Annette over the last three years. I certainly found her to be a very professional, very compassionate and caring individual. In fact, early on in my tenure, I had an individual approach me who was a victim of crime and felt that in the past — and by saying “the past”, I'm speaking about eight years ago — that maybe her case wasn't handled the way she had hoped it to be at that time. I certainly gave her information on how the department, due largely in part to Annette's work, had made great progress.

I connected the two and have seen great things come out of this individual working in the community as a volunteer and speaking about her incident, being a victim of crime, and how it impacted her. In those remarks, she also talks about the work of the department, the work of Victim Services and certainly the work of Annette and how it benefitted her on a move-forward basis.

Looking within our community, I certainly couldn't think of a better candidate to bring on as the child and youth worker. I have all the confidence in the world in Annette and look forward to the work that we see in her five-year tenure. I would like to congratulate Annette on her position and certainly ask for the support of all members of this Legislative Assembly.

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 other members who spoke in support of this motion and I won't go on at great length. I just congratulate Annette on being successful and wish her the very best in her new role, which I

am sure she will do an excellent job in, and I will commend this motion to the House.

Motion No. 907 agreed to

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 17: *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 17, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 17, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Premier that Bill No. 17, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This appropriation act will allow the public service to continue to make certain expenditures, while the main estimates for 2015-16 are being considered by the Legislative Assembly during this Sitting. The interim funding request is for the period of April 1, 2015 through June 4, 2015.

The total amount for which the approval is sought is \$353,979,000 and it is made up of capital expenditure appropriations totalling \$96,621,000 and operation and maintenance expenditure appropriations totalling \$257,358,000.

The amounts required for this period have been derived by canvassing Yukon government departments to determine their expenditure requirements. The amounts are significant, largely owing to the fact that large portions of commitments and expenditures are made during this period.

I move that Bill No. 17, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now read a third time.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, I intend to keep my comments very brief. As I have said previously, the Official Opposition will support this basically on sufferance. We do it because we know it's essential for the continued operations until there has been full legislative debate of Bill No. 18, which is the main estimates for operation and maintenance and capital for this fiscal year coming. We have indicated in the past that we would encourage the Premier and the Minister of Finance to actually respect the legislative responsibilities and accountabilities that all members of the Legislative Assembly have, which is to table and have debate of the budget before the beginning of the fiscal year so that we're not forced into this kind of a situation.

Mr. Speaker, we'll just move on with the business at hand.

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

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 17 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 17 has passed this House.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

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. 18: *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It is indeed a pleasure to have joining me Acting Deputy Minister of Finance, Mr. Mark Tubman, to be a part of general debate of Committee of the Whole for Bill No. 18, *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*. I rise today to present introductory remarks to Bill No. 18, *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, more commonly referred to as the 2015-16 main estimates. My intent today is really to try to get to the point.

Our government has once again delivered a notable and sound budget. The 2015-16 budget builds on the work of our previous years and allows the government to provide significant investments now and in the future for all Yukoners.

We will speak of the expenditure and revenue details in depth during general debate; however, allow me to make some observations at this time. This is the largest budget in Yukon's history. This is the largest annual capital investment ever by a Yukon government. This budget provides significant tax relief to everyday Yukoners and this budget continues to provide for sustainable and affordable fiscal management.

To quantify my earlier points, this budget provides total expenditures of \$1.367 billion, operation and maintenance expenditures of \$1.054 billion, capital expenditures of \$312.7 million, and tax relief of approximately \$5.5 million.

Our fiscal position continues to be sound with an annual surplus of \$23.2 million and projected net financial assets of \$136.9 million.

Additionally, if I can turn your attention to our long-term fiscal plan, we are targeting significant multi-year capital investments in both 2016-17 and 2017-18. While we do expect such investments to draw down or to reduce our net financial assets, we continue to provide for a significant net financial asset position in excess of \$100 million through 2018-19.

There is no doubt our government has significant expenditures in the here and the now. However, this position by no means mortgages our future. In other words, we continue to avoid net debt.

Our government has been criticized for tabling what has been referred to as an "election budget". This is an incredibly short-sighted observation. As I have observed in my Budget Address, our government developed this budget in consideration of one of Yukon's economic mainstays, mining — as this iconic industry is experiencing a downturn currently.

The importance of creating jobs and opportunities was specifically considered in drafting this budget.

Further economic stimulus in the form of tax cuts for Yukoners is also integral to this budget.

I ask you, Madam Chair, would members prefer us to not invest now, to not spend on behalf of Yukoners today, and not to put more money directly into the hands of Yukoners? Rather, would they prefer us to have us only focus on hoarding for the future? As I consider the many comments and observations of the members opposite, I can only presume that their collective recommended approach is to sit on or to hoard Yukoners' money, not to invest in Yukon and Yukoners, and avoid providing stimulus to Yukon's economy in the face of some challenging times.

Each of our budgets has been designed to maximize benefits to Yukoners through strategic spending. This budget continues on that theme. Our government represents all Yukoners and we have endeavoured to deliver on the mandate bestowed by the electorate. It is our obligation and our pleasure to balance strategic spending with fiscal discipline, a combination that serves Yukoners today while also providing for our citizens of tomorrow. This approach has afforded our government the opportunity, through multiple mandates, to make significant investments for the benefit of all Yukoners.

Our government is proud of our record. We have a strong fiscal position. We continue to invest wisely and strategically on behalf of Yukoners. This budget continues to build on our past successes as we anticipate our next mandate.

A recurring theme throughout my comments is our government's commitment to invest not only in Yukoners today, but also to invest in Yukoners tomorrow through our balanced approach managing Yukon's finances.

Managing with tomorrow in mind is key. According to our Bureau of Statistics, in 2003, Yukon's population was just under 30,000; in 2014, Yukon's population was approaching 37,000; and for 2022, Yukon's population is projected to be approximately 42,000 people.

I have spoken at great length over the last few sessions about Yukon's increasing population and the infrastructure

required to support it. Individual ministers will be pleased to speak in more detail during line-by-line debate. However, allow me this opportunity to comment on the high-level investments identified in this budget.

Just under \$61 million is allocated in 2015-16 toward our transportation infrastructure. There's approximately \$35 million for municipal infrastructure, primarily funded under the original Building Canada agreement, and over \$145 million represents our 2015-16 investment in various property developments, replacements and maintenance.

All of these commitments, all of these initiatives, not only are investments in programs and services needs of Yukoners; these investments put Yukoners to work.

This budget leverages our previous efforts of sound, disciplined and rigorous management to provide for today and to provide for tomorrow. As I just noted, this budget reinforces the principle of fiscal discipline and balanced management that allows us to be responsive to the future needs and priorities of Yukoners.

In the immediate term, Madam Chair, our budget serves to fill important gaps in programming, service delivery and community infrastructure. We are investing in a diverse range of projects across the territory, selected to maximize benefits to communities and Yukoners — the Carcross fire hall, F.H. Collins, Yukon seniors, Sarah Steele, Klondike palaeontology — and, on a longer term basis, our government looks forward to working in partnership with the federal government on the new Building Canada infrastructure agreement and approximately \$342 million targeted for Yukon investment over the next 10 years.

The security of being in a very strong financial position has allowed this government to deliver this notable budget, a budget of significance to all Yukoners, a budget with a vision of important investments over a multi-year horizon.

Madam Chair, I've said it numerous times and I'll continue to make this similar observation. Our strong financial position provides us with the agility to be responsive to Yukon's emerging needs. I've spoken on how our successive budgets have built financial capacity and how we continue to build on that capacity with our forward-looking financial plan.

If you allow me the analogy, Madam Chair, this budget allows Yukon to dip into our savings account and invest in Yukon on behalf of Yukoners. This budget delivers a strong multi-year investment plan while respecting the long-term financial help of the Yukon. We do this without breaking the bank. This is not binge spending, nor is it an election budget, as the members of the opposition would have you believe, Madam Chair.

I did make similar observations in my second reading speech on Bill No. 17. However, allow me to revisit those previous comments as it is apropos to pause here for a moment and reflect on the conclusions drawn in the Standard & Poor's report of September 2014. If I may, Madam Chair, Yukon's double-A rating reflects "...the territory's very low debt burden, exceptional liquidity, strong budgetary performance..." and the territory's demonstration of strong

financial management and the expectation "...that Yukon will continue to produce strong budgetary results..."

Madam Chair, clearly Standard & Poor's gets it. Our record has been strong and we will continue to be strong as we support Yukoners through this and future budgets. This budget is not a one-off exercise. It highlights our commitment to provide important programs, services and investments to Yukoners while maintaining Yukon's strong financial position over the long term.

The 2015-16 budget projects an annual surplus. Further, as I have already stated today, we continue to target balanced budgets throughout the next few year as members will note from our multi-year plan. With net financial asset forecast in the \$100-million range over the next four years, I am confident the Yukon public will appreciate our commitment to fiscal discipline.

As the Yukon Party has done throughout our mandates, we continue to maintain a very healthy net financial resource position and to avoid net debt. In an environment where many other Canadian jurisdictions are working toward achieving balanced budgets and reducing their debt, Yukon is already there. We have balanced budgets and we continue to avoid net debt. This is a very important consideration. Our 2015-16 budget builds on our history of delivering on commitments in our platform, "Moving Forward Together" and provides a strong financial base to be responsive to emerging priorities and opportunities as they arise. Our record stands for itself. Having managed the government's finances over a multi-year horizon — since 2003-04 in fact; a period of 13 years now — Yukon Party has delivered effective, responsible and disciplined spending initiatives and investments on behalf of Yukoners.

What this Legislature will recognize in our 2015-16 budget is the continuation of our efforts. We continue to plan, budget and deliver the best of programs, services and investments for Yukoners. Not to put a fine point on it, but our government continues to plan, budget and deliver programs, services and investments for Yukoners with due consideration for fiscal discipline. As this is now the fourth year that the Yukon government has included consolidated financial information with budget documents, I am confident that members opposite will appreciate and recall my previous comments indicating that this consolidation disclosure contributes to transparency and accountability in government reporting. I will not elaborate again here today.

Madam Chair, allow me to focus members opposite on the unconsolidated entity — the amounts and resulting financial results that are supported by Bill No. 18, the *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*. Members will find the non-consolidated summary starting on page S-5 of the 2015-16 estimates document.

Focusing on the unconsolidated side, the members opposite will observe that total expenditures, or appropriations identified in the 2015-16 main estimates, are \$1,367,070,000, of which \$1.054 billion is allocated to operation and maintenance and \$312.8 million represents our government's

investment in capital. Once again, Madam Chair, our government has provided a strong budget for all Yukoners.

As I stated earlier, in addition to the expenditure side, this budget provides tax relief to all Yukon taxpayers, totalling approximately \$5.5 million.

There is an understandable focus on the expenditure portion of the budget; however, as I just noted, our tax reduction measures — let's consider the revenue side for a moment. I hear a lot of talk about Yukon's reliance on Canada — talk about how Yukon is more reliant on Canada than we have been in years past.

There is no doubt that Canada is a significant partner in territorial investment through the various funding arrangements we have. However, I will detail shortly how Yukon's growth in own-source revenue has outpaced growth in the base transfers from Canada. I believe the members opposite forget that all jurisdictions across Canada — both territorial and provincial — are supported by similar arrangements by Canada. This is a significant point, not to be lost. All Canadian jurisdictions are supported by transfers from our federal government. Provinces and territories enter these arrangements based on one primary principle — similar programs and services for similar levels of taxation. This is the fundamental principle underlying federal transfers.

As I previously stated, it is often suggested that Yukon's dependence on Canada is increasing. If I were to look solely at the budget document, like so many do, I can understand how that conclusion might be reached. The information included on page 14 of the financial information section of the 2015-16 Budget Address booklet tells us that total federal funding — transfers plus recoveries — received by Yukon amounts to 84.2 percent of Yukon's total revenues.

There is so much more to it than the simple calculation reflected in these pages. I encourage the members opposite to apply some simple, basic analytics to gain a better understanding of the underlying data. Let's consider, Madam Chair, our federal funding arrangements under three general categories. First, there are recovery arrangements, where Yukon typically delivers federal responsibilities on behalf of Canada, on a cost-recovery basis.

Second, Yukon participates in conditional or time-limited arrangements that Canada has offered to its provincial and territorial partners. We might consider these as one-offs — certainly funding arrangements to which Yukon is no doubt a beneficiary, but nonetheless, these arrangements such as Building Canada and the territorial health system sustainability initiative are not unique to Yukon and come with specific spending expectations.

Thirdly, let us think about those components of Canada's support that are ongoing and reasonably predictable. That is, Yukon's key ongoing transfers under the territorial formula financing, the Canada health and Canada social funding arrangements. Yukon has been a significant beneficiary of recovery agreements and time-limited funding program agreements.

The benefits are more than purely financial.

These funding arrangements allow Yukon's participation in federal programs such as Building Canada. More importantly, our participation allows Yukon to influence initiatives and programs that are constitutionally the domain of Canada.

On the surface, our funding program and recovery arrangements do indicate a certain reliance on Canada. Recall however that in many cases, recovery arrangements reflect Yukon's delivery of programs and services that are constitutionally the responsibility of Canada.

Also recall that Yukon participates in time-limited funding programs administered by Canada just like every other Canadian jurisdiction. I have to wonder aloud if the critics of Yukon's reliance on Canada would have Yukon abandon participation in the funding arrangements. If that is not what they are suggesting, what exactly are they being critical about? Let's assume Canada and Yukon do not enter into recovery arrangements. Let's also assume that Canada does not administer funding programs to benefit all members of our federation. Yukon is left with two general sources of revenue: the ongoing transfer arrangements identified previously, i.e. the territorial formula financial agreement and the Canada Health and Canada Social transfers; and our own-source revenues.

These two components represent the revenue streams on which Yukon can rely on an ongoing reasonably predictable basis. We can effectively distinguish between more certain and stable transfer arrangements with Canada and Yukon's own-source revenues. The comparison is somewhat compelling. Madam Chair, would it surprise you to learn that since 2005-06, Yukon's own-source revenues grew by approximately 93 percent, while the revenue under the territorial formula financing agreement grew by 77 percent?

I see that you're telling me I'm out of time. I have a few more comments, but I will restrict them to my next opportunity to speak. Thank you.

Ms. Hanson: I certainly don't intend to reprise the Budget Address that was delivered respectively by both by the Minister of Finance and the Leader of the Official Opposition. I think both the Minister of Finance and this position had an opportunity to explore at depth and at length the respective views of the Official Opposition in the government with respect to not just the financial performance and accountability over the last twelve years — over the last four years — but also the specific matters at hand in Bill No. 18.

I do want to make a couple of remarks in the context of the general debate, but I would offer that it's our view in the Official Opposition that we've had an awful lot of — I would use advisedly the word "rhetoric" because by the Oxford definition it does mean persuasive discussion, persuasive argument — and so we have had a lot of that over the course of the first few weeks of this Legislative Sitting, but we haven't had the chance to get at the substantive matters at hand, which are really the discussions by department of the issues at hand.

The Minister of Finance has indicated that this is the largest budget in Yukon's history. Certainly we recognize

that. We would also point out that large or big does not necessarily equate with effective, nor does it mean sustainable.

The notion that we have laid out multi-year capital plans — well, one expects to see multi-year capital plans laid out in a budget. That is what you do. The question, though, is not just the amounts of money, but at what cost? The costs associated with each of the decisions around each of these major capital expenditures have everything to do with the approach and the strategy around investment in this territory.

The Minister of Finance presents it as an either/or. From the Official Opposition's point of view, we absolutely agree that it is important to invest and to invest now, but you have to invest wisely. You have to invest in consultation with all communities — First Nation governments, stakeholder groups, citizens — in order to ensure that the investments made address the expressed needs now and into the future and that they are based on evidence of need, evidence of future need and reflect that community input. We believe in the absolute imperative of strategic spending to maximize the opportunities for Yukoners. It is one thing to hear, as we keep hearing repeatedly, about the massive amounts of capital expenditures planned over the next short window, and they are short windows for building in the Yukon Territory.

We will raise, and we have raised, concerns about ensuring that that massive expenditure will benefit and provide maximum opportunities for Yukoners to benefit so that we are not repeating the fly-in and fly-out. We have had enough of that in other sectors of this economy. In the areas where the Yukon government can work with contractors, builders and planners, to me that is an opportunity that we should be doing to maximize Yukon citizens' — Yukon workers' — opportunities for employment close at home.

When we talk about the importance of strategic investment, there is no doubt that we have seen the government make announcements, but they seem to have been done in isolation of what communities have said, whether it is the absolute failure to consult with anybody outside the government — government internal discussions only — with respect to one of the largest capital budget items that is projected for this territory, starting — we have no idea what the end costs will be — at about \$330 million for a 300-bed care facility.

When you ask the medical association, the YRNA, seniors associations, a variety of community groups, have you had a conversation? What do you think about this? They look at you and say, "Well, nobody has asked us." I find that kind of a shock.

You see the territorial government not only making the decision internally that they're going to proceed with this, but they haven't even consulted with their sister government, the City of Whitehorse. So it's like big brother is telling you, "We want you to do this and we want you to change your planning, your OCP, to do it."

That's one large example, Madam Chair. We've seen the Association of Yukon Communities expressing similar concerns about how decisions are made about what

government — the Yukon government — deems to be the priority for the provision of recreational services and budgets for that. I mean, it's a good thing that the Yukon government believes it has the only idea about what communities need, but if it comes at the expense of a little community like Carmacks in order for — some would call it — an election item, and some would call it a pretty blatant election item — the artificial-turf project that seems to be rushing through, from the Yukon Party, in Whistle Bend. There's a whole series of those that we think merit focused discussion because they demonstrate that, contrary to what has been stated over and over again, just saying it doesn't mean it happens. What we are seeing is demonstration of no fiscal discipline in the budget that's presented. What we are seeing is the raising of flags on declining federal revenues. What we are seeing is a government that has spent down — I love the Minister of Finance's reference that now we're being allowed to dip into our savings account. This is a government that said repeatedly they didn't need to do that because they were such prudent and fiscally wise managers of our resources.

I think, in real terms, Madam Chair, the reality is that we are, in fact, more, not less, dependent after 12 years of Yukon Party government.

This massive decline in our surplus under the watch of the Finance minister is not a one-off exercise. It's a continuation — a continuation of spending. It's a continuation of the sort of selective-listening approach to how those spending decisions are made.

It's interesting when the Premier brings in the whole notion of comparing tax effort and our relationship to the federal government under the formula financing arrangements and equalization for the provinces. Section 36 that he referenced there — he didn't use it, but the notion there is that to ensure or aspire to ensuring that revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services, at reasonably comparable levels of taxation, are provided. That's what section 36 is about.

You know, the Minister of Finance spoke at some length about how the Official Opposition really doesn't want the government to be able to take advantage of time-limited or other initiatives that come from the federal government. In fact we think that those are amazing opportunities to embrace change; to embrace innovative ways of looking at programs and services that benefit all Yukoners. The problem is that, as opposed to looking at these initiatives as opportunities — so whether it is time-limited funding that comes from the federal government to support initiatives on mental health and it's two or three extra years of funding focused on developing pilot projects to look at how you could more effectively deliver an area of either health services or a broad range of services — and then the intent is that governments, whether they're provincial governments or territorial governments, will look at how those savings impact other operations and it's how you incorporate that into your ongoing operations.

What we've seen this government do is, time and time again, say, "Oh yeah, we'll take the three-year funding. Oops, it's gone; that program is gone" as opposed to a fundamental

look at how you realign programs and service delivery and look at how we make changes. A real government does that. It doesn't just look at how new programs come along and how you can manage them on behalf of the federal government. A territorial government should not be a program manager. We look to the ministers as leaders, not as program managers. What I'm seeing evidence of is program management — and not that well done.

Madam Chair, I am concerned. We've seen a government that has, over the last — this is the fourth budget — each one of them has had sort of a diminishing set of expectations other than spending — diminished expectations in terms of looking at real opportunities that do exist and making choices that will forego our opportunities for a really diverse economy that is based on effective partnership. By the actions of the Finance minister and Premier, our opportunities to capitalize on investment opportunities, working with development corporations and First Nation development corporations, diminishes day by day. The \$500 million the First Nation development corporations currently spend in this territory could be in jeopardy at the rate this government is going as they look to see other jurisdictions, where they have more effective and more responsive interactions with government. That has real consequences for our economy, because those development corporations hire all Yukoners, not just First Nations. They contribute to the income tax pool of this territory. They're located here.

As we go through the budget debate on each of the departments and agencies of this government, we will be, as I said in the past and in my response to the budget speech on April 7 — we will be both raising concerns about what is being put forward and the approach taken, as well as offering some ideas and some suggestions.

As we have said often, the Official Opposition's job is — and we acknowledge and accept it — to hold the government to account. We take that seriously, but we also know that part of our job is to offer suggestions and we have done that on a regular basis over the last number of years.

We accept the fact that the government to date hasn't accepted anything that we have put forward as ideas, but that doesn't mean that the ideas don't resonate with Yukoners. This Legislative Assembly is intended to reflect the ideas of all Yukoners, not just the Yukon Party. So, on behalf of Yukoners, we will continue to provide focused attention to specific areas of the main estimates for 2015-16 in the context of the current and long-term implications for the decisions being taken and the choices being made, because they do have consequences for all of us.

I don't need it all, Madam Chair, so with that I will suggest that we move on to substantive debate on the matters at hand, which are really the issues of — I believe we have Community Services and Education up this afternoon. I know that people have been looking forward to getting into those departments and actually having a discussion about where we have come in the last year or two and what the plans are for this year.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: That truly was a great display of really where the NDP would be coming from, where they would be going. What we do know and what Yukoners know, is what the record was of the NDP and their approach to the economy, from examples of their past leadership back in the nineties, to be the last one, at which time we saw an exodus of thousands of people. We saw double-digit unemployment — essentially the first time ever that this government had to go into debt as a result of the leadership under the New Democratic Party.

What our plans shows is sustainability, contrary to the Leader of the NDP. We have the long-term plan that shows where we're going and how we're going to get there and, because of the fiscal management we have had, we have the ability to be able to address concerns as they arise, plus have a long-term plan for where our goals are and meet all of those needs and still do it without mortgaging our children's future.

What is a big priority for this government is dealing with that public consultation — producing what we have — contrary to the Leader of the NDP. There was a significant public consultation that occurred in 2011 in a public election when we put forward a platform that said that, if elected for a third consecutive Yukon Party government, these are the deliverables that we will do, and that guides us.

We don't get into power and then deviate. Our focus has been on our platform, and I am proud to report that we have made considerable progress in addressing the needs that were identified in that platform. That is a public consultation that occurs every four or five years in this territory, and we will continue to deliver on those things.

We are focused in our spending on infrastructure like transportation, telecommunications and energy. We are focused on regulatory reform. We are focused on education and we are focused on training, hospitals, schools, seniors complexes, nursing homes, home care, fire halls, Salvation Army and working with them, Sarah Steele, Jackson Lake, learning centres, energy programs and tourism. Yukoners will decide again, as they always do, as to whose priorities are in focus. That will again come forward and we will look forward to that debate and that public consultation with Yukoners.

It was also interesting that the Leader of the Official Opposition again refers to the 300-bed nursing home, which we continue to —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Chair: Mr. Pasloski has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It does really sound sometimes like grade 1 or kindergarten —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Ms. White, on a point of order.

Ms. White: We have had rulings today and we have had rulings in the past where we talk about keeping a level of decorum up, and I believe right there that was a very pointed, fairly aggressive remark directed at the Leader of the Official Opposition. I can cite either Standing Order 19(i), which is

“...abusive or insulting language...” or 19(g), because I believe that was false.

Chair: Mr. Elias, on the point of order.

Mr. Elias: In listening to the debate today, I believe this is a dispute among members because I did not hear the Hon. Premier actually finish his sentence, so I don't know what he was actually going to refer to listening to grade 1 or 2 about. Maybe it was about when he was in grade 1 or 2. I believe this is a dispute among members.

Chair's ruling

Chair: The Chair did not hear this comment directed at a person. I did not yet form an opinion as to where that comment was going. At this time, I would say this is a dispute among members and there is no point of order.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I was speaking about long-term care facilities and the NDP continuing to imply that we are building a 300-bed nursing home. We continue to say that we have plans to build a 150-bed nursing home that will be built in a manner that will allow for future enlargement because that is what vision and forward-thinking is about.

I do take a bit of solace in their approach because I was watching some of the NDP platform from the Alberta election that is currently going on provincially, where part of the Alberta NDP platform is to build 2,000 more nursing home beds at a rate of 500 a year for the next four years. I don't think they are articulating or describing these nursing homes in the same manner that the Yukon NDP are, so I do take some amusement out of that point.

As I said, I wasn't quite finished my remarks for Committee of the Whole. Where I had left off was saying that if we actually drilled down to do a comparison of the parts of revenue that are comparable, we would combine the TFF, the territorial formula financial agreement, plus the Canada health and social transfers on the federal side and our own-source revenues. What I said was that, when you look at these, what you would find is that, since 2005-06, Yukon's own-source revenues grew by approximately 93 percent while our revenue under the territorial formula financing agreement grew by 77 percent.

Would it also surprise you that in this comparison Yukon's own-source revenues increased from 14.3 percent of the total in 2005-06 to 15.5 percent in 2015-16?

Madam Chair, context is everything and I'm appreciative of the opportunity to set the record straight. In the context of Yukon's ongoing revenue streams, this very simple analysis indicates that Yukon's growth in own-source has outpaced growth in the base transfers from Canada.

Yukoners know that Yukon is the beneficiary of important principle-based transfers from Canada, much like all jurisdictions through similar arrangements such as equalization. Canada continues to support the north through our transfer arrangements and, if I may reiterate, Yukon's TFF growth was 2.68 percent versus 3.85 percent for equalization.

I have to wonder aloud if the members opposite are suggesting that Yukon abandon this principle-based approach

to our fiscal arrangements with Canada. I also wonder whether members opposite suggest their governments would increase the tax burden to Yukoners in spite of Canada's accepted principle-based arrangements. Is this really how, given the opportunity, the members opposite plan to implement their respective party's visions of a fiscal plan? I apologize for the tangent. Allow me to get back to the final comment on Yukon's anticipated financial results for the 2015-16 fiscal year.

Our fiscal position continues to be sound with an annual surplus of \$23.2 million, the projected net financial assets of \$136.9 million. Shortly I will speak of some of the expenditure highlights contained in this budget. Suffice it to say that our government continues to deliver on our commitments to move forward together and to make significant expenditures on behalf of all Yukoners in the delivery of program service and capital investments.

We have done this without breaking the bank. With all decisions to date considered, our 2015-16 budget forecasts an annual surplus of \$23.242 million. This means revenues for the Government of Yukon are projected to exceed expenses for the 2015-16 fiscal year. Of course, surplus is not the only indicator of our financial well-being that should be considered.

As I have stated previously in this Legislature — and I am sure to repeat many times — the preeminent measure of a government's financial strength is net debt. We have a net financial resource position of \$136.993 million forecast for the year-end March 31, 2016. Yukon government continues to maintain a healthy financial position and avoid net debt. Madam Chair, most other Canadian jurisdictions are reporting net debt. This fact alone is significant, but let me phrase this in a different way.

Net debt provides an indication of future revenue requirements for government; that is, net debt provides a measure of the future revenues required to pay for the past. The significance of this should be of comfort to Yukoners. As one of the only jurisdictions in Canada not to be in a net debt position, it will not be necessary to allocate future revenues to offset or pay for past expenditures. Our government can say we are paying as we go and, yes, we do have positive net financial resources to invest in future programs and services.

As I've said, our strong net financial position is the most important indicator of our government's fiscal health. This indicator speaks to the future and, as I have observed previously, the 2015-16 main estimates forecasts our net financial resource position to be a very healthy \$136.933 million.

One final comment on our financial health: Our government continues to manage the Yukon's finances over a multi-year horizon. Our government saves when it is prudent to do so, and our government makes expenditure investments when it is necessary.

We see many needs and we are taking the opportunity to address those needs. We do this on behalf and for the benefit of all Yukoners.

As legislators, we need to look beyond the short term and to consider the long term. We continue to plan and spend according to our plan. Our government has done this to the benefit of all Yukoners. We have done this without mortgaging the future.

As I stated previously, our financial health is extremely strong. Our history of significant investment continues with our government's 2015-16 budget, as our strong fiscal framework provides us the flexibility to be responsive to emerging priorities and opportunities as they are presented to Yukon.

I noted in my earlier comments that this 2015-16 budget reflects total expenditures of approximately \$1.367 billion, of which just under \$313 million is directed toward significant capital investments for the benefit of Yukoners, and approximately \$1.054 billion is allocated for operation and maintenance.

As I've emphasized throughout, our commitment to fiscal responsibility remains so strong, while we continue to invest strategically in Yukon and for the benefit of all Yukoners. It would be easy to go through the laundry list of what the 2015-16 budget provides in terms of specific 2015-16 expenditure items. Today I prefer rather to speak about how our 2015-16 budget supports our multi-year vision of where and how the Yukon Party is making a long-term investment and, therefore, a difference in the well-being of Yukoners.

Of course my comments will be primarily focused on a number of strategic initiatives. Individual members will however be happy to provide full details for their respective portfolios once we get into line-by-line debate. An important theme of our 2015-16 budget is putting Yukoners to work. It is therefore understandable that my comments will focus on many of the capital elements of our 2015-16 budget. Our government has had a string of significant capital budgets — eight successive years where capital investments have exceeded \$200 million and 2015-16 is no exception.

Our 2015-16 budget calls for an investment in Yukoners and Yukon infrastructure of over \$300 million. As I've noted throughout, our 2015-16 budget includes \$312.8 million for capital expenditures covering a number of important investments across a number of sectors, including: \$61 million in support of the territory's transportation infrastructure; \$35 million to support a variety of investments in municipal and community infrastructure; and \$145 million for the planning, construction and maintenance of a number of facilities. These are some impressive levels of investment in targeted sectors. I am confident these investments will indeed put Yukoners to work.

Madam Chair, I spoke earlier about how our 2015-16 budget continues to plan for the long term and strategic investments to the benefit of all Yukoners. Allow me this opportunity to bring just a few to your attention. Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation are planning a new large-scale hydro dam to power our future over 10 to 15 years and we will be investing \$2 million in hydro infrastructure in 2015-16 as well as \$4.3 million in the Keno/Stewart Crossing transmission line.

Yukon continues to work with Canada to finalize the new Building Canada agreement. Once finalized, this agreement will provide approximately \$342 million in project funding over the next 10 years.

The availability of suitable land is also a concern for Yukoners. Our budget provides \$7.7 million through the Department of Community Services to start phase 3 of the Whistle Bend development and another \$5.05 million through the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to address land development in communities outside of Whitehorse.

Access to appropriate recreation facilities also continues to be of significant importance to Yukoners. Our budget provides \$400,000 for preliminary geotechnical work and detailed design of a soccer and running track sports complex. Following up on the tremendous efforts of the Yukon Foundation, which raised funds for an MRI, our 2015-16 budget includes \$22.3 million in support of the expansion of the emergency room at the Whitehorse General Hospital.

Finally, Madam Chair, our government and members opposite are fully aware of the anticipated growth in Yukon's population. We are all aware that more and more Yukoners have chosen to stay in Yukon throughout their retirement years. Allow me to highlight just three initiatives included in this budget to address infrastructure to support Yukon's aging population.

First, under the Yukon Housing Corporation, we find \$9.5 million to complete the Whitehorse seniors housing project that was started in 2014-15. Second, we have the anticipated completion in December of 2015 — the Department of Health and Social Services has identified \$7.8 million to complete the construction of McDonald Lodge in Dawson City. Madam Chair, as the last item in this brief list, this budget provides \$26 million to advance the planning, design and ground-breaking of a new care facility in Whitehorse. In consideration of potential growing demands, this facility will be built with the idea of future expansion.

These initiatives I have mentioned here today are just a few of the investments we are making on behalf of Yukoners. We are able to make these types of investments based on our successful record of planned and disciplined management of our finances. We continue to manage Yukon's fiscal framework over the long term. Our government continues its work to be ahead of the curve by identifying, planning and implementing long-term and multi-year expenditure plans now.

Madam Chair, my colleagues and I look forward to discussing the 2015-16 budget in more detail during general debate. Our government's commitment to sound financial management remains strong. As a result, we have net positive financial resources, we have accumulated surplus, and we have an annual surplus.

I am extremely proud of the efforts of our government to provide a wide range of program services and capital investments on behalf of all Yukoners while maintaining a very healthy long-term fiscal position. Looking into our multi-year forecast tabled with this budget, future years remain

extremely positive and revenues projected to exceed expenses for each of the next four years.

This forward-looking, healthy fiscal framework is what Yukoners can take great comfort in. Indeed, the Yukon remains financially well-positioned for the future.

Before I close my remarks, there was one other comment, I think, just based on the NDP leader's comments. She said that federal revenues are declining, and of course she is absolutely wrong there as well. Federal revenues' rate of growth is slowing, but they continue to grow. So this is a significant difference — a little play on words.

I look forward to any further questions.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate?

We are going to move on then to departmental discussion. We are going to start with Vote 51, Community Services. The minister has requested a 15-minute recess for officials.

Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

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

Department of Community Services

Chair: We are going to enter into general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I am pleased to rise in Committee to speak to this year's Community Services 2015-16 main estimates. I'm joined today by Paul Moore, who is acting as our deputy minister currently. Our deputy minister, Kelvin Leary, is down undertaking some medical tourism, visiting Vancouver, doing some shopping. I understand he's purchasing two new hips and they'll be installed while he's down there, as well, so he's out for a few weeks, and Paul is acting in his stead. Chris Mahar is the director of Finance, System and Administration for the Department of Community Services.

I have a number of opening comments, but I do understand that the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes has a bang up intro so I look forward to hearing his intro and his questions.

Mr. Barr: Madam Chair, I would like to start off by congratulating the new minister on his appointment to Community Services and thank the previous minister for his efforts. I do realize that the new minister does have a sensitive side and I'm going to keep that in mind as we move forward today. I do take it to heart and I look forward to a great afternoon of kibitzing, and I do look forward to hearing his other opening remarks. This is a very different approach, but I surely do appreciate it. I thought he was joking.

I would also like to thank the members from the department for being here and I thank them for their ongoing hard work. I do wish Deputy Minister Kelvin Leary all the best while he's in Vancouver and, given that he's down there — from what the Minister of Community Services was stating, it's having to do with his hips, I know that being a

hipster is in these days and I'm sure he'll be walking with a different twist when he gets back. So we look forward to seeing him when he gets back and really in all seriousness hope that it goes well.

I have had some friends who have had those types of operations. In the long run it is a great thing but, like anything of that nature, it is definitely not fun getting to where you are feeling good afterward. I do wish him a speedy recovery.

With that, I would like to start out by just giving a shout-out to all the hard-working volunteers of the communities that I represent in Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, especially the LACs and the volunteers, the members of EMS, the volunteer fire department, search and rescue — to name a few — the parents and children — from the parades that are attended to the fairs that we know go on in the communities, especially Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes and throughout the territory. Cookouts, ski races — soon we will be seeing the teachers going around throughout the territory cleaning up the ditches and raising money for various outings that they will be attending.

I know that, as we move into the summer months, the youth will be out of school, and the parents who have been going to the school every morning and helping with the school breakfasts will have time off. I am sure it will be only to start to engage with their children, not at school, but cooking breakfast at home hopefully and exploring what this great territory has to offer in the summer months.

I would like to make mention of some of the things that are going on before I get to the bulk of the Community Services budget, the 2015-16 main estimates. In regard to Carcross, I know that mountain biking, the beach and the past endeavours with the Caribou Commons there and the VIC opening and the new businesses that were up and running — there is going to be a welcoming of six new units in Caribou Commons that local entrepreneurs will be able to rent. That is going to be an added attraction for those who are out there listening or who want to be able to take it to their community.

I know that on sunny days, hitting the beach and grabbing an ice cream cone at Skookum Jim's is a big hit. The long-awaited Caribou Hotel is going to be opening this summer, and I do know that there may not be rooms, but the bottom part — restaurant and beverage side — I do believe they are working hard at getting that open. I was speaking with Jamie Toole, and that is the goal. We do look forward to that in Carcross, along with some of the local authentic carvings and art that is on display for people to purchase. I know people have been working hard all winter to get ready for this tourist season and welcome those who come to visit our territory. The train crews are working hard.

People are going to be using the Carcross Desert in a different way, and I do welcome the learning centre that will be starting to move forward and also with the ongoing work from all parties to finally have a new emergency services building where the old fire hall is now — or search-and-rescue building — and that will be going forward. I know that has been long-awaited in the community and people are happy that's coming together. I know that the learning centre — it

was previously talked about as being a potlatch house and so on and so forth and is now the learning centre. It was welcomed by all members of the community at different community meetings, but the concern was that we didn't forget about the community centre in Carcross. I'm hoping to move forward with the new minister and maybe have him come out and view what's happening out there with the folks who are interested.

I do know that in the agreement of having the learning centre go forward, it was agreed on by all members of the community — different folks from all stripes of life, including First Nations — that there would be a timeline included if that was to go forward and that there would be a community club. There would be a timeline for that that would be looked at so that members can enjoy what other — well, basically all other communities in the territory have community clubs to gather at. I'll be bringing forward those concerns as we go forward as will the members of the community.

I know other positives are happening and I'm glad to see them coming forward, like the Conrad campground and the marina. I know that the minister opposite will also be commenting on these, so I'm letting him know that these are good things. However, people still would like to get rid of the one-way street.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Barr: Thanks for the public notice there from across the way. The sewage lagoon is moving forward, but hazardous waste is another area, not only for the Southern Lakes but throughout the territory. I'll be commenting on that later.

I would also like to mention that Mount Lorne has enjoyed the new Zamboni. However, the community itself also is quite a destination point for the number of activities that happen at the Mount Lorne community centre — from the food nights, to the learning of different foods, to yoga classes; to the sled-dog races — Carbon Hill and the ski races that I've been fortunate to be able to attend and volunteer at. The local volunteers there are endless in Mount Lorne in providing opportunities for all walks of life. It is quite an attraction for many people from Whitehorse to attend any activity that is happening in Mount Lorne, not to forget the square dances, the local talent such as Nicole Edwards or Al Pope or some of the other ones who end up down there playing — Annie Avery, the Fiddleheads — playing for their pancake breakfasts.

There are ongoing issues there with the McGowan lands. It is a concern how that is progressing. There are concerns about agricultural land — the numbers coming in — and wildlife corridors and so on and so forth that I'll be putting forward.

There are wishes of that community that hopefully we can work on together regarding solar panels on the community club at Mount Lorne and possibly other community centres throughout the territory, looking toward renewable energy options and some of the O&M costs throughout the territory, not only in Mount Lorne. There is an initiative by some of the locals there, looking at the Building Canada fund. Hopefully

they will be able to cut down on the energy costs so there can actually be more money added to ongoing efforts by community members that will result in more of the fine programming and staff required to be able to continue the great work that is done in Mount Lorne.

I also note that civic addressing in Mount Lorne is something that has been receiving continued work and now that some of the roads — there are roads that have been given street signs, which is very helpful now and it is moving into the civic addressing stage. I know that with members from the staff meeting with the LAC and comments, not only about discouraging where it was going with McGowan — hopefully those considerations will be looked at — but also some of the considerations of a more Mount Lorne-suited civic addressing structure that people are happy with and willing to work with, and that will still allow emergency responders expedient times in responding to emergency situations that we know, at the end, either saves a house from fire or gets people to the hospital, saving their lives at times.

One of things about that is, you know, the roads back and forth — some of them need continued work. I do know that the Annie Lake Road for one, out there, has been requested from the previous Minister of Highways — for the grader that runs that Annie Lake Road now and over the years, there is really no more pit run left to grade. What seems to be happening, which work was started in the fall, was that as the grader goes down, there being no pit run left, it's bringing up boulders of large sizes. It's taking out mufflers. It's very difficult on the vehicles. I understand that some of the work had started, but the work that had started — basically with the weather as it was — is nonexistent from driving out there and seeing reports and listening to the people who do drive the Annie Lake Road. We're hoping that this government would be able to complete the work that was started last year and have a stretch of road that isn't going to cost those who live there for mufflers and shocks and suspensions and so on and so forth — or taking out rads with large rocks that seem to be only left to grade.

Some other areas — I know that Marsh Lake, from attending out there at various Canada Day celebrations — the amazing Fred Penner show that happened just recently, prior to Rendezvous, and the fine work that the folks do. I guess, whenever we bring people to town, they dovetail some of these folks no one would get a chance to see. That was one thing — I believe there were over 250 — my goodness, I have lots more, Madam Chair.

I will keep going, though, and I'll let the minister get back up, but I do know that, with Fred Penner, 250 youth were able to attend that one event — also reminding that it takes a lot of volunteers. Marsh Lake does have a lot of volunteers, not only with their fire department, but the people who were volunteering at the Army Beach Road and putting in trails. I know the money came forward — and very happy with that. Then they were able to put in their sweat equity and design the trails out there — from still reclaiming from the 2011 flood that we had, following up on being able to put some décor back into all the dead growth now as a result of the flooding

and the ditches being graded. Those things have happened, and they're looking forward to actually accessing some more funds to continue to beautify that back space.

Along with Marsh Lake, civic addressing is one of the things that the community had fundraised for to get monies for signage. However, seeing that other communities, such as Tagish, have received monies for those signs, they would also like to access money from Community Services to complete the work that they have.

Hopefully the minister will recognize that the people themselves have put in their time and energy in obtaining funds to do so, and I only believe, from this member, that it would be the right thing to do to qualify their efforts in putting forth money so the remainder of the civic addressing signs could come from Community Services so that they can finish some of the work that they have begun and that we do know is complemented from funding from Community Services in other areas and only kind of rise up to have it be recognized there also.

The Jackalope has Friday dinners and there is open mic there — music. It's a great place to be in Marsh Lake, but in speaking with all of the Southern Lakes, the water level and the raising of the water level do cause great concern — with how that may be proceeding. I know that people are not in favour of raising the water level in Southern Lakes for various reasons. I'll get into that later.

I'm not sure how much time I do have, but I would like to speak just quickly and briefly about Tagish. There is a new well there. However, I had written to the minister and I will be following up on that — how we can look at backup plans for when these things go out because many people do have blue jugs and can't get water because they get it regularly and can't go more than a couple of days, and sometimes the well has been out, for example. It's great that there is a new well, but some of the ongoing issues for when it does go down — because possibly not all the kinks are worked out, or in the future — that all the communities that are on water wells and that go get their own water — that we institute backup plans such as what Tagish has offered at the fire hall, that somebody could be there when that happens in that community and maybe in others and that somebody could go there and have the door open to allow people to get drinking water in the times that when rural water wells are down. That's something that hopefully we'll hear more about as we move forward.

There are so many involved people in that community, Tagish, who are looking forward to a possible warmup shack for the rink and a rink cover such as the kind of defunct one in Carmacks. I'll stop right there. Thank you Madam Chair. I look forward to hearing the minister opposite in his remarks.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It seems that the member opposite's comments related primarily to issues of concern in his riding and there wasn't a lot to do with Community Services main estimates but, since he has raised a number of the issues — I will respond, as he has raised a number of issues that I'm very interested in commenting on.

First of all, I know that the member opposite noted the great development at the Conrad campground in his riding.

We're very proud of that, although I should note that the expenditures themselves are made in the Environment department. Questions about the development itself can be directed to the Minister of Environment when we are on the Environment budget. Likewise a number of the highway issues, the road issues, that were raised by the member for roads in his riding can be directed to the Highways and Public Works department, as the Highways and Public Works department tends to be the department that deals with highways. The land issues — I know that he mentioned the McGowan lands and other possible developments — of course relate to the Energy, Mines and Resources department, which has the land development aspects of those issues.

The one thing I will note though is that he did comment on some of the goings-on in Carcross and of course I'm happy to comment on some of those. He did note the fantastic announcement that was made earlier this month on April 14 when the Premier announced that the Yukon government will contribute \$2.7 million toward the construction of a learning centre in Carcross. As the Premier noted on April 14 — and I quote: "The Carcross learning centre will become a central gathering place for the entire community, providing a number of critical services to Carcross/Tagish First Nation citizens." He added, "We look forward to working with the First Nation on this initiative and other projects."

Madam Chair, financial support for the centre results from the intergovernmental accord signed by the Premier and the Carcross-Tagish First Nation in March. Through the intergovernmental accord, the two leaders committed to working — the leader of course is Khà Shâde Héni Danny Cresswell — together on common priorities. In addition to financial support for the learning centre, the accord supports the negotiation of an education agreement to improve the outcomes of CTFN students and the provision of training for front-line workers focused on mental health and substance abuse. Similar accords have been signed with the VGFN and the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, as well as the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and the Kluane First Nation. The accords provide a practical way for governments to work together on joint priorities and initiatives.

Further to that excellent development, we've announced in the budget that we will be moving forward with the new fire hall in the community of Carcross. The Yukon government has allocated a significant amount of money in this budget for that construction. The design is substantially complete and the preliminary site assessment has begun. The Fire Marshal's Office has met with the local advisory council to discuss the new fire hall, which, for operational reasons, is based on an existing proven design. The Fire Marshal's Office is sensitive to the prominent location of the fire hall and looks forward to working with the community to ensure that the building is kept to the best degree possible with the character and sense of place that has been developed in Carcross.

The new fire hall will integrate local emergency services. It will have three bays and will house fire, Yukon Emergency Medical Services and search-and-rescue vehicles. There will

also be a fitness room that will be available for community use and will replace the aging existing fitness room in Carcross. Of course with that fitness room being open to residents of Carcross, it's likely, as fitness centres tend to do — that room will certainly become a focal point for the community, I'm sure, as those community residents who choose to access it will certainly have a sense of community with that particular building and with that particular room within the building.

If I may, I know the member has a number of other comments he would like to make about his riding, and I look forward to hearing those. Using my remaining time, I will turn to the matter at hand, the main estimates for Community Services. The department's main estimates include over \$54 million in capital expenditures and over \$84 million in operation and maintenance expenditures.

The Department of Community Services makes important investments in programs, services and activities that support healthy and sustainable Yukon communities. Our 2015-16 budget prioritizes investments for Yukoners and Yukon communities that will bring long-term benefits to the territory. Ultimately, the investments that I will highlight today support our government's approach to making Yukon an excellent place to live.

The breadth of the programs, services and support offered by Community Services is impressive. I would like to begin by telling you about our investments in Protective Services division. Our Protective Services division supports our communities and our quality of life, ultimately helping to make Yukon one of the best places to live. The division includes the Wildland Fire Management, the Emergency Measures Organization, the Fire Marshal's Office, Emergency Medical Services and the Building Safety branch.

Every year, Yukon can experience emergencies, including wildfires, floods, avalanches, extreme weather, human-induced and technological failures and other related events. By investing in personnel, equipment, training and infrastructure, the government has strengthened interoperability and coordination among the territory's emergency response agencies to bolster their preventive and response capacities.

We recently announced our support to move the current 911 call centre managed by the RCMP from its downtown location up to our new emergency response centre. This will be an important step toward our expansion of basic 911 to rural communities by next summer.

With the 2015 forest fire season about to begin, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge our Wildland Fire Management team who are starting to prepare for the season ahead and are ready to help protect us all and our communities through their important work. They too help make Yukon a great place to live.

Our Wildland Fire Management capital budget for 2015-16 includes a number of important investments, such as \$390,000 for the replacement of a pumper truck as a part of our fleet replacement plan; \$200,000 for other equipment

replacement and \$250,000 to expand the asphalt tarmac at the Carmacks air tanker base.

We have allocated over \$15 million in the 2015-16 operation and maintenance funding for training, fire suppression activities and other operations to manage this important public safety program in Yukon. This includes salary and wages, repairs and maintenance, fuel costs, training and other supports that enable the team to protect our communities from the potentially disastrous effects of a wildland fire.

We will again have two full turbine air tanker groups for the fire season this year. These turbine aircraft significantly improve response times, carry heavy payloads and meet current North American standards for air tankers.

We recently announced over \$850,000 that will be allocated for FireSmart in 2015-16. This continues to be a valuable program that is helping to reduce the risk of wildfire to our communities. More than \$13 million has been invested in 395 FireSmart projects across Yukon over the past 16 years. FireSmart funding is available to First Nations and municipal governments, registered non-profit organizations, community associations and school councils.

Managing fires in Yukon's boreal forest is always challenging, but I know that we have the right people, equipment and protections in place to safeguard our communities.

Yukon's Emergency Measures Organization leads all emergency preparedness planning for the Yukon government. It focuses on the four pillars of emergency management: prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. In an emergency event, EMO is responsible for drawing together the resources and expertise required to support a response in a timely and effective manner, whether it's from a local source, across Canada or across North America.

In 2015-16, we will see capital investments for EMO that include: \$30,000 for replacement of a search and rescue vehicle; \$235,000 for search and rescue storage units in Carmacks and Haines Junction; and \$125,000 for emergency public alerting equipment that will enable Yukon government community transmitters to broadcast mandated public emergency messages issued by Yukon or Environment Canada as part of the national public alerting system. \$620,000 in O&M funding is also identified for the emergency measures office to manage its operations.

The Fire Marshal's Office is responsible for reducing the loss of life and property to fire and the related emergencies throughout Yukon. It does this through leadership, education, enforcement, program development and first response. The FMO operates 16 volunteer fire departments inclusive of over 225 volunteer firefighters in unincorporated communities. In addition to the peace of mind that a properly equipped and trained fire department provides to a community, this operation is also of enormous value because a local fire service has a direct economic impact on residents who are able to pay lower homeowner rates levied by insurance providers.

The budget identifies over \$1.7 million this year for the operations of the FMO. This includes funding for honoraria for volunteers recruited and active in various communities around the territory.

The capital budget for the FMO this year is over \$4.7 million. It includes \$993,000 for fire protection, including fleet fire truck replacements, volunteer fire department equipment and upgrades, including fleet repair, turnout gear replacement, communications equipment and more.

Building on the past investments we have made in fire hall replacements, including significant investments in 2014-15 for the fire hall in Beaver Creek, as I noted earlier, we're investing approximately \$3.7 million in 2015-16 capital dollars for the construction of a new fire hall in Carcross. This new fire hall will reduce operating costs and better meet the needs of the local fire department and other emergency services within the community.

In addition to wildland fire, structural fire and emergency measures, the department continues to enhance Yukon's emergency medical services. YEMS provides safe, effective and timely emergency pre-hospital care to Yukon residents and visitors. In doing so, it is responsible for air and ground transportation of patients to and from the health care facilities throughout the Yukon, and tertiary centres in southern Canada.

YEMS is an essential partner in Yukon's health care system and works with Health and Social Services, the Yukon Hospital Corporation and other partners to respond to emergencies whenever the need arises. In this way, Yukon EMS helps to provide consistent, competent health care across the territory.

In 2014, YEMS responded to 5,278 calls in the Whitehorse catchment area and to 1,334 calls in the communities, for a total of 6,612. The YMS medevac air ambulance service responded to 860 calls in the same time frame. Our Yukon EMS team members are there for us in our time of need. These skilled men and women in the service, both staff and volunteers, do a tremendous job protecting our communities and making Yukon a great place to live. I want to take an opportunity to thank each and every one of them for what they do for us.

The 2015-16 budget identifies \$451,000 in capital expenditures. That includes \$310,000 to support the purchase of two new ambulances. Our main estimates include \$386,000 to support a strategic investment fund for rural community operations in our emergency medical services. This funding will help us make a difference in our service to communities and our partnerships with communities when it comes to EMS service.

The 2015-16 budget also identifies over \$9 million in O&M funding for emergency medical services operations in Yukon communities and that includes honoraria for EMS volunteers, wages, repairs and maintenance for ambulances and stations, upgrades to communication equipment, training and more.

Community Services is committed to providing emergency responders, both staff and volunteers with the

facilities, infrastructure, equipment and training that they need to do their jobs to the best of their ability and to provide care for Yukoners. I think I hear some of them out there right now. Their service on behalf of all Yukoners helps make Yukon a great place to live.

Also, in this branch of CS, the Building Safety and standards branch is responsible for helping to keep Yukoners safe in their homes and in the buildings they use for work, recreation and daily business. The branch accomplishes this through developing, interpreting, administering and enforcing the building, plumbing, electrical and mechanical standards in unincorporated communities, rural municipalities and rural areas of Yukon.

Building Safety and standards issues permits for, and conducts inspections of building construction, plumbing, electrical, gas and boiler related work on buildings and facilities in rural municipalities, unincorporated communities and rural areas. In 2015-16, over \$1.8 million is identified to support branch operations of the Building Safety and standards branch.

Moving on from the Protective Services branch, I would like to turn to the Community Development Division. First of all, within that division is of course Community Affairs. This budget also reflects the significant investments we in the Department of Community Services are making to support and build the capacity of local governments. The programs and services we offer help make Yukon communities great places to live, work, play and raise families.

Community Services supports the establishment and operation of effective local governments and works to foster effective working relationships between communities and the Yukon government. Communities rely on Community Affairs staff for their integrity and professionalism, which is evident in the successful partnership with the Association of Yukon Communities and work that has been accomplished with municipal governments and local advisory councils.

This government recognizes that municipalities make a major contribution to improving Yukoners' quality of life and we are providing over \$25 million to directly support local governance in 2015-16.

We are providing \$72,000 for LACs and value their contribution to local governance; more than \$6.6 million in grants-in-lieu of taxes are also payable to Yukon's eight municipal governments and \$100,000 is identified as a contribution to the operations of the Association of Yukon Communities.

Community Services promotes good governance and sustainable and healthy communities and we believe in supporting Yukon municipalities.

I recognize my time has elapsed, so before getting into the other branches of the government and providing a brief overview as to what this budget entails for those branches, I will cede the floor and look forward to hearing comments from members opposite.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his remarks. I will speak in some generalities still for a bit. I would like to finish up with Tagish and then carry on before I move into more

specific questions. I do thank those for listening and look at going forward to other parts of the debate.

I did want to comment — I know the elders and seniors at the Tagish community hall enjoy their carpet bowling activities and also the coffee and chat. The fall fair has continued to expand along with the weekly farmers market, which has been ongoing with the hard work of the folks in that community — looking forward to the funding that I know that this side of the House has brought up prior to even my being here around the different structure funding for community clubs and that is welcome. I guess as we have all moved in that direction, it is welcome in the rural communities to be able to have some breathing space, so I would like to thank all those for those efforts so that we're now in a place that — for example I was at the last rec meeting last week in Tagish and they're looking at being able to have some other funding to help their rec director not be so taxed in all the work that will make life a little easier in that one particular community club, so I would just like to thank those involved for seeing that to fruition.

Also the civic addressing is moving forward in Tagish and the minister opposite may be happy to hear that if he hasn't done so already. People have been putting up those signs to number their places. I would like to comment on the funding for training that was announced by the minister briefly just minutes ago in his first remarks and acknowledge the new Fire Chief Boyd Piper and a couple of the other volunteer firefighters who will be using some of those funds to attend the first upcoming competition for first responders in Vancouver in May. I wish them all well and know what that has done is that it has raised the morale of other volunteer firefighters, which we know we've been hearing can be lacking in some of the communities. People are kind of excited about getting into physical fitness to be able to take pride in increasing their own personal abilities in their physical fitness, which will only result throughout the territory in greater responses and efficiency in delivering the skills necessary to be a first responder.

I do know that the culinary cook-off coming up at Six Mile River is a welcoming thing in May — a welcoming event. The swans at Swan Haven — we do know the numbers of swans that attend are in huge numbers and it's always a welcoming sign of spring, but not to forget that they're very close to look down upon the Tagish bridge and see what only happens once a year here when they are coming through — for many people who do get to view them. I haven't ridden my 10-speed there, or my bicycle there yet, but I'm going to take a ride to the —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Barr: Well no, I'm going to actually wear off a few more pounds and ride my bicycle — not my motorcycle — although that time of year is upon us and that's great.

I heard the minister prior commenting on some of the things that I did speak to that are Energy, Mines and Resources, Highways and Public Works. Some of these — I am quite well aware of that. I'm just taking the time to mention some of these things because they have been ongoing

issues in the communities that I do represent and throughout the territory. I would be remiss if I didn't comment at some point. Seeing that these are some of the moments when I get to speak, I would like to mention Pennycook road — that people are still waiting for those kinds of things for the new Highways and Public Works minister — that it's on the radar. I'll just leave it at that.

I would like to move on now and speak to the 2015-16 specific estimates. When I look at these estimates, the story begins to emerge and it's most telling that the estimates point to a number of Community Services projects that were budgeted for the 2014-15 fiscal year and that either did not get built or major work did not get completed. These projects include: Beaver Creek library; the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation administration building's energy retrofits; the Mayo new community well and treatment; Teslin waste-water system upgrades — and the list goes on. All told, \$8.2 million in capital projects — \$8.2 million — was budgeted for last year and then wasn't spent. This year the government has announced that it has record spending planned for Yukon. How can we feel comfortable with the government managing the megaprojects being touted by the Premier when the modest projects currently in progress are running late? Madam Chair, why is this? A contractor is not bidding or not accepted. Are tenders not awarded? In a place like Yukon, when too much capital spending is approved, it's easy to overwhelm the capacity of local companies and more are handed to Outside contractors.

Here's what happens next: the trickle-down economic benefits of Outside contractors with fly-in or non-resident labour does not accrue to the territory, yet the jobs are done by local companies or by hiring local workers. This challenge applies to any department where capital spending is committed — Health and Social Services, Highways and Public Works, Yukon Housing Corporation and Community Services.

The contrasts are clear, Madam Chair. Hundreds of thousands of dollars for another recreation facility in Whitehorse, the outdoor AstroTurf fields and the projects in communities like the Dawson City rec centre and the Carmacks arena are still left wanting.

Community infrastructure, of which the maintenance is the responsibility of the department, isn't being maintained. It just isn't happening. Look at what happened to the Ross River School, a project for which problems were known to the government in 2008. When we were there on our community tour, it was brought to our attention, and it was kind of reminiscent of the Ross River bridge, which is now a success story — and it's very happy that the people came together for that. But to note that, back in 2008 when repair funds were allocated to the school, it's the view of those in the community that those repairs hadn't happened. What we're looking at is that people are in houses. Although the community has risen to the occasion with what's going on with the school by hosting classrooms and activities and there being various outbuildings, this didn't have to happen.

Also, we know that community resources in the school, like the Ross River library, aren't accessible.

Similar questions exist for several of our ambulance stations in Watson Lake — I do remember from three years now that concerns that were brought forward. The question is whether or not this has been resolved, especially in the winter months — when the bay itself was not built to enough length so that a stretcher could be pulled out in the bay itself, so the doors have to be left open, not only to do some of those things with stretchers, but to clean the ambulance itself. At minus temperatures, that's quite an inconvenience to those who are delivering that service or trying to do just the daily upkeep, maintenance and cleanliness of that ambulance station.

I also have to think about the ambulance station, or the ambulance, in the new — although it's welcomed that the new fire trucks are happening and new ambulances are purchased. Those are great things. However, some of the infrastructure, like in Carmacks, that still isn't built — and hopefully we'll get a timeline when that place will happen. I do realize that we can't do it all at once. I've stated that, however, when we do move forward in places like Carmacks for an ambulance station or a fire truck, that is taken into consideration, that the building itself will be designed so that especially the trucks and the ambulances themselves will fit in the space provided, and that ongoing care and maintenance and moving of stretchers — when you move a six-foot stretcher out the back of an ambulance, it requires probably at least eight more feet on the length of the bay — so that these things are in the design as we are going forward and these things are taken into consideration.

It just makes sense that we really do ask the people who are in the trenches, the volunteers who are out there doing that work — their opinions as to some of the oversights that do happen. This is not to place blame on anyone or anybody in the department; it is only that we continue to sharpen our pencil to see how we can do better. I am just raising those things in that way and hope that as we do move forward that we learn from our past. I have all the confidence that the minister will take this to heart because I know he is a good guy — sensitive, I was going to say.

Moving on — on the question of emergency services, I would like to underscore that we will be watching closely to ensure that Haines Junction ambulance services' ongoing challenges are met by the department. Not all ambulance services are created equal and ensuring a long-term solution that allows Haines Junction to access continued ambulance services is of paramount importance. When I speak to that situation — and I know that this has to do with what will be happening over this next year in Community Services — I raised questions about this last fall in the House. I do know that that issue is still outstanding, but I had been given assurances that it would be resolved by this summer so that we are not looking at the volunteer hours — and the numbers are high for emergency folks in that ambulance in Haines Junction.

The issue is that because of the length of the callouts, those volunteers are out so long that with the time for them

being volunteers and then to attend their day jobs becomes very difficult. It is specifically in the summer months that these things occur. I know I did hear on the news last week that there are still concerns that there hasn't been an agreement reached as to how this will proceed as we move forward and the summer months are coming quite quickly. I am looking forward to hearing the latest update on that. I did ask about that in the briefing, and I would like to thank the members of the department for the briefing. We did very much spend our whole time and wish we could have spent more. Although it was very informative, that was one of the things that had been left unanswered.

I guess I would like to speak also on waste diversion. We see from the budget that this Yukon Party is still committed to short-term solutions to the real challenge of recycling in Yukon. It is good to hear that one of the recyclers, Raven, is looking at opening their after-hours drop-off, which is going to be welcome to those who desire to recycle in the territory.

Although the recyclers did receive what they asked for — and that is not disputed at all, because I know that the minister has stated that — I would hope that before we get to another place in recycling, that there be talks that would be ongoing so that we could look at long-term planning for recycling in the territory and solid-waste diversion, for example.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Barr: Oh yes, thanks. Although I know that there are questions within what I'm stating, I will have specific questions, one at a time. If I don't hear the answers in these, I will go back to them and we'll finally get to that part of the debate. I am still trying to just move through some opening remarks in this way.

I'm sorry, Madam Chair, how much time do I have? Three minutes? Okay.

A specific question here — and it does come from realizing some of the past things I've brought up in the House — is: Does the government have a plan to cycle out some of its older landfills and ensure that we have a place to put our waste? Is there any plan being undertaken on this? The budget seems to fail on any concrete evidence of such planning. I know that there has been some berm-raising of some of the periphery solid-waste facilities to allow for the life of what is in place to live longer, knowing that from previous discussions, the landfill solid-waste facilities themselves are reaching their filling point sooner than the projected numbers, as a result of people dumping in periphery landfills other than in Whitehorse here. So that is a question that I did want to raise.

I'll just sit down and look forward to listening to the minister's other remarks.

Chair: Would members like a brief recess?

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, resuming general debate in Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I would like to thank the member opposite for his comments and questions. I think it would probably benefit the House to leave the questions aside until after the opening statements are done. That way we can engage in single questions and single answers. It would probably be easier. For now, I will continue with my opening remarks and then once we've finished those, we can get into those individual questions.

I did want to thank the member opposite for the very kind words about me, although I think it's important to reflect that I am a very sensitive guy. I hope he takes that into consideration the next time we engage in Question Period or other fora where he may be a little bit mean to me. I would like to remind him that my feelings are very sensitive, as he noted correctly. I thank members for offering tissues at this time.

The department support for sport and recreation in Yukon includes support for our athletes and ambassadors in major games and at local levels and for building our sport and recreation facilities so our athletes and citizens have places to train, have great places to play and ultimately, live happier and healthier lives.

We have committed a significant amount in this budget to repair and upgrade existing recreation facilities in our 12 unincorporated communities. In 2014, the then Minister of Community Services announced support for the development of a new outdoor sports complex in Whitehorse. This facility is envisioned to have two artificial-turf fields, an eight-lane rubberized track and bleachers. Community Services has formalized an agreement with the Yukon Outdoor Sports Complex Association, YOSCA, so that we can move forward together on the work required to develop this important piece of sport and recreation infrastructure. We have awarded the design contract and are working with the City of Whitehorse now on finalizing a location along with the necessary zoning requirements.

This facility will provide opportunities for enhanced training and development for Yukon athletes. It will offer a new space for the territory's recreation community to host events during the summer months. Facilities like this provide sport development as well as social development, and economic benefits for the community as a whole.

Yukon government will also invest \$1 million in this budget to support Yukon's participation in the 2016 Arctic Winter Games in Nuuk, Greenland. As we recently announced we will be providing \$100,000 to support the Arctic X Games, an alternate event here that will be hosted in Yukon to provide a competitive opportunity for participants in sports that will not be reflected in the Arctic Winter Games in 2016. Yukon's leadership in the Arctic X Games has not gone unnoticed by our neighbour jurisdictions across the north or by the athletes who will be able to compete at the highest level in both Greenland and Whitehorse in 2016.

This budget also includes an additional \$325,000 to support the 2015 Western Canada Summer Games, where I'm confident that again our Yukon athletes will be ambassadors for our territory and for their sports.

We recently announced a \$400,000 increase in community recreation assistance funding, or grant funding, for unincorporated Yukon communities. This funding increase begins in this 2015-16 budget and helps our communities fund recreation, wellness and active living opportunities. If members have a chance to look at the budget, you will see some significant increases across the Yukon in those unincorporated communities. As I am sure all members can appreciate, our investments in sport and recreation this year contribute significantly to making Yukon a great place to live and to play.

Over \$2 million in operation and maintenance funding is budgeted to provide public library services in Yukon communities. This includes funding to operate the Whitehorse Public Library and to support staff in our community libraries. Circulation of physical materials remains at the heart of libraries and their use continues to expand. In Whitehorse, we estimate that over 150,000 items were borrowed in 2014-15 and that, in the communities, over 34,000 items were borrowed. Loans of physical materials are now complemented by the use of electronic resources such as the e-library, which continues to rise in popularity. An estimated 5,000-plus publications were borrowed electronically in 2014-15. The e-library is very successful with some-2,000 e-books and audio books available for downloading. New titles in both English and French are added to the collection each year. Since its launch in 2011, over 1,100-individual users have borrowed items from the collection more than 15,000 times.

Libraries play an important social role in our communities and foster connections between people. Programs for all ages, public meeting rooms and Internet access are just some of the services that are offered by our libraries. Our libraries provide a safe, welcoming and comfortable environment to relax, study, read or play and are a key pillar in making Yukon a great place to live.

Within our Community Operations branch, there is over \$7.7 million in operation and maintenance funding allocated for this branch to manage public drinking water facilities, solid waste, waste-water disposal and other services that benefit unincorporated Yukon communities. This includes our recently announced increase of \$641,000 to support recycling diversion credits, along with a \$689,000 increase to support solid-waste management.

Our O&M investment in operations also includes a \$111,000 increase to support community groundwater monitoring. In 2015-16, Yukon government is committing \$250,000 toward a new water delivery truck in Ross River. That is an important resource that serves the community.

Infrastructure development continues to be a priority of the department in 2015-16. Our department delivers infrastructure projects through our Infrastructure Development branch, along with our Community Affairs and Community Operations branches. You will find highlights of over \$1.8

million in gas tax-funded projects in this budget, including funding for the construction of a new lagoon for the community of Ross River, support for the Ross River solid-waste facility and upgrades to the Burwash sewage lagoon.

A new gas tax administrative agreement was signed on July 24, 2014, which provides up to \$163 million in funding from 2014 to 2024 for public infrastructure projects in Yukon communities. Eligible categories have been expanded, and remaining money from the previous fund has been rolled into the new agreement.

To date, over \$73 million in funding has been approved for 185 gas tax projects and various municipal and First Nation initiatives through the gas tax fund. These initiatives are crucial to our communities.

This budget includes comprehensive support for Building Canada projects across our territory. Some of the projects continue work that has been started in previous years. All of the projects make a difference to our communities. Since 2007, federal, territorial and municipal governments have committed over \$265 million to core infrastructure needs in Yukon under the original Building Canada fund. The new Building Canada fund will provide approximately \$342 million to support Yukon infrastructure over the next 10 years in a 75-percent Canada, 25-percent Yukon split. We expect to see over \$29 million invested in Building Canada projects in this coming year. This funding, along with the gas tax, helps us to address our ongoing infrastructure needs, create jobs and improve the quality of life for all Yukoners.

We are currently developing a new Yukon infrastructure plan and are engaging with key stakeholders across the territory. Once in place, this plan will guide our investments for the short and medium term. Specific Building Canada highlights for this year include the following: funding to support upgrades to the Carmacks waste-water plant for a total of \$1.1 million; upgrades to the Dawson water system for \$1.75 million; \$3.2 million for Mayo sewer, water and road upgrades that will accommodate existing and future urban lot development; \$3.1 million for water well upgrades in Mayo that will include a new well, water treatment and distribution of local drinking water; roads will be upgraded in both Pelly Crossing and Teslin; and \$2.1 million will support the replacement of three lift stations in Teslin as a part of upgrades to their water system.

The Tagish Taku subdivision and supply pumphouse and fill point will be constructed with \$400,000 in funding support. Over \$5.1 million will support the construction of a new water treatment plant and pumphouse in Watson Lake. Over \$1.2 million will go to support the design and construction of a water treatment plant to serve the communities of Deep Creek, Horse Creek and Grizzly Creek. Also \$1.8 million will support upgrades to the community water well in Mendenhall, including well upgrades, storage tanks, filtering treatment systems and an addition to the facility to house new equipment. \$600,000 will go to support our efforts in building on our solid-waste action strategy to make infrastructure improvements to our territory-wide solid-waste management system. This will include upgrades to

make our facilities more efficient. In 2015-16, the government will also invest \$1.7 million in flood- and erosion-control projects throughout the territory, including projects in Carcross, Mayo and Liard.

Madam Chair, within the Land Development branch of the Department of Community Services, we have a supply of lots in the City of Whitehorse that are available for sale over the counter and this is a significant accomplishment, as part of making Yukon a great place to live means ensuring that Yukoners have great spaces to live on and build dream homes. Together with the City of Whitehorse, we have worked hard to catch up the supply of land with that of existing and future demand.

The Whistle Bend development in Whitehorse is growing. A number of streets have been filled with homes, which allow the installation of the final street landscaping to proceed in some areas this year. Three small neighbourhood parks will also be constructed and landscaped in the subdivision this summer. Eagle Bay lookout will be a beautiful addition to the recreation space in Whistle Bend. The viewpoint is located close to the entrance of the subdivision and will provide residents a view of the valley in which McIntyre Creek joins the Yukon River. In recent years, a number of eagles have returned to make this area their home.

There is over \$7 million identified in the 2015-16 budget to support the land development work in Whistle Bend this year. This will include work with the City of Whitehorse to improve the performance of the Livingstone Trail sewage lagoon and reduce odours to the best degree possible. When complete, this subdivision is envisioned as a neighbourhood for 8,000 residents, complete with transit service, a town square featuring public parkland, retail shops, space for a school, plentiful greenspace and many kilometres of paved and unpaved trails.

Within the Corporate Policy, Community Services division, we have a number of important items. In the area of Professional Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, formerly Consumer Services, our department will continue to provide support over the coming year. \$781,000 is included to support Professional Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. This branch licenses well over 4,000 professionals, including health professionals, medical practitioners and real estate salespersons. As well, the branch expects to issue over 150 raffle and casino licences for charitable and religious groups in Yukon in 2015.

We also have the Corporate Affairs branch in that section. To ensure orderly and responsible commercial activity in Yukon through Corporate Affairs, \$835,000 is allocated this year, including costs associated with implementing a computerized personal property system that is another step in modernizing Yukon's business environment and is helping ensure that Yukon investors and consumers enjoy similar opportunities and protection as in other Canadian jurisdictions.

The business legislation reform project, which modernizes Yukon's business legislation, is also coming into effect on May 1, 2015 and will be administered by this

branch. This major project will help to make Yukon a more attractive place in which to register a business entity and contribute to our economic growth.

The Employment Standards and Residential Tenancies office also falls under the department. The new *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* provides a clear framework for Yukon tenants and landlords and works to promote a healthy private rental market that is in line with best practices from across Canada. We look forward to finalizing the necessary regulations to fully proclaim the act into effect later this year.

Public education materials, an important component of the act, are being finalized to help guide landlords and tenants in their agreements and understanding of rights and responsibilities. The total allocation for the new Employment Standards and Residential Tenancies office is \$889,000 and includes personnel dollars, program materials and dollars for operations.

In the Property Assessment and Taxation branch, \$4.7 million in O&M funding is allocated. This includes significant funding in transfer payments to Yukon homeowners for the Yukon homeowners grant. In 2015, we estimate that over 23,000 properties will be assessed and over 8,000 homeowner grants will be paid, and \$1.8 million in capital is allocated to continue to support important taxation based lending programs. The first is the rural electrification and telephone program to assist rural property owners with installation of power and telephone services in rural areas.

The second is the domestic well program, which helps rural property owners with low-cost financing to drill domestic water wells. We took steps last year that included making changes to the *Municipal Act* and the *Assessment and Taxation Act* to expand the rural domestic water well program to property owners in participating municipalities. This expansion is also captured in the \$1.8-million capital funding for this year and includes an increase of \$400,000 overall.

All three of these programs are fully recoverable on property taxes through local improvement charges.

The highlights mentioned today merely scratch the surface of the great work of the Department of Community Services and the work that the department does to make the Yukon a great place to live.

This concludes my remarks on the main budget for 2015-16. I just wanted to thank the department — each branch — as I've tried to overview some of what they do. I look forward to getting into individual questions now about the various aspects of the budget and providing some responses to questions as they arise.

Mr. Barr: I'm happy to hear the minister's comments and his opening remarks. We're nearing the end of the day. I'll move into some other stuff, although I have some comments.

I would first like to start off with the initial comments from the minister of what, quite likely, in the past could have been called a point of order around meanness. I heard that word. However, I do know, and I did overhear, that the minister was planning on getting me a teddy bear that reflected my true character, and he knows I do not have a

mean bone in my body. It is a good day here in the House, Madam Chair, and we'll just carry on from here.

I would like to say that the Yukon NDP believes firmly in the importance of community infrastructure. I just have a bit more to speak on this prior to getting into first questions. Although I've asked several, I will go back to them, as the minister requested, in the department.

The Yukon government cannot be a Whitehorse-centric organization, we believe. We heard earlier today from my colleague who asked why the Village of Burwash Landing is still served by Haines Junction RCMP. The station is over 125 kilometres away. The government has the power to make a positive change in this community by requesting that the RCMP station be a permanent force in the village.

Madam Chair, the government seems to be pushing back against the community and against the First Nation government, which are pleading for this change. It's a similar refrain to what we heard from Yukon's communities and local area councils. At the end of the day, Yukoners do not feel listened to.

This spring, my colleagues and I were part of an organized 17-stop sustainable and prosperous community tour to listen to Yukoners from across the territory and we had discussions about our future. This is what we heard: the consultation isn't there; community needs are not being met; government assets are not being adequately maintained; and communities are not happy.

We know that the Yukon Party government prefers to stick to its guns and push forward, as we are hearing and reflecting back with a top-down communities plan, but we are doing communities a disservice when the government puts Whitehorse first.

I know that I did mention the Tagish fill site and the new well there. I had brought it up previously that that site has been going through some growing pains that have left some of the folks living out there without access to water for a week. I had written a letter about a backup plan. It would seem to me that this could fall into place for rural communities throughout the territory. I would like to hear a response from the minister: Has there been consultation with — specifically the Tagish volunteer fire department that is willing to work with it toward a backup plan so that if the pump does go out — people, especially those who are living by "blue jug" as we know it if you live in rural parts — blue jug water fills — they could be able to access a backup plan in the future when the water source in the community for the general public isn't available?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The new well at Tagish — if it isn't already commissioned, I think it is in the final throes of commissioning. I believe it is operating now, but the member's question is: What happens if the well doesn't work? Obviously, the first step and first goal is to have the well work.

The intent is to have the fill station operate for residents, but if there is an emergency and something happens — if the building burns down or the pump goes awry — that is something we'll have to deal with, depending on what happens, but we don't have a specific backup plan if it were to

occur tomorrow. I believe that what we would do is find a way to ensure that citizens have access to drinking water, whether it is from water delivery from Carcross or another fill site nearby. I don't know exactly what the member is looking for with regard to consultation. To my knowledge, no consultation has occurred to date on that but, as we move forward with the new fill site, if it is determined that it is something that we need to plan for, I will of course work with the community to determine how best to address those needs.

Mr. Barr: I merely included other communities that would be something kind of on the books that people could revert to, rather than wait — if there wasn't the possibility of people getting water. I do know that in Tagish — this is why I did send the letter to the minister, because people did want to know what they could do because they had and have been experiencing the availability due to — at one point, which I haven't heard definitively yet. The problem at that specific place, leaving people without water, was the possibly of an electric switch that was causing the problems. It was kind of like an intermittent problem and, without waiting for it to happen again, it would be as simple as contacting the fire hall that is already willing to do so — to open its doors — and let people know that's something that would be approved of and that it would be in place now, rather than wait, especially for a place that we already know has been having difficulties with getting water.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member is correct. There were some electrical switch problems with the well initially. I believe we resolved those concerns or those issues, but if they remain unresolved, I'm sure that staff are working diligently to address them. My understanding is they have been addressed and that the fill point is working. The member is correct. In an emergency situation, folks could go to the fire hall, but obviously with regard to drinking water, there are certain permits that are required and I don't think those are in place for the fire hall because it's not intended to be a drinking water supply.

Madam Chair, we'll continue to consult with the Tagish LAC. To my knowledge, they haven't raised this to date as being a significant problem — that being the need for an ongoing backup plan. But like I said, in the event of an emergency occurring, we'll of course respond and address the needs of the residents as best we can, whether that means having them go to an alternate flow point, whether that means having them go to the fire hall or whether it means finding other sources for drinking water for residents. But nonetheless, it's something we will continue to work with the LAC on and try to address the needs as they arise.

Mr. Barr: It was from one of the discussions with the LAC at a meeting — and I do attend the LACs in my riding quite regularly in all the communities, whether it is Tagish, Mount Lorne, Carcross or Marsh Lake, to hear from them specifically about ongoing issues. It was from one of those meetings that I said I would pursue that. If you would like a letter from the LAC, we can certainly do that also. It was a good point noted that the fire hall isn't designated for drinking

water, so that is something that people hadn't thought of as a result. However, we will just move on from there.

I would like to raise a question about waste management, as it was on everyone's mind over the new year that government missed its platform deadline to divert half of Yukon's waste with the 50:50 diversion waste by 2015. Knowing that we are in 2015, has the government set a new goal for 2016 in reaching 50:50 waste diversion?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As the member points out, we have committed to using 50-percent diversion as a target going forward. Obviously we haven't reached that target so we'll continue to strive for that. I think that we have made considerable strides in increasing diversion and promoting recycling in the territory. Obviously the announcement that we made earlier this year of the enhanced diversion credits and the commitment that we've made to those diversion credits in our budget this year will certainly go a long way toward that. As we have all acknowledged, the diversion credits are not intended to be a long-term solution; however, they do provide a nice bridging function as we move forward with plans for future developments.

Obviously, as I've explained previously, those include regulatory changes, including changes to the beverage container regulation as well as the designated material regulation. The Department of Environment has that work underway currently and is still in the process of reviewing the public consultation and drafting the changes as per the consultation. I think that the enhanced beverage container regulation will go a long way to addressing the financial sustainability of the recycling system in the territory.

Community depots, as well as processors here in Whitehorse, benefit significantly by collecting handling fees through the beverage container regulation. The contemplated increase to the surcharge associated with the BCR will provide additional funding for both processors and for handlers who access that funding. I think that the steps that have been taken, and will be taken through the changes to the BCR, will significantly improve the financial sustainability of those community depots.

Obviously the changes contemplated for the designated material regulation will also add to the financial sustainability of our waste management systems here in the territory, and the inclusion of new products, such as electronic and electric products, will be a significant boost to the financial sustainability of the waste-management system.

I also wanted to note that, under the BCR, by including additional products such as dairy products, dairy jugs, there is an additional stream of revenue then available to both depots and processors as well.

To circle back to the original question, no, we haven't changed what we're working toward, and that goal remains a 50-percent diversion. We'll continue to work with our partners in the communities, whether it be here in Whitehorse or out in the rest of the Yukon, to address the needs of communities for infrastructure. We'll continue to make changes to our regulatory structures, like the BCR and the

DMR, and we'll continue to make considerable investments in the recycling system, as outlined in the budget here today.

I hope that addresses the member's question.

Mr. Barr: There's some clarification there for me on this side of the House. I was glad to hear in the minister's response that he recognizes that this isn't going to solve our problems into the future although, with the BCR and the DMR, those measures taken to date — we still need some long-term vision on how we will move forward in the territory so we're not ending up in a crisis situation like we have, where basically the government did do as requested by its partners and that the whole process led to things piling up, up at the Whitehorse transfer stations, with the shutting down of one of our recyclers to drop off 24 hours a day, such as cardboard and so on and so forth.

We do know that there are some steps that have arrested the immediate issues, but we're looking at the long term. What does the minister have planned to be proactive with ongoing talks with the recyclers in the territory?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member is correct that, as a result of our investments in the recycling diversion credits, Raven Recycling was able to reopen its public drop-off. I should note that, even when they had that public drop-off closed, Yukoners and folks in Whitehorse continued to have considerable access to recycling opportunities that were available in our community. Obviously there is more work to be done, and we'll continue to work with our partners throughout the Yukon to do that.

What we are contemplating, as I mentioned before, is making improvements and changes to the beverage container regulation and the designated materials regulation to add products and increase the rates. As I've indicated to the House before, the intent is to continue with that process to enhance those regulations. As we continue to develop that, we'll add products over the years. It's important that we add them in a consistent but manageable fashion so that folks aren't overwhelmed.

We'll continue to work with our Yukon communities, the partners we have in waste management throughout the territory, whether it be in recycling or in any facets of our solid-waste management systems. We work with the solid waste working group through the Association of Yukon Communities. That group has yielded some significant and tangible outcomes that we are working to implement. They include sharing best practices for signage, for training and for other considerations of that nature.

We are investing in infrastructure, both for recycling and for other forms of solid-waste management in all Yukon communities, whether they be transfer stations like the ones in the periphery of Whitehorse or whether they be regional landfills — regional solid-waste facilities — like Dawson and now Watson Lake. We will continue to enhance the opportunities that those communities have to recycle and to divert waste from the system by improving access to that infrastructure and we'll continue to work with our partners. Obviously as I said before, the diversion credits aren't a long-term solution, but they do offer a nice bridging mechanism for

any transition that would occur. Obviously it remains to be seen what exactly the City of Whitehorse will do with their plans. They've indicated — earlier at least — some intention to explore the opportunity of a curbside program in Whitehorse. If they do undertake that, that's a decision that they'll have to make, but we will be talking to them about that in the weeks and months to come.

We'll continue to look at what the City of Whitehorse is doing. We'll continue to look at what our communities are doing and we'll continue to make strategic investments where necessary to address the needs of Yukoners. But as I said before, the Yukon government is committed to environmentally and fiscally responsible waste management. Recycling is an important part of our plan and we'll continue to work with all of our partners, including the City of Whitehorse, to develop a sustainable model for the processing of recycling materials. As work continues to establish a more sustainable waste management system across the territory, the Yukon government is committing \$573,000 in this budget for local recycling processors, based on the type and tonnage of recyclable materials they process in 2015-16.

This is two and a half times more than what was provided last year. Another \$68,000 will be provided to ship some of the stockpiled materials that had built up over the last year. As I noted before, we're reviewing the necessary regulations to improve our system.

Madam Chair, I think we have a path forward. We're working closely with the processors. We're working closely with communities and we'll continue to do so throughout the coming years.

Mr. Barr: I'm happy to hear that there will be ongoing communication between the stakeholders in recycling in the territory and that I would hope to hear within this year that there is some tangible information rolled out by the government — what's coming up and how to proceed — so that we're not kept short or get caught having to stockpile to get where we are at now and play catch-up so that we can move forward in a timely manner. I will look forward to hearing more and will be keeping an eye on that so that we hear actual action timelines for specific areas.

I thank the member of his response and I would like to just continue on this line of questioning regarding solid-waste facilities and reflecting on Mayor Potoroka's comments for Dawson, for example, with hazardous waste in our rural facilities. It is not enough at this time that people are holding on to hazardous waste at their homes. They are being required to hold on to hazardous waste in their homes longer than they would like. For example, in Dawson — which is one that has stated their concerns around this — they themselves at the solid-waste facility in Dawson — the collection of these hazardous wastes is, I believe, two times year, and that is not enough and the space isn't enough. They have to handle hazardous waste too long. That would require the government to look into this and — not only in Dawson, but other rural places that deal with hazardous waste — that it be moved out of communities in a timely fashion, so that it gets to a safe place where it is not going to contribute harm to our

environment and so that families don't have it lying around their yards, given that the sites are not able to receive hazardous waste from them in a timely manner. I look forward to hearing the minister's response.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The special waste program in the Yukon government and the household hazardous waste program is obviously something that is actually relatively new to the Department of Community Services. It came about as a result of the transfer from the Department of Environment to CS earlier this year, which was announced late last month — or earlier this month; I stand to be corrected on the date. We felt that it was an appropriate change to make to move the special waste program from the Department of Environment to Community Services to reflect Community Services' ongoing role in solid-waste management in the territory, and the fact that we are often — to use the term — “the boots on the ground” when it comes to solid-waste management in the territory. As a part of that transfer, obviously as well, the animal welfare program was transferred over to Environment from CS. There were some jokes about draft picks being involved, but I won't get into that.

With regard to solid-waste management in the territory, and specifically with regard to special waste and household hazardous waste, we are pleased to continue to provide the service, which provides up to \$200,000 of assistance, to allow for proper disposal of household hazardous waste and special waste. This service fits well within the Department of Community Services, which has a mandate to provide solid-waste services in unincorporated areas and to administer stewardship programs for designated materials throughout the territory.

The two departments — Community Services and Environment — are working together to ensure a smooth transition with no interruption in service for 2015. Any programming changes will continue to support existing businesses and offer viable solutions for industry, government and the public to dispose of their special waste in a responsible manner.

There are two components to the special waste program: the collection of commercial special waste, currently operated through a contract, and the collection of household hazardous waste, which is carried out by municipalities and NGOs, with YG staff providing technical advice.

Transportation costs account for about one-third of the total cost of collecting, transporting and disposing of special wastes. Programming delivered by Community Services beginning in April of this year will be similar to the services provided by Environment in past years, with one exception: disposal and transportation of household hazardous waste will continue to be subsidized by government, with free drop-off days offered throughout Yukon communities. The only change for 2015 will involve a reduction to the amount of assistance provided to a commercial business for the removal of special waste, from a limit of \$2,500 per business per year to \$1,500 limit per business per year. Approximately 25 businesses will be affected, as they employ that service. On a

positive note, reducing the per-client limit will allow more businesses to receive support through the program.

The commercial collection program is based on a first-come, first-served model, where participants are responsible for paying all costs associated with the disposal of their generated special waste. As I noted, the municipalities obviously perform an important function with regard to the collection of householder hazardous waste, and we come out from time to time to the communities to collect that waste.

I haven't heard that there was an inadequate frequency with which we're picking up this material. If that is the case with a particular community — Dawson being the example the member opposite raised — I'm happy to work with the municipality to determine if we can pick that up more frequently. I know that oftentimes — we try to get it out annually but, in some cases, communities simply don't have enough material to justify the cost of going out and picking up material on an annual basis, so we'll go every other year.

If that's not the case in a community like Dawson, as suggested by the member opposite, we're happy to work with the community to try to get out more frequently or try to remove more material when we do.

I haven't heard, in my conversations with the mayor of Dawson, that there's a concern about the special waste program and, if that's the case, I look forward to working with the municipality to address it. I believe that covers the question the member opposite raised.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister opposite for his response. I'll pass that information on to Mayor Potoroka and I'm sure he'll be happy to hear that the minister is willing to work with the situation there. I'll also sleuth around and see, for other rural communities, if possibly this is an issue and let them know that the minister is willing to work with finding solutions, if there are issues in the picking up of hazardous waste, not only from businesses, but from households in rural Yukon. We're just looking to do this to keep people safe. I thank the minister for his response.

I'll just stay with the landfills for a moment here and direct a question that I did speak to in my opening remarks of the minister. It had been brought forward — and I did bring it forward, I believe, in the spring of last year, when I was speaking with some of the folks who had contracts, particularly in Carcross and Marsh Lake — where there had been some consultation with a firm from Toronto to look at the lifespan of the solid-waste facilities themselves and being able to reach the 10-year life expectancy of amounts being dumped.

I believe there was one study done for \$100,000 from a firm that came from Toronto and stated, “Well, we'll just raise the berm level in the periphery of the solid waste.” I believe some of that work may or may not have been done, but I would ask the minister, if he is not aware, to look into the situation because it does raise the question that was brought forward as to how we are looking at the life cycles of our solid-waste facilities, noting that the 10-year cycle was looking more to be a realistic five-year cycle in the capacity that would be left.

I didn't hear that in the minister's opening remarks and would like to bring it to his attention, so that we are looking forward, rather than being caught unaware of a situation such as this, because it does take planning to look at alternate solid-waste dump sites, if you will. I remember when Carcross — its capacity was filled and the planning wasn't in place then to move to where the solid-waste facility is now.

It left a lot of people, especially who lived there, with a lot of concerns as to the site that is in existence out there with the environmental concerns that have to be addressed — a YESAA application and so forth — if this is coming up, so we are prepared.

I would ask the minister if he is aware of this. If not, take it into consideration and get back to me with the information at his earliest convenience.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I know that there has been a lot of work done with regard to the life cycles of solid-waste facilities around the territory, although I am a bit puzzled as to exactly which site he is talking about. He is referencing the fact that we were going to increase the berm height of some site, but I am not sure which one. If he is able to give me the name of the site that he is talking about, where there are apparently plans to raise the berm level, I would be happy to look into the matter.

Typically, our sites are transfer stations and are not intended to be "dumps," to use the term the member referred to.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, 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.

Mr. Elias: 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 199

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, April 21, 2015 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

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

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New Democratic Party

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

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, April 21, 2015 — 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.

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?

Notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to support the MacBride Museum Society to create an exhibit of Yukon's telecommunication innovators in the old telegraph office.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to support the Friends of Mount Sima Society to construct a beginner and intermediate double-track downhill mountain bike trail and single-track trail for four-season use.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to take responsibility for the 22-percent cost overrun on the new LNG facility being built in Whitehorse.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

(1) take responsibility for breaking a platform commitment that Yukon develop a goal of zero waste, with a target of 50 percent waste diversion by 2015;

(2) explain to Yukoners why it failed to keep this commitment; and

(3) explain to Yukoners whether or not this commitment has now been abandoned completely.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Oil and gas development in Kaska traditional territory

Ms. Hanson: The Kaska has long held a unique place within what is now known as the Yukon. However, in recent years, it appears that this government has purposely gone out of its way to antagonize the Kaska. One of the Premier's first actions was to unilaterally remove section 13 of the *Yukon Oil and Gas Act*, which required Yukon First Nations' consent to develop oil and gas. The move seemed to lack any purpose; apart from provoking the Kaska, who said the move — and I quote: "...destroyed any doubts which may exist regarding your government's profound lack of respect for recognized title and rights."

Despite this, the government now says it can solve everything by negotiating a reconciliation agreement with the Kaska. So can the Premier explain the purpose of the reconciliation agreement, the scope of the reconciliation agreement, and how, and by whom, it will be implemented?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As we have said in this House before, our most preferred path is a self-government agreement, as has been the case for 11 of 14 Yukon First Nations.

We realize at this time, however, that there is no mandate from the federal government toward a self-government agreement nor is there any will by the Kaska or the White River First Nations to go down that path. Having said that, we are committed to a new approach through reconciliation and we're doing that both with the Kaska, with the Ross River Dena Council, Liard First Nation and White River First Nation as well. This is a path that will be unique to each First Nation as we move forward and determine what the priorities are and we go forward from there.

Ms. Hanson: He didn't answer the question, Mr. Speaker.

It's certainly surprising to see this government adopt the language of reconciliation when it comes to its dealings with the Kaska. Given their track record, their preferred outreach with Yukon First Nations is in the courts.

Justice Murray Sinclair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission said — and I quote: "Reconciliation is about forging and maintaining respectful relationships. There are no shortcuts." Forging and maintaining respectful relationships has not been this government's forte. In fact they often appear to be actively resisting relationship building.

Can the Premier explain exactly how this proposed reconciliation agreement will contribute to repairing the existing relationship with the Kaska people and, most importantly, who among the Kaska will have a say in approving or rejecting the proposed reconciliation agreement?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Of course the opposition is always looking for those occurrences where governments don't agree, and certainly that will occur in the past and will occur I'm sure in the future as well.

What we do know is that there are many, many instances on a day-to-day basis where this government works with First

Nations to achieve goals that are to the benefit of all Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: What the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada made clear is that reconciliation is not about simple transactions. To date, the government's statements on their proposed reconciliation agreements are like most of their proposals — long on words but short on substance. The timing of this proposed reconciliation agreement is also interesting, coming as it does with the Yukon Party government's declared intention to open southeast Yukon to fracking. Yukoners have a legitimate right to know what is on the table.

Is this government trying to negotiate a resource access agreement under the auspices of a reconciliation agreement?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I know it pains the opposition to hear when this government continues to work with First Nations every day. We will continue to do so, and we will continue to work with representatives of the Kaska and White River First Nations to move toward a reconciliation agreement — a reconciliation agreement that will fit the concerns of each of those individual First Nations and focus on the priorities that we agree upon. That will be the path going forward. We want to ensure, as I have said in this House many times, that those First Nations can benefit from economic development within their First Nation. That is a priority for the First Nation and that is a priority for this government.

Question re: Continuing care facilities

Ms. Stick: The Yukon government's proposed \$300-million, 300-bed continuing care institution will be the largest and most expensive capital works project in Yukon history. Last week the minister responsible took great pains to trot out the two needs assessments and one business case that were written about the 300-bed model, and only the 300-bed model.

This bigger-is-better approach to health care was selected in the absence of public consultation, without analyzing seniors' health needs across the continuum of care, and without costing out other care options to support the health and well-being of our aging population.

Mr. Speaker, on what concrete evidence did this government base its selection of 300 beds before the two needs assessments and business case were commissioned?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: In the area of the business cases and the needs assessments — especially the needs assessments — those will give us good information, good data and statistical information on how we need to move forward with numbers of seniors who will be requiring this high level of care in the coming years.

What we see before us in this budget is an extension of that, with a 150-bed facility in the Whistle Bend area. This government believes in planning for the future and planning for possibilities, so what we've done is — we're looking at a model that is expandable, both with the facility and the amount of land that we've acquired, if, in eight, 10, 20 years down the road, those services are needed.

We see a fast demand — a high demand — for services in the next coming years, and we expect that the 150 beds in that new care facility will be used very quickly.

Ms. Stick: The government's own March 11 press release identifies a 300-bed facility.

This government has not worked with Yukon citizens or medical professionals to find the most effective and affordable means to meet the needs of our seniors and elders; instead, they chose a 300-bed model that will proportionately be more expensive to operate. The estimated O&M costs will rob the continuing care budget of its ability to focus on home care and other supports that help Yukoners age in place. This is not responsible planning.

This Yukon Party approach has already wasted millions of our health care dollars. What other options were considered in addition to or besides a \$300-million megaplex that is shown to be the most expensive?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, this government is very proud of the services that we continue to offer to seniors across the territory in all communities — in fact many of those services that the members opposite continue to vote against. This government will stand behind those seniors; this government will stand behind providing the services and the level of care that those seniors require. The members opposite continue to vote against that.

This government has a solid track record when it comes to looking into the future and looking at future demands on our health care system, especially with respect to services to seniors. We know that the number of seniors who will require a high level of care — not care that can be provided in a community, not care that can be provided with home care, but care that requires medical staff and doctors in close proximity to hospitals that —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Pardon me, Mr. Speaker. I know the Leader of the Official Opposition would like to speak but she'll just have to wait her turn here.

But I'll go back on this government's track record to providing those services to seniors, people with disabilities or people with mental health issues. This government puts its money where its mouth is. The members opposite continue to vote against that.

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, it's funny he should mention nurses and doctors because they have not consulted with them prior to coming out with this announcement.

Last week, the minister said he agrees with the NDP that keeping seniors in their homes as long as possible is the most viable option. Is he not aware that the number of Yukon seniors being assisted by home care services is lower today than it was four years ago? Those are the statistics from your own documents.

The Yukon NDP's vision is for aging in place, providing seniors and elders with the ability to choose from a range of options that are more affordable, more effective. The Yukon government has provided no such choice and it will cost all Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister show Yukoners what other options, rather than the expensive 300-bed model, were on the table or admit he never considered anything else?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It's difficult to know where to begin with this.

First off, the opposition continues to talk about a 300-bed facility. Of course we have said that we're building a 150-bed — but we have the vision to know that we're aging quickly and our population is increasing, so we will build a facility that has the ability to expand later if the need arises. That is called "vision" — something that the other two parties don't have because they describe this as a warehouse.

It's interesting how the NDP in Alberta, as part of their platform, is proposing 2,000 more long-term care beds. It's too bad they couldn't take a lesson from their partners in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, we've increased health care spending by 350 percent. We've added more seniors residences and we are looking at options for assisted living. We continue to work to ensure that we provide the best level of care for all our citizens. Perhaps it's still early in the afternoon and the member opposite is still out to lunch.

Question re: Energy transmission line

Mr. Silver: I want to talk about this government's vision on energy. It has been well known that, for many years, the Yukon Party government spent its time and resources planning to sell our energy futures to a private company from Alberta. Many fruitless years and a resignation later, Yukon Party 2.0 has decided to take a closer-to-home look to energy solutions.

For example, last year, the government funded a study to look at the viability of an electrical interconnection between Yukon and southeast Alaska. It was called the West Creek project. Last fall, the minister said that the report would be ready in February of 2015. When will that \$250,000 report be released to the public?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Studying the transmission link and potential telecommunications link between the Yukon and Skagway was extremely important work. The final study is scheduled to be completed this month, April 2015 — that's my understanding from officials. There were two scenarios analyzed: developing the West Creek hydro project — which the member opposite referenced — near Skagway, and exporting power to Yukon during winter or Yukon transmitting power to Skagway for the cruise ship industry when we have additional capacity during the summer months.

Again, we also believe that an economic development corridor between Yukon and southeast Alaska has the potential to generate and provide affordable, reliable clean energy. It may also increase hydro supply — there are a number of potential projects located along that corridor, both in the Yukon, as well as British Columbia, then further into Alaska.

Again, as mentioned, my understanding from officials in Energy, Mines and Resources is that the final study is scheduled to be completed this month.

Mr. Silver: Our energy demands continue to grow and it's time to make a decision on new sources of power. This government is now left with only one choice — more reliance on fossil fuels — because of its lack of long-term planning. It kind of left us with no other options.

Better late than never, but the fact remains that expanded hydro capacity is years away from becoming a reality. The government has two separate energy planning projects going on with two different departments in charge and with two different timelines in play. Yukoners have been waiting for this government to get serious about expanding our hydro capacity for more than a decade, and it appears that we're going to have to continue to wait.

Realistically, how far away is the West Creek project in Skagway from actually happening?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The West Creek project, which would be the production project in Skagway, is something the Alaska Power & Telephone Company is proposing. It isn't something that is being proposed by this government. Again, we've looked at the transmission viability and, again, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to listen to the Member for Klondike when it comes to promoting the use of natural gas or, in this case now, he's not promoting the use of natural gas. We go back to 2011, December 14, I believe it was, and Hansard clearly shows that the Member for Klondike, at that time, was very supportive of using natural gas, not only to supplement the domestic power supply, but also supply some of the mines in the Yukon.

Again, we noticed the Member for Klondike flip-flopping on an issue. He just continues to — it is almost like watching Timbits hockey when it comes to the Liberals. There are a bunch of people just chasing the puck around rather than a solid strategy and vision, and that is what the Yukon Party has.

Mr. Silver: Talking about solid strategy and vision, this is the government that wanted to privatize our power and now we are actually being pigeonholed into one option and one option only because of this government's decisions. Yukoners can appreciate that proper planning takes a lot of time. We only have to look at \$6 million wasted on scrapping the design for F.H. Collins to see what happens when planning is not done properly.

Yukoners are not impressed with the fact that the Yukon Party government is only starting to address the issues of expanded hydro power after 12 years of being in office and, again, most of those years were spent by a former Energy, Mines and Resources minister leading the way toward privatization. Is this the leadership that the minister speaks about, Mr. Speaker?

Why did this government sit on its hands until an expansion of fossil fuel use in the form of a new LNG facility was its only option to meet the expanded demands for power?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In addition to the very revisionist history we are hearing from the Leader of the Liberal Party, I would point out and remind — I actually have to ask the member: Has he been under a rock for the last decade? Is the member not aware of the investment in Mayo B, of the

investment in the Aishihik third turbine, of the investment in the Carmacks-Stewart transmission line project? All of these are investments by this government in public hydro infrastructure assets. In fact, I would remind the member that, in this term, we have strengthened the oversight and governance of Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation and also made it very clear that all public hydro assets will continue to remain public hydro assets. We are investing over \$100 million in public hydro assets. The member is either blissfully unaware of this or choosing to reflect something different in this House.

Question re: School bus driver wages

Mr. Barr: School bus drivers in the Yukon joined a union over one year ago, and we hope they get a fair first contract with the employer soon. I would encourage the public to check the YouTube video on Yukon's school bus drivers. For too long these bus-driving jobs have been treated as short-term, second-class employment, but school bus drivers have a huge responsibility to safely transport our children, even in bad winter conditions. They have every right to seek improvements in their working conditions. Their wages and benefits should reflect the important work that they do.

Why has the Yukon government neglected to include school bus drivers in the fair wage schedule?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Obviously, the Yukon government very much values the role that school bus drivers play, not only in our education system, but in our society. We, of course, continue to work with the provider of the service through their contract for school bus services in the territory. With regard to the matter the member is referring to, I will have to get back to him with regard to what was included in what schedule of which act and what was not. I will, of course, continue to work with the company providing the contract currently and providing the services to Yukoners.

Mr. Barr: The fair wage schedule sets the wage rates by category, class and job title to be paid to persons working on a contract for a public work of the Yukon. It is a policy tool that the government uses to ensure that contractors pay fair wages to their employees. The fair wage schedule includes electricians, pipefitters and many other occupations, including some driving jobs, but there is not fair wage set for school bus drivers. I raised this issue in December 2014 without getting anywhere with the minister.

Why does this Yukon government believe Yukon school bus drivers should be excluded from the fair wage schedule?

Hon. Mr. Graham: We have a contract with a private contractor to supply bus services to the Department of Education. The fair wage schedule, which is part of the *Employment Standards Act*, is not one of the laws that apply to our busing contract with Takhini Transport. What has happened in this situation is exactly the process that should be followed. If the employees feel that they require a union to represent them, then they should go through the process, which is exactly what's happening.

There is no requirement as far as I'm concerned to include these people in the fair wage schedule because this is a Yukon company employing Yukon employees.

Mr. Barr: The minister is not answering the question. School bus drivers do critical work and we trust them with the safety of our children. They deserve respect and they deserve to be covered by the fair wage schedule. I have a simple question for the minister and I am sure Yukoners would appreciate a straight answer: Why does the Yukon government believe Yukon school bus drivers should be excluded from the fair wage schedule?

Hon. Mr. Graham: It is almost like the members opposite feel that we should have a fair wage schedule for every single occupation in the territory. That is called a minimum wage. We have a number of —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Graham: The members opposite would have everybody equalized at the poverty line. I understand that, Mr. Speaker, because that is the socialist ideal.

We have a number of safeguards in place to ensure that our children are our number one priority. Those things are all included in the contract that we have with a private contractor. We are not going to get involved between every contractor in the territory or every employer in the territory and their employees. That is one of the things that is covered by union negotiations and that's why we believe that that is the system that should be followed.

Question re: Yukon species at risk

Ms. White: Since 2002, the Yukon Party government has had a long history of half-hearted attempts to proceed with Yukon species at risk legislation. However, in recent years, this most recent combination of the Yukon Party seems to have given up altogether.

In 1998, when national species at risk legislation was being developed, Yukon committed to implementing our own complementary species at risk legislation that would reflect the Yukon's unique interests. Yukon has many species at risk that are simply not being given adequate protection by federal legislation.

The Yukon Party likes to talk about their solid track record. So how is this for a track record? In 2003, 2005 and again in 2009, this government was brought species at risk legislation that they chose to ignore and not advance.

When will this government implement made-in-Yukon species at risk legislation?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Canada wrote to the Yukon to indicate that a recent review by the federal government respecting the federal *Species at Risk Act* indicated that there may be some inconsistencies with the definition of "federal lands" that is in conflict with the devolution agreement.

We understand the federal government is considering some minor amendments to correct the inconsistencies identified with the definition of "federal lands". We work with our management board and our local First Nations resource managers within those First Nations to address species at risk.

Ms. White: The federal species at risk legislation that this government continues to rely on is inefficient at the best of times and completely inadequate at the worst of times. The federal government has given recommendations on what species to protect by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada but those recommendations are only as good as the members of the federal Cabinet who review them and, as of late, they have been putting politics ahead of species and habitat protections.

I think most Yukoners would agree that a federal government that has been ignoring and silencing scientists across the board will likely not make the right decision when it comes to Yukon species at risk.

Why is the Yukon Party continuing to rely on blatantly inadequate federal legislation to protect Yukon species at risk?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I beg to differ with the member opposite. We do a really good job dealing with species at risk. We just need to look at our bison population, one of the largest non-diseased herds. We managed that —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Yes, exactly, federal species at risk. We managed that closely by monitoring populations. Our bison management team that we have — a partnership with the local First Nations and renewable resource councils of the local affected First Nations work together on this. We're doing a great job for species at risk. We're looking forward to doing more work in the future. Thank you.

Ms. White: Bison are a really visible population. We only need to look at Baikal sedge to see how badly they're really doing at species at risk. Made-in-Yukon species at risk legislation is essential to ensure the interests of Yukon are actually met. This government has a track record of inaction when it comes to protecting Yukon's wildlife. We only need to review their abysmal record when it comes to developing land use plans — those plans that would allow some protection of the habitat of endangered Yukon wildlife. One has to wonder why there is either an inability or unwillingness for this government to develop made-in-Yukon species at risk legislation.

Why is this government so resistant toward implementing made-in-Yukon species at risk legislation?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I do thank the member opposite for the question. What this government is committed to is working with the First Nations, working with the management board and the local renewable resource councils to develop management plans for species at risk and implement and work with them.

Question re: Inmate risk assessments

Ms. Moorcroft: When the Auditor General's report on the state of corrections in Yukon was released, it showed that all of this government's talk on community safety and protection of vulnerable individuals was just that — talk. The Auditor General found that this government was not effective in offering necessary programming that would reduce recidivism and keep our streets safe. Even more shocking was the fact that the majority of people convicted of sexual assault

or domestic violence were not receiving the additional required risk assessments. It wasn't a shock, however, that the minister dodged my question on the matter, so I'll ask it again.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister assure this House that all those convicted of sexual assault and domestic violence are now being given the necessary risk assessments?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In fact, I answered the member's question. She just didn't like the answer.

As I indicated to the member, we recognized that during the period of time that the Auditor General conducted the review in 2012, there were issues with the programming not meeting the standard that the government and the Department of Justice had set out.

As I indicated to the member, some of these issues were already identified by staff through internal quality review processes prior to receiving the Auditor General's report. Those additional areas that were identified in the Auditor General's report were immediately made a priority.

As I have indicated to the member, we remain committed to improving the programming to meeting the standard that has been set out. I have confidence in the work that staff are doing. They will, of course, have my support and this government's support in doing that work.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, I will ask the minister to listen to the question that I am asking him. I'm asking him about conducting risk assessments on inmates who have been convicted of sexual assault and domestic violence.

The risk assessments that are required for these individuals are there to ensure that vulnerable members of our community will not be victimized following the release of inmates.

It is essential that these assessments take place and the minister should quit dodging the question and hiding behind public servants.

Can the minister give Yukoners a guarantee that no more of the risk assessments designed to protect vulnerable individuals will be missed by the department?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I'm not sure if the member doesn't understand my answer or if she just doesn't like it, but I will again state, as I have before, that during the 2012 time period that was reviewed by the Auditor General, there were gaps in program delivery. Some of these were, in part, due to the challenge that staff were facing in transitioning into the new correctional facility. As I've mentioned to the member, some of these issues were already identified by staff through internal quality reviews and steps taken prior to receiving the Auditor General's report. Those areas where there are gaps or issues that were identified in the Auditor General's report that had not previously been identified are being focused on as priorities, and that includes preventing gaps from occurring in the future. As I indicated to the member previously, the department is focused on meeting the standard that was set out as a result of the work done in 2009 and since that time. I am committed to supporting them in that. That, of course, includes preventing gaps in program delivery.

I remind the member that this is a substantial increase in the standard we've set out and the types of programs that have

been set out since her time as Minister of Justice when it was certainly inadequate by today's standard.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, just because you're moving buildings doesn't give you a free pass on conducting risk assessments on inmates who have been convicted of sexual assault and domestic violence.

The minister has said that his department is working to improve gaps in program delivery. I'm going to ask for the third time if the minister will address the question of doing risk assessments. Can the minister assure this House that all those who are convicted of sexual assault and domestic violence are now being given the necessary risk assessments? The Auditor General reported that they weren't being done. Can the minister now say that the risk assessments are being conducted on individuals who have been convicted of sexual assault and domestic violence?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I will again reiterate to the member that the issues that were identified in the Auditor General's report — some of these matters were identified prior to the receipt of that report through internal quality review measures.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I hear the member heckling again — which, I point out, her own staff member described yesterday as “lacking class” when members were heckling the Assembly.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I have held back for some of the comments today, but this one has crossed the line. We can go either abusive or insulting language — we can go that way, or we can go imputes false or unavowed motives to a member not inside this gallery.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: On the point of order, I'm not sure how the member thinks this falls under either one of them. I was quoting what an NDP staff member put out as public communication on Twitter yesterday, and remind them they're hypocrites by their own standard.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: You can't have a point of order on a point of order.

Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on the original point of order. Did you have —

Ms. White: On the last comment, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: No.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: The rhetoric in the House has been rising. We've had several situations in the past few days where I have directed and cautioned both sides of the House on the use of different words, and yet it continues.

As for the minister's comment, this House doesn't like to have comments made to or about people who are not able to come here and defend themselves. The fact that it was on

Twitter — I would ask the minister to refrain from saying who put it on Twitter and just comment on the Twitter statement, as it is.

The order and decorum in the House is set by the members. The Speaker's job is to maintain it, but it is the members who will set the level of the order and decorum here. If you want it at a high level or a low level, that's up to you. I'm only going to maintain it at what you feel is tolerable. If you take offence to something somebody has said, in some cases, maybe you should get a thicker skin, because I will not defend you when you turn around and do it again.

At this point in time, I'm not going to give a ruling. I've made my statement.

The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of government private members' business

Mr. Elias: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of government private members to be called on Wednesday, April 22, 2015. They are Motion No. 926, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, and Motion No. 942, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

Do members wish 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.

Bill No. 18: *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16* — continued

Chair: The matter before Committee is Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

Department of Community Services — continued

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It is a pleasure to rise again to speak to the Department of Community Services main estimates for the 2015-16 budget year.

When we broke yesterday — when our proceedings concluded yesterday — we were discussing a number of issues related to solid-waste management and, in particular, recycling. I wanted to quickly take a moment to note one program that the Yukon government supports through the Department of Community Services, because I didn't have a chance to mention it yesterday. That is the Yukon recycling club. I had the chance to give some awards to some very deserving young students this year, earlier this month, and I wanted to highlight that work that's done to raise awareness of recycling in the schools by the Yukon recycling club.

The Yukon recycling club is a program for youth aged 4 to 16. Participants receive points along with the refunds for each beverage container they bring to local processors and community depots. These points are then redeemed for prizes contributed to the club by local businesses. The top point earners from each age category are entered into a grand prize draw at the end of each club year. This year's grand prize winners ranged in age from 9 to 16 and come from Whitehorse and Dawson City. The prizes included laptops, tablets, custom bikes and model rockets. This is the 20th year of operation for the Yukon recycling club and, each year, more than 1,000 youths participate. The club costs about \$100,000 annually to administer, with support coming from the recycling fund, which comes under the budget of the Department of Community Services.

In particular, I just wanted to note Arlene Carpina from the Christ the King Elementary School, who received an award and a prize this year, as well as Jan Mark Espinosa, also from that school. Jordan Lee La Vallee from Hidden Valley School received an award and of course Eva Von Flotow from Vanier also won her age category for the recycling club.

There was one other winner from Dawson City — whose name escapes me at the moment and I don't have it here, so I will have to return with that — but she won a bicycle that was awarded to her a few weeks ago as well.

I just wanted to make that note as I had forgotten to mention the recycling club in my previous comments — about some of the ways that we support recycling in the territory. I wanted to congratulate those winners of the recycling club awards and thank them for participating this year, and thank all of the students throughout the Yukon who participated in the recycling club. It is obviously a great program that the Yukon government values and it does a fantastic job in raising awareness and promoting recycling throughout the Yukon.

As a shameless plug, I would note that at this year's trade show — the Lions Club's trade show — that will occur I believe in May — the recycling club will have a booth. Yukon students are encouraged to visit the booth to sign up for this coming year's recycling club. If they do come and sign up at the trade show, they will be granted an additional 1,000 points to start off with. So it is a nice boost for any students who are

interested in participating in the recycling club to attend the trade show and sign up and get a nice head start with regard to those 1,000 points. That's what I wanted to add with regard to the recycling club.

Generally — and more related to where we ended yesterday's discussion — were the more specific issues related to solid-waste management in the territory. As I have noted, we continue to invest in our communities. We have made strides toward modernizing solid-waste management that will adapt to the changing needs of generations of Yukon communities.

Building on the success of the "Our Towns, Our Future" review, Yukon government partnered with the Association of Yukon Communities to form the Solid Waste Working Group, which produced a findings report in 2013.

Yukon government is now working with Association of Yukon Communities to renew the mandate of the working group, as we work together to modernize solid-waste systems in the territory. The group is now more action-oriented and plans to produce actionable items for implementation. The work of this group follows the 2009 *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*, which outlined a vision for modern and efficient solid-waste systems in the territory. We are pleased to say that we have taken a number of steps to implement objectives of the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*, including the following: meeting our commitment to end the practice of open burning; transforming solid-waste facilities to run more modern systems; providing opportunities for diversion of various forms of waste, including recyclable materials; collecting hazardous and special-waste streams at a number of facilities; improving signage to facilitate higher levels of diversion; and providing opportunities to divert various waste streams, including tires, scrap metal and appliances, propane tanks, e-waste, hazardous materials, and common recyclables such as plastic, paper, cardboard and tin. This level of diversion leaves much smaller volumes of waste going into Yukon landfills and also decreases environmental risks by diverting more environmentally hazardous materials.

We will continue to implement the goals of the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* and use a model of continuous improvement as we upgrade infrastructure and systems related to solid waste. We are also committed to working with industry and other stakeholders to find long-term solutions to improving waste diversion and recycling. We are committed to fair and transparent procurement processes in establishing contracts for our operations. We will continue to increase our engagement with industry to raise awareness of operational work taking place in the communities and contracting opportunities that will be advertised throughout the year. There are some inherent cost challenges to responsible waste management in the north, but we are committed to responsible and efficient solutions.

Since ceasing burning of garbage at our solid-waste facilities, our operation and maintenance budget has doubled. These costs include affording environmental stewardship initiatives like groundwater monitoring at each and every one of our facilities. These costs are still cheaper in the long term

than opening and closing landfills. Affording these costs allows us to manage the risk of environmental contamination and a potential costly cleanup.

While our responsible management of solid waste evolves, Community Services is in the process of conducting a comprehensive review of our solid-waste facilities and waste management systems overall. We hope to present findings from this review with options to continue improvements in the 2016-17 fiscal year. We are committed to fostering a strong working relationship with municipalities and we communicate with them prior to any changes to solid-waste operations or regulatory standards.

With regard to recycling, in 2013 we partnered with the City of Whitehorse to establish greater short-term certainty for recycling processors. This included interim funding to support processors in a fair and equitable manner while commodity prices were very low. We are engaging in ongoing discussions with the City of Whitehorse to develop longer term, sustainable models for the processing of recyclable materials within the city and at the territorial level as well.

We are also working with the Department of Environment to move forward with proposing changes to the beverage container regulation and designated material regulation as I explained yesterday. Those changes to the BCR would expand the range of containers that are subject to deposit and would increase the amount of money available to support community depots and processors. These proposed changes were created with the goal of increasing the amount of material recycled in the territory.

Proposed changes to the designated material regulation would include more tires of different sizes that would be subject to an environmental fee. The changes also propose to administer fees for other products, including electrical items and electronics. These upfront fees would provide money to administer stewardship programs for the recycling or responsible disposal of these items. This is a significant step toward greater environmental stewardship through waste diversion.

Yukon government is also aware of the success associated with extended producer responsibility programs in southern jurisdictions, but we are also aware of the challenges that come with those systems, and so we will continue to explore those systems and determine whether or not they could be successful in the north. As I have indicated previously, in the coming years we intend to maintain our stewardship model.

Yukon government is also committed to renewing waste diversion credits to recycling processors. That was something that we had announced earlier this year. In 2014, Yukon government provided \$150-per-tonne diversion credit payments to the recycling processors for recyclables hauled from the communities and shared costs with the City of Whitehorse for volumes generated within the city. Within the city, the rate was \$75 for Yukon government and \$75 for the City of Whitehorse.

We announced earlier this year — March 31 — that we would be expanding the diversion credit program and

increasing it. The announcement we made on March 31 indicated that, as work continues to establish a more sustainable waste management system across the territory, Yukon government is committing \$573,000 for local recycling processors in this budget, based on the type and tonnage of recyclable materials they process in 2015-16. This is two and a half times more than what was provided last year and, on top of that, there was an additional \$68,000 given to the processors to ship 400 tonnes of stockpiled mixed plastics out of the territory for recycling.

I wanted to take a moment to commend the excellent work of the City of Whitehorse on this file. The two orders of government represented by Community Services and the city administration, as well as myself and the mayor, had a number of discussions about this particular announcement. I wanted to acknowledge the fact that the City of Whitehorse really dug deep and provided a significant amount of funding when it came to this announcement. The City of Whitehorse of course indicated they were lifting the \$150,000 funding cap for its 2015 diversion credit program, which will provide an additional \$57,300 in credits to recycling processors this year. The city will also advance the 2016 diversion credit funding, which is another \$150,000 for recycling this year. It has also offered to accept mixed paper, which has been stockpiled by recycling processors at its compost facility where it will be processed separately into lower grade compost.

Madam Chair, on this particular issue, obviously the Yukon government and the City of Whitehorse work very closely. I would again reiterate my thanks and appreciation to the mayor and to the City of Whitehorse for coming up with this additional money and working together closely with us to address this need. Obviously I think it's fair to say that our enhanced support was a success, as we have seen now that Raven Recycling has indicated that they would be returning to their public drop-off program for non-refundable recyclables in the territory, which of course, yet again, increases the opportunity Yukoners have to recycle and to ensure that more waste is diverted from the waste stream and properly handled through recycling — again, an excellent example of a partnership with the City of Whitehorse to achieve a common goal.

We also have recently completed 10-year operating plans for solid-waste facilities in unincorporated communities to ensure efficient operations that are in compliance with regulatory and permit requirements. This project was completed in collaboration with municipalities outside of Whitehorse, which helps us all save money by jointly contracting the work. We continue to engage with the communities to acknowledge local perspectives in solid waste and to establish levels of service appropriate to each community.

An important highlight is the formal agreement about the solid-waste facility that was signed in the summer of 2014 with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in Old Crow. In August 2014, the First Nation took over operation and maintenance of the facility. This provides a model for community involvement in solid-waste operations. We are excited about

this type of local involvement and continue to engage with other First Nations to introduce more local perspectives on solid-waste planning. As with all of our facilities, we'll continue to monitor and test groundwater in Old Crow to ensure the local watershed is not being negatively affected.

We'll also continue to work with regulators in Old Crow to ensure appropriate and efficient operation of the solid-waste gasification unit in accordance with permitting requirements. Yukon government officials have worked very closely with the supplier and engineers, and we're happy to see that fuel efficiency, emissions and cold-weather performance of the gasifier have all improved. We also collaborated with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to coordinate the removal of waste metal from Old Crow in early 2014 when the winter road was in place.

Recently, in the fall of 2014, site improvements were completed to our facilities in Destruction Bay, Deep Creek and Champagne. We've also committed \$333,000 to municipalities outside of Whitehorse to support the establishment of consistent groundwater monitoring programs at Yukon solid-waste facilities.

Across Yukon, we are seeing investment in improved management of solid waste by municipal governments, by First Nation governments and, of course, by Yukon government. I would be remiss, Madam Chair, if I didn't also note that private sector and many non-profit organizations also participated in those initiatives.

We believe in innovative approaches to managing solid waste in remote communities and that community partnerships are the cornerstone of success for our collective solid-waste management efforts. We also recognize that there are challenges and we will continue to work to address rising costs associated with the transformation of solid-waste management in Yukon.

Currently the community of Ross River has a landfill. We've initiated discussions with the Town of Faro to explore the possibility of a regional approach for managing waste from Faro and Ross River. By establishing community partnerships with municipal governments, we're working to establish regional circuits across Yukon that could include a circuit for the southeast, the Kluane Lake region, the Faro-Ross River region, and potentially one more circuit in central Yukon.

This was a primary goal of the *Solid Waste Action Plan*. Madam Chair, I'm pleased to report, as you're well aware, that last week I had the opportunity to sit down with the Mayor of Watson Lake and sign a new regional solid-waste management agreement for the southeast Yukon. We are well on our way to moving forward with this vision. I'm hopeful that we'll be able to continue discussions with the community of Faro, as I've indicated previously, and continue discussions with the community of Haines Junction for the western portion of the Alaska Highway region.

With respect to municipal landfills, our government is committed to working with the AYC, as well as municipal governments, to address long-standing concerns about landfill liability. We recognize the need to expand our efforts to

address solid-waste management with a pan-territorial approach. We see the need to broaden the scope and we'll continue to work with municipalities.

Under the *Public Health and Safety Act*, municipalities are required to operate solid-waste disposal facilities for their residents. Municipalities follow the same operating requirements for unincorporated sites, as established by the solid-waste management regulations adopted in January of 2000. Since 2011, \$7 million has been allocated toward solid-waste management capital projects under the Building Canada fund; \$2 million was identified for transfer stations and recycling depots. This investment enabled us to transform dump-and-burn facilities into transfer stations to meet our commitments under environmental regulations and permits. This funding has led to installation of infrastructure to significantly reduce the amount of waste that goes into Yukon landfills. To date, we have spent just over \$1 million on this initiative.

Discussions continue with municipal governments with respect to establishing regional agreements, and we are hopeful that this dialogue will continue. As I indicated, of course, Watson Lake has taken that step and we look forward to expanding that model to other areas.

We have our agreement in place in Dawson, and that has been formalized in a partnership to regionalize solid-waste services in the Dawson area. This agreement provides the City of Dawson with access to \$400,000 of Building Canada funds for capital upgrades to the Quigley solid-waste facility.

I do have more that I wanted to provide to members with regard to this issue and I would like to turn now to infrastructure, but I do recognize, as you are indicating to me, that my time has elapsed, so I will cede the floor and look forward to comments from members opposite and to continuing the discourse that we began yesterday with regard to this important issue.

Mr. Barr: First of all I would like to welcome back the officials and thank you for helping us walk through this section of our budget, Community Services, which is a very large portfolio. It is all-encompassing.

I thank the member for his comments. It actually refreshed some of my memory and it also added some questions as he was speaking that I hadn't actually thought of, but I was triggered to remember now to ask — with some of the information that he shared.

Where I left off yesterday — and the minister had spoken regarding — when I was speaking about some of our older landfills as they were — we had talked about burns and this study — but this specific one that I was aware of was Marsh Lake. That was the one. I do know that, as we have moved toward waste diversion, those are the hopes — that we will be diverting what will be remaining in the landfills and I know that that's part of a solution. However, he was asking for which one and so I recall specifically that one and there were concerns around the Carcross one at the time.

Having said that, I'll maybe ask a couple of questions within this at this moment when I speak, and if I'm not hearing them, I'll just redirect those questions, Madam Chair.

I know that a large part of the response there was to discuss the future of recycling in Yukon and, as the minister mentioned yesterday, he realizes there is a longer term vision in actually succeeding as to where we're going with recycling and waste diversion in the territory. One of the questions is: Is the government's intention to move forward with universal access to recycling services like what is available in other jurisdictions in Canada, or is the government moving toward a user-pay recycling regime that requires Yukoners to pay more to recycle?

I do know that — I'll throw this one in the question — waste metal is no longer accepted in some of the rural transfer stations. Could the minister tell me which communities are no longer receiving waste metal? I know Marsh Lake is one again and I know Mount Lorne is one, but I would like to know where else and I will just end with those questions for now.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I have just a few more comments that I want to make about infrastructure generally with solid waste and then I will turn specifically to the questions raised by the member.

With regard to infrastructure, Yukon seeks to maximize the benefits of federal infrastructure funding programs to improve community-based infrastructure and initiatives that will also contribute to a healthy environment. Gas tax funding is held in trust for all Yukon municipalities and First Nation governments. Each has a specific allocation of the overall fund. The gas tax fund has become a permanent source of revenue for Yukon communities. In July 2014, a new agreement was signed and will now provide an ongoing source of funding for local infrastructure projects, including drinking water and waste-water systems, solid-waste management and a number of other important infrastructure items.

Yukon's initial five-year share of the fund was \$37.5 million and, beyond 2010, amounted to \$15 million per year over and above existing infrastructure programs. The new gas tax fund agreement is set to run from 2014-15 to 2023-2024. Over the next five years, Yukon will receive \$78 million for infrastructure projects, including projects identified under new categories that include regional and local airports, broadband connectivity, brownfield redevelopment, sports infrastructure, recreational infrastructure, cultural infrastructure, tourism infrastructure and disaster mitigation.

Many municipality governments and First Nations have utilized portions of their gas tax allocation for solid-waste projects. For instance, in Whitehorse, \$2.8 million was approved for compost program improvements. This led to composting and garbage collection carts for curbside pickup and upgrades to the city's composting facilities, including organic approval status and trucks. \$60,000 was approved for a waste composition study in 2009 that helped the city analyze contents of the landfill to understand the nature of the composition and better manage the waste stream. This project came in underbudget and was completed for \$28,500. \$275,000 went toward upgrades at the Whitehorse landfill, including transfer stations that are now in place. The project was completed underbudget. In 2013-14, \$680,000 was

provided to support the Whitehorse compost facility infrastructure and \$630,000 was provided to support solid-waste action plan implementation.

For the Village of Teslin, \$16,000 was approved to complete installation of solar-powered electrical fencing and the building of a composting facility structure. The project was completed within budget. An additional \$162,000 was used by Teslin to purchase a compacting garbage truck to reduce haul loads.

There were a number of other investments throughout the Yukon — in Watson Lake and Dawson, Mayo, Carmacks, and with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, and a number of other unincorporated Yukon sites.

I will turn back to the specific questions. I believe one of the questions was related to whether or not there was free access to recycling services in the territory. That is correct. Any person who wants to recycle can visit any of the processors to drop off their goods.

The BCR model is one that makes beverage containers a bit different, so there is a fee that one pays at the till for those products. Going through the process of the recycling fund, it is then returned at various amounts to the handlers and processors — as well as funding the recycling fund itself, which undertakes a number of activities throughout the Yukon. In a sense, there is a user-pay sense to that system, given that individuals pay at the till for a beer can or a pop can, or any other beverage container, as is common throughout Canada.

In regard to other products like the ones contemplated under the designated material regulation, again there would be an upfront fee associated with the disposal of the product at the time of purchase. That is the model we're going down right now. As I have indicated before, we intend to expand the number of products that will be included under that system, and we did a public consultation on that and heard a lot of good input from Yukoners about those proposed ideas. We started off with a modest list of products. Although it is modest in the sense that there are only electrical products and all sizes of tires, I think it is a big step forward and we will look at expanding that list of products in the future once we determine the relative success of the increase of the number of products.

For some products, there is a fee and that is the model we use. That is the way our system is set up. It's easy to look at other jurisdictions to see what they're doing, but that is the system that we have and we are committed to taking our system, growing it, improving it and making it work better for Yukon.

The next issue was about the specific concerns around Marsh Lake. My understanding is that there is a construction and demolition cell that does have some lifespan issues, but we are dealing with those. We are actively considering options presently to determine what the best course of action is for that particular site. I don't know if that includes raising the height of berms or not. That may be true. If the member — it is after all his riding — is aware that that is the case, I will

take him at his word there. I did want to note, though, that Marsh Lake does accept waste metal — the Marsh Lake transfer station. Of course it is a transfer station; it is not a landfill at Marsh Lake. I know, at one point in its history, it was, but it is now a transfer station and is intended to be that way for some time, so we don't anticipate that there will be larger issues with the lifespan of the Marsh Lake transfer station, given the fact that it is a transfer station.

There are a couple of small transfer stations throughout the territory that don't accept waste metal — Johnsons Crossing comes to mind — but typically we try to ensure that, regardless of where we are in the territory, there is reasonable access to solid-waste facilities that accept various materials. Obviously we try to rationalize that by looking at what services are provided in various parts of Yukon, and if there is somewhere that doesn't have the ability to accept certain materials, we try to ensure that it is communicated to the local populations where it is appropriate for them to go.

Recycling, Marsh Lake and the acceptance of waste metal, I think, were the three questions that I heard from the member opposite. If I have missed one, I apologize. I look forward to hearing it again.

Mr. Barr: Thank you to the minister for his response.

I was at the LAC just last week in Marsh Lake and the previous overseer of the transportation is now leaving — Walter — and there's a new person. But he was stating there — I'm sure I'm not incorrect — the result of waste metal in Marsh Lake and issues with it. It is no longer — and maybe it's just a recent thing that maybe officials and the minister aren't aware of but I notice in his response that they are still. I guess that's the contradicting information that I have from just last week and that's why I was asking.

I also received information just today about Mount Lorne around waste metal also — that they are no longer receiving any waste metals at that spot — and that just came up in a post today from Mike Bailey, actually, who has been quite instrumental in waste diversion in the territory. They continue to do a great job. I know that many folks in the territory are concerned with waste diversion and some of the information is that we have only have one planet. There are many very concerned folks who are dealing with waste diversion. I might add that Mount Lorne last year was already at 75:25 waste diversion, so they must be commended for what they're doing out there.

I would just like to state that I know that there were issues in Ross River with burning. In the minister's opening remarks here today, he was stating that we've moved away from that. I do know that has been an issue and continued to be an issue before we broke in Sitting. I am aware that there was a contract put in place so that there is some oversight at the Ross River landfill. I would like to get an update from the minister if he is aware of any recent burning. I'll just leave that at this point.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: First of all, I will just respond to some of the comments about the waste metal. The best information that we have here today suggests that — the policy is that both Marsh Lake transfer station and Mount

Lorne transfer station are to be accepting waste metal. Every year we issue a contract to go pick up that waste metal. If it's not being collected there, we'll have to follow up and determine why it's not because we're paying to go and collect it. We'll have to look into that if the communities have decided not to collect it for some reason or another. That's not consistent with the policy of the Yukon government so we'll have to look into that.

With regard to Ross River, there is a contract in place with some greater oversight, as the member noted, so there's more active management of that particular site being undertaken now by Community Services than there was previously with regard to burning. I haven't heard of any complaints about burning going on, but if somebody lights garbage at the dump and it is burning, it's something we want to hear about. Obviously it's not allowed and it's not consistent with our policy or our regulations.

It's a concern for us to hear if there is garbage being burned at any dump, including Ross River. I should note, though, that what the plan is with Ross River — and obviously we have the contract in place now. Ideally it would be nice if we could establish a regional landfill or a regional solid-waste agreement for that region. We're in discussions with the Town of Faro to that end. That is the approach we've taken in other regions. For instance, as I indicated in my opening remarks today, I had the opportunity to sign a new regional solid-waste agreement with Watson Lake last week. As a result of that, we'll be closing our Upper Liard facility and using the Town of Watson Lake's solid-waste facility as a regional site. That will work for the Town of Watson Lake for a number of reasons, but it will also work for Yukon government and the public, whether it be individuals or companies looking to dispose of waste in the southeast Yukon.

I think that's a model that can be successful in other regions like Faro and Ross River, and I'm hopeful that our discussions will be fruitful with the Town of Faro to achieve that. If we aren't able to do that, we'll continue to figure out a way to make the Ross River facility work. We'll continue to liaise with the community there and to ensure that we have the contracts in place and the management activity in place to ensure that the facility operates consistent with the regulatory requirements that are imposed upon us by their permits.

Like I said, we're hopeful that we can go down the regional solid-waste agreement route with that area but, if not, we'll have to find another way.

Mr. Barr: I'm happy to hear about the resolve in Watson Lake and Upper Liard. I know that was going to be a question of mine — to see where that is. It does bring to mind, when the minister was speaking about AYC and regional plans and speaking with municipal governments and the Yukon government around waste diversion, waste management, solid waste and so on and so forth — and I was reading in some material from a previous minister who was in this position — that there was a recommendation to also be including First Nation governments in these discussions.

I do know that I hadn't heard that in the response, and I'm wondering if there are ongoing talks, as it was a recommendation from a study done by previous ministers — I don't have the date on the tip of my tongue, but I can get that for him. I do recognize that Carcross-Tagish First Nation, for example, has taken it upon themselves to locate waste bins throughout the area, which is open to non-First Nations to put in — if they're seniors, not businesses, and say for in Tagish and in Natasheeni and Choutla subdivision, so on and so forth — because of bears and some seniors and a lot of people living in these rural communities having waste sitting around their houses. This is the reason for doing that — to cut down on that.

I guess it's just citing that there are some different approaches out there, but are there talks with First Nations included with the Association of Yukon Communities, with the YG?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The simple answer is yes, very much so. First Nations are involved in a number of ways with regard to solid-waste management in the territory.

I had noted a few examples — for instance, the innovative new approach we've taken in Old Crow with the Vuntut Gwitchin. There were discussions with the Liard First Nation since they have a curbside pickup system for their citizens in the Upper Liard area. That will ultimately end up at the Watson Lake facility as a result of our regional agreement there.

Likewise the member referenced the systems operated by the Carcross-Tagish. Obviously we commend them for doing those programs. Ultimately, whatever they collect ends up at our facilities as well. We're interested in what First Nations are doing and we're interested in what LACs and municipalities are doing because oftentimes it will end up in our system and we want to be able to understand where it came from and how it was collected.

We do work with First Nations throughout the territory in all regions of the territory to address these needs, and First Nations play an important role in providing some of those services so we'll continue to engage with them.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response and offering some clarification and all that. I appreciate that.

I would like to maybe move on at this point. I had, in my opening remarks, raised some questions and I will go back to them now because it was asked of the minister to maybe ask specific questions now.

One of the things I had asked or brought up during those remarks was about planning for ambulance services and fire trucks as we're amalgamating those in the communities such as Carcross right now. I know that when I had asked about Watson Lake and the bay being too short for the ambulance — for the stretcher and the cleaning especially being an issue when we're at minus 30 or minus-degree temperatures and for the upkeep of ambulances and just washing, for example. Has that been taken into consideration for the new building in Carcross?

I do know that there are new fire trucks and new ambulances that were purchased and we applaud the

government for doing this. We know this does help in moving things forward. But we also know that in the planning for the building in Carmacks, which isn't slated yet — we want to guarantee that we aren't having buildings built that don't really fit the whole need of the service. To confirm that for the upcoming one in Carcross — but has the issue been taken care of in Watson Lake, for example?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: To start as a general comment, I would say the member is correct that our goal — as we move forward with integrating the various protective services in the territory, we do try to collocate these services. That was what happened in Beaver Creek; that's what is intended for Carcross. When we build these facilities, it is cost-effective from a construction point of view and an operation and maintenance point of view to have a single building that houses all of these services.

It is helpful also for the integration of those services that they be located together. I know that there are some in the various fields, whether it is the fire field or the EMS field, who like to have their own building and it acts in some communities as a bit of an area strictly for that one field. So we are trying on the one hand to address that, but also address the fact that it does make more sense for the public to invest in a single facility that houses all of these services rather than having three or four different buildings or three — or different offices that offer those services. So yes, we are moving to integrate those services as best we can where it is appropriate, and we think it will be appropriate in Carcross.

As well, we consult with the communities to try to provide other interests as well. For instance, in Carcross there will be the fitness room, which will be available to residents of Carcross or citizens of Carcross. That was something that came out of the discussions with the local area council. I believe the LAC's representative who we were dealing with had a background in fire — either was a deputy chief or a former chief of the fire hall in Carcross. Certainly, there were some very helpful comments and helpful input provided through that process.

With regard to Watson Lake — I had a chance to tour the EMS building when I was there a few weeks ago. The EMS folks didn't mention at that point that there was a problem with the size of the facility, but that doesn't mean that there isn't. If there is a problem, of course as we construct these new buildings, they are built to —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Sorry, Madam Chair, I think the Leader of the Official Opposition is whispering. I can't quite hear — thank you, Madam Chair.

Obviously, when we construct these buildings we do build them to fit the equipment that they are required to hold. In the case of Watson Lake, I think it is a fairly old building, so perhaps the equipment has changed. I know that is the case with the EMS building down here by the hospital. The building that was built a number of years ago was suited to the older style ambulances, and it was indicated to me that the newer ambulances are larger and do not fit as well in the bays that were built for the previous models. That could be the case

in Watson Lake, but I don't know for sure. If there is a problem in Watson Lake, I am happy to work with EMS there to try to address it. But like I said, when I toured it a few weeks ago, the folks there didn't mention it as a concern. Perhaps it is. I had heard from the Hospital Corporation that there was a small concern about a bump leading into the approach of the new hospital that wasn't so bad for the EMS responders, but was a bit hard on some of the patients sometimes when they had that bump leading into the ambulance bay at the hospital. My understanding is that that has been or will be very soon addressed.

Yes, we do try to build these buildings to fit the purpose that they are intended for. I think that covers the question the member opposite asked.

Mr. Barr: Yes, I too toured that facility and that was the comment I received in Watson Lake. Actually, that building is newer. It is actually a retrofit from the old NAPA building that was built with the ambulances they still have in place. It was an oversight that maybe the minister would want to be proactive about. That is my information.

Moving on — I would like to at this time salute all the EMS workers and volunteers out there. I know that they do a great job in all of our communities and in Whitehorse. I just thank them for everything that they do and I was recalling in the budget briefing that, over the last few years, we on this side of the House have been advocating for even turnout equipment and I was assured that at this point — and the reason we were asking for that is that EMS workers were actually dipping into their barbecue funds to get some equipment. At this time and place, we are hearing that they have recently been purchased turnout gear and that is good news that this has happened at this point.

I have several questions here and I know that my colleague, the Leader of the Liberal Party, has several himself. I will just keep going at it and I know some of my colleagues here have some questions. So it is a large department.

One of the things I did bring up initially was also the civic addressing specifically in Marsh Lake, where I know that they themselves have been accessing funds for their signs for their civic addresses. I was speaking with the folks there today and have been in the past few weeks speaking about them going to community development funding to receive monies for their signs for people to put on their houses for their civic addressing, which we all know goes hand in hand with 911 — that these be available.

Given that Marsh Lake is one of the initial folks who have been working on this for several years, they have recently even received from people who have funded them in the past. They don't feel that their funds should go toward civic addressing signs — that it should be coming from Community Services — so I am raising this today. Is the minister prepared to work with Marsh Lake and offer the funding necessary for signs for civic addressing in that particular community that is ready, that has been working on it and that wants to move forward?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The Yukon government recognizes that street signs and house numbering are important to help

local fire departments, EMS services and RCMP respond to calls. Community Services is very pleased to be working with LACs, including Marsh Lake, who would like to improve street signage and house numbering in their area. Community Services is currently working with all five LACs on a civic addressing system, which is expected to be completed very soon. All five LACs have requested house numbers and street signs to assist for those local emergency services that I mentioned earlier.

In response to this request, CS has initiated and is working to complete a civic addressing project for the local advisory areas. We're working to ensure that all residents within a local advisory area have a house number and all roads have a street sign. This information is also being captured in maps so that it is available to emergency responders. This project is using a system that could be implemented for future territorial expansion of the initiative at a later date if necessary. So the short answer is that the Yukon government will of course provide the funding for street numbers and street signs and we're working with the LACs to implement that. I believe that there is a rotation at least. We're working with one LAC at a time. I don't know in what order they're being done, but when it comes time to do Marsh Lake, if it hasn't been done already, we'll provide the funding for street signs and house numbers.

Mr. Barr: If there is a rotation that's happening, would the minister provide this side of the House with who is next in line? Hopefully the minister will recognize that I do know, in working with the communities in my riding, that some have been working on it for several years and I know Marsh Lake is one. Others have come on just in the last year or two years and so on and so forth, but I do know Marsh Lake is one that hopefully would be next in line. I would ask if I could maybe get that information — if it's not here — at a later date.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that Marsh Lake is next or we're ready to go with Marsh Lake as soon as the LAC is ready. My understanding is we can provide funding for street signs and house numbers in the Marsh Lake advisory area as soon as we can. If the member is talking to LAC members, they can feel free to contact the department — or in particular contact their community advisor — and we look forward to implementing the new civic addressing in Marsh Lake. My understanding was that some LACs had indicated they weren't quite ready yet. My understanding though was Tagish was one of those — that other areas were going to go first. We'll get to the other LACs when everyone is ready and when they're ready to go. As I've indicated, there's funding available for street signs and house numbers and we look forward to implementing that.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response. I'll certainly pass that information on and I'm sure they'll be very happy to hear that it's happening and so will the first responders, because they have been part of the solution about time in getting to places that is going to eventually save lives ultimately. I thank the department for their efforts in this and the minister's comments.

I'm going to throw this out there because over the last few years in unincorporated communities, the *Dog Act* — the municipal act around dogs, animals and pets has come up I know in my riding. I know it comes up in others. Recently in Carcross at a community meeting, there were some elders in tears.

I know that it also has to do with street lights, especially in the wintertime, when there have been as many as close to half of them out in the Carcross community for example. Being that it's dark and we have dogs running around, is there an appetite to look at that act that reflects to pets running in the community? I know that it is kind of a free-for-all and the only response that RCMP can deal with is if there is a life in danger, really. Maybe that could be explored.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I should note that the animal protection program was something that was brought in a few years ago by the Yukon government. It saw a new animal protection officer come into the government and undertake a number of programs throughout the territory. Those are focused on — I know one program for instance is related to the spaying and neutering of animals throughout the territory. That program has been fairly successful from my understanding, but I should note that, as a part of the very recent change, that program has been transferred over to the Department of Environment, so some more detailed explanations of what is going on with that program would be better placed in Department of Environment debate.

I would note that part of the reasoning behind the transfer was the fact that the Department of Environment — and in particular the animal health unit — has some excellent resources and structure that we felt would be a better fit for the animal protection officer and, for instance, having the chief veterinary officer in the same office as the animal protection officer I think is a good thing. It provides that individual and that position with some support and structure around him or her — in this case it's a him — and I think it will be a good step forward for the protection of animal health in the territory. It will also give the program some additional ancillary supports from the animal health unit as Environment is a better fit for that particular program, which is ultimately why we transferred it to Environment. The animal protection officer program and the animal welfare program is something that we transferred to Environment and I encourage the member to bring it up with the Minister of Environment later on.

However, I should note that I don't believe at this point we're contemplating amendments to the *Dog Act* in this current term. That certainly doesn't imply that we couldn't do it in the future, but I think before we undertake legislative amendments, we would want to make sure that we were doing it for a good reason and a reason that made sense and we weren't just doing it for the sake of changing the act because we thought that would solve everything. I think what happens on the ground in terms of the program that is offered by Yukon government is important and if there are changes to the program that don't need to be made, I'm confident that within the new structure of the animal health unit, the Minister of

Environment and his department will be able to make those changes as necessary.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response. I'll update those who have been asking about that.

I would like to step back — I forgot to bring something up. In regard to the Haines Junction volunteer ambulance situation, which I brought up in my opening remarks — I believe there are actually even talks going on today to have some resolve with the situation that happens in Haines Junction in the summer months when there's a higher incidence of callouts that generally results in the volunteers being out on call for long periods of time, which, in turn, affects their ability to actually show up for work.

There were talks previously. I brought forward questions in the House last Sitting and was encouraged that the department was going to be coming to resolve before this summer. I know the minister likely wouldn't be able to comment, given that there is a meeting today, but there was a situation that did happen recently that I wanted to ask about, but if the minister does have information, please let me know. The meeting could have been completed by now.

Unbeknownst to the supervisor of EMS and the volunteers themselves, there had been a recruitment push by the department and they hadn't known about it, which seemed rather odd. Maybe the minister would like to comment on both the areas I've remarked on.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yukon government is responsible for providing equipment, infrastructure and training to support rural Yukon emergency medical response and relies on the community to provide the volunteers. This approach is consistent with all Yukon communities that are not serviced by a hospital or community health centre.

As the delivery of EMS in rural Yukon is largely dependent upon volunteers, their recruitment and retention is an ongoing process involving Yukon Emergency Medical Services in partnership with communities. While each community has its own dynamics, volunteer availability has been especially challenging in Haines Junction over the past several summers due to the seasonal employment of volunteers and vacation preferences.

At the suggestion of local volunteers in Haines Junction, a pilot project was put in place this past summer to reduce the number of uncovered shifts in the community. YEMS provided extra portable radio units to volunteers, and this helped alleviate the issue. YEMS continues to work with the community to look for long-term solutions and has partnered with other stakeholders to establish a working group that will provide recommendations on how to address service gaps in Haines Junction. The working group continues to meet and will report back to Yukon government in the near future.

Community volunteers continue to be supported through numerous initiatives, including maintaining the improved supply of uniforms, medical and safety equipment, fleet management and station maintenance, providing in-station training and implementing an on-line learning management system to allow community responders to develop and

maintain clinical competency without leaving their home communities. This system should be in place very soon.

The YEMS has been meeting with a community-based working group comprised of local first responders, municipal council members and CAFN representatives tasked with identifying options and potential solutions to address summer volunteer levels. Yukon EMS received the working group's summary of potential options a few weeks ago and is currently in the process of examining the report and its recommendations.

Yukon government continues to work in partnership with the community of Haines Junction, including the municipality and the local First Nation, to identify the appropriate next steps. We depend on our partnerships with Yukon communities to recruit and retain volunteers, and we will continue to assist to help secure adequate volunteer levels for the long term.

The working group that I referenced is providing recommendations to Yukon government that we will give consideration to, and we look forward to working with the community to address the unique needs of Haines Junction. Obviously, volunteer recruitment and retention is an issue throughout the territory and can sporadically come to be in a variety of communities, and that has been the case in Haines Junction in this case where Yukon EMS has been requested to meet with the working group. My understanding is that they met either late last week or early this week, so perhaps that is the meeting the member is talking about.

YEMS is committed to supporting the existing volunteer system within a pilot or mentorship program that will address the immediate summer coverage issues while building local capacity over the long term. Yukon EMS is actively working with other government partners to establish the framework to support this option and to recruit, train and deploy suitable community responders.

My understanding is that YEMS tries to engage with the community, especially the local volunteers, with regard to how they conduct their volunteer drives or their programs or communications to increase volunteerism and to attract new volunteers. If that didn't happen in the case of Haines Junction, I am surprised to hear it. Usually our EMS folks in the department are pretty good at engaging with our volunteers to do that, but I would be happy to follow up and determine if that is the case and, if so, what happened. As I said, my understanding is that we do try to work with the communities as best we can to raise awareness of opportunities to volunteer in YEMS. Like I said, if that didn't happen in Haines Junction in the case of the most recent initiative, I will have to look into that. I don't know why that would be the case.

I did want to note that — I think it is the working group that included the Village of Haines Junction, YEMS, Community Nursing — they all did some excellent work with regard to coming up with some recommendations. I think what they all noted was that there is the understanding that further development and systemic evaluation of the options will be required prior to consideration for implementation. We

are going to have to take a look at the recommendations that have been provided to us and give some consideration to them to determine what best to do with regard to the next steps.

I think that covered the question in general, but if I have missed something, I look forward to hearing more.

Mr. Barr: Yes, I will look forward to hearing the results of this latest meeting. I know summer is coming and I did find it odd that Yukon EMS hadn't worked with the supervisor and the local EMS workers to be part of their recruitment drive. That is why I brought that up. I know that there are other communities that certainly could benefit from a recruitment drive and I would encourage the minister to do a volunteer recruitment drive throughout the territory. Given that Haines Junction — it isn't really the issue of a lack of volunteers; there are a large number in Haines Junction — so it was the previous reasons for the difficulties in the summer months that I had expressed. It just seemed — yes, well, I will look forward to hearing back from the minister on why that may have occurred and would encourage it to happen in others too.

When I speak of volunteers in general, I know that a lot of the LACs are coming up for elections this fall and — whether it is a volunteer fire department or local advisory council — these people are often of the same pool within the communities that do volunteer. There has been some expression from when I have been attending meetings that there is a joint effort from YG just in all around general recruitment of new faces and to look at solutions as we go forward. I know myself as a volunteer and many people sit on many different boards in the communities and it is the same faces you will see at many of the meetings. I think that they need support in attracting new folks to step up to the plate, because volunteers do offer so much and it would be helpful to support them in the recruitment.

I'll move on to something I had brought up in the past. I know that specifically around emergency preparedness and whether or not this minister had an appetite to help communities that have — there are some communities, for example, like Marsh Lake, where if there is a huge emergency, people know to gather at Marsh Lake Community Centre. Families — people go there and there are going to be supports. There is a generator; there is a food — and so on and so forth — plan in place. Something happens, you know where to go — Mount Lorne doesn't have that plan set up — so that local people throughout the Yukon in their communities, given some catastrophe, have a specific plan in place — so where to go, generators in all these areas and so on and so forth. Would this minister look at being proactive in seeing where plans are in place and then assisting and helping to orchestrate an emergency plan for those that don't?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The short answer is yes, absolutely. The EMO does do much of this work already. The EMO supports seven volunteer ground search and rescue teams across Yukon, collectively made up of over 100 individuals. They supported the merging of the administrative portion of the SAR teams into one society, while maintaining response capabilities and assets in the communities.

We support ongoing efforts of the Yukon Amateur Radio Association to maintain the Yukon marine distress system and the amateur radio network. We've distributed roughly 12,000 72-hour emergency preparedness brochures to Yukon households. We've delivered incident command system training to over 250 Yukon government and community personnel, including the ICS 402 course, to 22 Yukon government senior managers. We organized the first annual Yukon-wide earthquake preparedness exercise, called Yukon ShakeOut, with over 6,000 participants in the first year. We established temporary enclosed storage shelters for SAR in Faro, Dawson and Whitehorse, using federal search and rescue new initiative fund dollars. We coordinated the collection of digital elevation data as part of the Yukon flood risk mapping. Surveys of 13 Yukon flood-prone community areas were conducted last fall, in aid of providing enhanced digital elevation data to improve flood-plain mapping.

We also piloted the disaster resilience planning program with the Village of Carmacks and the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation to refine the program for use in all communities. This program will assess the community's disaster resilience in aid of strengthening its emergency preparedness capacity. That model is one we could use in other places as well. I know the EMO works directly with other levels of government, including First Nations, to develop disaster management plans to ensure that there's an understanding among governments of who is doing what in the case of an emergency, and to ensure that necessary services are available to community members in the event of an unfortunate incident like a disaster.

We do that bilaterally with First Nations; we do that with municipalities; we do that with LACs and any other group that is willing to work with us. So if there is a group — for instance, Mount Lorne is the one referenced by the member opposite — I would encourage them to contact the EMO to determine how best to integrate their needs for programming or for services or for plans with what's being done already.

Our focus in EMO does tend to be on the four pillars we have identified: prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. We assure that the Yukon government emergency coordination plan is up to date and we try to provide a coordinated approach to emergency response within the government's areas of responsibility.

Today, most Yukon government departments and corporations have completed their own emergency plans, inclusive of business continuity, and progress is being made on the rest. EMO is currently leading the modernization updating of the territorial emergency coordination plan. The Yukon government emergency coordination group is assisting in the rewrite. It's anticipated the new plan will be ready for approval in mid-2016.

EMO has been engaged in a multi-year initiative through the Aboriginal Relations — Executive Council Office — branch implementation fund to strengthen emergency preparedness by planning alongside with First Nation governments and communities. EMO is working with all Yukon self-governing First Nations to provide this advice and support. So, Mr. Speaker, again, we work with communities,

First Nations and other levels of government to try to ensure we have a coordinated response to any type of disaster. In the specific case of the group that the member opposite discussed, I would encourage him to contact EMO to discuss their concerns and provide the support that they are looking for.

Mr. Barr: That's encouraging. I will pass that information on. I thank the minister for his response.

Over the past year, organizations as varied as the Association of Yukon Communities, the City of Whitehorse and a number of local area councils have expressed severe concerns about collaborating with the Department of Community Services on a number of issues, including consultation. Since the new Community Services minister has taken charge, has his department announced any initiative to improve the government's strained relationships with Yukon's other governments?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I'm not sure exactly which groups he's referring to. Could he give me an example of which order of government he's talking about? Is he talking about LACs or municipalities? I'm not clear.

Mr. Barr: Actually several, including the municipal government of Whitehorse, Association of Yukon Communities, the City of Whitehorse — I'll use those.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I happen to disagree. I happen to think that the relationship between the Yukon government and the City of Whitehorse is very strong. I would encourage members to ask the mayor for his opinion of the relationship. I think that we have a very strong relationship. We work together, at the political level between the mayor and myself as minister. As well, our department works very closely with the city administration. We provide, obviously, significant funding to the City of Whitehorse and work together in a number of ways. I would point to the example I cited earlier of the enhanced diversion credits as an excellent example of us working together to address a common interest. I think the communication has been open. Working relationships are strong and we'll continue to work on a government-to-government basis with the City of Whitehorse. I disagree with the overview provided by the member opposite. I think that our relationship is very strong with the City of Whitehorse.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response. Thanks to my colleagues for being up here with me.

Another situation I brought up previously was that Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay citizens have been asking for an RCMP detachment for years.

Last month this shortcoming was made clear by the 90-minute response time that happened from the closest detachment in Haines Junction. Is the government going to listen to the communities and their leadership, both the municipal and the First Nations, and create a permanent RCMP posting in Burwash Landing?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I would remind members that the issue at hand is the Community Services budget for 2015-16. The issue of RCMP detachments is dealt with in a different budget, the Department of Justice, and I

would encourage members to focus their questions on the topic at hand.

Mr. Barr: I respect the minister's comments and would encourage him to work with his colleagues to help finding resolve. I know that we don't always operate in silos here. If the minister could do so, that would be great.

One of the things I have also brought up in the past was — and it's great that the government has announced new investments for volunteer ambulance uniforms. It is to ensure that they are visible and effective in their duties. There are other volunteers out there with their turnout gear. I am familiar with specifically one — it is the search and rescue volunteers, and it costs each one of them in the neighbourhood of \$1,000 for their gear to turn out and go out on call. That's something that they come up with out of their own pocket. Is the minister looking at subsidizing those volunteers? They volunteer, for example. They go out and do that. The support isn't there to get them boots required or rain gear, and so on and so forth. They come up with that amount of money on top of saying, "I'm ready to go out at any time when I'm called through the night and day", whether or not it is their kid's birthday. I just feel that supporting them with uniforms would be a good thing.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The Yukon government does support search and rescue individuals or volunteers throughout the territory in a number of ways. I'm not aware that we are contemplating subsidizing the purchase of rain gear at this time, but that is something I would be happy to look into going forward.

Mr. Barr: That's great. I'm sure they'll be happy that you're willing to look into that. I hadn't heard that from previous ministers.

I have a few more questions and I know that I am going to turn it over shortly. I'll just ask a few more and allow my colleagues to ask some questions.

I have heard in the House that there are plans to reopen the Ross River School. Can the minister comment on that and give us some timelines?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The Department of Community Services 2015-16 budget does not include any appropriation for the Ross River School.

Mr. Barr: I think at this point that will conclude my questions.

I have one other one. In the budget regarding the Dawson City water treatment facility, is there money allocated? I know that, for the facility itself, it still hasn't been handed over to the city. There have been ongoing issues, and I know it has been worked on and it is still being worked on, and that in the agreement, until the city feels comfortable with the Yukon government, it won't happen. There had been debate as to whether or not money would be available for infrastructure that — not the new infrastructure, but one of the flooding situations where it connects to the old. Is there going to be money put forward in that part of the water treatment facility that needs replacing for the system to work?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I may have to review the Blues to get the full breadth of that sentence, but I believe he is asking

about the force main in Dawson. If that is the case, we have been working with the City of Dawson to address that need and will be providing funds this year to deal with the force main in Dawson.

Mr. Silver: Thank you to the department officials for their work here today and yesterday. Your time is very valuable and it is much appreciated in this Chamber.

Seeing as we just had a question on the Dawson wastewater treatment facility, I might as well start there. Yes, I do believe my colleague was talking about the force main. Interestingly enough to note, when the blueprint was being looked at for this waste-water treatment facility, it was noted at that time by officials from the City of Dawson that these mains — they had had an interesting history. They weren't the right fit to begin with. There were changes to the design and it was an ongoing issue. It was brought up at that time that it should be looked at. It was even indicated by the officials from the City of Dawson that this will be an issue — that if not dealt with right now, this will be an issue. As we noticed, it did become an issue. This is probably not necessarily the department to be talking about most of this type of infrastructure work, but I will bring it up during Community Services. I will also bring it up with the Minister of Highways and Public Works as well at that time and maybe we will get an answer from someone.

On that, the facility has finally passed three months' compliance from Corix. It should be noted at this time that bleeders are coming off. We do not send as much pure, fresh water through the system at this time, which was having an effect on the tests. It is probably the lowest flow for the whole year as well.

I could see why the mayor and council could have a little caution as far as this, but again, as far as the compliance necessary for Corix to be able to sign off with YTG, we have seen that it has finally passed three months' compliance. There are still going to be major issues on functionality, especially during the summer months when we have a lot more flow through that system.

There are O&M costs that are at issue as well, and sustainability issues as far as downloading the cost of this facility to the City of Dawson.

I guess the question at this point right now is: How far ahead is the government in dealing at this point with getting a commitment or something signed with the City of Dawson as far as warranties — as far as at least a five-year warranty? I know that there are issues about air handling and there are issues about the liner on the clarifying tank, so if the minister can explain how the negotiations are going with the city and how much closer they are at signing, at bare minimum, a five-year warranty for the turnover of this facility to the City of Dawson?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yukon government remains committed to ensuring that the operation and maintenance costs of the water-water treatment plant are sustainable for the City of Dawson. We are working with the City of Dawson together to ensure the waste-water treatment plant consistently meets the contractual terms and conditions. The member

referenced some warranty issues. There were some warranty issues with Corix, the contractor, and we are addressing those.

The negotiations and discussions are ongoing with the City of Dawson to reach an agreement for how to move forward. As those discussions and negotiations are ongoing, I am not going to say too much about them, but I will say that they are going well and I look forward to working with the community of Dawson to see waste-water services provided in an efficient and reasonable way in the community. Obviously I think there is more work to be done and more discussions to be had, but I am optimistic about how things are going. I have spoken to the mayor about this a few times, but the primary discussions are going on at the officials' level between the administration of the City of Dawson and the Department of Community Services with some interaction, of course, with the Department of Highways and Public Works as well. I am optimistic we'll find a path forward that will meet the needs of the community of Dawson as well as the Yukon government.

Mr. Silver: I do appreciate that conversations are being had and things are moving forward. We are not putting all the onus here on just the Yukon Party or just the YTG. We know that the City of Dawson — the CAO has left, moved on to Elliott Lake, so I could imagine, as you are building up negotiations and talking about this issue and then you have a change in personnel at such a high level — that would definitely throw a wrench into things, for sure.

Could the minister expand a little bit more upon capacity to take this over? I know that one of the issues is to get city employees to be certified to the right levels of certification. Maybe the minister can give us an update on how that's going.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I guess if I was to expand a little bit more — I don't intend to be coy — these are ongoing discussions and I don't want to say something that is incorrect.

It is a dynamic situation, because discussions are ongoing. We are seeking a multi-year agreement. The agreement would include ensuring that the community of Dawson has the capacity to operate the facility at the time upon which they would potentially take over the facility. We want to make sure that officials from the community of Dawson have access to the facility throughout the coming years, to ensure that they can get an adequate amount of training and experience with the facility.

Obviously we want to ensure that everybody is comfortable going forward and that the proper accreditation or proper training is provided to those who will be operating this facility. The exact figures around training times, operation and maintenance costs and the amounts that will be paid by the various orders of government over the coming years are things that are still to be determined and we're in discussions currently with the town to determine what those are going to look like.

Mr. Silver: Thanks to the minister. I do appreciate that you want to get things right, especially if we're bringing them up for Hansard. I know that, after my conversations with mayor and council — lots of good faith conversations — we had the previous Minister of Highways and Public Works

stand up in this Chamber and say that YTG wouldn't ever download something that couldn't be handled by the municipality. Of course I'm paraphrasing right now, but we have faith that this government will stick to that and a solution would be had in the hopefully very near future.

Might as well get back to the original segue, which was with the water force mains — and just a little bit more background: when the facility was built, it was simply connected to an old discharge pipe — the force main. In December, that connection between the plant and the old infrastructure broke — if we can get an update on whether the department has plans to upgrade this infrastructure; timelines; price — that's everything, Madam Chair.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Within 24 hours of me becoming the Community Services minister, I had a chance to meet with the mayor of Dawson in his capacity as president of AYC. The meeting was prearranged for a different reason but, given my new responsibility, I had a chance to meet with the mayor very shortly after it was announced I would be the Community Services minister.

At that time, he impressed upon me the great importance that this particular piece of infrastructure had and why it was a key piece of municipal infrastructure or a key piece of infrastructure for the community. He was seeking support to help improve that or address that issue. Over the following weeks and months, we had gone back and forth a few different times in discussions — both at the political and official level — and we were able to find a way to support the City of Dawson in addressing this issue.

I stand to be corrected on the actual final amount, but it's in the neighbourhood of \$1.5 million that will be provided to address this piece of infrastructure in the coming season.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Madam Chair and thank you to the minister.

When the waste-water treatment facility in Dawson was planned, a district heating project was layered on that. Part of this was a boiler that was going to run on biomass, on wood chips for, like I say, a district heating project.

Can the minister give us an update or let us know about this plan? Is this still in the plan? What buildings are we talking about? Is this extending to the museum? Is it extending to the waste-water treatment facility? Where are the plans right now for the boiler system that is to be fed by biomass?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that the biomass facility is functioning and provides heat to the facility. However, as the member noted, it was contemplated that it could perhaps provide additional energy to other facilities. My understanding is that it has been raised that we could do an additional phase and possibly a third phase in the coming years. We're looking at including the potential for that in upcoming infrastructure plans as we move forward to implement the new Building Canada fund.

Mr. Silver: Sorry, just for clarification's sake — there's no line item per se in these mains for this item?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: No, I don't believe so — not for expanding the system to other buildings, although as I've indicated, if we were to conduct a second phase or a third

phase of that, it would come in future years, perhaps through the new Building Canada fund.

Mr. Silver: Thank you to the minister for the clarification.

Sticking to the heart of the Yukon, the Klondike, I would like to ask a question about the —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Silver: Did I hear some opposition over there? I would like to stick with the heart of the Yukon, the Klondike — I have to reiterate my statement — the Dawson City rec centre. The City of Dawson has recently indicated that it wants to proceed with fixing the current rec centre as an option. There's a debate about this tonight; there are more conversations being had locally right now. The government has a report that provided a permanent fix for the current recreation facility and that report is almost a year old. The report is recommending the demolition of the curling rink and replacing it on the other side — turning that into more of a parking lot on the south side. It also recommends a new ice plant and several renovations to the ice rink and it pegs the cost at around \$12.5 million.

We are hearing too that the recreation facility planning report 2015-16, which was done by the working group, has been drafted and is ready as a draft — or ready at least in theory and supposedly is on a desk somewhere at YTG. Of course the planning committee is made up of Dawson City community members and also made up of members of YTG, so we are wondering when the minister can make this available and if he could maybe make some comments on it here in the Legislature.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member opposite is correct that the funding that has previously been made available to Dawson is still there for the most part. I believe it was approximately \$4 million that was allocated previously for this project. The working groups comprised of — and again I stand to be corrected, but my understanding is that there are two officials from the Yukon government and two from the City of Dawson who approved the workplan for the coming year to spend that money on the facility. My understanding is that the City of Dawson passed a resolution that reads as follows: "Whereas long-term planning for the eventual replacement of recreation facilities is an important municipal function, but should not come at the cost of dealing with today's issues; whereas there is money that may be used towards the refurbishment of the current Rec. Centre that will enhance that facility's function; be it resolved that Council endorse focussing efforts and resources on the current Rec. Centre for the foreseeable future; be it further resolved that administration investigate costs associated with renovating the second floor and installing an ice mat system in 2015."

So, pursuant to that resolution, I understand that the plans for this year are to do just that — to renovate the second floor and install an ice mat system. I believe that the workplan has to be approved by both governments and it is somewhere in the approval process as we speak. I don't know exactly where, but my understanding is that it is anticipated that that would be approved relatively quickly and that work can begin this

year to spend some of that \$4 million that has been allocated for the work to be done on the Dawson recreation centre.

I think I've answer the member's question with regard to where it is. It is with both governments right now in the approval stage and, once it's approved, work can begin — the work that is contemplated in the resolution passed by the Dawson City council.

Mr. Silver: Thank you to the minister for the update. Yes, the sooner the better — reports, plans. It would be nice to start going forward on some type of upgrades at least to the current facility. The whole plan of these mats is a great idea. We have some of the best hockey players in the Yukon currently and we have a limited — an extremely limited — season. I was told anecdotally the other day that our team girls hockey players are some of the best absolutely in Yukon and the boys in Dawson are actually afraid to play against them. So imagine the talent level if we could start hockey at the same time of year as the rest of the other communities — imagine.

I'm going to move on to — actually, it is probably a good time to talk about the Carmacks arena and I do believe it was brought up here as well. I think this issue was partially discussed but it was more on a larger question about sports and recreation commitments in the Yukon in general.

In December, an inspection on the Carmacks rink by its insurance company revealed that the supports holding the roof above the outdoor rink were unsustainable. As a result the arena has been closed all winter. Where are we as far as the department's commitment to ensuring that Carmacks has an arena next year?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I am sure it will come as no surprise — my disagreement that Dawson has the best hockey players. From what I can tell, the best hockey players, of course, are in the capital City of Whitehorse, although I should note that a number of excellent hockey players have come out of a number of communities. Haines Junction, I think, has produced some excellent hockey players as well. I should note that the community of Old Crow has put forward some good athletes, including a few in the Oldtimers, which I think includes the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. Of course, the transition to Oldtimers is never easy for an individual, and I hope we all support the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin as he makes this difficult transition in his life. Moving from recreational level to the Oldtimers league is never easy, and I know that the emotional toll it has taken on the member has been difficult — to say nothing about the physical toll. Going up against people like the Minister of Education, of course, doesn't help, as he is known for — the term we use on the rink is "laying the lumber". He is a bit nasty sometimes, but I don't want to go too far; otherwise I may be called on a point of order.

With regard to the Village of Carmacks recreation complex and hockey arena, the member is correct. In December 2014, just a few months ago, the Village of Carmacks received word from their insurance provider that they would have to shut down their hockey arena, citing structural safety concerns. Soon after, Community Services

representatives met with the CAO there. It was decided that an assessment by a structural engineer would be done to determine options for fixing the arena in order to open it for this winter season. The report came back from the structural engineer with the advice that the village could indeed fix the arena. However, the Village of Carmacks council has decided to look at longer term options as opposed to financing short-term solutions. Community Services is committed to working with the Village of Carmacks and the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation to come to a resolution for the ice rink. We are currently collecting information on structures and funding options in order to provide meaningful recreation opportunities for the Village of Carmacks residents. We have provided this information to Carmacks, or will be shortly, and we are assisting them in continuing to build a healthy, safe community with a fully functioning hockey arena and recreation complex.

We are working closely with the community there to determine what the needs are and how to move forward. At this point, we have engaged to the degree that has been requested of us by the community and will continue to do so as we consider options alongside the village to determine what the needs will be and how best to address them.

Mr. Silver: I am going to move on to another question here on search and rescue. I have a couple of questions on search and rescue and then I will give the floor up to my colleague from Mayo-Tatchun.

In November of 2013, a report entitled *Yukon Search and Rescue Capability-Based Risk Assessment* was prepared by the Yukon government Emergency Measures Organization. The report concluded by making recommendations based upon 14 areas. I asked a question during Question Period, May 14, 2014, for an update on these recommendations, and the minister of the time said that he would not — and I quote: “...speak to specific actions here today in the House.” He went on to say — and I quote: “I can assure the member that government will be taking action, based on the good advice and solid input we’ve heard from our volunteers.”

Madam Chair, he did not say whether or not the recommendations of the report were actually going to be implemented, so I guess I’ll start there. Is the government still looking at this report?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Could the member suggest which recommendations exactly he’s referring to?

Mr. Silver: Again, we asked the question: Are you moving forward with this? So there were recommendations based on all 14 areas. I would leave it to the minister to tell us which ones they are working on.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I take that to mean the member doesn’t have the report handy or have it at hand. Yes, my response at this point would be that I’m sure we’ve taken the report recommendations seriously and we’re considering how to respond.

Mr. Silver: All right; fine. The first recommendation of the report, recommended from EMO, is that EMO work with its partners to increase the safety through public prevention, taking steps to educate the public, in order to reduce

hardships, injury and loss. Has this happened? If so, what has been done to promote public prevention?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, we are acting on that recommendation, along with our partners in disaster prevention and emergency response. That work is being conducted by the Emergency Measures Organization in a number of ways, and I’m happy to discuss some of the EMO’s work on that front.

In an emergency event, Yukon’s Emergency Measures Organization is responsible for drawing together the resources and expertise required to support the response in a timely and effective manner, whether from a local source, across Canada or across North America.

EMO leads all emergency preparedness planning for the Yukon government. It focuses on the four pillars of emergency management: prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. EMO is responsible for ensuring that the Yukon government emergency coordination plan is up to date and for providing a coordinated approach to emergency response within the government’s areas of responsibility.

Today, most Yukon government departments and corporations have completed their own emergency plans, inclusive of business continuity, and progress is being made on the rest. EMO is currently leading the modernization and updating of the territorial emergency coordination plan. The Yukon government emergency coordination group is assisting in the rewrite. It is anticipated that the new plan will be ready for approval in mid-2016.

EMO has been engaged in a multi-year initiative through the Aboriginal Relations, Executive Council Office, implementation fund to strengthen emergency preparedness planning by First Nation governments and communities. EMO is working with all Yukon self-governing First Nations to provide advice and mentoring in the development of preparedness plans and local capacity. In Yukon, the RCMP have the responsibility for all missing persons, inclusive of all ground and inland water search and rescue operations. EMO supports this by helping to provide training and equipment to search and rescue teams so that they can respond to a search mission when requested by the RCMP. As part of the government’s all-hazards approach to emergency management, EMO works with Wildland Fire Management, the Fire Marshal’s Office, Emergency Medical Services, Health and Social Services, Highways and Public Works, and other government and non-government partners to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency events.

Periodically, flooding can pose a risk to some communities. To help residents prepare for this, EMO and the Department of Environment publish weekly seasonal flood risk reports. These are distributed to the media, stakeholders and the public. EMO recently completed work on a project it initiated to survey community flood risk using light-detection and ranging-survey technology launched in 2012 in conjunction with the Yukon government’s Climate Change Secretariat. The project was funded through the federal government’s climate change adaptation program.

LiDAR-based surveys of 13 Yukon flood-prone community areas were conducted in 2014 in aid of providing enhanced digital-elevation data to improve flood-plain mapping. To improve detailed mapping of flood-prone areas in and near Yukon communities, planners, land developers and emergency managers are better able to plan, build and prepare for current and future climate-change-driven flood risk.

In partnership with federal, provincial and territorial partners, EMO delivers its 72-hour emergency preparedness public education campaign every May. In short, Yukoners are encouraged to learn about the risks they face, prepare an emergency plan and have an emergency kit capable of supporting themselves and their families for a minimum of three days. As part of its preparedness program, EMO led the successful Great Yukon ShakeOut exercise. On October 16, 2014, Yukon participants joined millions in North America and around the world to practise the “Drop, Cover, and Hold On” earthquake preparedness drill during the world’s largest annual earthquake exercise.

EMO continues to work collaboratively with the Yukon Amateur Radio Association to ensure there is a redundant radio communication system in place in case of a telecommunications emergency in the territory. In addition, Yukon Amateur Radio Association, along with support from EMO and the Canadian Coast Guard, maintains the marine radio system in the Southern Lakes region. EMO also participates in regional, national and international partnerships to share information and best practices related to emergency management, develop national emergency management strategies as well as guidelines and standards and coordinate their implementation. To that end, EMO is active in the National Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management forum, composed of federal, provincial and territorial emergency management agencies; the provincially and territorially focused Canadian Council of Emergency Measures Organizations; the Western Regional Emergency Management Advisory Council, where it works with B.C., Oregon, Idaho, Washington state and Alaska under the Pacific Northwest Emergency Management arrangements in making preparations to assist each other during catastrophic events; the national Ground and Inland Water Search and Rescue Council, composed of provincial, territorial, GSAR — so ground search and rescue representation from the National Search and Rescue Secretariat — Parks Canada, and the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada; the Northern Search and Rescue Roundtable, where federal, territorial and regional — including Nunavik — local and national volunteer SAR agencies meet to discuss search and rescue issues and concerns across the north from three search and rescue disciplines: air, marine and ground; and the Pelmorex Public Alerting Governance Council, which is composed of representatives from the FPT governments as well as public/private broadcasters and cable, satellite distributors that collectively provide direction and advice to Pelmorex on matters relating to their role as the distributor of national emergency public alert messages.

Madam Chair, through these measures and many others, the Yukon government is working to implement the recommendations as suggested by the member opposite.

Mr. Silver: With all due respect to the minister, the 72-hour prep, the earthquake response, the regional partnerships, the national councils — all of these items go well beyond a 2013 report. These are items that have been historically what the government does.

Specifically to this report, there were some specific recommendations in 14 different categories. Now I’m not going to list them all here. We’re not going to go through it here, but I will ask a couple more specifically — but if the minister could possibly get back to us when he has actual recommendations or responses to the actual recommendations — specific recommendations and specific responses — that would be very helpful.

Again, a couple of them — EMO forming training working groups — if so, based upon a recommendation from this particular report, who is included in this working group? That would maybe be a question I could ask the minister today. Or has EMO provided any funding or anything in terms of curriculum development as well, which is another one of the specific recommendations from this *Yukon Search and Rescue Capability-Based Risk Assessment*? I’ll leave it at that — if the minister can maybe respond to those two and I will give the floor to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I’m not sure if we have responses to those recommendations formally or not. If we have, I’ll provide that information where appropriate. But I don’t have the specifics on the curriculum development today.

Chair: Prior to moving forward with another speaker, 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 are continuing general debate in Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

Ms. White: So just before we start, I promised the minister I would start off with a compliment — so I sent an e-mail to him on February 5 of this year. I’m going to get more into the e-mail, but I pointed out that there were two links on the Community Services website, both for an emergency preparedness guide for people with disabilities and then an emergency preparedness guide for people with children. Both of those links actually went to the French part of the federal website. I pointed that out to him and I have just checked and they now go the English website, so that’s fantastic. Congratulations and thank you for making the change on that because it probably could have easily got lost in that.

The reason I’m referencing this is that, on February 5, I sent an e-mail and I was having a conversation with an elderly

constituent and she asked if the emergency measures plan for Whitehorse has a plan for seniors or wheelchair citizens or people with disabilities. In my e-mail to him, I said I didn't have the answer, so I looked on-line. You know, on the Community Services website it takes you to these two federal websites with handy suggestions, but not really with any answers.

So I'm just coming back to this — and I'll just paraphrase the last paragraph, which is that he was quite certain that whatever plans we have in place would contemplate dealing with folks who have limited mobility, but that he would be happy to confirm it and didn't know that we have a single all-encompassing plan that we could share with my constituent, but he would see what he could find out. I think the e-mail conversation stopped there.

So my question is: What is the department's plan on dealing with people, both in the City of Whitehorse and outside the City of Whitehorse, who have limited mobility issues — people with disabilities, wheelchairs and seniors? In the event of a disaster, what is the department's plan for helping those people?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: In the case of the City of Whitehorse, they have a municipal plan in place that we work with them on. My understanding is that it does address issues related to mobility or people who are challenged with mobility. I don't have the specific data with regard to what specifically happens or what actions specifically go into place, but I know there is a plan in place and it does address those concerns.

Ms. White: The City of Whitehorse website actually links directly to the Emergency Measures website of the Department of Community Services. I am just flagging this as an issue. We all have seniors in our ridings and I am sure we all have people with disabilities in our ridings and we might get asked the question. I am just going to put that out there — that right now it goes in a circle. The City of Whitehorse says to check Community Services; Community Services says to check federal government and I still don't know what to tell the seniors. I will just put that down for right now, but I do thank the minister for changing the website so at least now it goes to the English page.

I sent a letter on March 17 with questions about rural well enhancement and the program. My question — well there are a lot of different questions, I'm sure — but when we go into the program description, it seems to be that there is some leeway in the program. My question is that if someone had both a domestic and commercial property — and we are not talking about a large commercial property, we are talking about a small café with two flushing toilets, and they need to make changes to their water system to be able to access their business licence. Does the rural well enhancement program possibly be something they could look under?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The answer is no, it would not. The rural well program is specifically for domestic users. Commercial is a very different use and a very different application. The domestic rural well program is not intended for commercial operators or commercial wells. There are a lot of reasons for that. It relates to the different types of liability

that are associated with commercial operations, the different valuations in terms of the asset that you are borrowing against. In some cases, that is not possible with a commercial operation in the same way that it is with a domestic. The simple answer is no. The rural well program is not intended at all for commercial operators.

Ms. White: Just reading the definitions and stuff, I understand the minister's answer there.

Is there a program that will help rural Yukoners who live in these kinds of homestead-like situations and are trying also to work and live on their property to make changes to their water systems?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, when we made the changes to the rural well program last fall — and we have begun to enact them now through regulations and agreements with municipalities — I had asked departments to look at that possibility. So the answer is, no, we don't have anything in place, although we were contemplating whether or not that would be possible in the future.

The early indications I've received are that it doesn't look good. There's a significant degree of uncertainty and risk associated with commercial properties that isn't there for domestic, so if we wanted to get into commercial lending for the purposes of wells that would be used to provide commercial operators with services for their businesses, that's a very different application than the domestic application. While we did give that some consideration and we don't have anything in place today, it doesn't look like we would be able to do anything beyond the domestic program for commercial operators because of a number of reasons. But the liability and risk were at the top of the list for those reasons.

Ms. White: If the same well serviced both the small business that is run seasonally and the home that is lived in full-time — would that change the situation at all?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I don't want to get into specifics about a specific case, but the intent for the domestic well program is for domestic wells. They aren't intended to be used for commercial applications. If a well was being used for a commercial purpose, I don't believe it would be eligible for the domestic well program.

Ms. White: But if it was the same well — so it was used for the domestic purpose — so let's say then we don't talk about the commercial aspect and we stop the pipe from running to that side, would the program possibly be able to be accessed for that purpose?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I don't believe the Yukon government could simply ignore the fact that the well was going to be used for commercial purposes afterwards. If the well is intended to be a domestic well, it would be eligible for the program, assuming it meets all the parameters of the program. If it's intended for commercial use at any time during the year, then it's not eligible.

Ms. White: Last fall, I tabled a petition highlighting some of the unique challenges of mobile home owners. It's super interesting, because the new minister represents a mobile home park and the minister for the Porter Creek South riding also has two mobile home parks within his riding. What

has come to light — kind of in the last number of years, especially since we passed the legislation in 2012 — is that mobile home owners face unique challenges and, under the act, those challenges seem to be exacerbated in some cases. Under the new act, when it gets enacted — which I have a question about as well — mobile home owners are viewed solely as renters, but we know that when you own the asset on the piece of property, there is concern about kind of planning long-term futures.

I guess my question here is: Has government looked at engaging mobile home owners to discuss the unique challenges that they face with the current *Landlord and Tenant Act* or the one we passed in 2012 that will hopefully be enacted soon?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I can confirm that the regulations are being developed currently to bring the RLTA into force. The new RLTA will govern tenancy agreements between mobile home owners and mobile home parks. It will provide additional protection and certainty for mobile home owners, and it will also provide new tools and options for mobile home owners to avail themselves of in the event they need help or advice or have a dispute with their park owner.

In terms of protection and certainty, it will limit pad rent increases to no more than once per year. It will require mobile home park owners to provide at least three months' notice of an increase in pad rent, and it will prohibit pad rent increases in the first year of tenancy. Furthermore, if a tenancy is to be terminated, the RLTA provides expanded time of notice for mobile home owners than other types of tenants and prohibits a park owner from requiring a tenant to move a mobile home during the coldest months of the year.

Additionally, mobile home owners will have access to the Residential Tenancies Office, which will be prepared to offer advice and assistance for mobile home owners on matters related to their tenancy, including tenancy agreements. As well, the RTO offers a new avenue for dispute resolution beyond what is currently available.

While there are new protections, new tools and new options for mobile home owners built into the RLTA, the act does not provide for the type of rent control that I know members sought previously in discussions. I would note, though, that, as we move forward with the implementation of the act — if it becomes apparent, as we move forward both with the act and the regulations, that there's a need for some additional measures relating to mobile homes, then I can commit to revisiting tenancy laws between mobile home owners and park owners at a future date and, yes, that would include discussions with the mobile home owners.

Ms. White: So the points that the minister just highlighted — except for not being made to move your mobile home during the winter months — are essentially the same protections that have been given to renters, whether it's a duplex or a basement suite or a bachelor apartment. The security he has just highlighted is for all renters.

So if I was renting an apartment, and I was told in three months' time that my rent was going to go up substantially — let's say by 50 percent — I could start looking for a new place

to live. If I was a mobile home owner and I lived in a mobile home park and I was told in three months' my rent was going to go up by 50 percent, I have an asset that has to be moved. It has been highlighted by the previous minister that, if I moved my mobile home within the City of Whitehorse, it would no longer meet building codes. So then I couldn't even move it to a lot within the City of Whitehorse.

It was suggested that, as a mobile home owner, I could move it out of town. We know that isn't so easy either. So my question is: Does the minister recognize that there is a difference between being able to move the contents within a place with three months' notice, as opposed to moving an entire place — like the home itself?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that response. So recognizing that difference, is there not a value in having a conversation now with mobile home owners? We have six within the City of Whitehorse; I would guess there are more than 900 homes. They have different management; they have different expectations. One park, if you pay within the first three business days of the month, it's \$400; if you pay after the first three days, it's \$480. We have seen substantial increases in those park fees.

We have seen those increases tied to promises of increasing services, but we have not seen that. So would the minister consider having that conversation sooner rather than later?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Obviously we just passed this bill relatively recently, so not we're keen to make amendments at this time. But, as I indicated, if it becomes apparent as we move forward with the implementation of the new regulations and legislation that there is need for some additional measures relating to mobile homes, then I can commit to revisiting tenancy laws between mobile home owners and park owners at a future date. I won't commit to any specific measure at this time, but I can indicate that, yes, we will take the matter under consideration and consider the member's comments as we move forward.

Ms. White: Just to remind everyone, we passed the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* on December 12, 2013, which was a fair number of years ago. As we have continued to wait patiently for those regulations to come in place for that act to be enacted so it's actually in place, is there any room within the development of the regulations, prior to them being implemented, that we could look at some protection for mobile home owners?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, which was passed in the fall of 2012, sets out the rights and responsibility of landlords and tenants when they enter into a residential tenancy agreement in Yukon and sets up a new dispute resolution process outside of the courts to ensure compliance and encourage a healthy private rental market in Yukon. This act will come into force when the regulations, including minimum rental standards, are in place. As I have indicated, we're hoping to have those in place later this year.

The *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* — until the new legislation comes into effect — and the *Employment*

Agencies Act, which regulates employment agencies in Yukon — all fall under the Employment Standards and Residential Tenancies branch of the department. The regulations that will come into effect later this year, as I indicated, will bring into force the act and those new tools and new opportunities that are available to tenants — including mobile home owners — will be available then. As I've indicated, if it becomes apparent through the implementation of this legislation and regulations that there is a need for some additional measures relating to mobile homes, then I can commit to revisiting tenancy laws between mobile home owners and park owners at a future date.

Ms. White: What sort of problems or what kind of threshold are we talking about for that being revisited? We have seen quite a few examples in the recent past about the challenges of being a mobile home owner within a park, so what's the threshold that the minister would require in order to be able to open up that conversation?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I don't know if "threshold" is the right term for it, but I've indicated that, if in the implementation of the new legislation and the regulations, it becomes apparent to us that there is some change needed or some revision necessary, we would entertain revisiting the laws between mobile home owners and mobile home parks.

That is something we will have to determine as we move forward, but, as I have indicated, there are new tools and new options that are available to mobile home owners as a result of the new act and I hope that mobile home owners are able to avail themselves of these new resources to try to resolve any potential disputes that they might have with park owners. If it is determined in the course of the implementation that it is not sufficient, then we would consider revisiting those rules.

Ms. White: Will there be a process at the Residential Tenancies Office if a mobile home owner comes in with a complaint or a concern, that it will be documented so that those can be stored and when we reach whatever critical mass, the issue can be revisited? Will there be a way to keep those separate and tracked?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that the RTO will track its calls and incoming issues and that information, we hope, will be available.

Ms. White: Just based on these unique circumstances and the challenges of mobile home owners, will the office be given the direction to keep a separate file so that those are easy to track, easy to find and easy to understand?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I don't know exactly how the RTO will operate its filing system, but we can look into that and determine whether or not a different file folder can be used, perhaps, for those types of issues.

Ms. White: I will take that file folder as a win.

Yesterday the minister said that the residential landlord and tenant regulations would be completed later this year. We have heard that in 2013 and again in 2014. I was wondering if I could have a more precise timeline as to when we can expect this act to be enacted and the regulations to be in place.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The process for bringing regulations into force is a complex one and involves a number of agencies

and government, including Cabinet, to approve, so I am unable to provide a precise date at this time, but I think — as I have indicated — they will be available later this year.

Ms. White: Since we passed this in December 2013 — sorry, 2012 — there have been times when we have sent people to the Residential Tenancies Office to look for help and they are handed a pamphlet of paper, including tenant rights, landlord responsibilities, how to access the Law Line if you need to go forward with the small claims process — so until the law is enacted and the regulations are in place, is this the service that we can still expect from the Residential Tenancies Office?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, I believe that is correct.

Mr. Tredger: I welcome officials and thank them for their time and their attention to this budget and I thank the minister for his answers so far.

I would like to talk a little bit about Keno City. As everyone knows, Keno City is a very small community north of Mayo. They have been undergoing a bit of a renaissance.

Mike Mancini still has the Keno City Snack Bar, but also there is a hotel that has just opened. The Keno City Sourdough Bar has opened. It is a thriving community — Silver Moon Bunkhouse has opened.

In 2012, Dr. Hanley did a health impact assessment. I know since then that Community Services has worked with the residents of Keno on a number of issues and I want to thank them for the time that they have spent there.

Dr. Hanley noted that although a number of stressors can be mitigated or minimized through collaboration, the lack of a governance structure or organized representation within the community poses significant challenges in terms of developing a strategy that responds to a unified community vision.

I have talked a number of times about what mechanism Community Services would pursue or work on with the residents of Keno City so that they will have opportunities for organized representation. Last summer, during one of the submissions to YESAB, one of the residents wrote the following: There has been no formal process for residents and landowners to voice their concerns — more importantly, a mechanism in place that ensures that people can formally express their concerns and have them responded to accordingly, and that there is a record of this and that this record is referred to in any subsequent applications. Our understanding was that this formal process was to be put in place. Who ensures that this is adhered to and complied with? We believe that the process can only be effective if a third, impartial body ensures that it is done in a measurable way. Whatever informal process that currently exists has been inconsistent, at best, and generally unsatisfactory in terms of coming up with mitigations and any follow-through on the art of the proposition.

The concern is that, as an unincorporated community, Keno has not had any means of representation. I am wondering whether Community Services has followed up on Dr. Hanley's recommendation. What type of formal process is in place? I know that in talking to various officials there is a

certain amount of frustration in who represents Keno. Is it the community club? Is it individuals within Keno? Having a formal structure would go a long way to helping not only industry, but various levels of government interact with the residents of Keno. The residents of Keno could then gain some assurances that they are represented at a municipal and a community level.

I am wondering whether the minister is aware of this or whether he would undertake it as a priority, certainly for the citizens of Keno.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that Keno is too small to incorporate as a municipality and also doesn't have the numbers to justify a local advisory council. We have assigned a community advisor from the department to Keno. Our community advisor visits Keno and hears Keno's concerns in much the same way that we do for other municipalities or communities, but because there is no municipality or municipal government there, the community advisor typically engages with citizens directly.

I believe there are few enough citizens that she's able to do that. We have dealt with the community club previously. That's one way for us to engage with the community, but the very small size of Keno means that it's simply too small to justify a local advisory council. If they want to pursue specific issues, like recreation, they can form a recreational authority, and that's how we'll continue to engage with the community of Keno.

As well, I should note that, in the budget this year for sports and recreation, we're providing close to \$18,000 for the community, which is up considerably from past years, as a result of the significant increase we've made to the community recreation assistance grant, the CRAG funding.

Keno is certainly getting a significant boost when it comes to recreational investment in this budget, and we'll continue to work with the community to try to address their needs as best we can.

Mr. Tredger: I understand the importance of recreation and we'll talk about that in my next series of questions. Keno needs some sort of representation. The community advisor — there are citizens who live in Keno as well as many property owners who don't. Has the position of the community advisor been advertised or made known to the people of Keno? Does that advisor visit on a regular basis? How would citizens of Keno find that out and know when she's coming?

Again, we run into this: Is there a means to communicate? Does Community Services have a means to communicate with the majority of residents of Keno so that, should the community advisor be planning a trip there, there's some way of advising everyone in the community, short of sitting down with a phone and phoning all the land owners and all the residents? It's an awkward situation and, as I say, it was noted by Dr. Hanley and it has been noted many times since. This is a critical part of it.

I don't expect the name of the community advisor on the floor, but if the minister would advise me who it is, so I can let the residents know who it is and who they have — someone they can contact — but, more importantly, how do

citizens know when the advisor is coming? How do they know what the process is for involving her or that person in their concerns?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that the community advisor has visited Keno a number of times since we assigned her with the responsibility for being the community advisor for Keno. I don't think there's a problem for me to say — it's Kirsti Muller, so citizens are welcome to follow up with Kirsti to address those issues. When she comes to town, she lets as many people know that she's coming to town as she can. I think she's able to deal with them on an almost individual basis, given the very small size of Keno. I don't think there's a necessity for a municipal or LAC structure in Keno, given the small size, but we will continue to provide the considerable services that we do in Keno.

Those include a range of municipal-like services, including drinking water and waste water and all of the solid-waste services that the Department of Community Services provides.

Mr. Tredger: Does the community advisor have a regular schedule? Is there any way of alerting not only the current residents of Keno, but the landowners who live there and may be there for periods of time over the year? There's a significant number who reside in Keno part-time and enjoy that. Again, we have that problem: How does the community advisor contact all of the residents? Are her visits on a regular basis or are they sometimes?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I think the answer is somewhere in-between regular schedule visits and sometimes. I would say she visits the community on a semi-regular basis.

Mr. Tredger: When she visits the community, is a report given back to the community?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Not a written report that I'm aware of, Madam Chair — if folks want to know what she heard, they can just ask her.

Mr. Tredger: I think that sort of explains the crux of the matter. When somebody comes by on occasion and visits with individuals within the community and then goes back, there's a sense of frustration. I understand some of the problems — the size of the community — but it is in a community where there's a lot happening. I would ask the minister to look into that and see if the visits can be arranged ahead of time and that some kind of reporting — what I heard, what I took forward from them — would be arranged.

When we discussed this with the previous minister and some of the other ministers, they mentioned that, in response to Dr. Hanley's report, an interdepartmental committee had been formed to look at addressing some of the issues that Dr. Hanley raised. At the time, I wasn't able to ascertain which department was taking the lead. I would assume that the community advisor would make reports to that committee. If those reports are being made to the committee, could those reports be made public or does that community advisor sit on the interdepartmental committee? How does Community Services relate to that? I'm trying to find out again: How often does the interdepartmental committee meet? Are the minutes or the discussions in that — even the topics — made available

to citizens of Keno or to the public? Which department is taking the lead on that? Is there an individual there whom residents of Keno could contact if they feel their concerns aren't being addressed?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that the intergovernmental committee is being led by Health and Social Services so I would direct the questions about its function to the minister in the debate on the Health and Social Services budget. But my understanding, again, is that the community advisor visits the community on a semi-regular basis, every three or four months. I understand that she has a fairly extensive e-mail list of community members. If someone is being missed, I'm sure that, in his capacity as MLA for the area, the member could provide the community advisor's name or information to her to add to that list. If any of the community members have concerns with the services being provided by Community Services, then they are welcome to raise them with the community advisor. Likewise, if there are other concerns with other departments, I'm sure she's willing to act as a conduit from the community members to the various departments as issues arise.

Mr. Tredger: I would be very happy to take the minister up on his offer there, and before the community advisor's visits to Mayo, if she would alert me as to when they happen, I would be more than happy to contact various residents who I know may be interested in meeting with her or taking part in any public meetings that occur in Keno. I will help to advertise it, as I stated.

Does the community advisor sit in on the interdepartmental meetings? Does she relay the information that she has gathered from the community members to the interdepartmental meeting that is, as I understand, hosted by Health and Social Services?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that the community advisor attends some of the meetings of the interdepartmental working group, but I don't know the frequency with which that group meets, as it's something led by the Department Health and Social Services.

Mr. Tredger: Is the minister privy to reports that the community advisor gives to the interdepartmental meetings? If those reports are available, I would ask that the minister table them or, at the minimum, share them with the opposition parties.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I will have to take that under advisement. I don't receive the reports so I can't commit to tabling them.

Mr. Tredger: We were talking a little bit about recreational facilities and recreational facilities in various communities in the Yukon. There have been a number of indicators that our facilities are beginning to age and that there needs to be some long-term strategic planning.

My experience with the Auditor General's report is primarily in education, but I know they have had a number of reports to various departments over the years. He talks about strategic planning as a management tool that helps to set priorities and goals and develop a plan to meet those goals. It also helps to assess how resources are to be allocated and

gives it the scope to adjust its direction in response to a changing environment.

We heard earlier how important recreational facilities are to the Yukon and the quality of hockey players being trained and growing up in our various communities. I would like to put in a little pitch for Carmacks hockey players, not necessarily as the best — although they are darn good — but persistent. This winter, the Carmacks players would drive to Pelly after school to practise. The recreational team would drive to Pelly to practise. Others joined teams in Whitehorse and drove to practise. What was missing is that it wasn't happening in their community.

I know that our structures need maintenance. We know that we should have a schedule for replacement. We should have a means where there is assessment of the facilities in each of our communities so that we are not surprised, whether it is the settling of a building in Dawson City, or permafrost malfunctions in Ross River, or structural problems in Carmacks, or a leaky roof as in in Pelly.

I am wondering if Community Services has a long-term strategic plan for capital replacement, for operation and maintenance of our recreational facilities and, if it does, what is the mechanism for addressing emerging concerns, for addressing future potential capital projects — and for ensuring that the operation and maintenance of the facilities are kept up-to-date.

I will just leave it at that and I have a few more follow-up questions.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: When it comes to recreational infrastructure, we work with Yukon communities, Yukon recreation groups, sports groups and others to address the recreational infrastructure needs of Yukoners. When facilities are owned by municipalities, they tend to undertake the operation and maintenance; when they are owned by Yukon government, we do so. That is pretty consistent throughout the territory. When municipalities have recreational infrastructure needs, they communicate that to Yukon government and we will determine the degree to which we are able to support them or help them.

Obviously there's a component of federal funding available there as well, through Building Canada and other funding mechanisms from the federal government. We try to address the needs as they arise. We have a pretty good understanding of our own recreational infrastructure throughout the territory and work on an annual basis to ensure that the necessary upkeep is undertaken. When communities approach us with concerns about their recreational infrastructure, as has been the case in a number of communities, we work very closely with them.

I provided earlier today an explanation of what's going on in Carmacks — also what's going on in Dawson. If we want to get into specific facilities in specific communities, I'm happy to, but I think that's a general response to the very general question raised by the member opposite.

Mr. Tredger: I guess what I was hoping to hear is that there was an inventory of all of our facilities in the communities — recreational facilities — and an assessment of

where they are in terms of their life expectancy, what kind of repairs are needed, what it will take to maintain them.

I think it's important that such a strategic plan be developed and that it be open and transparent. My experience in talking to various municipalities and unincorporated municipalities, is that they weren't sure how the process was arrived at. That leaves us with a bit of a problem, because if there isn't a clear process there, then people may get the idea that these are political decisions rather than necessity decisions, and get into a situation where one community feels they are in competition with another community and that they don't have control of the process or input into the process.

I hearken back to the mid-1990s, when many of the school buildings in our communities — and indeed throughout the Yukon — were aging, and many of them were in need of replacement. Every community wanted theirs done now, and every school in Whitehorse wanted a new school now. What the government of the day did, under Piers McDonald, was assess all the structures and then sit down with all of the school councils afterward and say, "Look, we can't build 10 schools this year, but let's together sit down and decide what needs to be done first, what can we get away with in terms of maintenance, and where we can go in the future."

Subsequently, within a 10- to 12-year period, there were 10 schools built — schools in Mayo, Pelly, Carmacks, Haines Junction, Golden Horn, Hidden Valley, Holy Family. It's hard to believe that, in the 10 years since, we've built one school; in the 10 years previous, we built quite a few.

The reason I think we were able to do that is that we sat down with an open and transparent process. When I hear of communities like Carmacks going without a rink, it wasn't a surprise. Carmacks has been looking for a replacement for years. Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation and the Village of Carmacks have all been saying, "We need to do something. Our facility is falling apart."

This year I heard from the citizens of Pelly Crossing. Their arena is having significant damage because the roof hasn't been replaced. What we need is a long-term strategic plan, not only for the maintenance and upkeep, but for potential replacement, and it has to be open and it has to be transparent so that the players — the community members closest to it — can have some input and look at realistic projections. I will just include in those facilities that we've been mentioning that many of our communities have swimming pools that are aging rapidly. Does our long-term plan call for the replacement of them on a regular basis or are we going to wait until they're unusable and scramble to come up with the funds to replace them, maybe leaving the kids and community members who use those pools in the summer out for a year or two, as has happened in Carmacks with their skating rink?

Does the Department of Community Services have a long-term strategic operation, maintenance and capital replacement plan? Is that available to our municipalities and to our community members — both incorporated and unincorporated — and if not, will the minister commit to getting such a plan in place?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'm happy to take the member's comments under advisement and I will have to give them some consideration as we move forward.

Mr. Tredger: While he's taking those under advisement, I would ask that he also look at emergency services in our various communities and the housing of them. Again, what I hear from several communities is that when they get their new equipment — fire trucks or ambulances — the old buildings won't be large enough to hold them. What I hear is that there's a need for a building to house ambulances, fire and search and rescue equipment. In some communities, it's scattered throughout the community; there's no central place. But as we're going to a more modern place, having the search and rescue boat in somebody's backyard is not optimal.

So again, is there a long-term strategic plan to look at the needs in terms of emergency services to bring them under one roof where training can occur; where there is a central area where they can exchange ideas, and maybe share some of their services and training and some of the costs where the facility is upgraded? I know a number of the facilities in my area are in need of repair and in need of upgrading. I know there is an expectation that within a few years they will need a new ambulance station or a fire station and again, is there a long-term territory-wide plan that would allow for communities to input in an open and transparent matter so that they can plan? Okay, we have to wait because there is more of a need in community X and community Y might wait for five years or 10 years, but make do with what they have and know that in that length of time theirs will be looked after.

It's a matter of involving everybody and strategically planning so that we can address the needs before they happen, rather than after the fact.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, there is indeed a plan and I look forward to providing the member's comments to those who implement the plan so they can be made aware of the considerations brought forward by the member.

Mr. Tredger: One of the things that I noticed in travelling from community to community is that, in order to input the municipal councils that have more experience or that have been more stable or are able to provide better and more accurate input and know who to contact and who to work with — whereas in other municipal councils or unincorporated councils there may have been more turnover, more change and they haven't made those connections.

Now, given that this fall there are going to be municipal elections and Community Services may end up with a variety of new councillors and people new to positions, has the minister given any consideration to working with the councils in terms of training the new councils so that they know how they can access strategic planning, how they can have input, what their limitations are in terms of that, how they go about ensuring that their recreational facilities, their medical facilities and their town structures are being maintained — or if we're looking at replacement? So has the minister worked with the Association of Yukon Communities as well as with various municipalities in terms of how they're going to handle the changeover from the current municipal officers to the new

ones? In some cases that won't probably be as necessary because there may be some continuity; in others you may end up with a brand new council.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, of course, we offer these sorts of training and opportunities for new councillors to become familiar with their jobs and familiar with the services and programs provided by the department.

In November, following the elections, we provide an orientation for new councillors — we do that in partnership with AYC, I should note — and through that orientation we provide as much training as we are able to, to new councillors or new mayors, to provide them with an understanding of what their role is and what some of the general issues are in the territory with regard to relationships between the Yukon government and municipalities. I understand that the AYC also offers some services in that respect as well, and other more experienced, or seasoned, councillors are available from other municipalities to provide mentorship and guidance to other communities or councillors who are new.

I think it is an excellent example of the AYC facilitating training and opportunities for councillors to get the skills and information that they need to do their jobs. I think the Department of Community Services has come a long way over the years with regard to that interaction with municipalities. I know that it wasn't that long ago that community advisors were somewhat strangers in the municipalities, but now I think there isn't a municipal government or mayor or council or otherwise who doesn't know who their community advisor is and who doesn't have an ongoing relationship and discussion with them.

Not only that, Madam Chair, but at the more senior levels, of course — at the CAO level or the city manager level — those officials liaise directly with the department at the director or ADM level, and mayors and councillors at the political level engage with us ministers. We try to engage with them as often as is necessary.

I think we provide those services to the municipalities and the councillors through a number of means, but the partnership with AYC is one of those.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that, and it would be important to extend that to the unincorporated communities as well. Over the years, I have heard from a number of the communities a concern that YTG is becoming more and more centralized and more services — in order to access them — some people either have to go to Whitehorse or, in some cases, one or two satellite communities.

I am wondering if the minister has a breakdown — and I don't expect him to have this now, but it certainly would be worth looking at the number of services offered in each community over the last 10 years and whether that has been increasing or decreasing — the number of personnel. Again, I would stress the fact that public servants contribute much to our society, and when personnel are taken out of a community, it leaves a significant gap. These are the people who have kids in school, who do coaching, who are an integral part of the community.

I know the importance that our public servants pay in our communities. I'm wondering two things here: if the minister has, or whether Community Services has, done a time lapse of how that has been going? When I go to the communities, I hear that we lost this and we lost that, but I don't have anything concrete to say this is why or that's why. I think that would be important and it would be a transparent and open move.

The other concern I heard from a number of areas — and it relates to a couple of my earlier questions — housing of the various personnel, whether they be from Yukon Housing Corporation or whether they be our licensee agencies. By housing, I mean their office buildings, not their personal house — that's not your department — and whether the buildings in the communities — I know Mayo has a number of agencies in one building and that has worked very well. A number of other communities have asked me if there's any plan to have such a centralized building. It may be the same building that houses our emergency services or something. But again, is there a long-term plan to work with the municipalities to develop YTG buildings in the community that would house several services and be a real boon to the communities?

You know, to pick up your mail and go to Yukon Housing Corporation or to get your driver's licence, or those kinds of things, without having to drive to Whitehorse, and have it under one facility — I guess that's a long way of saying two things: one, do we have a breakdown of whether or not there are more Community Services and YTG personnel in the communities now than over the last 10 years; and, secondly, is there any thought to increasing the number of personnel in communities and trying to develop a YTG-type building that may be in combination with the municipality buildings?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: For the Department of Community Services, our personnel allotment by community has remained unchanged, but I can't speak for other departments. When it comes to the distribution of government employees throughout the communities, that's something you'll have to ask various departments about.

When it comes to government space — meaning the space that we use for offices or buildings, storage and otherwise — that is something that's done centrally by the Department of Highways and Public Works, which determines the space requirements for government offices throughout the Yukon government.

So to the extent that's possible, my understanding is that Highways and Public Works works with the communities to try to collocate services where possible, but that's something that's ongoing.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that answer, and I will ask Highways and Public Works about that. Much of the relationship between our municipalities and YTG is through Community Services.

I know that the community advisors are in touch with them, but in terms of when you say "remain unchanged", I am wondering if the minister would commit to giving the

opposition members a breakdown, community by community, of the number of personnel within the community and their functions — and whether or not that has changed year by year over the last 10 years.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Our community staff tends to be somewhat seasonable. The fire folks, of course, are seasonal. We have personnel from EMS in communities and other staff, but I don't have a 10-year breakdown of the ebbs and flows of those numbers. I think it would be a tremendous amount of work to collect that, but I don't believe there have been — as I have said, there have been no changes in the past 10 years from a Community Services perspective, as far as I know, in the allotment of personnel per community or the distribution among the communities. I can't provide that information at this time.

Mr. Tredger: Is Community Services responsible for the issuing of licences and permits?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The department is responsible for some licences and permits. Obviously Health and Social Services issues permits and Environment issues permits. I think there are some permits issued from Highways and Public Works as well. There are a range of permits. I am not sure exactly what the member means.

Mr. Tredger: I am just trying to get — when I go to various communities, I hear that services are becoming more and more centralized. I am just trying to see if I can get some hard facts so that I can say, “No, that is not true”, or “Yes, and here is where you can advocate for those services or bring it forward.” I apologize for my not being exact on that, and I thank the minister for his answers today.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate?

We are going to move on then to line-by-line debate, starting on page 6-7.

On Corporate Services

On Operation and Maintenance

On Deputy Minister's Office

Mr. Barr: Can we get the number of personnel in Communications in the deputy minister's office?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The deputy minister's office is made up of the deputy and I believe an administrative staff or two.

Deputy Minister's Office in the amount of \$565,000 agreed to

On Human Resources

Human Resources in the amount of \$842,000 agreed to

On Finance, Systems and Administration

Mr. Barr: Could I get a breakdown of this please?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The increase from last year of \$84,000 is made up of \$54,000 for merit, reclassifications and collective agreement increases, and \$8,000 for increased e-mail storage costs and \$22,000 for virtual services.

Finance, Systems and Administration in the amount of \$2,001,000 agreed to

On Communications

Mr. Barr: Could I know how many people are in Communications and get a breakdown of this?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: There are 4.5 FTEs in the Communications branch.

Mr. Barr: May I ask who they report to, Madam Chair?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: That would be the Director of Communications.

Mr. Tredger: Can you tell me who the Director of Communications reports to please?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The deputy minister.

Communications in the amount of \$506,000 agreed to
Corporate Services Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$3,914,000 agreed to
On Capital Expenditures

On Office Furniture and Equipment

Mr. Barr: I see that has doubled. Can I get some clarification here?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This line item is for the purchase of office furniture, primarily required as a result of office moves. The department has undergone some consolidation and moves from offices to offices, so there is a requirement from time to time to purchase new office equipment.

Office Furniture and Equipment in the amount of \$85,000 agreed to

On Information Technology Equipment and Systems

Information Technology Equipment and Systems in the amount of \$172,000 agreed to

On Building Maintenance, Renovations and Space

Mr. Barr: Could I get a breakdown of this please, Madam Chair?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The budget of \$664,000 consists of \$119,000 for capital maintenance and renovations on a variety of CS buildings; \$195,000 for tenant improvements to the Lynn Building to accommodate Infrastructure Development and Community Operations; \$200,000 for tenant improvements to the Berska Building to accommodate Policy and Communications and \$150,000 to move Community Development from the main administration building here to the Lynn Building.

Ms. White: The Lynn Building — is that a leased building or is that an owned building?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: That is a leased building.

Ms. White: What is the cost to lease that building for the Department of Community Services per year?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The leases are conducted as per my comments earlier. The space requirements are covered by Highways and Public Works, so the lease for that space is in the Highways and Public Works budget. The building belongs to one of the First Nation development corporations, I believe.

Building Maintenance, Renovations and Space in the amount of \$664,000 agreed to

Corporate Services Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$921,000 agreed to

Corporate Services Total Expenditures in the amount of \$4,835,000 agreed to

On Protective Services

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Program Administration

Mr. Barr: May I have a breakdown on that?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This modest increase of \$15,000 in personnel costs is due to the collective agreement and merit increases.

Program Administration in the amount of \$549,000 agreed to

On Emergency Measures

Mr. Barr: May I get a breakdown?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: \$439,000 of that is for personnel, which includes salaries, wages and benefits for a manager, emergency management planning coordinator, office manager and a First Nation emergency preparedness planner position; \$176,000 is for Other, which includes travel, various contract-related services; \$11,000 is for repair and maintenance; \$8,000 is for rental expense; \$6,000 is for program materials; \$30,000 is for communications; \$21,000 is for training; \$24,000 is for various other requirements of the program; and there's a \$5,000 transfer payment, which is a contribution to the marine radio distress system.

Emergency Measures in the amount of \$620,000 agreed to

On Fire Marshal

Mr. Barr: May I get a breakdown of that please, Madam Chair?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This is for the Fire Marshal — \$717,000 is for personnel, which includes salaries, wages and benefits for the director of Fire and Life Safety, four deputy fire marshals and one finance/administrative assistant. There is also another portion that is for travel; \$33,000 for volunteers; \$25,000 for outside Yukon travel; \$265,000 in honoraria for volunteer firefighters; \$74,000 for contracting services; \$48,000 for rental expense; \$33,000 for safety advertising campaigns; \$31,000 for petroleum; \$34,000 for program materials; \$112,000 for repairs and maintenance; \$83,000 for electricity and utilities; \$75,000 for heating fuel; \$69,000 for communications; \$135,000 for training and \$15,000 for various other requirements of the program.

Fire Marshal in the amount of \$1,787,000 agreed to

On Fire Management

Mr. Barr: I would like a breakdown of this amount.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This covers FireSmart, pre-suppression costs and suppression costs for fighting fires in the Yukon. That includes the personnel, obviously, salaries and wages and all of the other activities of the branch, which include rental expenses, advertising, supplies, program materials, repairs and maintenance, communications, training, memberships, computer system hardware and software, printing and, in general, implementing reduction and safety projects to reduce the risk of forest fires.

Fire Management in the amount of \$15,249,000 agreed to
On Emergency Medical Services

Ms. Hanson: I just have a question. In the supplementary information provided in the budget binder, it noted under this area, Emergency Medical Services footnote 2, that, beginning in 2014, the totals would differ from the total number of medevacs as community hospitals in Dawson

and Watson Lake can now medevac patients directly south rather than through Whitehorse.

So my question is: Who pays for that? If it's the Hospital Corporation, why are we not seeing a decrease in projected expenditure there?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Health and Social Services pays for that.

Ms. Hanson: The second part of the question then, Madam Chair?

Chair: Would you repeat the second part?

Ms. Hanson: If it's being covered by another department, then why is there not a projected decrease, based on the footnotes provided in the supplementary information?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Of course, Emergency Medical Services is a very important component of the Department of Community Services. They provide some important services to Yukoners.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: 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. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, 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.

Mr. Elias: 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 200

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, April 22, 2015 — 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 Tourism and Culture; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Justice; Yukon Development Corporation/ Yukon Energy Corporation
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Education
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Highways and Public Works
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Community Services; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Environment
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation

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Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
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Jan Stick	Official Opposition House Leader Riverdale South
Kevin Barr	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes
Lois Moorcroft	Copperbelt South
Jim Tredger	Mayo-Tatchun
Kate White	Takhini-Kopper King

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 22, 2015 — 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 Earth Day

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, it is Earth Day today and I rise today to pay tribute to what is an important annual event for many of us.

Earth Day is an opportunity for us to make positive changes over the long term. I am pleased to say that our government is committed to doing this each and every day. The Climate Change Secretariat coordinates the government's wide response to climate change on a daily basis, while also forming climate partnerships with various organizations — the many government departments involved with water management who ensure the continued health of all Yukon waters; as well, through initiatives like the *Solid Waste Action Plan*, which includes the current efforts to enhance our efforts for recycling, waste reduction and diversion; and the *Energy Strategy for Yukon*. It gives me great pride to say that we are making real progress on implementing the climate change action plan.

We remain committed to the goals of the government's climate change action strategy, specifically: enhancing knowledge and understanding of climate change; adapting to climate change; reducing greenhouse emissions; and leading Yukon action in response to climate change.

I would like to recognize those who have helped make great strides toward those goals. First, last December, the Yukon government once again participated as a member of the Canadian delegation to the United Nations international climate change negotiations. Our participation ensures that Yukon values, circumstances and ideas are factored into national and international decisions on climate change. This shows northern leadership and builds working relationships to advance our research, adaptation and mitigation interests. Our government also sent a Yukon climate change youth ambassador in recognition of the importance of youth involvement in climate change issues. This demonstrates our commitments to promoting discussions among future generations and to enhancing the knowledge and skills of our Yukon youth.

Secondly, this year the Climate Change Secretariat is co-leading the Arctic Council's initiative focused on climate change adaptation. Following the Arctic Council's ministerial meeting in Iqaluit later this month, they will launch a climate change adaptation information portal. This on-line database

will enhance northerners' ability to effectively adapt to climate change by fostering knowledge transfer, innovation and the development of best practices. This government's commitment to a healthy environment goes beyond climate change. I would like to commend our Water Resources branch for its efforts leading the implementation of the *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan* in collaboration with other government departments. This plan helps ensure that the Yukon will have water for nature and water for people.

In the last year, our government has been busy meeting many of the goals outlined in the water strategy. Now in its second year, we look forward to reaching new milestones in 2015-16 and, to that end, we are investing more than \$1 million this year in order to continue funding a training program at Yukon College and to build additional hydrometric and water quality stations across the territory.

The Yukon government is also committed to modernizing recycling regulations. By updating the current regulations, our government is reflecting its continued commitment to promote recycling and responsible waste management throughout the territory. It will also ensure customers recycle more beverage containers, while helping to keep products such as electronic waste and tires out of our landfills. By making these changes to the regulations, we are ensuring that recycling fees better cover the costs of diverting and processing recyclable materials.

I am proud to be the Minister of Environment and, as an avid outdoorsman and someone who has been involved in community-based resource councils and committees for years, I have a great affinity for our environmental stewardship, which supports a healthy, sustainable and prosperous Yukon, now and into the future.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all Yukoners to join me in celebrating Earth Day.

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to celebrate Earth Day.

Not only do we globally celebrate the planet today, but in Canada, April is also National Poetry Month. Poetry allows us to see the world through different eyes and today I want to show you earth as a pale, blue dot.

I would like to share with you, *Shoulders*, by Canadian spoken-word giant Shane Koyczan. I am going to try really hard to do this poem justice:

Like many, I love to look at the stars

I love the fact that ours is just one among many

What I love about astronomy is that our constellations tell a story

Our constellations were born from mythology.

Mythology was our first attempt to understand the world in which we live

We put a god in everything

And those gods would give us our reasons.

Why is the sky blue? Who chose blue? Gods.

How come men have nipples? It's the will of the gods.

Why does the wine taste so good? There's a god in it.

And for a while there was not a single thing that the gods could not explain.

We believed that their anger gave us lightning, their despair gave us rain.

We whispered our desires to them, believing that their charity would sustain us.

Those gods... were just stories.

But stories became a large part of how we learn;

They burn lessons into our memories;

They become a part of how we remember.

We can remember almost everything,

Right down to that first unbearable bee sting,

When we learned that this tiny blue marble we call the world has rules.

Rule number one: Don't mess with the bees!

An unforgettable lesson brought to you by your memories.

I remember that I grew up loving mythology.

I remember the story of the titan Atlas, who was also the god of astronomy,

The original global positioning system sending sailors safely home by telling them which constellations to keep starboard.

He taught us about the stars.

He did all of all of this while he held up ours —

Our pale blue dot.

But Atlas is caught between two different tellings of his story.

In the first, he leads a rebellion against Olympus and is then sentenced to hold the heavens on his shoulders for eternity.

In the second story, he is chosen to be the guardian of the pillars that hold up the earth and sky.

I prefer the second story.

It means that the world is not a punishment; but rather, a responsibility.

But how can just one be charged with such a burden?

How can just one be responsible for all of this?

When I think of Atlas, I think of a single drop of rain.

I think how unfair it would be to hold a single drop solely responsible for making the entire world clean again.

I remember how my grandmother tried to explain our world to me —

She told me a story

She said the ground and the sky, they love each other

But they don't have arms.

So rain — that's just how they hold one another.

I began to see how the earth and the sky need each other.

But I wondered about us.

In this perfect design, where do we fit?

Which piece of the puzzle are we?

Like constellations, I began to see a connection between dots and numbered my thoughts

And drew lines from one to the next.

I began to see us in the context of a bigger picture, sharpening the blur slowly into focus

We are Atlas.

I saw that this pale blue dot, this one world, is all we get.

There will be no reset button, no new operating system, no downloadable upgrade.

We will not be allowed to trade in our old world for a new one with climate control or better fuel efficiency.

We get one shot at this.

Dismiss all reports of second chances; we get one

And yet we draw advances on our future as if we one day we won't be held accountable.

We will.

We are.

The human race runs toward a finish line emblazoned with the words "too far" and wonders,

Will we ever cross it?

Have we already?

We are faced with the seemingly impossible task

And it's okay to be afraid.

Our dilemma stands before us like a mountain carved into a blockade —

The sheer magnitude of our problem would be enough to dissuade anyone.

How do we save the world?

We lay in our beds curled into question marks, wondering,

What can we do?

Where do we start?

Is hope a glue crazy enough to hold us together while we're falling apart?

The burden seems immense

But we can do this.

We must take the martial-arts approach to loving our planet —

Love as self-defence.

Forget about the cost.

There will be no other thing as worth saving as this —

Nothing more important; nothing as precious.

This is home.

All of our stories start and end here.

We are sheltered within an atmosphere that has given us every single breath we will ever take.

Every monument we will ever make has come from the flesh of our planet —

Water like blood, skin like soil, bones like granite.

It is not a myth, there is no debate, facts are in.

Fact is, there's never been any question.

We are facing crisis.

We dismiss the truth, not because we can't accept it, but because having to commit ourselves to change is a scary prospect for anybody.

The most alarming part of the statement "we are facing crisis"

Isn't the word "crisis",

It's the word "we" —

Because those two letters take the responsibility away from one and rest it squarely on the shoulders of everybody.

We are Atlas now.

But our strength will come from finding a way to share in shouldering the responsibility of turning the impossible into somehow —

Somehow, we will do this.

We can do this.

We can dismiss apathy; we can reject uncertainty.

We can be the new chapter in our story.

We will not see change immediately.

We must act in faith as the hour hand grips the minute hand and they land on the eleventh hour.

We must believe like the seed that change is possible to see.

Never seize the flower; it grows knowing it must become more than what it was.

It changes, because in growth, all of its potential can be unlocked.

Change is like rain, it starts with a single drop —

Just one, like our pale blue dot,

Caught in an endless waltz called gravity, we circle the sun, wondering who, if anyone, left the light on.

We are constellations drawn upon the earth; we are connected to one another; we are bound.

We must behave as the arms that connect the ground to the sky.

We must try to be more like the rain.

Our stories may differ, our goal is the same.

How do we save our pale blue dot?

We act as the rain, realizing that each individual drop is as equal and important as any.

We act as one.

Now we are many.

Mr. Silver: I rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute and mark the 45th annual Earth Day.

Mr. Speaker, Earth Day was originally held on April 22, 1970 in the United States and it was originally intended as a one-time deal. It was to bring awareness to the environmental movement, but now it's considered as the birthplace of the modern-day movement.

As Yukoners, we have a lot to celebrate when it comes to our environment, to our beautiful scenery, to our fresh air and our clean water.

We are certainly very fortunate, but we should also take note of all those things that we may take for granted that some other countries and areas of this world do not possess. As individuals, we all have a part to play in ensuring that the actions that we take and the products that we buy are not damaging to the environment. As lawmakers, we have the added responsibility of ensuring that what we do in this Chamber is for the long-term benefit of generations of Yukoners to come. That means not mortgaging the future for short-term gains.

Earth Day is a chance to celebrate what we have and provides us with an opportunity to reflect on our individual choices that we make each day and how they affect the carbon footprint. I was first introduced to a topic, to a concept, to a theory 25 years ago when I was studying environmental

science, and that is called the “tragedy of the commons”. The tragedy of the commons is an economic theory and it is by Garrett Harden. The term is taken from the title of an article that Harden wrote in 1968, which in turn is based upon an essay by a Victorian economist on the effect of unregulated grazing in common lands. The theory states that individuals acting independently and rationally, according to their own self-interests, behave contrary to the best interests of the whole group by depleting some portion of the common resource. Simply put, without a plan from a greater community, the individual and society will believe that their small actions couldn't possibly have that much damage.

Now the reason for this history — and I have to tell you that it is very humbling to do a history lesson in front of Mr. Deuling, who is a legend in that pursuit in the Yukon. The reason for the history lesson is that this is not a new concept. It has been a widely held truth in science for over a century now that this tragic belief is having an enormous, detrimental effect on our climate. As an individual, as a community or as a small government, we cannot simply assume that our small, individual contribution does not affect the larger picture, for that is simply not true.

This is why Earth Day is such a profound success as an environmental movement. We live in a global village, and the tide is turning on those who believe that our small footprints do not add up. More than six million Canadians join together each year with more than one billion people across the world in 170 countries to stage events and provide awareness on a local environmental stage.

I am very pleased to stand here today and recognize Earth Day. Living in a healthy, beautiful territory is something that we are fortunate to enjoy and that I truly hope to pass on for generations to come.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Graham: It is indeed a pleasure for me, and I hope all members will join me in welcoming the grade 11 history class from Vanier Catholic Secondary School along with their instructor, Jud Deuling. Welcome to the Legislature, and I hope it is a very pleasant stay for you.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of personal privilege

Speaker: Hon. Premier, please.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Yesterday, during Question Period, I misspoke when I stated that we have increased health care funding by 350 percent. As I have stated before in this House, the correct statement was that we have increased our

investment in home care by 350 percent. I wanted to stand on a point of personal privilege just to correct the record.

Speaker: 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 agrees with the *Earth Statement* authored by prominent scientists, economists and policy-makers, which states that in order to prevent a rise in temperature beyond two degrees Celsius, the “safety limit” agreed to by governments, a large portion of fossil fuel reserves must be left in the ground.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Environment to recognize that, contrary to a statement in this House on April 21, 2015, the Yukon Aishihik wood bison was removed from the specially protected species list and added to the list of big game species in 1998.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to actually transfer the Yukon College endowment lands to Yukon College.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Health and Social Services to visit Watson Lake to explain the government’s decision to issue a tender for provision of pharmacy services in the community of Watson Lake.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

Speaker’s statement

Speaker: Before proceeding with Question Period, the Chair will make a statement regarding events that occurred yesterday in Question Period.

During Question Period, the Member for Copperbelt South asked the Minister of Justice a series of questions about inmate risk assessment. In responding to the member’s final supplementary question, the minister drew the House’s attention to comments that he referred to as “heckling”. The minister then referred to comments about heckling, which he attributed to a staff member of the Official Opposition. At that point, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King rose on a point of order. The gist of the point of order was that the minister had either used abusive or insulting language against, or imputed a false or unavowed motive to, the aforementioned staff member.

The Standing Orders referred to by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King — 19(g) and 19(i) — do not protect persons who are not members of the Assembly. However, Guideline 8 of the Guidelines for Oral Question Period says:

“A question must adhere to the proprieties of the House in that it must not contain inferences, impute motives or cast aspersions upon persons within the House or out of it.” The Chair applies the same rule to responses to questions.

Having reviewed the Blues, it is the Chair’s view that there was no point of order. The minister repeated what another person had allegedly written. The minister did not cast aspersions on the person who allegedly made the remark.

The Chair would also remind members that they are responsible for everything they say in the House, even if they are quoting another person. Attributing the words to another person does not immunize a member from being called to order.

In response to the point of order, the minister used the word “hypocrites” to refer to members of the Official Opposition. That term is out of order, and the minister has been a member of this House long enough to know that and not to use it.

Before ending this statement, the Chair would note that the point of order was preceded by a number of comments that personalized the proceedings. There were also a number of comments by members who had not been recognized to speak that also raised the level of tension in the House.

As the Chair said yesterday in dealing with the point of order, ultimately the level of order and decorum in this House is up to the members. Whether the Chair intervenes on his own, or rules on a point of order, the offending words will have been said before they can be dealt with. The Chair does his best to apply a uniform standard, but it is ultimately the members who will determine what that standard is.

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: YESAA process

Ms. Hanson: Yesterday, Bill S-6 was pushed through the parliamentary standing committee. The Yukon Party’s federal cousins voted down a dozen amendments, removing any chance of staving off more economic uncertainty in Yukon. By now, most Yukoners know that the changes to YESAA contained in Bill S-6 will be bad for Yukon. First Nation governments have been clear: they will be forced to fight these unilateral changes in court. Industry has been clear: the threat of more litigation will spell the end of Yukon as an attractive place to do business.

The Premier is either being wilfully blind to the negative economic implications that will come with the passing of Bill S-6 or he simply doesn’t care about the repercussions. It is clear that the Premier is not listening to any stakeholder groups or citizens when it comes to Bill S-6.

So, Mr. Speaker, who is the Premier listening to when he pushes his unilaterally imposed changes to YESAA?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It is very disappointing that, at this point of this debate, the Leader of the NDP still doesn’t understand that this is federal legislation. This is federal legislation — we were consulted on it, as were First Nations. What I will say is that an environmental assessment process that creates consistency with other jurisdictions allows us to

remain competitive, allows us the opportunity to see jobs and opportunities to keep Yukoners here at home, and that's a priority for this government.

Ms. Hanson: It's difficult when the Premier refuses to acknowledge that he pushed for the most controversial amendments. First Nation governments have been clear that they will challenge the changes to YESAA in the courts if Bill S-6 is passed. When the vice-president of Capstone Mining was asked what impact the litigation would have on mining, he said — and I quote: "It's going to result in more layoffs, more mine closures and the end of mining in Yukon."

Kaminak Gold Corporation has said the changes to YESAA would make their presence in Yukon uncertain. These are their words, not mine.

The Premier has also made it abundantly clear that YESAA does not just apply to mining, meaning that all assessments will be caught in the crossfire created by this government. It is clear to everyone in the Yukon that the Premier is taking the Yukon's economy to the precipice. Can the Premier give any assurances to any businesses that their investments will not be tied up as a result of costly and lengthy court battles?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Bill S-6 is good for Yukon's economy and will strengthen Yukon's environmental assessment process. We stand by that. We know that there are ways to get through this, as has happened in the past. I stood in front of the House of Commons committee and said that, as leaders in Yukon, we have the ability to find a way to implement these amendments on the ground.

That offer to Yukon First Nation leaders is still there and I look forward to the opportunity to work with Yukon First Nations, as we have in the past through the devolution transfer agreement and also through the Yukon oil and gas agreement. We have done it before; we can do it again.

Ms. Hanson: After going behind First Nations' backs, why would they trust this government? You know, this government's actions simply defy belief. The Yukon Party is walking into economic uncertainty with their eyes wide open. Worse yet, the Premier is actively encouraging his Conservative friends to pass the legislation more quickly. Everyone in the Yukon except the docile dozen knows that these changes to Bill S-6 will take the Yukon down a path of litigation and economic uncertainty. As the Premier repeats his recycled and inaccurate talking points of Bill S-6, he begins to sound more like the last violinist on the Titanic while the ship sinks beneath his feet.

Why is this government so wilfully taking Yukon down a path that is going to lead to broken relationships, litigation, uncertainty and economic decline?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It is surprising, but yet the Leader of the NDP continues to creep to a new low on a daily basis.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Ms. White: 19(g), 19(i) — so either it imputes false motive or uses abusive or insulting language.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I agree. The Premier's language was somewhat abusive, but he is only returning what he was getting, so there is no point of order. I would like to take this opportunity to wonder if any of the members were listening to my statement earlier today. Hon. Premier, please curtail yourself, sir.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I was mentioning, Bill S-6 is federal legislation. Yukon government was consulted on these amendments. We provided our input. We believe that the federal government listened to and took into consideration our comments and recommendations prior to tabling Bill S-6.

They also went out and consulted with First Nations. I won't comment on the adequacy of that, because that would be disrespectful for First Nations. What I can say is that having environmental assessment legislation that is consistent with other jurisdictions is good for Yukon. It's good for Yukon families. It's good for Yukon jobs. As I have stated publicly, I look forward to the opportunity to sit down with Yukon First Nation chiefs as leaders in this territory to find a path forward. The federal government has provided — or will provide, if this goes through — legislation. It is the responsibility of leaders in Yukon to find a path forward to implement these amendments.

Question re: Drug and alcohol addictions counselling

Ms. Stick: The Yukon NDP knows that expanding access to alcohol and drug services for all Yukoners in all of our communities is one of the urgent needs facing our health care system. Just last fall, we noted in the 2014 clinical services plan that alcohol and drug services are in significant deficit outside Whitehorse, and there is no greater need — particularly in the communities. This finding was highlighted again as recently as last month in the Auditor General's report on corrections in Yukon, which stresses that most communities outside Whitehorse do not have access to substance abuse management and relapse prevention programs.

Mr. Speaker, when will the government develop a coherent plan for coordinated community-based actions on alcohol and drug services?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Certainly the department has been collaborating with a number of key stakeholders around the territory, including First Nations, Mental Health Services, Many Rivers, Community Health and Justice to identify a number of gaps in services.

I give accolades to this government who has invested in replacing the Sarah Steele Building. Those services are expandable into many of the communities, but we also see services through Many Rivers on a contract basis reaching out to the communities in the territory.

This government continues to invest in services for people with addictions and mental health issues and I stand behind those investments. We certainly know that the members opposite continue to vote against those services.

Ms. Stick: The 2014 clinical services plan had no shortage of comments on the significant deficit facing alcohol and drug services outside of Whitehorse, including — and I quote: “...all aspects of ADS care, including the general absence of aftercare and a high rate of recidivism.”

The Yukon Party government has neglected rural services for ADS prevention, detoxification, pre-treatment and especially after-care. The Sarah Steele replacement may expand the number of clients provided with care, but even the minister cannot disagree that the building is based firmly in Whitehorse. The absence of community-based services means people are on their own before and after treatment.

What is the minister doing to address the lack of ADS after-care in Yukon’s communities?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, a new community addictions program has been developed to address this very thing. The community addictions program will provide supports within communities, including prevention, pre-treatment, counselling, and after-care supports. But as I mentioned in my first response, this government has made significant investments in moving forward with Sarah Steele. We continue to have dialogue and contracts with Many Rivers. We work with Mental Health Services. This government has invested over \$1 million in the Jackson Lake land-based treatment facilities. So we’ll continue to stand behind those investments and we urge the members opposite to start voting in favour of providing these services to Yukoners who need them.

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, alcohol and drug services have not been a priority across the territory and in the communities. If the minister wants proof positive of this statement, he need look no further than his own department’s Health and Social Services strategic plan for 2015-19. The only issue this government will be tracking over the next four years is the rate of emergency room visits by people, related to harmful alcohol use. Youth access to addiction services and supports, the percentage of ADS clients accessing after-care programs and rural access to ADS services are all left to some future date. The minister mentioned a report. Where is it? I would like to see it tabled in this House.

Will this minister turn his words into action and make rural access to alcohol and drug services a priority today?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, mental health and addiction services for youth and their families is a collaborative process with the department and work is ongoing to ensure that that effective integration of supports continues.

We have seen this government continue to provide investments, not only in alcohol and drug services and counselling for adults, but for youth as well. We know that the members opposite continue to vote against those services. This government has invested over \$1 million in Jackson Lake. The members opposite continue to vote against those

services to those individuals. This government has brought forward investments in replacing the Sarah Steele Building and the members opposite continue to vote against those services. This government is doing great work, and I would like to extend my thanks to the staff — the men and women who work each and every day providing these services for mental health and addictions to people all across the territory.

Question re: Continuing care facilities

Mr. Silver: A business-case analysis was done by a private contractor on the Government of Yukon’s new 300-bed continuing care facility and listed the price of it at \$330 million. Now, in this year’s budget there is \$26 million set aside for the advancement of this project. Several months ago, the government referred to this as a 300-bed facility. This spring, the government changed its mind and now refers to it as a 150-bed facility. The new minister said yesterday that the second phase could be built 20 years down the road. The government has certainly changed its tune from just a few months ago.

While the government figures out how many beds it actually is going to build, can it at least tell Yukoners what the total cost for the project is going to be?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Well, here we have another clear example of the Liberal leader not paying attention to debate in this Legislative Assembly. The Liberal leader is well aware that this afternoon we have a private member’s motion debating this very thing. I don’t know if it is just that he is not organized or doesn’t understand the motions that are on the docket for this afternoon.

Let’s be clear. This government is moving forward with an investment in a facility that will have 150 beds provided to Yukoners, many of whom are our relatives, friends, families, brothers, sisters and grandparents — people — Yukoners who need these services. So 150 beds that will be completed in 2018 — and at that time we can conduct a further needs assessment on whether we need to move forward with an additional 150 beds.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Now I know the Member for Whitehorse Centre, the Leader of the Official Opposition, finds seniors’ care funny, and that is very sad, Mr. Speaker. This government takes this issue very seriously, but we care about Yukoners. We care about our brothers and sisters and family members and providing that level of care to those Yukoners who need it when they need it.

Mr. Silver: The minister can still hurl insults and we will still keep on asking the questions. The public is confused about this new facility. There is a motion from the previous Minister of Health and Social Services that was brought forth in December of 2014 — only a few short months ago — and I quote: “That this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue moving forward with the planning and construction of a new 300-bed continuing care facility...” Now, unlike the government, I have been quite clear as what I would do. I would put more resources into facilities in our communities, and I would not build a giant warehouse in Whitehorse.

Last fall, the government did its own analysis on the potential cost of the new facility. It said the cost will be \$268 million for a 300-bed facility, a full \$60-million less than an independent consultant. Here's the question, Mr. Speaker: What number is the government going to use — \$268 million or \$330 million?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Another clear example that the member, the Liberal leader, is confused. We have in fact seen how the Liberals make investments in this territory. We only have to look back from 2000-02 when an exodus of people was leaving the territory because of those investments.

We've been clear all along, Mr. Speaker. We're building a facility that will be for 150 beds, completed by 2018, and that facility will be expandable to 300 beds. The member opposite just needs to pay attention to the details and be a little bit clearer with his questions.

Our priority is to provide that level of care to Yukoners, many of whom are our friends and family members — a high level of care. They are no longer able to stay in their homes. This government is committed to providing that to Yukoners and we would encourage the members opposite, instead of heckling in the Legislature this afternoon, to pay attention and to support this program.

Mr. Silver: Pay attention to which motion? It's a moving target with this government.

Mr. Speaker, Yukoners are understandably nervous when they see this government barging into major construction projects without a plan. The fact that the government can't decide whether it's 300 beds or 150 beds — that's not helping either, Mr. Speaker. The timeline for this project is being driven by the timing of the next election — that is known. The government wants people working on this project as we head to the polls for the fall of 2016. This type of incompetent management will result in more wasteful, overbudget projects.

The government has been repeatedly criticized by the Auditor General of Canada for its shortcomings in this regard. We just heard this week that the LNG facility will be 22 percent over its budget this week, so why is the government moving ahead with construction when it can't even tell Yukoners what the end cost of the project will be?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This government is focused by providing health care for Yukoners today and for the future, and that's why we have the vision to be building a long-term care facility right now for 150 residents, with the ability to expand it at a later date if the need is there. That's what's quite clear.

What's also very clear is that the Leader of the Liberal Party was very publicly opposed to the hospital that this government built in his community and opposed to the new nursing home. I challenge the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Member for Klondike to ask his constituents today what they think about those facilities.

We are focusing on building our population, focusing on diversifying our economy to deliver the programs and services that Yukoners desire and Yukoners deserve.

Question re: Beaver Creek infrastructure

Mr. Barr: The Yukon Party government's apparent belief that Haines Junction is the westerly boundary of Yukon is astounding. The Village of Beaver Creek is the latest casualty of the government's lack of investment in the upper Alaska Highway. We learned that the fire alarms in many buildings are no longer directly connected to the Beaver Creek fire hall. This is an essential and important component of a community's emergency response system.

Is the Yukon Party government aware of Beaver Creek's disconnected fire alarms? What is their action plan to reconnect the alarms to the fire hall?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I should point out that the Beaver Creek facility that was recently constructed was something that the members opposite voted against. It provides an excellent service to that community by integrating the protective services needed for that community.

If there is some malfunction with some technical aspect of the building, of course we'll look into that and try to correct it. I haven't heard that the fire alarm is disconnected currently. If that is the case, I'm sure officials are working diligently to fix it, but I certainly don't think it's something that requires political direction to do. I will assume that the officials are diligently working on that. I know that the members opposite don't have the confidence in our officials to do that, but if there is a need for some direction, of course we'll provide the direction to fix the fire alarms.

Mr. Barr: The school is not hooked up, among others. The Beaver Creek airport doesn't have an automated runway light system. That means that, in case of an emergency, someone from the community needs to physically go to the airport and turn on the lights so that emergency aircraft can land. When there is an emergency, turning on the runway lights should not be on the checklist of a modern Yukon community.

Will the government finally listen to Beaver Creek residents and install automated runway lights at the community's airport and will they finally pay attention to the needs of Yukoners who live between the Alaska border and Haines Junction?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Of course we're paying attention to the needs of Yukoners. That is why we invested in a brand new building for Beaver Creek that was recently constructed. It was built on time and on budget, to my understanding, and it provides an excellent service to the community. It integrates all of the protective services that are provided there and is certainly a central point in the community when it comes to providing those services. If there is a particular aspect with some runway lights, I'm sure I'll hear about it from officials in due course, but certainly that is not the kind of thing that we provide political direction on — with regard to whether or not a fire alarm is plugged in. If there is something at the operational level that needs to be dealt with, I will be happy to look into the matter.

Certainly the investment in this new building is a wonderful boon to the community and it improves the services that are available to the community of Beaver Creek. It is

unfortunate that the members opposite voted against that wonderful new facility.

Mr. Barr: It is still the minister's responsibility, Mr. Speaker. It isn't just the fire hall that is left wanting when it comes to the community support. The Beaver Creek Health Centre recently received a new ambulance, but, get this — it is too big for the building. We have already discussed this at length in the budget debate and it is similar to the Watson Lake ambulance bay that is short on space. In the dead of winter, when the ambulance requires cleaning and maintenance and when stretchers need to be loaded and unloaded, the ambulance needs to sit outside and be exposed to the Yukon winter.

How did the Yukon Party government think that this is an acceptable solution for the residents of Beaver Creek? Why didn't the government make sure that the new ambulance fit into the Beaver Creek Health Centre?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: You know, it is again disappointing to look at the lack of leadership that we see from the opposition — the opposition who say that one day they would aspire to be government, Mr. Speaker. If they really cared about the community, what they would have done is to advise those people to contact the officials to make sure that the work was done —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order — back off. I can't hear people. I can hear more on this side than I can on this side.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: If they cared they would advise those people to contact those officials. Instead, what they are trying to do is make political points. Next time that they see an issue like this, show some leadership and do the right thing.

Question re: Energy transmission line

Mr. Tredger: The Yukon government, through the Yukon Development Corporation, is spending \$5.3 million on a new 138-kilowatt transmission line between Stewart Crossing and Keno. This \$5.3 million is just for planning.

We understand that the cost of the new transmission line will be in the neighbourhood of \$40 million. Will the minister confirm that planning and construction of this new transmission line will cost Yukoners an estimated \$45 million?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: The money that is currently allocated is just for planning to get it shovel-ready, but I would remind the member that, since the questions came up yesterday in the House about investments and hydro infrastructure, this is but the latest in a long string of investments that this government has made in investing in our hydro infrastructure. That includes the investment in Mayo B; that includes the investment that connected the Carmacks-Stewart transmission line project, which connected the two grids and which is a platform commitment we fulfilled. It includes the investment in the third turbine at the Aishihik facility and, of course, in the latest step, upgrading the line to

Keno — which, as the member may know, the line itself is in need of work and, at this point, we're looking at the options for what type of line it makes sense to replace it with, when we will be making investments to that infrastructure, which has reached a stage in its life where it does need investment in it.

Mr. Tredger: In the event of power outages, Keno residents have to wait hours for a temporary generator to be brought up from as far away as Whitehorse. They have been asking for years for a backup generator. Just yesterday, the Minister of Community Services talked about Keno being too small to justify incorporation or getting a local advisory council. I certainly hope that the minister is not pretending that Keno residents, or even Mayo residents, are the main beneficiaries of this \$45 million project. That is a very expensive backup generator.

The real beneficiary is the mining sector, but Alexco has shut down production and Victoria Gold is far from being an active mine. Will existing mines and future industrial consumers be expected to contribute to the direct costs of this \$45 million project, or will it be up to Yukoners to foot the bill?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, I should point out to the member that these are planning dollars at this point in time. It's the latest in a long string of investments that we've made in hydro infrastructure, including the Mayo B hydro facility, the investment in the Carmacks-Stewart transmission line project, the investment in the Aishihik third turbine — and I would point out to the member that, as part of his preamble, he noted the issue of power outages in Keno.

Investing in and upgrading this line — which is due for an upgrade because of the age of the equipment — looking at the options for that and determining what voltage that should be is part of improving that reliability. Rather than buying — as the member suggested — a fossil fuel-powered generator to be placed in Keno, we're investing in the line that takes clean hydro power from Mayo B to the residents of Keno, and of course to Alexco and any other future customers that come on, whether they be residential or industrial, in the Keno area.

Mr. Tredger: The Yukon Energy Corporation is expected to manage this project, but curiously its parent company, the Yukon Development Corporation, is putting out the tenders on this project. It is clear that this path involves no ratepayer scrutiny. If the Energy Corporation was to fully manage this project, it would have to bring it to the Yukon Utilities Board and have its plans scrutinized. If this project was to receive proper scrutiny from the regulator, there is a good chance it wouldn't go ahead as it is. There just aren't the industrial or residential consumers to merit a \$45-million expenditure.

Is this the government's plan to deliberately use the Yukon Development Corporation when it wants to rubberstamp energy projects and spend millions of dollars on projects without appropriate scrutiny?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I have the sense that the Member for Mayo-Tatchun doesn't understand the Yukon Utilities Board process and doesn't understand that there's a difference

between when projects such as this one — and, at this point, they are planning dollars for a project — are funded entirely by government and are not being added into the rate base that customers then have to pay for as part of their electrical bills, those projects do not go before the Yukon Utilities Board as a matter of course.

Anything that the corporation — in this case, Yukon Energy Corporation — wants to see added to the rate base and that they are fully covering themselves and they are paying for, that has to go to the Yukon Utilities Board, because it is being charged to consumers — but if government makes an investment, that same requirement does not exist.

I would remind the member that this investment in improving the electrical line in the area is necessary because of the age of the equipment. It will improve the reliability of power supply in Keno. It will provide that power through hydro power from the Mayo facility, rather than fossil fuels, as the member suggested. I would remind the member that, in addition to industrial customers in the area, that in fact there has been work done on potential wind projects within the Keno area and at Ferry Hill — that, if those projects were developed, would also be using that transmission line. This is the latest of a string of investments, including over \$100 million in Mayo B, over \$40 million in the Carmacks-Stewart transmission line project — which connected the grids — and the Aishihik third turbine. This government is investing in hydro infrastructure.

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. 926

Clerk: Motion No. 926, standing in the name of Mr. Elias.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue moving forward with the planning and construction of a new 150-bed continuing care facility that is designed to provide for future expansion in recognition of Yukon's growing senior population, while at the same time continuing to enhance home care for seniors in order that they can stay in their homes and home communities as long as possible.

Mr. Elias: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of Motion No. 926, urging the Yukon government to continue moving forward with the planning and construction of a new 150-bed continuing care facility that is designed to provide for future expansion in recognition of Yukon's growing senior population, while at the same time continuing to enhance home care for seniors in order that they can stay in their homes and home communities as long as possible.

There appears to be some confusion among the members opposite about the purpose of the new 150-bed continuing care facility. I would like to take a few moments to help correct some misunderstandings that the members opposite may have. We should also remember that, in my opinion, what has been lost in this discussion is that this is not a seniors facility; it is a care facility. Seniors will be the majority of clients, but continuing care is for any Yukoner who may need specialized care. It is about our families. It is about our grandparents. It is about our parents. It is about our brothers and sisters. It is about our friends. It is about caring about Yukoners.

That being said, we know that the Canadian population is aging. Stats Canada indicates that seniors make up the fastest growing age group. We know that this growing population means that the majority of clients at this continuing care facility will be seniors. The trend is expected to continue for the next several decades.

In 2011, statistics calculated by Employment and Social Development Canada pointed out that 8.8 percent of our population in the territory was 65 years and older. The projection grows substantially by the year 2036 where, in the Yukon, it is projected that 19.6 percent of residents will be 65 years or older. That means one in five Yukoners will be older than 65 by the year 2036. My point here is that our government is planning for the long term for a demonstrated need.

A Yukon Party government priority remains to keep Yukoners in their communities and homes as long as possible. To that end, we have invested extensively in seniors housing in Yukon communities. Successive Yukon Party governments have built new seniors housing in Whitehorse, Haines Junction, Watson Lake, Teslin and Faro over the last few years. Work to build a new seniors residence in Mayo is presently underway. In addition, work to replace the McDonald Lodge in Dawson City began last year.

We have agreed that home care is very effective in keeping people safely in their homes longer, both in Whitehorse and rural communities. Over the past 14 years, the budget for home care has increased by 364 percent, to a budgeted \$5.609 million to allow seniors to stay in their homes longer. I have heard the Member for Riverdale South refer to our continuum of care. Unfortunately, their stance reflects a misunderstanding of what continuum of care actually means when it comes to looking after our loved ones. The government's planning reflects a continuum.

It is not a matter of living with medical supports or living without medical supports; it is a matter of degree. People who do not require any specialized supports are at one end of the spectrum. Most people fall into this category of home living — or independent living.

For various reasons, including illness or aging, some people require home care or assisted living. Home care is exactly as it sounds. Additional support is brought into the home, as needed. Supported living refers to facilities that offer meals, light housekeeping assistance and social activities. It is not for those who have complex medical needs.

The term “assisted living” is also used to describe this kind of retirement community, or aging-in-place facility, where food, laundry, housekeeping, personal care services and assistance with minor physical or functional health challenges are provided. As medical needs become more complex, assisted or supported living facilities will not suffice.

One type of care cannot be used to replace the other. This is where the position taken by the opposition is flawed. Home care is effective, but is not a substitute for continuing care for those who require a significant level of support or specialized services.

Our government’s current numbers show that, today, we have over 200 home care clients who may develop health issues that require continuing care beds in the near future. In addition, 14 percent of home care clients have no local caregiver at all. This lack of a caregiver is considered one of the strongest indicators for predicting the future needs for continuing care. Residential continuing care is the term that refers to facilities that provide 24-hour professional care and supervision for those with complex medical care needs and are unable to manage themselves.

I’ve noticed that, sometimes, the members opposite appear to use all of these terms interchangeably. I hope that I have helped to define these terms better here today, so we can all agree about what we are talking about when we discuss the new 150-bed continuing care facility.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, a continuing care facility should not be confused with a hospital. Although the care required may be as intensive as in a hospital, a continuing care facility is more home-like and comfortable.

We all want to be treated with dignity, regardless of what our circumstances are, and we would all like to have as much control over our environment as possible. That is why this new continuing care facility is being designed to provide as much client control over their environment as possible.

In addition to being medically supportive, a home should be both comforting and comfortable. The Whistle Bend continuing care facility will offer advanced dementia care services, hospice palliative care, a subacute activation unit, a mental health unit, bariatric care and a day program.

We believe that this facility will fill an important gap and demonstrated need in our community. This is not about the number of beds. This is about providing dignity to those we love as they face the most difficult and challenging of circumstances.

Ms. Stick: A 300-bed facility is what was announced by this government many times over, both publicly in this Legislature and to the media. From the very get-go, it was about a 300-bed facility.

I thank the member opposite for bringing this motion forward because I too agree that a lot of information needs to be clarified. I do understand that this is about people, but this motion speaks to the 300 beds. This motion speaks to 150 beds.

As recently as March 11, 2015, there was talk of a 300-bed continuing care facility, built in two phases. Phase 1

includes 150 continuing care beds and the support spaces such as offices, common areas, a loading area, kitchen and laundry needed to sustain this facility, and phase 2 includes an additional 150 beds. Today in Question Period, there were comments about this. I was struck by something heard today and heard yesterday — that this will be 150 and maybe, in six or eight or up to 20 years later, we will look at an additional 150.

As recently as September 2014, in a news release from this government, this is what was said: “Construction of the new facility was announced earlier this year. The initial phase will be for 150 beds, with the second phase of an additional 150 beds to begin immediately after completion.” So we open in 2018 and we start building the next 150 beds. This is the government’s news release. It is what was said, Mr. Speaker, by this government.

We also heard that, well, we’ll do another needs assessment. This government — I mean this goes back to a report that was issued in June 2013 by this government. It was placed on their website and it was a document, entitled *Final Report: New Whitehorse Continuing Care Facility* — 186 pages; no small report. Initially, it was posted on the website of the department and then taken down. I found it by chance, downloaded it and read it, and I was shocked that this hadn’t been announced anywhere. This wasn’t in any capital plans. This hadn’t been spoken of publicly. It certainly wasn’t in any platform, but it was out.

One of my first questions, when reading the report, was: Who was consulted? It was clear that this was a needs assessment, but who was consulted? I will come back to that, because to me this is the crux of this situation.

We know that this government was looking at this project well before June 2013 — for them to have completed that work. It took time. This report looked at national and Yukon demands for nursing home beds, and there is a way that governments across Canada report this and ways that it is calculated.

Let’s look at the numbers used by this government in this government’s own report.

Nationally the average bed utilization — and that’s how they phrase it; the number of beds needed — is 46 out of 1,000 in population for seniors over 65 — fair enough. The Yukon rate is 53 over 1,000, and I would suggest that it is higher than the national average. When looking at the stats and when determining needs, the authors of this report also looked at the wait-list for long-term care beds. I acknowledge there is a need. I acknowledge there are beds in the hospital being utilized by people who would be cared for better in a long-term facility, but what happened then was that our rate went from 53 out of 1,000 to 62 out of 1,000. That is much higher than the national rate, which is 46 over 1,000. This is double of what Quebec’s number is. This is one of the highest in Canada, but let’s go with that and agree for the moment that that’s our rate.

Does that mean, Mr. Speaker, that right now we should be considering a 300-bed facility? Doesn’t it make sense to start asking the questions? Why? Why is it that we have a higher-

than-average utilization rate than Canada? Why are we higher than other provinces? What is the reason that Yukon seniors are ending up in care facilities? We know they have complicated care needs, but why are ours higher? Why are the numbers higher? Especially when similar stats that you can look at show that the population in long-term care beds in the Yukon, on average, are younger and more independent than their counterparts across Canada — why is that Mr. Speaker? Why did no one ask that question? Shouldn't it have been a question about how we can improve the health outcomes for seniors so they don't need that level of care? I don't see those questions being answered anywhere.

Throughout the whole needs assessment, it talks about a 300-bed facility and the need for that in the very near future — that's what we need. It didn't look at other options. It did not do a comparative study of costs. We did not see a comparative analysis, and I'm not just talking about home care or smaller facilities. I'm talking about other things that are missing.

The member opposite gave us definitions of a continuum of care. A continuum of care is just that. It is a variety of services that spans from a person living independently and those in a long-term care facility. We have home care. We have home support workers. We have Macaulay Lodge. We have facilities now, but there is a big gap.

The member talked about assisted living and he talked about supported living. We have the Vimy Heritage Housing Society that has gone out and done a community needs assessment about providing 75 units for individuals or couples to live in and to be able to receive meals, maybe some light housekeeping and perhaps laundry. That is what they have looked at. That does not exist currently in the Yukon. The gap is going from home care and living in your own home into something still fairly independent without all the supports that would be required — or that are a part — of a 300-bed continuing care facility. Not everyone needs those. Not everyone needs to move from their home with home care into that type of facility. It is not necessary. Vimy has asked this government, "Help us. We have done the needs assessment; we have done the study, and we need land." They are not asking the government to run it or to build it, but they are asking for assistance. They have recognized that this is a gap in services in the continuing care continuum — it's one.

Others would include the same type of facility or the same type of apartments, but perhaps with a nurse on staff or some kind of rehabilitative services on staff.

It is good to hear that they understand a continuum of care, but we also have to recognize that there are gaps in our service. Instead of rushing into this, let's look at what our other options might be. They might be more economical and better able to be delivered in communities where people live — and what people want.

How do we help seniors stay independent? How do we provide services to them so they can maintain their health? These are questions we should be asking. If we are to look at the *Health and Social Services Strategic Plan, 2014-19*,

seniors care is not a strategic priority, and yet we have this project on the books.

It does state in that report — and I quote: "Given increases in the share of seniors among our population, and in our awareness that most seniors wish to stay in their homes for as long as possible, we'll also be working with older adults and communities to try to maximize the years spent in good health in the community. This means encouraging older residents to stay active and social, and to have healthy habits in all areas of life; providing respite and guidance for informal supports; and maintaining home care and other services that help ensure seniors are safe and secure in their homes."

It's good awareness. It's positive. I support that. You would think there would then be something in this strategy or this strategic plan that would address these issues, but it doesn't. It doesn't extend to either policy planning or action items. Nowhere in this Health and Social Services strategic and performance measures framework does it even talk about a 300-bed facility. Shouldn't it be there? Shouldn't it be part of a long-term vision going up to 2019? There is brief mention about a focus beyond to maintain — I'm not sure about that one — or decrease the fall rate in continuing care programs — serious falls and hospital admissions for those 65 and over. That's it.

If we look at the *Yukon Health Care Review* from 2008, senior care was a strategic priority and it stated: "Having appropriate continuing care services in place can reduce demand on other high cost items and overall costs to the system by pushing health care to the lowest cost appropriate, service delivery model — the right care at the right place at the right time".

It recognized that in some communities — the smaller ones — they are isolated and might not have the appropriate support systems. They talked about home care. They also talked about the costs and looked at monthly and daily operating costs — Copper Ridge, Macaulay, McDonald Lodge — and these are high. They're really high. Back in 2008, \$361 a day, Copper Ridge; \$287, Macaulay; \$221, McDonald. We know that bigger does not mean cheaper or more efficient. We know it's not the most cost effective.

We know that demographic changes are going to put an increased strain on our health system and on care. But it seems that seniors are ending up in the hospital because they did not receive the appropriate care to that point and when they get into the hospital, they deteriorate quickly and end up in a situation that requires more acute intervention — lack of access to appropriate care at the right time.

Too many seniors are not able to leave the hospital. Perhaps if we put more resources in the form of individuals in home care, we might be able to see more people stay at home longer. I recognize that some individuals will need an acute care level. We know that, but not every senior should be planned to go there. I read those reports. I read the case plan. I looked at the summaries, and what is it? Is it a 300-bed; is it 150? Is it to build 150 and then start the next one right away? Is it 20 years down the road? It is not, to me, a good plan.

One of the recommended actions out of 2008 was that, where projections indicate a future demand, the government should continue to invest in expanded home care community-support programs and supported assisted living. Intervention and care at this level is proven to keep individuals out of the acute care facility and long-term care system and provides better level of appropriate services at a lower cost. The government should develop a comprehensive long-range plan to increase residential long-term beds at Thomson Centre or new facilities to ensure that plans are in place for the future.

Part of these reports is talking about amalgamating some of these facilities now. They are not sure what should happen to the Thomson Centre. They don't support putting more funding into Macaulay. That is part of the reports.

To me, one of the most glaring omissions in all of this is public engagement and consultation — 186 pages in the new Whitehorse continuing care facility report from 2013; a 30-page report, the new Whitehorse community care facility memorandum; a 53-page report, the *New Whitehorse Continuing Care Facility Business Case Analysis*. That is a lot of paper. That is a lot of work. It is a lot of statistics, drawings and graphs, but there wasn't any consultation. How do I know this? It's because I have asked. The Yukon Medical Association has been clear that they have not been consulted — certainly not prior to these reports coming out. The Yukon Registered Nurses Association has been clear. They have not been consulted — not before these reports came out. Some still haven't heard from this government about the implications of 150 beds, of 300 beds, on their professions.

Seeing as it is such a large facility, it's going to have a large increase in professional staffing. Why wouldn't this government speak to these professionals about what's going to be needed, what's going to be anticipated, and how they're going to fill those positions? We have trouble now. We have difficulties now. How are we going to staff this place? It's not just nurses. It's not just physicians. Let's talk about other professionals — LPNs, occupational therapists, recreational therapists, speech and language pathologists, social workers, physiotherapists, and then the staff needed on a daily basis to manage this place: cleaning staff, kitchen, laundry, maintenance personnel, security, managers, and supervisors. It's a lot of people, Mr. Speaker.

What are the O&M costs going to be? We heard that 300 beds would be the best model because it will be the most cost-effective, but that's not what reports across Canada say. They say that anything over 200 beds will indeed cost more. It loses that efficiency. I don't make up these facts. The information is out there.

The Canadian Nurses Association and the Canadian Medical Association speak loudly about what is needed across Canada — how they want to focus on being able to give people the best care at the right time and the right place to encourage seniors to stay at home, to be independent. They go to Ottawa and speak to MPs there about what they see happening.

These are professionals who have knowledge, who have skills, and who I think should have been consulted on such a

project like this. These are professionals who know what it is going to be like to try to staff this 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That's a lot of staff, Mr. Speaker, and to not have gone to the professionals and speak to them, and ask their opinion and have some input is wrong.

I think it should have been part of a needs assessment.

In 2012, the Minister of Health and Social Services announced that they were putting 10 additional beds in the Thomson Centre in the fall of 2012. In his announcement — I'll just quote what he said: "One of the biggest challenges for us is staffing the unit ... To provide care to 10 additional individuals, we need 17 staff and it takes time to get the right staff in place." That was just for 10 beds in a facility that's already functioning, that's already up and running, and we're only adding 10 beds. Seventeen staff, and it's the biggest challenge. I would say staffing a 150-bed facility or a 300-bed facility is going to be a big challenge.

We have nurses, we have vacancies of nurses, we have nurses who come up on contract, we have nurses who go into the communities on contracts — there's a shortage. How are we going to staff this? What are those costs going to be?

Occupational therapists, recreation, speech and language — we know how difficult those are, the speech and language — and social workers. We do have a program here and that's great, but specializing in gerontology — those are rare.

One of the pods or neighbourhoods my colleague across the way mentioned was palliative care. Mr. Speaker, has anyone spoken to a palliative care physician about this project? I don't think so. As a matter of fact, I know they haven't. So let's talk about that and moving palliative care away from the hospital to Whistle Bend.

Palliative care — and it was mentioned there was palliative care and there was also hospice, but they are two different things. A person may move from one to the other. Palliative care units are usually for those individuals with high acuity needs — pain management, shortness of breath, complex care needs — and they're usually units within a hospital, because they need access to medications, they need access to a pharmacy, they need access to tests, whether it's blood tests or x-rays or those types of things. Those are usually delivered in a hospital or in a building very close to a hospital. They need doctors and they need nurses.

Hospice beds are different. Hospice beds are for palliative care conditions, but where the individual is stable and generally in the last three months of life — or less. They do not need medical intervention as much. They are not expected to need bloodwork or investigations. They do need to be more in a home-like situation, and they may move to a hospital at some point, or not, depending on how they are doing. But the hospital should continue to be the place of care for those with high needs and acute problems. So why would we put palliative care beds in a facility far from the hospital instead of close by, or maintain the one that is in the hospital and make improvements on that.

We have great palliative care in our hospital. The care is excellent, but the hospital and the rooms they use are not designed for palliative care. They are small. I know when my

own husband died, there were 12 of us in the room with him. You could not fit 12 very comfortably into a room at the hospital. There was excellent care, but not the greatest setting. At one point, it was this government's plan to have palliative care beds in the hospital and hospice beds in the Thomson Centre. What happened to that plan? Where did that go? That made sense — larger rooms, close to a pharmacy. Is this new facility going to have a pharmacy there 24/7 as the hospital does? Is there a way they are going to be able to get drugs or will they have to get them from the hospital?

I ask these questions because I talked to palliative experts and asked them their opinion on moving palliative away from the hospital to Whistle Bend. They are all for having the hospice, so yes, hospice beds can be away from the hospital, but let's remember that palliative care does require acute medical care.

There was mention of a mental health pod or neighbourhood. Who is that for, Mr. Speaker? Is it for seniors? Is it for the individuals who we now have to send out of the territory? Is it for the individuals who sometimes have to remain at the jail because of their mental health? Are these the individuals we are talking about? There wasn't a good descriptor when looking at this in their reports. So it is fine to say there is going to be a mental health pod, but what does that mean? Who is it for? Are we going to have psychiatric nurses working there, and where are we going to find them?

Who has the government consulted on this? Who will staff this? What are those requirements going to be, or is this strictly for seniors?

There is so much that hasn't been answered — O&M costs, how we are going to staff it, and how people feel about this. Where is a comparative study that shows clearly that this is the only way to go? I agree that we do need more facilities, but I also think that we could be doing a better job up front. I believe we need to put more resources into home care, increase the numbers and increase the availability of home care so that individuals can stay in their homes a lot longer — make sure that every community has home care and home support services as an option. That would have a big impact. Studies have shown that.

We can look at CIHI. We can look at CARP reports. We can look at the Canadian Medical Association and what they say, and at the Canadian Nurses Association and what they have to say. All of them repeat, over and over — better home care, better outcomes.

Yes, we will need some long-term care facilities for those with acute care needs, but to suggest that it should be a 300-bed facility — and I'm not sure. They talk about 150 to start, and I'm not sure now where the other 150 — is it immediately after? Is it six years, eight years, 20 years? They have the information in front of them. It's in the needs assessment but they seem to be backtracking. It's just a moving target and I find that difficult.

Again, I'll mention the home care because I truly believe we could be doing better. To enhance home care, we could expand the hours. We could relieve — put more staff in now. Home care workers are doing a great job but they are

stretched. They are stretched and they're working as hard as they can, as fast as they can, but they need more. They need more staff. They need more home support workers, they need more nurses and they need more home care workers, because they are dedicated health care professionals. They are doing good jobs.

It's not just seniors and elders. It is people leaving in the hospital who can receive home care. It is people with disabilities who can receive home care — it is not just seniors. They do an important job, but they need to be supported. They need to be resourced appropriately and, if they were, they truly could be meeting more of the needs of seniors, elders and citizens across this territory.

Again, the Canadian Nurses Association: "Enhancing home health care makes sense because it's what Canadians want, but also because the evidence shows it can make positive differences in a person's health status, relieve pressure on overcrowded care facilities and lead to performance efficiencies in the health system." Those are good things. That is what we should be striving for. We have long advocated a patient-centred, collaborative care model, but we didn't collaborate on this. We haven't spoken to communities, First Nations or other levels of government. We haven't talked to the citizens. We haven't heard from them what they think, what they want, and they should have been the first thing. Even the Vimy housing society did that. They went out and they spoke to people. They had people fill in a survey. They could build 75-unit apartments with meals available and light housework and fill it immediately, and start construction on another 75-unit one and fill it, according to their needs assessment that was done for them. It was a very telling report. Seniors are looking for that.

Seniors housing is great — we have lots of that across the territory — but it's only a part of the continuum. Supported living is missing. That ability for seniors to live independently and perhaps have a meal downstairs; to have social activities organized. Home care can go into those places and provide the services needed there, but we can't talk about a continuum of care if that's not even what exists right now.

Let's look at other options. Not everyone will go from home care to a 300-bed facility, but they would like something in between. They would like assisted living. Why haven't we focused on that, rather than the plan for an acute care facility or a long-term care facility?

The Yukon NDP will not be supporting this motion because it only speaks to part of what's needed to move ahead. It only talks about home care and improving that. I agree with that. It talks about 150, but all along this government has been speaking about 300 beds. We need more than enhanced home care. We need a continuum of care that includes everything. Seniors do want to stay in their homes; they do want to stay in their communities. They are a resource. They are a resource for their families and for their First Nation.

People don't want to see them leave. Mr. Speaker, we will not be supporting this motion. I don't think the government has done its homework. They haven't done the

consultation. They haven't spoken to seniors. They have after the fact. When the plan is ready and when the plan is there, they say, "This is it. Let us show it to you. Let us share it with you." But you didn't ask them ahead of time.

This government didn't go out to all the seniors groups. There are many of them in the Yukon — ElderActive, Golden Age, Signpost Seniors — there are many — Yukon Council on Aging. There are many groups. When I spoke to them about this when it first came out, they were not aware. They had not had an opportunity to even comment or to make suggestions, and I find that disrespectful. This is about them. It should include them and it didn't. This is about professionals in our community — doctors, nurses, all the others listed. We didn't talk to them. They looked at other facilities Outside, went to Vancouver. Fraser Health — looked at their facilities — very different, big populations. This is the Yukon. Let's find a solution that Yukoners can embrace and see as a good thing.

Just to finish, Partnerships B.C. — it talks in here about a Whitehorse continuing care project. The initial 150 — but to sustain a 300-bed continuing care facility.

So we can talk about 150 beds but we know what the plan was. We know what the plan is. We've seen the plan but I don't think it is a good plan.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would like to thank my colleague, the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin, for bringing this very important motion forward today.

I would like to start by making an important point and that is that the definitions and terminology for living supports are not consistent across Canada. I think this is important because the NDP keep calling for the government to invest in home care, but we have to the tune of a 350-percent increase over the last decade.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are confused. They also need to understand the difference between gaps and pressures.

Home living is for people who live independently in their home, apartment, or their condo. They are responsible for arranging for home care or other support services that they may require. We've made a number of investments to help seniors stay in their own homes longer — one being the assistance with minor home repairs and upgrades.

We've also delivered on our commitments to work with NGOs to provide seniors housing and assisted living facilities. Supported living combines accommodation services with meals, light housekeeping and sometimes social activities. It's able to meet a wide range of needs but cannot support those with serious or complex health care needs.

Assisted living provides housing and hospitality services — which mean, for example, food, laundry, housekeeping and personal care services — for adults who can live independently but require a supportive environment and light care due to physical and functional health challenges.

Residential continuing care provides 24-hour professional clinical care, as well as supervision, for adults with complex care needs who are unable to manage at home with the

support of family, friends, home care and so on. This seems to be where the disconnection is for the members opposite. People living in continuing care facilities have extremely heavy care requirements, such as advanced dementia or where they require total care and require specialized care services that are delivered in a home-like setting. These individuals — often our parents, our aunts and uncles, perhaps our grandparents and our sisters or brothers, and sometimes even our children — cannot be maintained at home or in an assisted living or supported living complex.

We are talking about Yukoners — Yukoners who have the highest level of needs. We are building a 150-bed continuing care facility that, yes, will be expandable to 300 beds when the need is there to care for Yukoners with the highest level of needs.

In our platform, we committed to caring for elders and seniors. We realize that while many Yukon seniors will be able to live out their days at home in their home communities, sadly there will be some Yukoners who will not be able to do that. We are stepping up our game, doing the responsible thing and planning on how we are going to take care of them. Although our needs assessments and business case tell us that there are going to be pressures, it's not about numbers. It's about care.

We committed to replacing McDonald Lodge in Dawson City with a new facility attached to the new Dawson hospital. Members opposite have already told us that they don't support that infrastructure. As I have listened to the members opposite this afternoon, I have come to the realization that they are confused. They seem to think that every Yukoner is going to end up living in a facility like the one that we are building. Well, that is not the case — albeit I have talked to many who are very much looking forward to this facility.

Having said that, there are other current options available to seniors in our territory. We have home care services. The number of home care clients has almost doubled in the past seven years, resulting in additions to funding in the last three budgets. The referral rates and complexity of care required by individuals continue to grow within that program. Home care is working collaboratively with Whitehorse General Hospital to support the discharge of clients who require an alternate level of care rather than acute hospital care. At the same time, home care has enhanced its services to specific clients to prevent hospitalization.

Part of our Continuing Care, home care is a Yukon-wide program that provides both professional and home support services to its clients. I thank the women and men providing home care across our territory to the many people who require it, for this is about caring.

Home care is a cost-effective and integral part of the bigger health care system. The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to meeting the needs of Yukon people in the most cost-effective way. Having a robust home care program supports the efficient use of resources within the system. This will assist in the delay of admissions to facility-based long-term care, as well as decrease the use of acute care services for many people.

I should mention that the home care program also employs community liaison coordinators who are physiotherapists or occupational therapists to supervise home support workers and provide assessment, treatment and care coordination for home care clients in communities that do not have a home care nurse. Again, Mr. Speaker, this is about caring.

I'm very pleased to see home care and the Yukon Hospital Corporation collaborating to coordinate therapy services for Dawson and Watson Lake. Given my time limits for this afternoon, I would like to touch on how we're relieving the pressure on our use of hospital beds to serve long-term care patients.

We're opening an interim facility to address the urgent need for more long-term care beds and, as you will know, we have purchased a residential property on Sixth Avenue to use as a small interim continuing care facility. This will provide 10 more beds for seniors' and elders' care and will be open later this fall. These beds will address the immediate need and the growing wait-list and number of individuals waiting for long-term care in the hospital. Many of those waiting remain in their homes, supported by family. Some are supported through the home care program; others are alternate level of care patients in the hospital.

The 150-bed Whistle Bend care facility — that again is being built to be expandable to 300 beds when the need is there — is scheduled to open in 2018. Once the new Whistle Bend facility is complete, the Sixth Avenue facility can be repurposed for other needs within Yukon government.

The McDonald Lodge replacement project is a joint project between Health and Social Services and Highways and Public Works. As part of the government's support for seniors, replacement of the existing McDonald Lodge in Dawson City was identified as a priority project by this government. This finalized schematic design was completed in May of 2014 and the RFP for construction was issued in July of 2014. The contract was awarded to NGC Builders, and site work began in August of 2014.

The project team is working closely with the Yukon Hospital Corporation to coordinate the work that needs to be done within the new Dawson community hospital in order to share mechanical and electrical systems. We anticipate the completion of this 15-bed facility late in 2015, with occupancy early in 2016.

The members opposite believe that we don't have any justification for the 150-bed continuing care facility. They're simply wrong, but I understand why the members opposite don't understand the concept of growth, as people were leaving the territory under the NDP-Liberal rule. However, the Yukon Party is far more organized. We have completed a needs assessment and functional plan and business case for a new Whistle Bend Whitehorse-based continuing care facility to meet growing needs as well as ensure resources for acute dementia, mental health needs and palliative care.

This need is something that my colleagues and I hear about from Yukoners. We hear from aging Yukoners who are in need of these services and who want these services. We

hear from their adult children — people in my age range — who are caring for their elderly parents and who live this difficult journey each and every day.

I'll tell you something, Mr. Speaker. The NDP-Liberals may not know we need it, but Yukoners sure do, and they know that we care.

The reality is that, since we took the reins of the economy, the Yukon Party has stopped the tsunami of seniors leaving the territory. The reality is that there is a stark contrast between the NDP-Liberals and the Yukon Party. The NDP-Liberals' plan was to tank the economy, causing people to leave the territory and a lack of opportunity for people wanting to move here; whereas the Yukon Party government believes in fostering a strong, diverse economy, which encourages growth and prosperity. The reality is that it is not feasible. It is not practical, affordable or sustainable to provide extended, complex care in small facilities throughout the territory. Such facilities would be outrageously expensive and impossible to staff. They would not allow us to support adequate client care.

In 10 years, from 2004 to 2014, Yukon's population increased by 19.7 percent. In 2014, Yukoners 65 years and older made up 10.7 percent of our population. In the next 10 years, it is projected that this same age group will almost double, as 19 percent of the current Yukon population is in the age group of 55 to 69 years. The cost to care for people in acute care hospital beds is somewhere around the neighbourhood of \$2,000 a day versus approximately \$350 a day in continuing care.

In Whitehorse, there are currently 96 beds at Copper Ridge Place, 47 beds at Macaulay Lodge and 31 beds at the Thomson Centre. As I have mentioned, in Dawson City, there are 11 beds at the current MacDonald Lodge. The demand for continuing care services is growing in all program areas, with an urgent and critical need for more long-term care beds. Again, these beds are for people with complex medical needs that are beyond the scope of anything that elders and seniors — and their family and friends — can address by living at home.

With the aging population, shifting demographics and a tendency for Yukon seniors to retire in Yukon in greater numbers than in the past, there is continued pressure and demand for home care and for long-term care placement services within our continuing care facilities. All Whitehorse continuing care beds are filled and there is a wait-list for care in all of our facilities. The continuum of care that falls within continuing care is advanced dementia, hospice palliative care, the subacute unit, the mental health unit, bariatric care and day programming. A recent count showed us that there were about 58 people waiting for care facilities services, 19 of whom are currently waiting in the Whitehorse General Hospital.

Unlike other jurisdictions in Canada, which have historically had lengthy wait-lists, this is a new pressure in Yukon. The Yukon home care program is already one of the most comprehensive programs in Canada and we continue to look at ways to increase support, particularly for the frail, elderly and those with dementia.

Quite frankly, it offends me to think that the NDP are opposed to helping the frail, elderly and people with dementia as they continue to vote against these services during each of our budget cycles. This Yukon Party government is committed to long-range, comprehensive planning for continuing care services, including residential care facilities, home care, palliative care and dementia care services, as the demand — in terms of volume and in terms of complexity — is increasing in all of these areas.

While individuals may require care that is almost, or in some cases, as intensive as an acute care facility, the way that the care is delivered and the environment is designed are purposefully different. Specifically designed environments meet the unique care requirements and support quality living for what remains of the client's life. Critical design elements include safety, client control and way of finding home-like environments to support living and to support wellness. To live and to die with control and dignity is one of the most important and essential goals of the program.

While a continuing care room may look very different from a hospital room, they all have the same specialized clinical tools, like overhead lifts, vitals monitoring and so on, but it's designed to be a comforting home. Our government believes in caring for elders and caring for seniors. We believe in providing them an environment where they can live and die with dignity.

The members opposite continue to talk numbers. They talk about flip-flopping. They criticize a new neighbourhood in Whitehorse named Whistle Bend. They don't understand there is a growing need and they have no concept of a business case and I don't believe they truly appreciate the good work carried out 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year by the women and men working in home care, working in supported living and working in continuing care. Mr. Speaker, I'm appalled. I'm disappointed in the members opposite for their attempt to make seniors and seniors' care a political issue. This is not a numbers game. This is not a political game.

This is about caring for our parents, our grandparents, our aunts and uncles, our sisters and brothers and, as I mentioned earlier, yes, sometimes our children. These people may have very serious health issues — issues like COPD, dementia, mental health issues, serious chronic health conditions, or permanent or long-term cognitive or physical incapacities. This issue — our commitment is about caring for people. It's about caring for our seniors and it's about caring for those who simply cannot care for themselves any longer.

This issue that the opposition continues to polarize is about ensuring that our loved ones have a level of care they need at a time in their life when they need it most. For the members opposite to make this an issue of where in the parameters of Whitehorse this home care facility will be located or how many beds will be provided to our loved ones is disappointing. I'm very disappointed. I'm saddened that the level of debate about caring for people who are not able to care for themselves has reached this point by the members opposite.

I support this motion and I thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing it forward. Thank you.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, it is worth repeating again the actual words of this particular motion, Motion No. 926:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue moving forward with the planning and construction of a new 150-bed continuing care facility that is designed to provide for future expansion in recognition of Yukon's growing seniors population, while at the same time continuing to enhance home care for seniors in order that they can stay in their homes and home communities as long as possible.

Mr. Speaker, this is very similar to a motion on the Order Paper put forward by a previous Yukon Party Minister of Health in December 17, 2014. That was Motion No. 854 and it read — and I quote:

THAT the House urges the Government of Yukon to continue moving forward with the planning and construction of a new 300-bed continuing care facility in recognition of Yukon's growing seniors population, while at the same time continuing to enhance home care for seniors so that they can stay in their homes and home communities as long as possible.

The only difference between these two motions is the number of beds. Now the minister is saying that the numbers aren't important, but oh they are, Mr. Speaker. The minister is saying that they're more organized, yet they can't even agree on the numbers in a few short months.

Let's look at how this facility has shrunk over time and the incredibly shrinking commitment of the size of the facility displayed by the new minister. A July 2014 consultant's report called *New Whitehorse Continuing Care Facility Business Case Analysis* said this about the size of the facility — and I quote: "In 2012, HSS, HPW, and Kobayashi Zedda Architects (KZA) produced a Functional Program for a 300-bed continuing care facility." That's on page 3, Mr. Speaker.

Here's another quote from the *New Whitehorse Continuing Care Facility — Facility Review and Functional Program* done by a local architectural firm — and I quote: "There are three parts to the report. Part One: Needs Analysis. Part Two: Physical Assessment of Copper Ridge and Macaulay Lodge and Functional Assessment of the Copper Ridge, Macaulay Lodge and Thomson Centre. Part Three: New functional space programme for a 300 bed facility."

Here's a quote from the request for proposals, facility consultant advisory services for Whitehorse continuing care January 2015 — and I quote: "The Whitehorse continuing care project — the Project — consists of the construction of a 300-bed facility."

As of the budget speech, however, it was suddenly only a 150-bed facility with no explanation given as to why. This is what was said in the budget speech by the Premier — and I quote: "On a larger scale, we'll be proceeding with the construction of the 150-bed Whistle Bend care facility in January of 2016, with an initial allocation of \$26 million."

Now the new Minister of Health and Social Services on the first day of the current Sitting went out of his way to describe the new facility as being a 150-bed facility. He said — and I quote: “This government has committed to building a 150-bed facility as we see in the budget in front of us.”

Yesterday he went even further to say that the second phase would be — and I quote: “...20 years down the road...”

Now this is indeed quite a change from what the government was saying as recently as December. Here’s a December 18, 2014 news release. Let me quote: “The initial phase will be for 150 beds, with the second phase of an additional 150 beds to begin immediately after completion.”

There has been a major change in the scope of this building, and the public is wondering why — and they deserve to wonder why. The government has flip-flopped on its commitment to the second phase of this project, plain and simple. We are not sitting here arguing whether or not there is a need for seniors facilities. We are not sitting here arguing about anything else other than the fact that this government’s leadership has the public wondering how many beds and how expensive. They have not provided the answers to these questions. The Yukon Party government can say that we are cherry-picking stats here. Well, please explain to me how, in a few short months, you can go from 300 beds to 150 beds, because everybody is wondering why.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Silver: I have more; don’t you worry.

There has been a major change in the scope of the building. The government has flip-flopped. That is known.

Let’s move on to the potential costs of this facility. A government case analysis done by a private contractor on the Government of Yukon’s new 300-bed continuing care facility lists the price of it at \$330 million. In this year’s budget, there is \$26 million set aside to advance this project. Just today in Question Period, the minister was unable or unwilling to tell Yukoners what the complete cost of the building will be.

I hope the minister can understand why the public would be confused about this new facility. Last fall, the government did its own analysis of the potential costs of the new facility. It said the cost would be \$268 million for a 300-bed facility, a full \$60-million less than the independent consultant. There is a large discrepancy, and one the minister would not address in Question Period today.

The question remains: What number is the government going to be using? Is it \$268 million? Is it \$330 million, or is it a whole other number?

The government has also refused to say what the price tag of the first 150 beds will be. It certainly will be more than 50 percent of the total cost, one would imagine, seeing as it would include all of the items needed for phase 2 — another question that we still do not have answers to.

Yukoners are understandably nervous when they see this government barge into a major construction project without a plan. The fact that the government cannot decide whether it is 300 beds or 150 beds is not helping either. The timeline for this project is being driven by the timeline of the next election. The government wants people working on this project as we

head to the polls in 2016. It is this type of incompetent management that results in wasteful, overbudget projects.

The Premier had the audacity to assert here today that my opposition to the building of the hospital in Dawson City had anything to do with whether or not we needed an upgrade in that community. I was opposed to the lack of leadership that would allow such a major build in my community without a needs assessment. My concerns came from my community, Mr. Speaker — the same community that came out in droves to ask so many questions when his representatives told us what we are going to get. When the questions from the medical community in Dawson that night got too overwhelming, it was his own representative who said in my community — well, something along the lines of, “If you don’t want it, we will build it somewhere else.”

The Premier has the audacity — for me to come into this House and to question the leadership of his government on issues about the medical fraternity in my community? Well, he doesn’t get it. His representative didn’t get it. I guess the Premier wasn’t listening as well to the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, who stood witness in this House and reiterated my concerns and the concerns of my community, and said they could not find any rationale for this project, other than a re-election plan. They are not my words, Mr. Speaker. We all saw it. It was in this House that the Auditor General of Canada said there was no needs assessment.

He can continue on his narrative that I’m opposed to medical care. He can continue on his narrative that we’re opposed to seniors or puppies and sunshine, but he will lose this debate every single time when Yukoners see both sides of the argument and see the bigger picture.

Mr. Speaker, those who do not learn from history are bound to repeat it. Forging ahead with no plan on what the building will cost is a recipe for more cost overruns. Mr. Speaker, with almost no consultation, the Government of Yukon has decided to proceed with this continuing care facility in Whitehorse — 300 beds, 150 beds. We still don’t know.

The estimated cost for the new facility will range from \$268 million to \$330 million, according to the government’s own reports. Clearly money is no object when it comes to continuing care in Whitehorse. At the same time, the government is spending with replacing McDonald Lodge in Dawson. While there were plans to make this a 20-bed facility, those were scaled back to 15 beds. People whom I spoke to in my community and other rural centres are interested in staying in their own communities. They don’t want to move into a one-size-fits-all facility hundreds of miles away in Whitehorse.

It begs the question: Why is this government pursuing this centralization approach instead of focusing on keeping seniors in their home communities?

The government has missed an opportunity to have more beds in rural Yukon. It did so because it seems to think that the solution is a big system in Whitehorse. We can all agree that the demand for continuing care is growing. The Liberal

caucus, however, disagrees fundamentally with the government on how to manage this growth.

I hear the birds chirping in the background, Mr. Speaker. It must be spring.

I like to see the demands in rural Yukon being met in rural Yukon. The government's approach is to funnel our seniors to Whitehorse. One of the planning studies that the government is relying on as it proceeds with continuing care decisions says that only new beds that will be built in the future are in Whitehorse. No other options were even considered.

The Government of Yukon recently leaned on the City of Whitehorse to make zoning changes to allow the new \$330-million facility to be built in Whistle Bend. It left at least two councillors publicly criticizing this government over its heavy-handed approach to this project.

We have already heard the concerns of First Nation elders who would not be comfortable in such a large institution. In the planning of this facility, what consultation has the government had with First Nation governments regarding their needs to plan for and to provide for their aging population? It's a question that still remains unanswered.

Perhaps the next government speaker could table some letters of support from First Nation governments or others for this one-size-fits-all approach.

In closing, unlike this government, I have been quite clear as to what I would like to do. I would like to put more resources into facilities in our communities, and I wouldn't build a giant complex in Whitehorse. I will not be supporting this motion, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your time today.

Hon. Mr. Graham: It is truly an honour to be standing here and speaking to this motion today and I thank the member for bringing it forward at this time. I have listened with great interest to some of the information — some of the misinformation, I guess — being dispensed here today. I found it quite interesting to hear some of the reasons for not constructing this facility. It's not in the platform — but in the platform is our commitment to care for seniors, and I guess this isn't considered to be care for seniors — or just because an issue has arisen that wasn't in the platform, it can't be done. The NDP attitude seems to be that if you didn't put it in your platform and an urgent issue arises, you can't do anything about it — interesting concept.

The Member for Riverdale South asked a whole lot of questions. Why do we have a higher rate? Why do we do a number of things? Bigger is not necessarily cheaper, she says, but she obviously didn't read the report. Mr. Speaker, on page 23 of the report, it is very clear that there are advantages and disadvantages to every different size of facility that you can imagine. The report looked at 100- to 125-bed facilities. It looked at a combination of various sizes of facilities. In the report there are also a number of references to everyone who was consulted. When we talk about consultations with respect to the size of the facility, we haven't built that size of facility anywhere in the territory to date. We had to go — or the consultants had to go — outside of the territory to take a look

at what was possible, what is being built outside of the territory, and what could be, or would be, the most efficient and what else could be utilized.

They took a look at operators of facilities with fewer than 100 residential beds and decided that, in the western provinces, facilities with fewer than 100 residents are no longer economically practical and are planning new facilities in the 120- to 130-bed range minimum. The provincial health authority in B.C. said they have an absolute minimum capacity of 125 beds.

The consultant also went through a number of reasons as to why facilities could be more economical if they are larger — and I quote: "Most of the professionals consulted agreed that efficiency is equated to costs, predominantly staff costs which represent about 80% of the operating budget for most facilities. Significant economies of scale arise from the reduction in the ratio of management and some support staff to the number of residents. The management staff required for a 100 resident facility is similar to that required for a 125 or even a 150 resident facility. Additional benefits accrue with increasing size by reducing similar factors in the areas of food services and material purchasing and handling."

I guess I have to take some responsibility for the member opposite's lack of understanding about a 150- and 300-bed facility. Mr. Speaker, I was the Minister of Health and Social Services at that time, and I should have understood that if I introduced a difficult concept to the members opposite, given their limited understanding of these things, they would not grasp that concept. I should never — and I accept responsibility for this — have said that we were building a 300-bed facility. I should have stated then that we are constructing a 150-bed facility with the option of converting it to a 300-bed facility in the future. I apologize for that, and I apologize to my caucus members as well because I see what a difficult concept it is for the opposition to grasp and I understand the difficulty that it has caused for us. I hope that members will understand now where that difficulty happened. It's my fault and I accept responsibility for it.

When the Member for Riverdale South asked about the higher rate of people in the territory who require a long-term care facility, what the member doesn't seem to understand is that many of the people currently accepting home care in the city — and I'll get to home care in a little while. There are about 520 clients in Whitehorse and in the surrounding and other rural Yukon communities who are currently accepting home care. About 40 percent of those home care clients, as I think my colleague the Minister of Health and Social Services has already indicated, are at high risk for institutionalization. We know those numbers are accurate because our home care workers deal with these people on a weekly and sometimes a daily basis. We know there are about 208 high-risk folks out there who are in high need and could need long-term care facilities sometime in the future.

What they didn't say is that many of these people are singles. We have a huge rate of people who are living alone, currently accepting home care, who have no built-in support system, so they don't have relatives, they don't have close

friendships that they can depend on to assist them during difficult times when they are living at home. We also have the highest rate of seniors, 85 years and older, living at home alone.

Those are reasons why we have a higher rate of people requiring long-term care than many of the provinces do. It's just critical, to me, that planning is done and construction is started as soon as possible to ensure that these services are in place to meet the needs — this growing demand — of our senior population here in the territory. I am only too happy to see Health and Social Services working on options with continuing care. They are working, I know, at continuing to increase our home care. It was interesting because again I heard the Member for Riverdale South saying: "Oh, you're dealing with fewer home care residents now than we have in the past." Talk about cherry-picking — at no time did the member opposite also state that many of these people who we are now dealing with are more complex. They require a greater degree of care and because we have a finite home care system, they take a larger percentage of the home care resources than do the people who only have to be visited once a week.

I know it is difficult to understand these things, but having had to resort to home care myself for a person whom I cared for in my home, I know how these things progress. I have seen it progress and I know how difficult it is to sometimes accept the fact that you are no longer able to care for that loved one in your own home. It is sometimes very difficult to finally accept that some other, higher form of care is required for your loved one.

Our approach will be to continue to support seniors living in their homes as long as humanly possible, but we are doing it while also ensuring we have the facilities in place to provide that more complex care when it is needed and at a cost we can all afford. We do not want to see these folks put into the hospital. I think at one time here I had a list of how many people in need of long-term care were in the hospital, and it approaches 20 to 21 people from time to time, depending on the situation. That is just too many.

As well, during my time as Minister of Health and Social Services, we have had as many as 50 to 60 people on a wait-list for long-term care, and that is absolutely unnecessary. We need to have these facilities in place. I congratulate the Minister of Health and Social Services for going ahead and working to open another 10 long-term care beds in the very near future on a temporary basis, because I think that is needed. I think it's essential to the territory and it's essential to our seniors.

It was interesting to hear again the member opposite say: "Well, we have Macaulay Lodge", but what she didn't say is that facility is more than 50 years old. That facility would require so much renovation to be brought up to current standards — to make the doorways wide enough to accept the new beds. There is just a whole host of renovations that would be necessary to bring that one up to the quality needed. Consequently, it's not used for difficult cases — for long-term

care difficult cases. It's used for seniors who are mostly mobile. It's used for seniors who don't need intensive care.

Once that building reaches the end of its useful life, I know those people will have to be moved somewhere else. That's why we're doing this planning, Mr. Speaker. Again, I don't understand the difficulty behind planning ahead and vision for the future, I guess. I fail to understand it. We know from these needs assessments that were done — unless the members opposite have difficulty with those needs assessments. I found it interesting that the Member for Riverdale South doesn't have any problem at all with one needs assessment done by the folks from Vimy, and she uses that one needs assessment to indicate that it's absolutely essential that we go ahead with the Vimy Place construction.

We've been dealing with Vimy for — what? — two or three years, Mr. Speaker. We have been dealing with them; we've made sure that they've had their ducks in a row and that they've done a needs assessment. We've encouraged them. We provided the funding to do the needs assessment. We provided the funding to do a business plan. We have provided assistance for them in every way we possibly can. I am surprised that it has taken the members opposite two years — three years, almost — to catch on to what has been happening and what we've been doing on a daily basis. I'm so happy to see that they agree with what we've been doing in the case of Vimy.

The Member for Riverdale South said Vimy didn't ask us to build it. Well, that's true, Mr. Speaker. They didn't ask us to build it, but there are a number of things that they've asked us to do, and it takes time to put those things through the process. We're currently working on them to make sure they obtain the land in the necessary quantity and location, and we're still proceeding with that facility, as we speak.

I'm not as closely attached to it as I was when I was with Health and Social Services, but I commend the minister, once again — and I know the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources as well — for working with Vimy to put forward the land and the necessary supports for them to build that facility.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Member for Riverdale South talk about what is done in other provinces and how they're going to smaller facilities. What she never said, again, was that in many of these provinces private care is a huge provider. I only look back to three years ago, when I said that we would like to see private care users come into the territory. I was severely harangued by members opposite because I was trying to give away long-term care beds here in the territory and I was turning over the long-term care system to the private sector and what a terrible person I was — but that was never the intent. The intent at that time, and it would still be nice — and I guess Vimy will now fill that gap — it would be nice for people to have alternatives. That was what I said, over and over, but I was harangued continually by members opposite that this was such a terrible, terrible thing that I was trying to do.

I guess — I'm not sure how much time I have left.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Graham: Good. Can I borrow the Member for Riverdale North's time and continue to speak on his behalf too? That won't work? Okay. He told me I could.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Riverdale South also talked about the staff that would be needed to staff such a facility. You know, I agree with her. It's going to take a large staff to work this facility. We know that. The question that went through my head while she was speaking was: Why the heck do you think we're doing the planning two- to- three- to- four years in advance? It's so we know what we need. It's so we can go out there and begin to put those things in place to hire those individuals. We also said that it will be — again, the 150 beds and expanding to 300 over time so it allows us the option of opening that facility in phases and staffing as we go. I kind of think — in fact, I even wrote it down — maybe it's just that the NDP think that it's just better to hide our heads in the sand because we're not going to be able to get these people and pretend that the seniors would go away if we don't have to deal with all of these issues.

Mr. Speaker, that's simply not our attitude. Our attitude is: we know this has been called — a “tsunami” of seniors is coming. I'm one of them — I know. I'm a senior myself. I talk with seniors. It was interesting to hear the member opposite say, “You haven't talked to anybody.” She named off three organizations whose AGMs I went to and I discussed it with people at those AGMs. We've talked with them, Mr. Speaker. We know that tsunami is coming and we want to be prepared for it. I think that between having this planning done for our long-term care facility, by expanding home care in such a way that we take care of everybody we possibly can and by encouraging things like Vimy or even possibly — horror of horrors — a private facility to open their doors here in the territory — all as options that would be available to seniors. Mr. Speaker, all of those things we believe are appropriate and we believe could be options in the future.

Then we have the member — God bless him — from Dawson, who wants to know the complete cost of the facility. He is so fixated on these cost things that I sometimes have to laugh, because I remember standing up here and saying that I don't even want to talk about the cost of the facility yet because we haven't begun the actual planning and the architectural engineering things that would determine exactly how much this building will cost. I said I don't want to get into saying very, very loose estimates provided by a consultant — it's going to cost in the \$250- to \$350-million range. I didn't even want to say those things, Mr. Speaker, because I knew that member opposite would fixate on those numbers and he'll follow that number through to the bitter end and he'll squawk about it every single time he gets an opportunity, because he simply doesn't understand the process. When we get closer to the time when the contracts are let — at that time we'll have a really good idea of what the true cost of this facility is.

Mr. Speaker, I see you telling me I only have a minute left so —

Unparliamentary language

Speaker: Order please. The Member for Mayo-Tatchun, on a point of order.

Mr. Tredger: I find the use of the word “squawk” in reference to a member's talk on the floor offensive. It certainly cannot be parliamentary. I find it offensive language and I would ask that that be ruled out of order.

Speaker: Minister of Education, on the point of order.

Withdrawal of remark

Hon. Mr. Graham: If it offends the member opposite, I am willing to withdraw that word and say that I apologize to the Member for Klondike as well for saying, “You were squawking.” You will bring that issue up before the Legislature time and time again and remind us —

Speaker: Order please. Your apology is accepted. I believe the Minister of Education has 30 seconds.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Okay, that means I will conclude simply by saying that I commend the Minister of Health and Social Services in his pursuit of this project. I wish him all the best, because I believe it is truly needed in this territory and I look forward to seeing it completed.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise to speak in opposition to the motion before us:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue moving forward with the planning and construction of a new 150-bed continuing-care facility that is designed to provide for future expansion in recognition of Yukon's growing senior population, while at the same time continuing to enhance home care for seniors in order that they can stay in their homes and home communities as long as possible.

I am looking forward to the time that I have to speak on this debate. I want to start out by noting that the mover of the motion this afternoon, in his opening remarks, alleged that the opposition is confused.

Mr. Speaker, let me lay out just how confused the government is on its announcement of a new 300-bed continuing care facility — now a 150-bed facility with an option for expansion. This afternoon, in Question Period, the Premier rose and said that 150 beds was phase 1 and that in future, the government might — quote: “...expand it at a later date, if the need is there” — quite a revealing statement. The former Minister of Health and Social Services has just finished his remarks that again repeated that there would be a 300-bed facility — quote: “...when the need is there.”

I think that shows right at the outset that they haven't done the needs assessment that should be done when they themselves can't even agree on when or where the need is there.

The Premier's remarks reveal a lack of attention to a government motion that is on the Order Paper and the former Minister of Health and Social Services just spoke to that — the motion stands in his name — Motion No. 854 — “THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue moving forward with the planning and construction of a new

300-bed continuing care facility in recognition of Yukon's growing seniors population..." — and it goes on, Mr. Speaker, to complete the sentence using the same wording as the motion from the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, so I won't read the rest of that motion.

The Premier's remarks also demonstrate confusion about the government's lack of proper planning for the proposed 300-bed facility and, finally, the Premier's remarks show a lack of knowledge of his own government's project brief.

So I will start out, I think, with the project brief. The project brief says that this design/build model for the capital cost of an initial 150-bed design and construction contract will include — and I quote: "sufficient space, e.g. offices, common areas, loading, kitchen, laundry, to sustain a 300-bed continuing care facility." It also speaks about strong government and public support for the project. I am going to speak later about the lack of evidence from the public is maybe why the government has gone from announcing a 300-bed facility with great fanfare to now saying it will be 150-bed facility and possibly larger over time.

The cost of the infrastructure for a 300-bed facility to build a kitchen, laundry rooms, offices, a loading area and common areas that can accommodate a 300-bed facility are really going to be an astronomical overexpenditure if in the end they only build 150 beds. It is also costly and lengthy to build a facility when you haven't done the proper planning in advance. The members opposite spoke about economy of scale. How can it be an economy of scale to build a kitchen to serve 300 people if you are only going to put 150 beds there?

The question of costs is what I want to turn to next. The *New Whitehorse Continuing Care Facility Business Case Analysis* that is posted on the website revealed that the construction costs will be in the \$330-million range. That is the \$330-million expenditure for 300 beds for a population of 36,000 people. The size and the scope of the project will make it more difficult for Yukon contractors to bid on the project and could potentially reduce the numbers of workers from the Yukon being able to be hired and employed on those projects.

Now my colleague, the Member for Riverdale South, spoke about some of the other possibilities and spoke about the need for a continuum of care that supports seniors remaining in their own homes as long as possible. Seniors want to stay at home as long as possible, and they can with appropriate supports. The families of seniors and elders want their loved ones to remain in their communities for as long as possible.

Looking at the estimates in the \$330-million range, I want to turn to the fact that the Yukon government is not prudent in spending public money. Consider the Auditor General's report on the construction of two hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson City without a needs assessment — those hospital construction projects that the Auditor General also reported went millions of dollars overbudget. Those hospitals were constructed on borrowed money with long-term debts for future generations.

Now, the former Minister of Health and Social Services spoke about when an urgent issue arises, we need to move

forward. So they saw it as an urgent issue, they announced they would be building 300 beds, and then, because they hadn't done appropriate consultation and because some reasonable questions were raised about the size of the facility, they've backtracked and now they're saying they're looking at 150 beds.

As my colleague, the Member for Riverdale South, referred — the Yukon Medical Association, the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, seniors and seniors groups, palliative care doctors — think it would be wise for the government to speak to them before they make these kinds of announcements.

One of the issues when it comes to the seniors not just in Whitehorse, but in rural communities, is that their families want to be able to see them regularly. I've spoken to family members in Carmacks and I've spoken to family members in Carcross whose aunties or grandmas or grandpas are in a care facility in Whitehorse, and there's no bus service and there's no public transportation for them to be able to come to visit their families. So I think we need to look at offering services in the communities, encouraging people to stay in their homes and offering the supports for people to be in their homes as long as possible.

Now here's another comment that the current Health and Social Services minister made — when he said he's disappointed in the members opposite for making the debate this afternoon a political issue. Mr. Speaker, let me be clear: Perhaps the members opposite don't understand it but, as elected representatives of the Yukon public, our work is political; our work concerns having an organized form of government and dealing with public affairs. That is the work of politics, Mr. Speaker; it's serious work; it's important work; and we do it every day. So I would encourage all members of this Assembly to take a look at the Oxford English dictionary once in awhile and, when they bandy about words like "political," maybe they should just understand what it means.

The Yukon Party government is making a political decision. They're making a political decision to have a design/build project for a 150-bed continuing care facility that will have common facilities to serve 300 beds. That is a political decision, we are all elected to contribute to the political debate and we're all elected to debate political issues.

So I'm puzzled by the member opposite saying that, and I want to assure him that our purpose in this debate is to bring forward the importance of looking at the big picture. Look at the Yukon, look at our economy, look at our people — the entire population that we're elected to serve and represent.

The Yukon Party government should also talk to people before they make a decision to spend money on what would be, I think, the most expensive capital project they've yet embarked on. In this case, let's consider what seniors and their families really want.

Let's discuss this with the medical professionals, and let's encourage an approach that respects the needs of seniors and that offers care to seniors in their homes and in their communities as long as possible.

Before I close, I wanted to quote from some of the reports that we looked at in preparing for this motion but also some of the reports that we looked at when the government first announced their proposal to build a 300-bed institutional facility. They have since changed their minds because they have had some pretty intelligent criticism of their approach from the communities and from others.

I want to refer to the Canadian Association for Retired Persons and the Canadian Medical Association's *13th Annual National Report Card on Health Care* strategy for senior care which says, quote: "Not only is hospital and institutional care unaffordable, but they are not the best means of care for most people. Most Canadians want to stay at home and in their communities for as long as possible and as a result, prefer to receive homecare."

We also had the president of the Canadian Medical Association in Whitehorse in November or December of 2014, I think it was. He said that home care, not institutional care, is the ideal model. Dr. Chris Simpson pointed to Europe, where they have managed to deliver better quality care for cheaper, and he highlighted Denmark, which has invested in home care at a rate of five times that of Canada, as having the best approach for efficient health services and adapting to the needs of an aging population. Dr. Simpson pointed out that the Copenhagen-based public health system had not added any new long-term care beds in two decades and had removed thousands of acute care beds simply by shifting the focus on delivering the care where seniors need it, which is in the community and in their homes.

We in the Official Opposition believe that we can do better for our seniors than building a 300-bed facility in Whistle Bend, and I speak in opposition to the motion before us standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the members who have spoken already this afternoon on this motion, and I rise to join my colleagues from the Official Opposition and the Third Party in speaking against this motion.

When my colleague from Riverdale South described finding — because finding the documents related to the development of a new Whitehorse continuing care facility in June of 2013. I can remember looking at this and sending it to a member of the Yukon Council on Aging and saying, "What do you think of this?"

That person, a senior, opened the link on the computer and said, "This is too big. I can't read it." So they phoned the Department of Health and Social Services and said, "Can I get a copy of that?" They said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "I'm looking at a link about a new Whitehorse continuing care facility final report and it's dated in June of 2013 and I can't read things on the screen. I would like a hard copy."

Mr. Speaker, the phone went sort of dead. That person came back on the line and said, "Oh, well, it's not available to the public." Then it was taken off the website.

Mr. Speaker, the concern that I'm expressing and the Official Opposition is expressing today is that it is one thing

for the Government of Yukon to decide that it knows all and it can determine for us, citizens of the Yukon, what is in our best interest — and not only determine that, but make every single decision along the way on how that is going to happen and how it's going to be delivered without consulting with us, the users — without consulting with us, the citizens. Fundamentally, Mr. Speaker, that is wrong. That runs contrary to any concept of democracy that I know about, and it certainly runs contrary to any concept of effective planning — community-based planning.

When we speak about the lack of consultation, it is deep and it is profound. My colleague referenced the 2008 health care review process, which engaged many, many Yukoners. The 2009 follow-up, *Taking the Pulse*, also engaged everybody from ordinary users of health care systems — citizens — to the continuum of health care professionals.

We've already experienced the first time the Yukon Party government decided to reject the interests, the views, the experience and the expertise of citizens and health care professionals in this territory — turned their back on what the recommendations were from the *Yukon Health Care Review* and the follow-up, *Taking the Pulse*, and made a political decision — a decision that was confirmed as political in this Legislative Assembly by the chair of the Hospital Corporation when he was asked, point-blank, why a government member of the Public Accounts Committee — so what was the basis of this decision to build these hospitals? It was direction from the government. It was not coming out of the health care review. It did not come from any community-based needs assessment — a reflection of what the community's desires or needs were. We are seeing a repeat of that, Mr. Speaker, in this top-down, father-knows-best approach to determining the kind of care that will be available to seniors as seniors and all citizens age in this territory, decisions that are being taken now that will preclude the kind of options that we know, based on evidence — evidence not just in Canada but across the world — about what contributes to healthy aging in place — healthy aging, not institutionalized aging. We moved away from that a long time ago.

I have heard a lot of stuff said this afternoon — in the guise of argument or in the guise of debate — trash-talking the opposition. That is fine. I am getting inured to that, because it doesn't make their arguments any better. The facts of the matter are that in the content of the three major documents that so far are available publicly — well, first of all, I want to go back to the former minister — I can't remember if it is the former minister or the current minister — but the notion that they consulted because they talked to the experts Outside. You know, I kind of think we have experts within this territory whom we augment from time to time with expertise from Outside. To think that we are making our decisions based on consultation with people from British Columbia who used to work for the B.C. Minister of Health or from the Fraser Health Authority or the Salvation Army in Toronto or the Swedish Canadian Rest Home Association — seriously, you don't think that we have people in this territory who have knowledge and expertise, who are living with

people who are aging, who are aging? We are all going to get there eventually. Wouldn't you think it would be nice to talk to us? What do we want? One of the fundamentals about care, home care, seniors care — any form of health care — is the right to make the decision about the care you should receive — a fundamental right to make that decision. That is being taken away by this government.

There are many, many questions that need to be answered before this territorial government should consider committing to spending hundreds of millions of dollars toward the building of this facility. I keep hearing that this is the facility that is going to be neighbourhood-like. It's going to be — they talk about “pods”. Let's just call them what they are — they are wards. We are talking about a three-storey institution. There is no way that you can describe a three-storey facility as anything other than an institution. You can reframe it. You can call it whatever you want, but a pod is a ward and these are wards. They may be designed nicer, but that is what it is. It is a three-storey institution.

When this was being considered, one of the reports that was looked at and was commissioned by the government — the *New Whitehorse Continuing Care Facility Business Case Analysis*. They were asked to look at a range of things, but one of the things I thought was kind of interesting was the issue of site selection. Based on the Yukon government's site selection criteria and construction cost estimates and the site appraisals, it wasn't the Whistle Bend site that came out ahead. It was the Porter Creek site.

Here we have a government that has its information, its own appraisals done, and it makes the decision to tell the City of Whitehorse that we want you to rezone an area that has been designed through community participation through the official community planning process — extensive consultation about the kind of community that Whitehorse citizens wanted to see — and suddenly we have had this government foisting not one, but two pet projects that require the city to amend its official community plan.

You know, it is just like — the bullying tactics are wild.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Unparliamentary language

Speaker: “Bullying” is not permitted.

Ms. Hanson: Well, excuse me, Mr. Speaker. I won't use it.

The Porter Creek site capital costs were estimated at \$328 million. The Whistle Bend minimum is \$330 million, so there's at least a minimum question as to why one site over the other?

Mr. Speaker, the risk assessment for the site selection goes on to suggest — you know, we've heard a lot about challenges for those building in Whistle Bend. Well, the risk assessment for site selection indicated that the Whistle Bend site has a significantly higher risk score. The largest reason for this discrepancy is the ground conditions. The soil conditions are known to require unusually costly foundations, and it is considered possible that they are not well enough understood

at this time to avoid delays and cost increases as the project commences.

Mr. Speaker, we've been there before, haven't we? We have been there before with this government that has knowingly entered into projects without having them well-thought-out, and guess who pays the dollar? It's the taxpayer, Mr. Speaker. It's the citizens of this territory.

So why would they choose to do this? What's the rush if they haven't thought this through?

The other part that's most interesting — they talk about being well-prepared and planning into the future. Let's look at some of those costs. The future cost — the 20-year cumulative investment required by Yukon citizens and this is using a net present value in 2014 — is, at minimum, \$950 million. That's a lot of money, Mr. Speaker. I want to know as a citizen and I want to know as a member of this Legislative Assembly that we're getting value for money, because you can bet that the Auditor General will be paying very close attention to this one, Mr. Speaker — very close attention.

There are some serious issues about just the financial basis for the decisions that have been taken here, to say nothing about the decisions that are being taken away from citizens with respect to the decision to invest heavily in institutional care versus home care. I have heard some very strange comments from the members opposite with respect to investments with respect to this government's commitment to home care. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that the facts don't bear it out.

The Canadian Institute for Health Information — the former and present ministers of health will know that that is the authoritative source in terms of data on health care in this country. The number of clients for Yukon home care has not increased. It has declined over the last three years under this government.

In 2011, there were over 1,000 — 1,015 — clients in home care. In 2013-14, the number is down to 940. We're seeing that the number of admitted clients, in terms of home care, is also declining. The number of assessed clients is declining.

One of the challenges we face — and until and unless we grasp the reality that home care has many elements to it, and the speakers have chosen to suggest that they are going to continue investing in home care.

It is our understanding, based on discussions with people who are involved with the provision of these services and people who are involved in receiving those services, that our home care system is stressed. They were asking professionals to work beyond their professional capabilities, in terms of the caseloads that they are being placed in.

There are serious challenges here — serious challenges. What we're finding is that reductions in access to home support and residential home care have meant that services are increasingly provided only to people with higher levels of need and often in response to a crisis — such as when somebody is in an emergency room visit and has been discharged and, somehow, somebody has to be there — but then you start piling on those caseloads on top of people who

are already taxed, in terms of those professionals. If we were seeing a commensurate increase in home care as part of this government's strategy, there might be some logic to it but absent consultation, this is a very difficult argument to make.

You know, it is a challenge for seniors with complex needs to live well at home with the current fragmentation in service delivery and the limited hours of care. There is no 24/7, Mr. Speaker, for home care. If you would like to provide it, that would be wonderful. We would love to see — and I know many seniors who would actually be in their homes right now, if that was available.

There is a growing body of research and evidence to show that seniors with complex needs can live well at home and use far fewer emergency and hospital services when you structure the services around a senior's needs, provide those services through an interdisciplinary team of professionals and front-line workers, and you make it available 24/7 — and it is less expensive than institutional care. It is way less expensive than what we are paying currently for the services at any of the long-term care facilities in Whitehorse.

I am just trying to make sure that — I am trying not to repeat the points that my colleagues, the Member for Riverdale South and the Member for Copperbelt South, also covered. I have different little tags to myself.

One of the things — there was reference made by — the Canadian Medical Association, first of all, in their studies and their cost estimates — a day in home care is 60-percent less expensive — 60 percent — than one day in long-term care. You know, Mr. Speaker, if you think about it — for the kind of investment in nursing care — the kind of professional care to provide people care in their home; to allow them to age — and even die — in their own home would be a lot more effective and it would be a lot more respectful of the individual citizen's right to make a decision about that kind of care and where they receive it.

My colleagues have referenced the work that both the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Association for Retired Persons have done over the years — and the Canadian Nurses Association — with respect to the care continuum and the importance of allowing people to live at home while receiving a level of care suited to their needs. That continues right into what we would consider — and many times have put people into care facilities, because we say that we can't provide that level of nursing care in their homes. We can. We can and we must, because you know what, it is way less expensive and it is way more effective, and it's also more respectful — totally more respectful — than telling people that they must go live in an institution.

Fifty years ago, Tommy Douglas showed us a better way, in terms of developing and institutionalizing health care in this country. We have all benefited from universal health care. Now, fixing seniors care will be our challenge. It will go a long way in renewing the whole health care system. I think it's a challenge that this territory should be taking. It's a challenge that is past due.

We do not need the Yukon Party to tell us as citizens what is good for us. What we do need is a government that is

willing to work with citizens to provide care that allows us the choice to stay in our homes, to receive the care that we require. We need a government that will actually deliver on the commitments it made.

I'll make one more comment, and it's about the appalling lack of follow-through with respect to palliative care by this government and the notion that they're going to establish a palliative care facility miles and miles and miles away from the hospital. It really does belie a fundamental misunderstanding of the needs of palliative care professionals, in dealing with the needs of people who are at that very end of life — the need to have quick access to pharmaceuticals and the pharmacy at the hospital. You won't get it if you are at Whistle Bend. As much as we rely upon private pharmacies to deliver medications, it's more than can be dealt with in that situation.

There are many, many elements of this. It speaks to the fact that there has not been public consultation. That's a fact. That's on the record. Nobody from the government side has denied that to date, Mr. Speaker. The public has a right to have a say in an element of health care that will affect us all, either directly or through our loved ones, our family, our friends.

Mr. Tredger: I just have a few words to say on this. I will thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing forth the motion. I thank all those who spoke on it today.

Our seniors — it's a right priority, but I believe this is a wrong policy and wrong action. Why do I say this? I think that I'm concerned that, right from the beginning, Yukon citizens should be involved.

Yukon citizens should be the deciding factor — a certain input into how decisions are made. We've had experiences — many of us have had experiences with our parents, our neighbours or our friends as they've aged. We're aware that there is a range of options and different ways to go about meeting the needs of our seniors. It's challenging. Our senior population is growing. There's increasing concern about how we're going to meet those needs. Now — now more than ever, we cannot rely on top-down decision-making. We need to talk to the people in Carmacks; to the people in Haines Junction; to the people in Whistle Bend; to the people in downtown Whitehorse. What is their hope for themselves and for their parents? What kind of system are we going to build that will allow dignity and respect that those in care need. What is our vision?

I know in Carmacks and in Pelly and in Teslin — and I talked to the elders or to their grandchildren — they tell me about their importance in the community and how they want to age in place and how important community events are like potlatches or funerals or graduations. When I'm teaching in a classroom and an elder comes in, I see the strength and the possibilities and the importance to our children of what having elders in our community means.

When I talk to children of elders — grown children, grandchildren, cousins — they want to help. They want to be able to take over cookies, to sit down and have tea, to learn

how to bead, to shovel their walks and feel important, to cut their wood.

There is a real concern in more and more of our facilities — not just for seniors or people in care, but all our facilities — but I would say particularly for seniors and people in care, that one of the greatest fears and concerns is their sense of isolation and their sense of not being in their community.

We have some decisions to make as a society. Is there a continuum of care? Is aging in place important? Are we committed to it? The motion speaks to home care. It might be more believable if our home care had the priority it deserves — if our society enabled it and strengthened it, and looked for ways to make home care happen. It might be more believable if we had an overall plan — if we had an objective community-based plan that had ownership from our citizens and involvement from the people in our communities, whether those communities are in Whitehorse or in the various municipalities around Yukon.

I think we would find, if we asked and worked with citizens, that we could develop a better system — a system that was more effective in meeting the needs of our elders, allowing them to contribute to our communities and to age with dignity — I think our seniors and those in care would be healthier. I think the situation would be more respectful and I think it would be more cost effective.

If we could structure our system around the needs of our seniors — my colleague from Riverdale South often talks about patient-centred care and what that means, what it can do for us and how we can build on it. I think we need senior-centred care. We need to design our communities around inter-generations, so we can combat that fear and sense of isolation that so many of our seniors are experiencing, so that, because someone lives in Mayo or Carmacks or Old Crow or Teslin, they don't need to move out of their communities — that they feel they have the support of their communities; that our society believes in them and in their dignity and recognizes the contributions they have made — and the communities, the villages, the institutions and the systems that they have helped build are there working for them as they age.

We can do it. It won't be easy. It will take time and it will take diplomacy. It might take some money, but it will be a system, a way, that we can be proud of and that we can as a society say — and look one another in the eye — that we care about all of our citizens, whether they are old or young. We care, and all of our citizens have something to offer and all of our citizens are part of our community.

I guess one of my concerns is that there doesn't seem to be an overall plan. How does this fit in? What are we doing in other areas? To invest — well, we don't know how much we're investing, because the government doesn't seem to have any idea how much we are investing — but to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in one form of care means that we are not looking at all of the options. It means that many of the range of options are being discounted or put to the side while we invest our resources, our time and our efforts — not only of the members of the Legislature, but our public servants,

who are working hard, coming up with ideas, looking for ways to help the people they work with each and every day.

They have many ideas, many effective ways. We need to listen to them before we go off in a particular direction. I guess that is why I won't vote for this, because I think the citizens of Yukon can come up with a better way. They only need to be asked, they only need to need to be involved and they only need to be respected.

I would urge the government to take a step back, take a chance, take a risk, and believe in Yukon people, because I believe they have the answers.

I won't be voting in favour of this motion. I do believe that it is a right priority, and it deserves our attention. It deserves the attention of our public service to look at how we can ensure all of our seniors in all of our communities can live in dignity, respect and maybe, most importantly, find ways that they can continue to contribute to our society.

Mr. Barr: I would like to just say a few brief words, because I hadn't planned on it. I have been listening to the debate today. You know, I want to reflect some of the words that were stated while I was part of our community tours in the communities that I went to. When comments from the people in the communities — seniors, family members — as we've heard today, this is about our grandmas, our grandpas, our brothers, our sisters, our friends, our aunts, our uncles, our cousins. It is about that. Those people we heard from in the communities, who were grandmas, grandpas — so on and so forth — did not want to be warehoused in Whitehorse. They want supports in their communities. When we talk about home care, there are guidelines as to what home care means or what is available — to the amount of care that someone who needs care can get.

What I heard was that people wanted some outside work to be able to be done. They wanted an expansion of what is available to be able to remain in their homes. When they couldn't remain in their homes, they wanted to be able to still stay in their community. I do know Carcross, for example — and Tagish — for probably 20 years has been asking for space that would house 10 seniors who could stay in the community; who would be able to still walk over to the bridge in Tagish and fish — still have what the Member for Mayo-Tatchun just said: have your niece and nephew come over and sit with you or have a fire pit in their backyard — a communal one like they're talking about having in Teslin — and having a structure where family could still connect.

When I heard about the members opposite in the Yukon government talking about this being about the same people I am talking about here right now — I guess we have just a different vision of how we're going to care for them — and it is about them. It is about me as I get older. It's also about a fellow I'm helping right now who does not want to come to Whitehorse, and he's getting on his years and he needs some help. I've been helping him for close to a year. He wanted to go to Carcross but there is no space for him. We don't even have that building, yet here we're talking about this megaproject here in Whitehorse.

It goes back to some of the things I've been saying in this House. Where is the infrastructure or where is the vision or where is the seniors building in Carcross and Tagish? We don't even have that yet, and here the government wants to go ahead with this megaproject — warehouse.

When I hear these nice words — “pod”, for example; “palliative care pod” — I volunteered at Whitehorse Correctional Centre for many years and then I delivered programs as a contractor for several years, and it used to be called “D dorm” or “A dorm” and now they are pods. Whitehorse Correctional Centre has pods, so we're sweetening the language to make things more palliative, but moose droppings look like little chocolate Easter eggs. What's a pod? What are words? Upon closer inspection, this place is an institution. I used to work in institutions in the 1970s in Ontario.

When I hear comments from members opposite about having to go Outside because we never built something this big before — well, Outside they have a population base in a square block that's the population of the Yukon. They build things a little bigger out there. Why wouldn't they? It's a different scale. It's a different perspective.

I do not support this motion. I didn't support it when it was a 300-bed motion to build an institution and I don't support a now 150 — which, I believe, because it has become more apparent to people that their palate might want to hear about 150, instead of a 300 — something like moose droppings and Easter eggs — and we are going to change some language around so that it is more palatable. At the end of the day, it will still be a 300-bed institution.

I just spent the last years of my sister's life with what we have at Whitehorse General Hospital in palliative care, and I couldn't imagine going through that experience where it is intended to be built — nor from the discussions with the people who were delivering that care, 24/7, because we sat there 24/7 with her and saw the differences in medications and the dedication.

What we need is a palliative care unit — no doubt — and it's long overdue, but not up there. We need to speak to the people who are delivering these services first, before we move ahead like this, or to the ones we expect to live there. If you were asking me, I would tell you, “No, I don't want to do that.” The people I have heard from in the communities do not want this. I would have been remiss not to stand up today and speak and pass on those words. The people in the communities — I heard one person who came out to these discussions who thought that it would be a good idea — one. I would be remiss to not speak on those voices' behalf today.

Thank you for listening, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the day.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Elias: I just want to thank all of the members who spoke to this motion that I put forward today. I did put my

name on this motion because I believe in it, and I see nothing wrong with planning and constructing a new 150-bed continuing care facility with the possibility of expansion so that our elders and our seniors can live with dignity in the twilight of their lives. I support this motion.

There was an attempt by some members to try to touch on the importance of one aspect of the motion and that was the importance of seniors. I guess, to me, elders and seniors are important because of their long, accumulated knowledge, experience and wisdom that they share with us. Seniors are important because, if given the opportunity, they have much to teach us in a lot of different ways. Seniors are important because they can be helpful in applying life lessons to us, especially with self-esteem and self-respect and self-discipline.

I think seniors are important because they offer a great deal of satisfaction and joy when we are around them. Elders and seniors are important because of the practical experience they offer us when we visit them. Elders and seniors are important because they have so much to give intangibly to us. Elders and seniors are important because they have learned the lessons of humility and they teach that to us. Elders and seniors are fun companions when we learn how to be in their company. Elders and seniors know things we would never guess unless we ask. Seniors and elders help us deal with disappointment, grief, illness and heartache throughout our lives. Elders and seniors know how important it is to have a sense of humour.

I want to conclude with this sentiment. When I see an opportunity for us to take care of our seniors and elders, because they took care of us, I am going to take full opportunity for it, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. Stick: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Mr. Tredger: Disagree.

Mr. Barr: Disagree.

Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 11 yeas, six nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion No. 926 agreed to

Motion No. 942

Clerk: Motion No. 942, standing in the name of Mr. Elias.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to begin the process of developing a made-in-Yukon K to 12 education curriculum through consultation with all of the Yukon government's education partners, including students, their parents, Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Teachers' Association and expert educators, Yukon College, representatives from businesses and industry, school councils and the general public.

Mr. Elias: It's a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to begin the process of developing a made-in-Yukon K to 12 education curriculum through consultation with all of the Yukon government's education partners, including students, their parents, Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Teachers' Association and expert educators, Yukon College, representatives from businesses and industry, school councils and the general public.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most important responsibilities we have is to educate our children. Education prepares them to become leaders, citizens and committed members of our communities. This is reflected in the mandate of the Yukon Department of Education: to deliver accessible and quality education to Yukon students of all ages; and in the strategic objectives of the department: success for each learner, an inclusive, adaptable, and productive workforce that meets the needs of Yukoners.

We share the important responsibility of educating Yukon's younger generations with many essential partners, including parents, public school and post-secondary educators, First Nations, the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, employers, school councils and community members, and post-secondary institutions, like Yukon College.

It truly takes a village to raise a child, as the saying goes. We each have a role to play in ensuring that our children have the education and skills they need to succeed in the future. Parents are the first and most important teachers and advocates in a child's life. The teams of hard-working teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals working directly with our children form the foundation of Yukon's strong and diverse school communities.

First Nation governments and the Council of Yukon First Nations are partners across many school programs, as we work together to improve outcomes for First Nation learners

and to provide all Yukon students with opportunities to learn more about Yukon First Nation cultures and traditions.

The Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon delivers French first language programs and advocates for French language education in our territory. Yukon employers offer valuable advice and input in developing school programs, as well as training opportunities, to ensure Yukon students are learning the skills needed in our workforce. Yukon school councils shape the evolution of each school, providing a voice and say from the communities on the growth and development of their schools.

Yukon College and other post-secondary institutions help us shape the pathways for students to go on to advanced education training and programs of study and we, the Government of Yukon, coordinate and collaborate with these partners to direct the future of education in Yukon schools.

For this reason, I was very pleased to hear our Premier announce that education has a permanent front seat spot on this government's agenda and that over the coming months we will be rolling out a new vision for the future of education in Yukon schools. This is no small task. It is a major undertaking that will involve a comprehensive look at Yukon's public education system to explore what is working, what is not working and how we can make it better.

We already have some sense of where to start, based on recommendations from previous reviews, such as the 2007 *Education Reform Project Final Report*, the 2008 *One Vision, Multiple Pathways: Secondary School Programming Process Final Report*, the 2008 *Helping Students Succeed: Vision, Goals and Priorities for Yukon First Nations Education* report, the 2009 Auditor General of Canada report and the 2010 to 2015 New Horizons strategic plan for the Department of Education.

In response to many of these recommendations, the Department of Education has undertaken a number of educational reforms, new programs and improvements since 2007 to improve education for Yukon students. However, it is now 2015, and it has been a few years since the most recent of these reviews was completed.

The first step in a comprehensive look at how Yukon's public school system is doing is to examine these past reviews, their recommendations and Yukon Education's responses. This will give us a sense of what is working and what still needs improvement, as well as addressing new programs and initiatives that have been in place since the last review. I am pleased to now summarize these past reviews for discussion with my colleagues and later with our partners in education.

The education reform project was released in 2008. It began in 2005 through the *Education Act* review of 2002 to 2004. Its mandate was to address the gap between First Nations' and non-First Nations' student outcomes, a challenge we continue to address today. Other goals of this project were the development of an education system that would meet the needs of all Yukoners, ensuring that students could participate successfully in work, post-secondary education, training and lifelong learning and increasing the involvement of First

Nations in schools and in the education decision-making process.

Areas addressed included early childhood learning, literacy, technology, facilities, FASD, rural schools, experiential learning, professional development, teacher evaluations, et cetera. Many recommendations focused on greater involvement and partnership with First Nations for governance and committees, curricula, language instruction, resources, administration of schools, First Nation student support and more.

Through a memorandum of understanding with Yukon First Nations and the governments of Canada and Yukon, we are working together on the subsequent joint education action plan to find ways to support the success of First Nation students in school. The goals of the 2014-24 joint education action plan include: building more culturally inclusive schools; identifying First Nation community priorities and capacity-building needs; collaborating on protocols and evaluation and closing the academic achievement gap through foundational supports that meet the needs of Yukon First Nation students.

A working group is developing an implementation plan with tasks and timelines this spring using feedback from the 2015 Yukon First Nations Education Summit. We are also continuing to develop educational agreements with individual First Nations. A great example is the signed agreement with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. Under this agreement, we jointly develop school curriculum and programs within Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in traditional territory, such as accredited cultural camps — First Fish Camp 10, Moose Hunt Camp 10 and First Hunt 10 — cultural education and more.

There is great work being done by the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit of the Department of Education. They are responsible for working with First Nations to develop and promote the inclusion of First Nation cultures, language and traditions for Yukon school programs, including building productive relationships with First Nation communities, increasing the amount of resources available that share First Nation perspectives in Yukon schools, improving the academic results of First Nation students from kindergarten to grade 12, and providing support to and enhancing First Nations' efforts to revitalize their languages.

In 2008, the *One Vision, Multiple Pathways: Secondary School Programming Process Final Report* was undertaken and released. The central finding of this report was that program enhancement and new facilities were not enough to improve student engagement and outcomes. The proposed solution was systemic change to promote inclusion and excellence through the development of flexible learning pathways, increased collaboration with partners, and individualized learning and student success.

With respect to the 2008 *Helping Students Succeed: Goals and Priorities for Yukon First Nations Education*, this 2008 report described a vision for the education of First Nation students in the public school system. They sought an education program and environment that supports First Nation student success in academics, culture and language, where

students graduate from high school well prepared for participation in life and life-long learning no matter where they lived and worked. This vision included a focus on First Nation curriculum development, experiential learning, parent participation and community partnerships.

Goal 3 identified the need to create curriculum and supports to teach students about the history and legacy of residential schools. As you know, a unit about residential schools was developed and has been introduced at several Yukon schools this year. We have worked very closely with First Nations in the development and rollout of this curriculum, and, Mr. Speaker, in about an hour and a half, I will be attending an information session this evening on this very topic. I look forward to hearing what my constituents have to say about this piece of curriculum and their feedback.

The 2009 Auditor General's report was completed six years ago with a number of recommendations to assist the department in more effectively delivering public school programs to Yukon children. It focused on performance indicators, student progress after they left school, strategic planning, risk management and the long-term plan for facilities management. The department's responses to the various recommendations in this report, which largely related to strategic planning, can be found in the Yukon Education annual reports 2010 to 2014. One example is the implementation of the school growth planning policy, school review and growth plans in response to recommendation 81 for individual school plans.

With regard to the 2010 New Horizons strategic plan, this initiative began five years ago and was the second phase of the planning cycle under the education reform project. With New Horizons, the Department of Education decided upon a strategic plan to begin significant long-term changes in school cultures, administrative growth and professionalism and was able to embark on long-term efforts to improve student achievements. The consultation process for New Horizons provided useful feedback on the way the department carries out its duties. Some key outcomes of New Horizons are as follows: strategic objectives centred on student achievement with an additional focus engaging and helping First Nations students to be successful; continuing development of land-based experiential programs to improve First Nation student achievement; movement to a web-based student information system; completion of an assessment framework and implementation of a school-growth planning policy; implementation of a larger market framework, including a comprehensive skills- and trades-training strategy; completion of a staff allocation formula; ongoing development of a long-term facilities plan; leadership training for teachers; and introduction of professional-growth plans.

We are on the path to a thriving public school system in the Yukon. We are working closely with partners. We are being responsive to their feedback and advice. We are supporting the needs of all learners, including rural and First Nation students. We are building flexible learning pathways to success for all Yukon learners so that students can fulfill their aspirations to work, business, trades, college, universities or

other pursuits. We are promoting locally developed learning opportunities and programs that reflect the unique northern context and perspectives of Yukon. We are working with other jurisdictions with a continued focus on competency-based learning, which focuses on literacy and numeracy, as well as collaboration, creativity, communication and critical thinking.

It is important to recognize that the Department of Education has made many great strides to support the success of Yukon learners. Some of our public school initiatives are recognized in the field of education as pioneering and good practice, such as rural experiential models. These for-credit programs bring together students in grades 10 to 12 and educators from rural Yukon communities for an intensive week of learning and teaching in fine arts and applied skills with local experts.

Blended learning combines in-person and on-line instruction through educational technology and students are able to progress through their courses at a pace appropriate to their learning needs with real-time support from a classroom teacher.

Experiential programming — a great example is the bison hunt program at Hidden Valley Elementary School, Holy Family Elementary School and St. Elias Community School. School staff and students go out on the land with volunteers from the Department of Environment and First Nations in their communities to learn about ecology, the natural world, hunting practices and cooking.

In fact, a teacher from Holy Family Elementary was a keynote speaker at the winter conference of the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario to speak about the bison hunt program at his school. Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't mention our Chief Zzeh Gittlit School in Old Crow and what they're doing, as this is the last week of their cultural programming in experiential learning. As members of this House know full well, the former Minister of Education travelled with me to our community of Old Crow and to our land-based cultural camp — or cultural learning centre — and she was able to learn how to set a trap and catch a muskrat. She skinned the muskrat and she stretched the fur and we talked about the traditional values of this experience, and then we actually cooked the muskrat and she ate it. So it was a full cycle of learning experience for our former Education minister.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, the groundwork is there. It is now time to meet with our partners, evaluate our work that has been done as a result of previous recommendations and decide how to chart our course forward from here. Yes, there will be meetings, but our focus will be action — action that will be evidence-based and well-informed to build upon our successes and make improvements where they are needed.

In order for the new vision for education to succeed, we must ensure that it reflects the values and needs of our many partners. To create sustainable and successful change, all partners must feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the state and future of education in our territory.

At this early stage in the process, I can tell you that the new vision will include more Yukon content in a curriculum that is based on the principles of 21st century learning, which focuses on foundational skills in reading, writing and math as well as the development of key competencies in collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication. It is place- and culture-based and engages learners. As a result, 21st century students are encouraged to learn on their own and apply what they know.

We need to ensure that the Yukon curriculum is relevant to Yukon students. As we discuss how to meet these curriculum objectives with Yukon educators and our traditional curriculum partner, B.C., we will also explore good practices from other jurisdictions that could be adapted for Yukon. A made-in-Yukon curriculum will reflect our territory while meeting international standards for education to ensure that our students have the knowledge to work and learn anywhere in world, whether it's here at Yukon College or overseas at Oxford University.

Curriculum is more than the context of textbooks. It is more than the units of a course. Curriculum is also the broader goals of competencies, skills and personal and social development of each child. So a made-in-Yukon curriculum isn't just about kids learning more Klondike Gold Rush history. It's about teaching them about the knowledge and values that form Yukon's culture and political identity as well as their role in our Canadian society. For this reason, clear, inspired and motivational curriculum resources and materials play an important role in ensuring excellence in Yukon's education system.

Education has changed a great deal since I was last in school, with a teacher at the front of the room with a chalkboard and the kids sitting in lines of desks handwriting their notes. Today's classrooms look very different: teachers and students move around; iPads and laptops have taken the place of pens and paper; Promethean boards and PowerPoint presentations have replaced the chalkboard; and technology is used across subjects and classes from blended learning to distance education.

There is a wealth of on-line learning opportunities now available to Yukon students that didn't exist when I was in school. Teaching our children how to use these technologies safely and about their rights and responsibilities as digital citizens of the world are critical to their future success, as the world of work also has changed and requires the daily use of technology in so many jobs.

Technology is one of the many ways we can support the individual learning needs of Yukon students. Students learn in different ways and they can be better engaged through their individual interests and strengths. It is up to all of us to ensure that the education system meets these needs and supports their success.

The Department of Education is well-positioned to begin these important conversations with partners to inform the new vision for education in Yukon, thanks to the hard work of teachers, administrators, councillors, school councils and department staff.

The next step is about working together. Clearly, education is about more than academics, so working with partners and communities to support each learner is critical to remodeling Yukon's education system. The Department of Education will be bringing key partners together before the end of May to begin this exploration for a new vision for education in order to chart our way forward. Students, parents, educators, the Yukon Teachers' Association, First Nations, CSFY, school councils, NGOs and community members all have ideas to contribute, and we want to work with them to move these ideas into action.

We all share the same responsibility and goal — the success of Yukon learners. If we are to bring real change to education and if we are to truly invest in our economy by investing in our education, we must take the time to work together and get it right to ensure that our kids have access to an education that prepares them to face whatever unexpected challenges arise in their future.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the member opposite for introducing this motion to the House and I thank him for his words on education. Any day that education is discussed in the Legislature is a good day.

Education plays a critical role in all of our lives and it is a continuous process throughout our lives, so I thank the member. This is the right priority. However, I do have to question how we are going about it. I'm not sure exactly what the government is proposing here. I wonder what the value is of embarking on a major curriculum change. It could be completed in two months, or two years — we're not sure. The Premier, in his speech, mentioned a couple of months — the minister said a couple of years. I suspect that to overhaul our curriculum will take a lot longer, and it is a lot more involved than what is being proposed.

As a principal and former educator, I'm proud of our students. I'm proud of what they've done — the universities around the world they've attended, the jobs they've done in our communities. I'm proud of our school councils and our parents, the First Nations and their belief and involvement in our schools. Much has been accomplished.

When the Premier spoke I was a little bit taken aback by some of the things he said about our system and about our teachers and about our students. It seems that some of his statements — and four pages of his budget referring to this proposed educational change — were so vague as to be meaningless. How could you not agree with apple pie? Some of his statements did not recognize the ongoing and important contributions of our hard-working educational staff, whether they are in the Department of Education, in administrative positions or in the classrooms.

A new vision for Yukon — based on what? The Premier said that not all of our students have the same aspirations. Then he went on to say that, "...despite this, we still offer only one standard — one educational stream through which all students must pass."

The newly appointed Minister of Education has been making an effort to go to our schools, and I thank him very

much for that. Perhaps the Premier would like to accompany him and he would see the differentiated learning happening — the experiential learning. The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin mentioned much of our programming that differentiates learning for our students. Wood Street, community-focused education, blended learning and the rural experiential models are all examples of educational streams that students can take to reach their goal.

The Premier mentions an educational system that is engaging and relevant for all of our students. Let me assure the Premier that that is the goal for each and every one of our teachers and for each and every one of our schools.

The Premier talks about — we used to talk a lot in education about pedagogy. Pedagogy literally means "guiding a child". We need to bring this back into education. Let me assure the Premier that this idea is alive and well and that teachers every day are guiding our students forward and working hard.

The Premier says that education needs to be a team effort among parents, educators, communities, our partners and all other stakeholders to guide each child toward adulthood. Let me assure you that that is happening. Let me assure the Premier that our parents want to be involved in our school system, that our teachers have ideas and things to bring forward.

The Premier says, to that end, we will be focusing specifically on assessing what resources our schools and our educators require to ensure that those needs can be met. This is not new, Mr. Speaker. In 2009, the Auditor General had this to say: "We expected the Department to be able to identify performance indicators and measure performance results for both Yukon students as a whole and for major student sub-groups ... Setting meaningful performance indicators ... are key ways for the Department to assess the effectiveness of its programs, services, and policies. We also expected the Department to establish goals, set targets, and benchmark results ... we expected the Department to monitor and report actual results, then address gaps and work toward continuous improvement."

Continuous improvement, Mr. Speaker — that has been the goal of our education system for many — as long as I've been involved in it. Continuous assessment and continuous evaluation — try something, see if it works, if it works do more of it, if it doesn't work, do less of it.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier says: "So this initiative will depend, in large part, on bringing the community back into education." The community is waiting to be back into education. Parents want to be back into education. Teachers want to be back into education.

Some of the Premier's statements were contradictory: "We need educators and administrators to provide their professional input." Yet two years ago this government policy was to silence teachers. When they were called on it, they were told it was a draft. That draft has never been rescinded. It has been just brushed aside, leaving teachers and administrators not sure — where do they stand?

Let me tell you, teachers want to advocate for their kids and let me assure you that teachers know what should be kept confidential. They deal with that every day. Part of their job is to know what they can say and what they can't. They know what's personal information. They don't need a communications officer assigned to the Deputy Minister of Education to tell them whether they can talk about their buffalo hunt or whether they can talk about the needs of their students. They understand what confidentiality is and, in front of them, they see the need every day.

So to say we need to hear from them — we need them back in education — at the same time saying, "We'll tell you what you can say" — I don't know; it seems kind of contradictory to me.

Mr. Speaker, a new vision — a new vision according to whom? Who has the government asked about their thoughts on the Yukon? I would like to know what happened to the reviews that the government has already performed on Yukon's educational system, as mentioned by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin — the *Education Act* review, the education reform project, *One Vision, Multiple Pathways*. In those situations, consultants and Yukon people were hired at great expense to look in detail at our system, to analyze our alternatives. These were major undertakings with visits to all of our communities.

The education reform project was a partnership between CYFN and the Yukon Party government. They were co-chaired — one from each. This was a major undertaking. Concrete recommendations were designed to improve Yukon's education system. What happened to these recommendations? What happened to the Yukon Party's vision for education, the New Horizons project? Has that New Horizons become stale already? Has it become "lost horizons"?

This sudden decision to overhaul Yukon's educational curriculum without any investment in personnel or material resources: Is this a serious attempt to improve our system or is it just purple prose? This unilateral, top-down, here-comes-our-vision approach to education — is this a response to some of the recommendations we have heard from every one of our reviews? Is this a response — as the education reform project says, "a workable and inclusive model"? Is this a response to the decentralization of decision-making and empowerment of school councils and communities? Those areas were identified as essential.

This is a top-down, announce-first-and-consult-later approach to First Nation relationships and to parent relationships. It betrays the very real concerns and efforts of teachers, school administrators and Yukon parents and the work that has been ongoing for years. I won't go there.

Yukoners would call for an end to the centralization of school-level decision-making. There is a need to address the growing violence in our schools. There is a need to ensure that our special-needs students, or students who are struggling in the school system, are receiving the support and care they need, and that our front-line educators are receiving the

support and care that they need to work with them each and every day.

Yukoners would be concerned about the lack of respect for parents and teachers. Yukoners would be concerned that — here we go again — another review, another report, another distraction. We know that our resource rooms are chronically under-supported, creating a vicious cycle that means students who enter resource rooms often remain there. We know, as the Minister for Health and Social Services mentioned, there is an increasing number of students with autism. There is an increasing number of students in our school system with other struggles to learn. Our school system is changing. A direct attempt to address that would be appropriate.

The Premier was right about one thing when he proposed his vague vision for Yukon's educational future: It does take a village to raise a child. It also takes a government that consults the village before it acts. Notwithstanding the budget speech, the government has a number of commitments to uphold to the community when it comes to education. I have a number of questions about this new vision.

What is the timeline? The Premier talked about a couple of months. The minister talked about a couple of years. Realistically, an overhaul of the curriculum — pretty amazing, given our record so far — in B.C., it takes three to five years to change the curriculum in one subject area. Different grade levels have to be interconnected. Different subject areas have to be matched.

The Premier, in his address, talked about the need for more made-in-Yukon curricula and cited the 20 percent that already exists in the act as not being enough. Is he aware of any school that has more than 20 percent — or even close to 20 percent — of their content locally developed? I'm not. Yet this rush to change the act — we've been told many times during this Sitting and previous Sittings how hard it is to change the act. Prior to consultation, we're talking about changing it.

The Premier talks about partners. Has CYFN been consulted or did they find out about this new plan the way we did, in a budget speech? The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin mentioned the MOU with CYFN. One of the tenets is transparency and respect. One would think before embarking on a major vision, a major or comprehensive review or a major analysis of the education system — whichever we're doing — CYFN should be part of that.

Parents — how are they going to be involved? Is it going to be through their school councils? Are we going to have community tours? Is it going to be various people going to various places gathering various information? This isn't clear. But let me assure you, if it's to be done properly, it can't be done on a napkin at the dinner table.

The plans have to be put forward and vetted by the partners. The process has to be transparent and open. YTA — have they been told that there's going to be a new vision for education? Have they been told that there's going to be a major K to 12 curriculum overhaul — at some time, by someone? "It's okay, we'll talk to you sometime about it."

How does this mesh with the MOU of the three governments — Government of Yukon, Government of Canada and CYFN, as representative of First Nation governments — and their joint education action plan? How does this mesh with it? Have discussions been taking place to see where it fits in? It would be an interesting first meeting. “Since our last meeting, we’ve decided to embark on a brand-new vision for education. Don’t worry. We’ll tell you about it.”

Mr. Speaker, right priority, wrong policy. Our school system is in a state of continuous progress. We learn, we grow, we examine, we use evidence-based learning, we evaluate programs, and then we move forward. We assess the changing clientele, and then we move forward. At best, Mr. Speaker, this motion, this vision and this comprehensive analysis and this direction the government is going off in are a distraction from the real work of what’s happening in our schools. It’s too vague to be useful.

I’m concerned that it comes at a time when the Premier has seen fit to remove the previous Minister of Education, when the Deputy Minister of Education has been changed, and when the Assistant Deputy Minister has been changed. That’s a lot of change just before we embark on a new vision.

I would urge the government to take a step back to allow the educational staff to act on the recommendations of previous comprehensive reviews and visions, to work out a system of governance that is more inclusive, that isn’t centralized and that allows parents and teachers and students to take ownership and responsibility.

How is this different from what was recommended in the education reform project where they identified four areas that would be essential to meet goals — a workable and inclusive model of public school governance, the decentralization of decision-making and the empowerment of school councils and communities, a strategy to address aboriginal language, revitalization and retention — and to that I would add, the culture of Yukon?

Number four — initiatives to address the social and community aspects of Yukoners’ educational needs. 2007 education reform, 2008 and the reaction to it, 2009 and the Auditor General’s report — they all talked about the same thing: the need to engage all of the partners at the beginning of the process so that all of the partners can take ownership and move forward.

One of the things I learned when I was in the school system was that there are a lot of challenges. Each and every day there are challenges. Some of them you can resolve quickly. Some take more time. Some of them are systemic.

Sometimes that can be overwhelming. Sometimes that can be overpowering, but if you can be part of a team, you can grow and learn together and you can accomplish a lot.

I will not be supporting —

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

Debate on Motion No. 942 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 201

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, April 23, 2015 — 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 Tourism and Culture; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Justice; Yukon Development Corporation/ Yukon Energy Corporation
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Education
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Highways and Public Works
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Community Services; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Environment
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation

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Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Government House Leader Vuntut Gwitchin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, April 23, 2015 — 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 proceeding, the Chair wishes to inform the House of a change which has been made to the Order Paper.

Motion No. 854, standing in the name of the Minister of Education, has been removed from the Order Paper as it is similar to Motion No. 926, which the House adopted yesterday.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of 2015 Yukon Young Authors' Conference

Hon. Mr. Graham: I rise in the House today to pay tribute to the 35th annual Young Authors' Conference and the talented young writers of the Yukon.

Humans connect through language. The written word is a powerful way of sharing stories and ideas with one another and with the rest of the world. The Young Authors' Conference encourages young Yukoners to share their stories and ideas through writing. This conference nurtures young writers to pursue their interests, develop their skills, learn about Canadian authors and literature, and introduce them to mentors and peers.

Each year, the conference brings together about 40 to 50 aspiring authors in grades 8 to 12 from around the Yukon. This year, they will work with professional writers including Susan Musgrave, our own Patti Flather, C.C. Humphreys, Graeme Peters and Jacob Scheier.

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

I would also like to thank F.H. Collins Secondary School and the Yukon Public Libraries branch of the Department of Community Services for hosting this program each year.

Most importantly, I want to recognize these young writers and the teachers in their lives inspiring them to chase their dreams. As Dr. Seuss said, the more you read, the more things you will know; the more that you learn, the more places you'll go.

Writing helps young people to express themselves, to engage their imagination and to develop critical thinking and

observation skills. This conference nurtures the young talent of Yukon, inspiring the authors of tomorrow.

I would like to ask all of my colleagues to join me in wishing these writers an excellent conference here today.

Applause

Mr. Tredger: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition and the Liberal Third Party to pay tribute to the Yukon Young Authors' Conference. I thank the minister for his tribute.

It gives me great pleasure to rise in the Legislature to pay tribute to the Young Authors' Conference and the Yukon Writers' Festival. On the webpage, it states: "The purpose of the conference is: to encourage students who have interest and potential in writing to pursue their interest and develop their potential; to make students more aware of Canadian writers and the vast array of their stories; to introduce students to successful Canadian writers; to introduce Yukon young writers to each other."

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

The first Young Authors' Conference was held in 1980. It was the brainchild of Terry Burns, who was then the librarian at F.H. Collins Senior Secondary School. He created the Young Authors' Conference to be the local cornerstone of the Canada-wide National Writers' Festival. The first conference had 33 students from five Yukon schools, working with three visiting authors. The original organizers — it's kind of neat to have these names roll over my tongue in the Legislature. The original organizers were Terry Burns, Irma Bourassa, Marg Healy, Marion Noone, Val Ross and Marg Wicken. I had the experience of working with some of those educators and they were certainly inspirational to me and many students.

Terry Burns was the overall conference organizer for 10 years. The conference was then taken over by Joyce Sward, who was the main organizer for the last 20 years. It is now being organized by Claire McDowell and Joyce Sward. Most impressively about the conference, or one of the things that affected me most, was the way the conference went out of their way to ensure students from communities had the opportunity — more than the opportunity, they were encouraged — to attend. Shy, reluctant students from communities were invited in and made to feel a part. As a principal, I saw first-hand the effect that this conference had on not only the students attending but their classmates.

I taught in Pelly Crossing. It was a wonderful and supportive community, but it was small and isolated. It was through programs, like Young Writers, that our students were able to expand their horizons. We would have writing units built around the Young Authors' Conference. Students learned the strength of their stories; it gave them a voice and, for some, a broader audience. They gained a sense of themselves as being important and the power of language. Sometimes we don't realize the effects of our ideas and how they can build our society to a better place.

I'm going to tell a personal story for the Terry Burnses and the Joyce Swards — those teachers whose ideas have blossomed. I was in one of my communities shortly after being elected. A young person who was struggling with addictions was in legal trouble and saw me. He came up to greet me and to congratulate me. "How are you doing, Jim?" I said, "Not bad. How are you?" He looked at me, and he said, "Not so good. I'm having some troubles." We talked about it for a little while and then off he went.

Five minutes later, he showed up with a ragged set of papers, sort of beaten up a little bit — the papers. It was a story he had written many years before for the Young Authors' Conference. He wanted me to read it. "I'm still writing when I can," he said. "It helps. I'm a writer." His shoulders straightened out a little bit.

Mr. Speaker, I can't remember if he went to the conference as one of the ones or whether it had been a springboard, but I do know it gave value to his life, a sense of purpose and, most importantly, hope. That hope was what he was clinging to as he looked for a way forward. I look forward to his next stories as he rediscovers his voice.

Thank you to all the teachers, all the student participants, and all the volunteers who have made the Young Authors' Conference a success in so many ways — and a special thank you for including the communities and the students from the communities. My colleague from Whitehorse south attended the Whitehorse reading and reception at the Old Fire Hall last night and said it was a wonderful experience.

I encourage all who are listening and all who are here to attend one or more of the events and readings in our communities: reading and music on Saturday at 7:00 p.m. in Haines Junction; Monday, April 20 at 1:30 p.m. in the Carmacks library; Tuesday, April 21 at 9:20 a.m. at Eliza Van Bibber School; Tuesday, April 21 at 7:00 p.m. in the Dawson City library; Thursday, April 23 at 7:00 p.m. at the Watson Lake library; Friday, April 24 at 1:00 p.m. in the Teslin School library. All of the events are free and, as my colleague, the Member for Copperbelt South, said, they are well worth attending.

To conclude, as one student said when returning from the young writers' conference — "Yes!"

In recognition of Administrative Professionals Week

Mr. Elias: As Government House Leader, I rise today in recognition of Administrative Professionals Week and to pay tribute to the important role that administrative professionals play in our working world.

This week of celebration was started 63 years ago as National Secretaries Week and has since expanded to recognize the changing role that administrative professionals play in the workplace.

Almost every office counts on the expertise and professionalism of their administrative staff. They work in areas such as finance, human resources, project management, communications and information technology. Our administrative professionals keep the chaos at bay and form the foundation of our organization. They keep our files in

order, they ensure that our technology is running, and they perform a myriad of complex transactional duties that keep the machinery of government and business running.

The services and programs that are so vital to the lives of all Yukoners count on the tireless work and dedication of our administrative professionals. In the Yukon government, administrative professionals are usually the first point of contact for a member of the public needing assistance. If you are applying for a hunting licence, a health care card or a business licence, or enquiring about a program or service, it is likely that you are speaking to one of the many administrative professionals. It is said that when you start a new job, one of the smartest things you can do is make friends with the administrative staff in the office. They are the ones who hold the knowledge that is a key to the smooth running of any office environment, and they can make your life very easy and enjoyable.

I encourage everyone to join me in celebrating Administrative Professionals Week and to take a moment this week to thank the administrative professionals in your office for the work that they do.

I take this opportunity to recognize Harmony Istchenko, Madison Pearson, Caitlin Irvine, Carly Boss, LJ London, Jessica Hall, Leah Kelly, Val Benoit and Loretta Devries. Thank you for making us on this side of the House look so darn good.

Applause

Mr. Tredger: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition and the Liberal Third Party to pay tribute to Administrative Professionals Week and Day. I rise to pay tribute to this week and day for administrative professionals. It is celebrated on the last Wednesday of the last week in April each year in many countries around the world, although it began as National Secretaries Week in 1952 in recognition of the importance and value of the administrative support provided by secretaries to an organization. Organizations have evolved; so too has the role of the person who many of us refer to as the person who does everything for us in the office — especially make my computer work.

In 2000, the name was changed to Administrative Professionals Week and Day to reflect this complexity. The administrative professionals' work touches on technology, finance, customer services, vendors, the law, health care, human resources and taxes — all in one day — and especially being a friend to all those in the office.

We tend to think of administrative professionals as support or secondary staff. In some offices, they are relegated to second-class status because they are "just" the administrative assistant or office manager. However, anyone who has worked in an office environment for any length of time knows that it is these people who are the ones who make our offices function.

Our offices have become a swirl of activity, whether they are offices in schools, in lawyers' office, in legislative offices or in business centres. Administrative professionals don't just work behind the scenes. Whose face do people see when they

first walk through the door? Who does that student in the school run to when their knees are skinned on the playground? Who do we look for when something goes wrong in the office? The administrative professionals represent our organizations and set the tone for each person who visits our office.

They are an integral part of our workplaces and deserve recognition for their often unsung contributions. In my career I have been fortunate to work with many administrative assistants and professionals and I can attest to their importance to the success of those organizations and indeed any organization.

Administrative professionals are indeed professionals. Not only do they perform their prescribed roles, answer phones and greet visitors, but they are the glue that touches all of us in the organization. They are there to listen to and support each person in the office. They calm the waters; they support and encourage ideas; they fill in the gaps; they smile through the constant contingencies and interruptions — the continuous putting off of their work to support others. They deal with emergencies and they calm a crisis.

The administrative professional is core to our successes. Administrative professionals often help the office come together as a team. Denise Leschart, the administrative professional for the Yukon NDP, makes a comparison to a wagon or a bicycle wheel. Everyone on the team must work together like the spokes of the wheel. For the wheel to work, she says, every spoke has to be there, including the administrative professional. One can't be missing.

This week is our turn to officially recognize the administrative professionals in our workplace for the work they do each and every day, for their support, encouragement, patience, their insight, and especially for their friendship and the contributions they make to the successes of our organizations. I would add especially for their contributions to each of us for our individual successes. Thank you for the support they have been offering me.

Administrative professionals make us all better. On behalf of the Yukon NDP and the Yukon Liberals, I encourage everyone to recognize and celebrate contributions of the administrative professionals in their workplace. My hope for all organizations is to have administrative professionals as skilled and dedicated as the Official Opposition is privileged to have working with us. Thank you.

Speaker: I would be remiss if I didn't add my own comment at this point. The staff we have in the Legislative offices who work on behalf of all the MLAs — Helen, Brenda, Dawn and Doris — are held in high esteem by all the MLAs and are greatly appreciated for keeping us not just on the straight and narrow, but out of trouble as well.

Are there any other tributes?

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: With your indulgence, I would like to introduce to members today a visual artist visiting from

Calgary, Alberta, who has been here in the past and is back to visit a long-time friend who happens to be Elaine Schiman, who also is in the gallery and works as a member of our staff. I would like to invite all members to give a Yukon welcome to Kelly Krueger. Welcome.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2015-16, to convert the Oblate centre into a 10-bed continuing care facility to be opened later this fall.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to partner with Bell Mobility to ensure that the community of Old Crow benefits from fast, affordable and reliable telecommunications services in July of 2015 by:

(1) upgrading the cellular service to 4G;

(2) providing the residents of Old Crow with the ability to use the latest smartphone technology to access web-based and smartphone applications; and

(3) ensuring that the residents can call, text, browse and watch video using the latest wireless devices, handsets, tablets and smartphones, including the Apple iPhone 6, Samsung Galaxy Note 3 and the Samsung Galaxy S5.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work in conjunction with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to provide the community of Burwash Landing with a year-round, consistent and locally posted RCMP presence.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to tell the public what the total cost of the 300-bed continuing care facility will be.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Nurse recruitment

Ms. Hanson: Nurses are an integral component of collaborative health care in the Yukon. Nurses in our rural communities are often the primary health care provider and they also play a critical role as community members. Health

and Social Services' own 2014 clinical services plan recognizes this critical role and recommends — and I quote: “That recruitment and retention of community nurses for rural Yukon Territory health centres continue to be a priority until vacancies have been eliminated...”

Can the minister explain why there are currently seven vacancies for community nurses who serve Yukon's community health centres?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I would like to start off by thanking the nurses across our territory, whether they are in Whitehorse or our communities like Dawson City and Haines Junction and so on, for the good work that they do each and every day in providing the high level of service for those communities.

A *Clinical Services Plan for Yukon Territory* was released in April 2014, as you know, and sets a long-term plan for the evolution of health and social services delivery in our incredible territory. While the report's recommendations have not been accepted by government, the department continues to utilize the plan as a foundation for innovative, evidence-based decision-making and maximizing system efficiencies.

Again, I would like to extend thanks to the good men and women working in nursing across the territory each and every day. This government certainly appreciates the service that they deliver to Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: I would say that the thanks would ring hollow when you don't feel the support that's required. Nurses in rural Yukon communities face complex situations with only minimal supports and resources. As this unaccepted 2014 clinical services plan notes: “It is not unusual for nurses to be providing non-nursing functions, due to limited resources and staffing.”

Many community nurses work alone or with little backup in their daily practice. These hard-working and dedicated nurses provide primary and emergency health care 24 hours a day. That is why the float nurses, who are based out of Whitehorse and provide temporary relief to our community nurses, play such an important role.

Given the importance of the role played by these float nurses, can the minister explain why there are currently four vacancies for float nurses?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Again, I need to extend this government's thanks to the men and women working in all Yukon communities in nursing, for the good work they do and providing those services to Yukoners.

As the member opposite should be well aware, every government department finds that there are vacant positions from time to time, and we work very well at filling those positions. I would like to thank the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission and his department for spearheading all that work and working with a number of government departments in making sure those vacancies are addressed.

The report's recommendations are currently being reviewed by the department to determine goals and priorities with the intent of having an implementation plan developed this year. The plan will be evolving, as system evolution in Health and Social Services are certainly complex issues.

I again thank the men and women working across the territory in nursing for the good service they do for all Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: If this was new news, those thanks might be understood. That year to implement the report might be understood. The fact is that there are seven community nursing vacancies and there are four vacancies for float nurses who provide relief to our hard-working community nurses. Health care professionals have also expressed concern about the shortage of LPNs in the community hospitals.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this sad state of affairs is nothing new. There has been study after study showing that our health centres and community nurses are not given the resources and support they need. The Yukon Party government continues to let down our rural communities and nursing professionals alike. It's time to put Yukon communities and our rural health professionals first.

Will the minister explain to Yukoners why his government has not made the health of our communities and the well-being of our community nurses a priority?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I think the Leader of the Official Opposition is clearly out of touch with the good work that is being done within the departments to provide those types of supports to nurses and government staff across our territory. Again, I would like to thank the men and women working especially in the nursing field. I've had the opportunity to go to communities, like Dawson City and Watson Lake, and certainly here in Whitehorse. I'll be out in Haines Junction in the next couple of weeks, visiting the teams out there.

There's lots of good work being done. There's certainly lots of training available through the Department of Health and Social Services and working with the nurses. The member opposite is talking about vacancies within government, and we certainly work with PSC in filling those vacancies.

This government stands behind the men and women providing the service. This government stands behind issues that are in the budget like the nursing bursaries that the members opposite continue to vote against.

Question re: Violence in schools

Mr. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, eight years ago, the Yukon Teachers' Association found that almost one-third of educators had sustained some level of physical injury on the job and almost two-thirds had some level of psychological injury — unacceptable.

For the ensuing eight years, we have heard from parents and the Yukon Teachers' Association about violence in Yukon schools. When I raised this issue with the last Yukon Party Education minister, she said that the government had the initiatives in place that ensure the well-being and a safe workplace for all of our teaching professionals. The last minister didn't think there was any problem.

Mr. Speaker, does the current Education minister agree with the president of the Yukon Teachers' Association that violence continues to be a significant problem in Yukon schools?

Hon. Mr. Graham: It's one of those issues that I finally agree with the member opposite on. It is a problem in our schools, Mr. Speaker. We share the Yukon Teachers' Association's concerns regarding classroom safety and we look forward to working with the Yukon Teachers' Association on how we can move forward to make our schools safer.

Yukon Education also has implemented a number of policies and processes during the last two ministers' stay in the office to ensure that these issues are dealt with appropriately. These include the workplace risk assessment and safety plan and a safe and caring schools policy, so we have been working on the problem, but we're always open to new suggestions and we're open to working with the Yukon Teachers' Association to make our schools safer than they are today.

Mr. Tredger: As the employer, the Yukon government is responsible for ensuring the safety of the workplace. A little over a year ago, the last Yukon Party Education minister told the Legislative Assembly that — and I quote: “We track all workplace risk assessments and threat assessments, incident reports, and many others. We continue to track this information.”

Mr. Speaker, we know that violence in schools is chronically underreported and we need proper stats to properly address it. Has the minister worked with the YTA to address this underreporting and to ensure that all violent incidents are reported? Will the minister make this information available to school councils and to the public?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, as I've said to the member opposite a number of times, I don't have any secrets in the Department of Education. I'm happy to tell him what the reported incidents were last year in 2013-14. There were 85 reported incidents; 63 resulted in workplace risk assessments and 22 included violent incidents. In 2012-13, as I'm sure the member opposite knows, there were only eight incidents reported and we feel that by working with teachers and school councils and our partners in education across the territory, the data was underreported in 2012-13, which is why only eight incidents were reported. Because of the emphasis on reporting and dealing with these incidents, the number last year increased substantially. We are hoping to reduce that number in the coming years to nothing.

Mr. Tredger: The Yukon Teachers Association report — *How Safe are our Educators?* — was a wake-up call that has yet to be answered by successive Yukon Party education ministers. This report highlights the alarmingly common-place occurrence of violence directed at teachers. This violence includes spitting, kicking, swearing, intimidation, damage to property, threats to one's family and more. Violence in our schools has a serious impact on morale, classroom management and the effectiveness of our educators. The learning environment suffers and all children are affected. The onus is on the Yukon government as the employer to address violence in our schools.

Can the current minister explain why eight years after the YTA first raised the issue, there has been so little done to tackle this problem?

Hon. Mr. Graham: If the member opposite was just trying to elicit the information, I would love to present him with additional information, but he leads up to the information with so many facts that are in dispute, shall we say. There have been a great number of advances made in the workplace for teachers over the last few years. I have already named a few of them.

Our attitude on this side of the House is that all students, as has been shown in the last little while, have a right to be treated in a fair and reasonable manner. Just as important to us is that all teachers also have that right to be treated in a fair and reasonable manner, and they should be free of any kind of abuse at all. In fact, it is one of the main issues going forward in the ongoing discussions leading up to a new contract with the Yukon Teachers' Association. I can't go into details here in the Legislature because we are currently in those discussions, but it is an issue and it is an issue that we are trying very, very hard to deal with because we agree, even though we don't do it in a negative manner as the NDP do. We agree that this is an issue that has to be addressed.

Question re: Continuing care facilities

Mr. Silver: Yesterday I asked the Minister of Health and Social Services a question in Question Period about the cost of the 300-bed continuing care facility this government is planning in Whistle Bend. We also had a long debate in the afternoon as well about the facility. I believe three of the members opposite got up to speak.

During Question Period and in the debate that followed, the minister had plenty of opportunities to answer the simple question that I had asked and that is: What is the cost of this new facility? Now he refused to answer the question. We have heard and seen some estimates anywhere between \$268 million and \$330 million, and we are looking for a confirmation. Surely the minister knows what the number is or the government would not barge ahead with the construction.

The question is simply again: What is the cost estimate for the new seniors facility?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: First off, I would like to start by expressing my disappointment that the members opposite clearly demonstrated that they are not in support of this government providing care to seniors in a new seniors facility by their words that they chose yesterday in this Legislative Assembly.

This government will continue on with a 150-bed facility; a facility that will be expandable in the future when the need is there to 300 beds.

This government believes in providing that level of care to our friends, our neighbours and Yukoners who can no longer care for themselves in their own homes. This government will put its money where its mouth is and continue down that path to providing those services to Yukoners.

Mr. Silver: Whether it's 300 beds or 150 beds — 300 beds was said a couple of months ago; 150 beds is said now — Yukoners deserve to know how much this is going to cost. I don't know if the minister or any of the Premier's staff play poker, but it's always a good idea to know how much money is on the table before you sit down.

There is \$26 million set aside in this budget that will move ahead for this year. The government has refused, however, to tell Yukoners how much that total cost will be. Having watched this government go overbudget on many capital projects, Yukoners deserve to know how much of their money is going toward this project. It's a simple question, Mr. Speaker: What is the cost estimate for the first 100 beds the government is planning?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The lower figure that was produced last fall was an estimate for both phases of the facility in today's dollars, so for example, if construction had begun immediately. The higher figure is an estimate that includes an escalator factor that includes longer timelines, since the construction is expected to begin a year from now, and not be completed until 2018. In addition, it's important to note that cost estimates at this stage will undergo refinement as the planning continues.

The money set aside in this year's budget for the continuing care facility is for a number of things, including the schematic design. So we'll have a better idea of cost after that schematic design is completed, and we look forward to 2018, when this government can provide that level of care to Yukoners who can no longer live in their homes.

Mr. Silver: To continue the analogy, when you play poker, you lose a lot of money. I've actually seen it cost people their jobs in the past. The point is that a poor game plan by this government will lose taxpayers' money due to cost overruns. A business case analysis was done by a private contractor on the Government of Yukon's new continuing care facility, and they did list a price, and it was \$330 million. Last fall, the government did its own analysis of the potential cost of the new facility, and it said that cost would be \$268 million for a 300-bed facility, again, but it's a full \$60 million less than the independent consultant.

Either way, the public deserves to know how much money is at stake, whether it be a cost estimate or not. You don't start building a house and then wait until the end to decide how much money you're going to spend. This work needs to be done, and it happens on the front end to avoid the kind of cost overruns that we're starting to get used to with this government.

So what is the cost estimate now, today, for the new facility?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: What is obvious is that the member opposite, the Leader of the Liberal Party, who would like to be Premier, has absolutely no clue how this contracting works. The good news is that, after 12 years of Yukon Party government, 12 years of strong financial management, we can afford to build this nursing home to provide health care for Yukon seniors and all those people who need long-term care. We're in a position financially where we can afford to do it.

Question re: Off-road vehicle use, select committee recommendations

Ms. White: Nearly six years ago, the all-party Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles was formed and then consulted extensively across the territory.

Over four years ago, that same select committee released its final report. It is a fair comment that action from this government on the ORV file has been slower than molasses going uphill in February.

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources had just announced a new 60-day consultation and discussion paper on the subject of off-road vehicle use. Though the Yukon Party government has the ability to be proactive and protect ecologically sensitive areas before they are damaged, they have chosen not to.

A simple question: why not? Why does the Yukon environment have to wait for yet another spring to pass before this government does anything to protect its ecologically sensitive areas?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The member opposite is correct. We are in the middle of a 60-day public review. It began at the beginning of this week, April 20. What we're going to do is build on valuable information that we have already received from First Nations in a prior consultation with First Nations that was done over a 30-day period. We're looking forward to engaging with the public and off-road vehicle users to work toward developing a policy that will work when it comes to managing this type of activity.

This is in response to recommendations brought forward by the Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles. The discussion paper will be mailed out to First Nations, industry and interest groups and I've already heard via e-mail from one of the interest groups on some tweaking that they feel can be done to one of the forms that is available on-line.

We're looking forward to these consultations being done and reviewing what the public has to say about the consultations upon their conclusion.

Ms. White: I wonder what sort of engagement the Yukon Party is expecting. The consultation calls for written comments by June 22. It's buried on the EMR website and not the main Yukon government homepage. There has been limited public advertising and there are no public meetings scheduled.

It was six years ago that the select committee was formed. The select committee talked to Yukoners throughout the territory. It received hundreds of survey responses. Four years ago, that same select committee agreed that Yukon needed rules to prevent and mitigate environmental damage and cumulative negative impacts to sensitive wildlife and fish habitats. For four years the Yukon Party government has dragged its heels. It hasn't done a thing to protect sensitive areas from ORV damage, and now protection of environmentally sensitive areas face further delay.

Why does the Yukon Party continue to drag its heels on bringing forward rules to protect sensitive areas from the irresponsible use of off-road vehicles?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: The member opposite is correct — minor amendments to the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* are in place to support recommendation 14 that will enable the regulations to be developed. Once implemented, the new regulations will allow land use administrators to manage off-road vehicle use on Yukon lands when required.

Off-road vehicle management tools will be applied on a complaint-driven basis or through an area-specific planning process to manage off-road vehicle use as required in identified hinterland areas. It will be the renewable resource councils and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, in their role as managers, to review processes for proposed off-road vehicle areas. I might remind the member opposite that there are a number of acts in place already and legislative framework for the protection of our Yukon lands, water and air.

Ms. White: Complaints — that moves beautifully toward my next question. The select committee on ORV use consulted extensively four years ago and made this recommendation: “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.”

The reason is simple. We can’t effectively manage ORVs without being able to identify the users. British Columbia has a simple and inexpensive 10-year licensing program that the Yukon could follow if we so chose, but the consultation doesn’t address — this current consultation doesn’t address — this omission in our laws and amendments to the *Motor Vehicles Act* brought in last year only dealt with ORV use on highways and public roads.

When does the government plan on getting around to the issue of off-road vehicle licensing and registration?

Hon. Mr. Kent: What we’re conducting right now is public consultation with respect to recommendation 14, that will enable regulations to be developed to support the minor amendments, as the Minister of Environment mentioned, to the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* that we introduced earlier in our mandate.

Tools to manage off-road vehicle use will be applied, as mentioned, on a complaint-driven basis or through these area-specific planning processes. The 30-day review with First Nations has been concluded. We are currently embarking on the 60-day public review process that started earlier this week and will conclude in June. We are looking forward to hearing from the public and anyone who uses the backcountry and use ORVs — responsible users of ORVs — we are confident that we can get to a place that we can protect the Yukon environment as well as the rights of responsible ORV users for generations to come.

Question re: Yukon species at risk

Ms. White: On Tuesday, I asked the minister about his party’s track record on completing a Yukon-made species at risk act. In a somewhat surprising digression, the minister went on to talk about Yukon’s bison population. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Aishihik herd is the second-largest disease-free free-ranging wood bison herd in the world. In fact, the population has so flourished that it was added to the list of big game species back in 1998. Now, with a population of well over a 1,000 animals, the government has taken steps to increase yearly harvests.

Does the minister recognize that in Yukon, the wood bison was removed from the specially protected species list 17 years ago?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I think this is a good example of the Department of Environment working with our First Nation partners and our renewable resources councils and the Fish and Wildlife Management Board on dealing with a species that was at risk and we are happy to see the cooperation we are having moving forward.

Ms. White: That was interesting.

We look forward to that same attention being dealt to the smaller, less cuddly species at risk in the territory. On Tuesday, I asked the minister about his party’s track record on completing a Yukon-made species at risk act.

1998 was a big year for species at risk. The wood bison herd was removed from the specially protected species list and the Yukon government committed to implementing its own species at risk legislation, but in 2003, 2005 and again in 2009, the Yukon Party government was brought species at risk legislation by its own Department of Environment that they chose to ignore. Instead, they rely on inadequate federal legislation that has been continuously gutted by the Conservative government of Canada. Made-in-Yukon species at risk legislation is essential to ensure the interests of Yukon are actually met.

Does the minister really think that Yukon species at risk are fully protected by federal legislation, which has been continuously gutted by the Conservative Government of Canada?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: We on this side believe we are doing a really good job at this, actually. There are national recovery plans currently being developed for the western toad, bats, several birds — all of which are found in the Yukon. National recovery or management plans are anticipated for grizzly bears, polar bears, collared pika and a number of other listed species.

The Department of Environment manages and monitors species of wildlife that are at risk and tracks all species of conservation concern. I am proud of our biologists who contribute to the federal species-at-risk assessment and recovery planning. That is part of our commitment under the national *Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk*.

We have 18 species occurring in the Yukon that are listed under the federal species at risk act, and I am proud of the department and the hard work that we do working with these species.

Question re: Mine closure security

Mr. Tredger: When the Ketza River mine closed two weeks ago, this government assured Yukoners that because it was a type 2 mine, the federal government would be responsible for the cleanup costs. While this is partially true, under the devolution transfer agreement, it is set out that any new work that was approved by Yukon government since devolution is the responsibility of the territorial government. We know that work has gone on at the Ketza River mine since Veris Gold took over operations. There are securities that have been held by Yukon government, but the minister can forgive Yukoners for being skeptical of their adequacy.

Can the minister assure Yukoners that the remediation and closure costs of the Ketza River mine will be fully covered by the mine's security?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The member opposite is correct. Ketza is designated as a type 2 site under the Yukon devolution transfer agreement. Under this agreement, the Government of Canada maintains responsibility for environmental liabilities at the site prior to the implementation of the DTA in 2003. Since that time, most of the activity that has been conducted on the site has largely been exploration activity such as drilling. There has been no active production on the mine site since 2003 — since devolution. This mine goes back to the mid-1980s as far as the initial start-up and production. On April 7, Energy, Mines and Resources seized the \$797,000 in security held under the *Quartz Mining Act* and officials have assured me that they are confident that this amount will satisfactorily address the outstanding reclamation work related to Ketza River Holdings' exploration program, which has been conducted post-devolution.

Mr. Tredger: Recently, two mines have walked away from their obligations on-site due to financial problems. In the case of the Wolverine mine, when the Yukon Zinc Corporation walked away, they left the Yukon with nearly \$3 million in outstanding security payments that were earmarked for reclamation and remediation. Yukoners want to know why a mine was allowed to conduct operations without having paid the security costs necessary for the remediation and reclamation that is associated with it.

Why aren't mining companies required to put up securities for remediation and reclamation before going out and conducting operations that may ultimately require the use of those securities?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Just to correct the member opposite, the owners of the Wolverine mine — the Wolverine mine is in temporary closure. The owners are still on-site doing the care and maintenance work. Officials from Energy, Mines and Resources are inspecting that work on a regular basis and working with the company to ensure that it continues to work toward compliance of the temporary closure act.

Again, perhaps the member opposite didn't hear me, but with respect to the Ketza River mine, largely the activities that have taken place there since devolution have been exploration activities, such as drilling and that type of thing. We do hold \$797,000 in security, which has been seized as of April 7. Again, officials in the department have informed me that they

believe that amount will satisfactorily address the outstanding reclamation work related to the post-devolution activities. Again, as a type 2 site, we have begun the process of working with Canada to turn the site back over to them as their responsibility for the activities pre-devolution.

Mr. Tredger: When devolution occurred, Yukon was promised a new approach to mining that would ensure mines are managed in an environmentally responsible way and that Yukoners would reap the benefits of their operations. The recent closures of Ketza River mine and Wolverine have shown that those commitments were just empty words. This government is simply perpetrating the same system that the federal government ran in Yukon before devolution — a system that left us Faro, Mount Nansen, Clinton Creek — mines that will take years to clean up at a huge financial cost to the public.

Will this government follow the DTA and bring in regulations that close the gap to ensure that corporations that mine the Yukon minerals have to put up the money to deal with the environmental liabilities before beginning to mine?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Again, with the Ketza River mine, it did not come back into production post-devolution. It was an exploration program that was taking place on-site — an exploration program on a brownfield site, essentially, is the type of activity that was undertaken there.

Again, we have seized approximately \$800,000 in security held under the *Quartz Mining Act*. Officials at EMR have assured me that this amount will satisfactorily address the outstanding reclamation work related to that exploration program. As a type 2 site, the federal government will be responsible for the care and maintenance ongoing as well as reclaiming the initial work when the mine actually was in production.

Mr. Speaker, this shows the difference between the Yukon Party government and the Official Opposition NDP when it comes to mining industry. We're very supportive of a strong and robust industry. The NDP would get rid of free-entry. They would increase royalties. They would increase taxes. They would make it very, very difficult for hard rock or placer miners to operate in this territory. We're proud of our track record working with industry to ensure that responsible resource development can occur in the territory and that we can provide the jobs and opportunities for Yukoners associated with it.

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. 86: Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation — Second Reading**

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 86, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 86, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 86, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It is indeed my pleasure to introduce Bill No. 86, *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation*.

The bill before this House is comprehensive and it provides in excess of \$5.5 million in 2015 in both tax relief for taxpayers and support for families with income too low to pay income tax. This bill also simplifies and improves the transparency of the tax code.

A responsible government cannot set tax policy purely based on its own fiscal performance. Governments cannot lose sight of the financial situation of the citizens it represents.

In the last 10 years, the average Canadian household debt has increased from 123 percent of disposable income to 163 percent of disposable income. There is some concern that, in the post financial crisis world, many in the middle class may have difficult saving for retirement. Despite these challenges facing many individuals, government support for citizens does not always need to take the form of more government programs.

Support can also come in the simple form of tax relief, as opposed to tax-and-spend policies. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, increasing disposable income through tax relief presents Yukoners with a financial choice. Whether Yukoners choose to use this tax relief to reduce debts, save for retirement, take a vacation, or a number of options, we are pleased to be able to leave more money in the pockets of Yukoners.

Yukoners expect to pay taxes in return for various government services, such as our excellent health care facilities, education system and transportation network, just to cite a few examples. However, taxpayers who pay for these services have the right to demand that they are provided in a cost-efficient and effective manner. In other words, taxpayers should pay the minimum level of taxes required to deliver the services provided.

I'm very proud of our fiscal record and I'm equally proud that our record enables us to provide tax relief outlined in this bill. This bill represents a fiscal dividend for Yukoners, resulting from our strong fiscal or financial practices. In the last 11 Public Accounts audited by the Auditor General of Canada and tabled in this Legislature, we have recorded nine surpluses. As of March 31, 2014, net financial assets — the amount that our financial resources exceed our liabilities — have grown to be in excess of \$194 million.

This is an impressive accomplishment, given the fact that government has also funded significant capital expenditures out of surpluses and not by borrowing. The main estimates for 2015-16 and the *Supplementary Estimates No. 2* for fiscal year 2014-15, are still forecasting surpluses after factoring in this tax relief.

In fact, surpluses are forecasted in fiscal years 2016-17 and 2017-18 as well. Clearly this tax relief, the 13th and most comprehensive since the Yukon Party began its mandate, is another testament to our strong fiscal management.

Amendments to the *Income Tax Act* are often technical in nature. I will limit my comments for second reading to a broad overview of the initiative and will expand on the details during my Committee of the Whole speech. There are approximately 27,000 tax filers, of which 19,500 are taxpayers. The lowest three tax brackets are being reduced, resulting in a tax savings of \$4.9 million in 2015. The first bracket, which covers income up to \$44,700, sees the largest percentage decline. The rate will fall from 7.04 to 6.4 percent, representing a decrease of 9.1 percent.

The second bracket, which covers income from \$44,701 up to \$89,400, sees the second-largest percentage decline.

The rate will fall from 9.68 percent to nine percent, representing a decrease of seven percent. The third bracket, which covers income from \$89,401 to \$138,585, sees the rate fall from 11.44 percent to 10.9 percent, representing a decrease of 4.7 percent. The fourth bracket, which currently covers incomes in excess of \$138,586, sees the rate essentially unchanged other than a minor rounding adjustment from 12.76 percent to 12.8 percent in order to move to a single decimal rate of tax for consistency with lower tax brackets. Every taxpayer in the fourth bracket benefits from the changes in the three lower brackets and will therefore see lower tax bills despite the rounding adjustment in this bracket.

With Bill No. 86, we are implementing two changes that are essentially revenue-neutral. First, we are eliminating the surtax of five percent of taxes payable in excess of \$6,000. Second, we are creating a fifth tax bracket that matches the large corporate tax rate, both in rate and threshold. In other words, income in excess of \$500,000 will be taxed at a rate of 15 percent. Eliminating the surtax will reduce taxes payable by \$604,000 and the new tax bracket increases revenue by \$660,000 in 2015.

The surtax, which essentially is a tax on a tax, is a historical anachronism created when provinces and territories did not have the ability to set the progressivity of their own tax systems. Many provinces created surtaxes as a workaround on this constraint. A tax on a tax means the effective tax one pays to the government is higher than the stated tax rate in the tax brackets. This fact is often confusing for many taxpayers trying to comprehend their tax situation. The surtax is a complex piece of tax code that, over time, has not responded as intended to other changes in the tax system. Allow me to explain.

When the surtax was introduced in 1993, it was expected to impact only a small portion of taxpayers who were in the top tax bracket. With inflation and the fact that the \$6,000 threshold has never changed, the surtax has suffered from what is referred to as "bracket creep". In other words, the surtax is impacting more and more taxpayers at lower and lower tax brackets with the passage of time.

Today, approximately 2,100 tax filers, or 11 percent of those who pay taxes, pay an additional surtax on their taxes.

Roughly one percent of those paying the surtax today will be subject to the new tax bracket.

Bill No. 86 provides considerable support for families with modest incomes. In addition to the largest reduction of rates applied to the lowest tax bracket, there are two additional measures that will benefit Yukon families with modest incomes. First, this bill proposes to enhance the Yukon child benefit at the annual cost of \$468,000, funded by \$414,000 in new money and transferring the \$54,000 annual cost savings by eliminating the low-income family tax credit. I will talk at length about this measure during Committee of the Whole. For now, I just want to point out these two facts.

First, the Yukon child tax benefit has been significantly more effective at providing support to families of modest income than the low income tax credit, and we are proud to be increasing the Yukon child tax benefit by almost 35 percent.

Second, the low income tax credit value is declining every year, and it's expected that the cost of this program would be zero as soon as 2018, if the tax act is left as it is today. The second initiative that supports families is the change in the nature of the children's fitness tax credit from a non-refundable to a refundable tax credit. This change ensures that parents will receive the credit, even if their income is too low to pay taxes.

This bill will also amend the political contributions tax credit. Upon passage of this bill, Yukon's political contributions tax credit will be consistent with that of the Government of Canada. The bill also contains technical and consequential amendments related to various administrative roles, and I will elaborate on these changes during Committee.

In our party's platform commitment, we stated that our government would continue to expand Yukon's economy by maintaining Yukon's extremely favourable general tax environment, which promotes investment in the territory. We also promised to maintain the Yukon small business investment tax credit. Bill No. 86 contains provisions to improve the administration of that credit. With Bill No. 86, we are living up to these commitments. In fact, this is the 13th change to the *Income Tax Act* since the Yukon Party came to power in 2002. All 13 changes have resulted in tax relief for Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the Minister of Finance for his comments. I would like to say that, any time you look at changes to the income tax, it's a bit daunting. We're talking about a piece of legislation that's over 3,200 pages long. So I'm sure, when we get to Committee of the Whole, we'll have an opportunity to thank the officials who did the briefing.

When we review the proposed amendments — Bill No. 86, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation* — the Official Opposition will be voting for it at second reading, but we do want to put on the record, at this stage of the process, that we do so essentially tentatively until we get some clarification from the minister opposite on a number of matters, because there are some fundamental issues. As the Premier said, taxes are an important element of the fiscal toolbox — he didn't use that;

that's my wording, but he did say that they're important. They support many of the essential services that we take for granted. In fact, taxes in the Yukon are also our largest contributor to our own-source revenue for the territory, which accounts for only some 15 percent of our total Yukon revenues.

After the minister's introductory comments on this, I believe, he made a number of references — and has made numerous references — to the Standard & Poor's report on Yukon's performance.

I went actually back and read that, just to put in a context for this discussion as well, because it is not just about credit rating, Mr. Speaker, but what the Standard & Poor's report does point out — and this is the reason why I am nuancing my support for any proposed legislation that speaks to additional tax cuts — is that they say in the report that is posted on the Department of Finance's website, for those who are interested in reading it, that the territory's budget flexibility is weak. They go on to say — and repeat this actually several times through the report — that the federal transfer constitutes a substantial proportion of the territory's revenues — about 80 percent of the operating revenues, which have changed little from previous years. They do say that, although those transfers from the federal government provide a stable and predictable revenue source, they believe that Yukon's budgetary flexibility is weak and somewhat constrained as a result.

One of the challenges that we face as a government — a territorial government that is so dependent, as this government continues to be, 12 years into its terms — is that what they call their “modifiable revenues” really typically, they say, account for a relatively small percentage of the operating revenues of this government. The current modifiable revenues — things that we have the flexibility to make choices about spending — are only about 17 percent of our operating revenues.

One of the things that Standard & Poor's goes on to say is that, despite the fact that the government talks about the mining and resource sector as being the pillars of and the foundations of Yukon's economy — actually on page 6 of that Standard & Poor's report, they say that public administration, health care, social assistance and educational services remain the foundation of Yukon's economy, constituting a significant portion of its economy.

Combining those — and then looking at the fact that, twice in that report, Standard & Poor's mentions that the territory's ability to increase revenue is somewhat constrained as a result of an act passed by a previous Yukon Party government, the *Taxpayer Protection Act*, which stipulates that the Yukon government cannot introduce a new tax or increase an existing one — in particular personal income or corporate income or fuel taxes — without a referendum. The Standard & Poor's report goes on to say that this requirement would be more of a negative credit factor if the territory relied more heavily on own-source revenue.

On one hand, we're constraining our ability to grow and, on the other hand, we want to have own-source revenue, but

this government is going to make it very, very difficult for itself or any future government. I am not making this up. It is coming out of Standard & Poor's.

They say on page 9 that transfers from the federal government drove the operating revenues almost exclusively. They also made a note that I thought was interesting — in terms of the operating revenue growth percentage has decreased from 9.43 percent in 2011 to this year. It's a negative 1.53 percent.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about having some concerns and seeking to balance the approach to the use of our tax system as an important piece of our fiscal toolbox, we support the notion of progressivity. We support the notion of progressive taxation. One of the concerns I have is that this government is committing itself to cutting taxes during a time of economic uncertainty, and we know from studies across the country that cutting personal income tax rates does not necessarily provide the positive growth rate and investment that we look to and seek.

We also wonder about the effects of the commitment to reduce our tax base and admittedly, Mr. Speaker, this appears to be modest. We're only talking of roughly \$5 million, but it's those small and modest cuts — and cuts of a thousand of those, we have — like the cranes.

This government has demonstrated a commitment to reduce tax bases while at the same time making no efforts — any expenditure cuts. We have the simultaneous increasing on one and decreasing on the other. We have seen this government move from healthy surpluses to a quite concerning low surplus — estimated at this stage from \$72 million to an estimated surplus of about \$23 million for this fiscal year.

The Premier, the Finance minister, talked about some of the real concerns that exist across this country and in this territory, as well as about the vulnerability — in terms of debt vulnerability — of citizens. One of the notions in economic theories is that if we cut taxes, we're going to boost spending and that will help boost the Yukon's GDP, in which case both rich and poor are going to benefit. There is also evidence that, in times of economic uncertainty, there is a tendency to save rather than to consume. We asked questions in the briefing — and we'll come back to that in Committee of the Whole — about the modelling that was done here with respect to what kind of a multiplier effect the government was looking to achieve through these tax cuts.

The Official Opposition supports making the child tax credit refundable as this is a way to ensure people who are not paying taxes — low-income people — get the benefits. We also support, as I mentioned earlier, the notion of progressive income taxation. We've seen the implications of governments in this country that have moved away from that and the really difficult circumstances it places citizens and governments in.

We support personal tax reductions for low-income Yukoners as well as the creation of a higher bracket for revenues over \$500,000. But where I have to express a concern, Mr. Speaker — and I am looking to the Minister of Finance when we get into Committee of the Whole — is why

this government felt the need to reduce income taxes for the second-highest tax bracket for revenues over \$138,000 or \$140,000 to \$500,000. Why was there no consideration of splitting that bracket in two? There is a significant difference in income of somebody with \$138,000 and somebody with \$400,000 or \$499,000.

The notion of a progressive tax rate means that we pay a higher rate of tax as we earn more. We do expect in this country that kind of progressive taxation. That is what has given us the kinds of services that we all enjoy in this territory and provides the opportunity for all citizens to benefit. We are no strangers to growing income inequality in this territory, in this city. Tomorrow there is a forum on vulnerable people put on by Kwanlin Dun and the City of Whitehorse. There are people living in poverty.

The growing income inequality in Canada — the fact that we have not a temporary, but an institutionalized food bank in this territory. We have NGOs struggling to carry on more and more the functions of governments. That is really a fundamental piece and we need to have a debate or discussion in Committee of the Whole on why there was no consideration of splitting — or why they saw it as a priority to reduce the income taxes for people who earn at the top end of that highest bracket and why they wouldn't consider splitting the tax brackets in two, instead of having one range, as I said, of \$138,000 to \$500,000.

There are a number of comments that I would make when we get into the actual details of the sections as we go through them, because it is quite detailed, as the Minister of Finance noted in his comments. The notion of progressivity in taxation is great, but the notion of ensuring that the people who need to benefit the most from things like child benefits — that they can achieve that. That is also something that we would support, but we do want to see a real reflection of a real notion of progressivity in our taxation system in this territory. We will look forward to the debate in Committee of the Whole so that we can hopefully reach a common understanding of what the intent of this legislation is.

Mr. Silver: I will be brief here on second reading for Bill No. 86. I am happy to rise and to speak to it. As a Liberal, I support giving tax breaks to those in the middle class, and they will be receiving the lion's share of the benefits in these changes. The Yukon can be an expensive place to live, and I am happy to see more money staying in the pockets of families and the middle-class folks in the Yukon. For lower income earners, however, the tax cut means only a mean of about \$90 a year. I would have preferred to see these cuts directed more toward those in the lower brackets, for those who actually need the break the most.

It is worth noting that the last significant tax relief for families and individuals was under a Liberal government back in 2000. I do have a few questions that I hope the minister will address. How were these cuts decided upon? Who did they consult with? How did they calculate the percentage cuts for each bracket? I look forward to the debate continuing through Committee of the Whole.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'm very pleased to rise and speak to this bill at second reading. The changes that are made in this bill are excellent ones and I would like to commend the Minister of Finance for bringing this bill forward. Of course, what we see in this bill are sweeping personal tax cuts that will provide more than \$5.5 million in savings annually to Yukon taxpayers. That's a fantastic step forward, I think, Mr. Speaker, and I'm very pleased to be part of a government that is bringing forward these sweeping new tax cuts.

The bill that we have before us includes new lower tax rates for all existing tax brackets. It's a fantastic step forward. As other members have noted, these lower rates apply primarily to what we generally refer to as the middle class, but they apply across all tax brackets.

I did want to note that this isn't the first time that we've amended the *Income Tax Act* in the Legislature. I had the pleasure last year, on April 2, to table changes to the *Income Tax Act* to reduce the small business tax rate from four percent to three percent. That was done, as I said, just over a year ago from now.

At that time, I noted that a 25-percent reduction in the corporate tax rate ensures that the Yukon tax regime on small businesses is competitive with neighbouring provinces. I also noted that businesses will soon be able to retain a greater portion of their earnings. That bill and that change to the *Income Tax Act* that I tabled last year came into effect on July 1 last year. As a result of that, Mr. Speaker, Yukon small businesses now have more money that stays in their businesses as a result of those changes.

I should note that the federal government has followed Yukon's lead in reducing the small business tax rate even further in the most recent budget that was tabled earlier this week. My understanding is that that tax rate would again be reduced by another two percent from the federal side which, as a net, means that three percentage points have been removed from the small business tax rate in the past year, as a result of both Yukon government and the federal government tax changes.

This is an excellent step forward for small businesses in the territory. I should note that the Yukon already has a very competitive tax rate across the board. Our active business income rate, the rate the small businesses pay for the first \$500,000 of profit, is relatively low now. I should also note, Mr. Speaker, that the previous Yukon Party government, in 2011, tabled changes again to this act that increased the threshold from \$400,000 to \$500,000, which was the income limit for small businesses, at which point the rate would change from a small business to the other corporate level. That was another very positive change for Yukon businesses.

We've seen over the years a willingness by this government to make changes that benefit Yukon businesses and now, as of this bill being tabled before us today, significant changes to our tax regime that improve the opportunities for Yukon citizens as well. We have made changes to promote businesses in the territory and now we're making changes to promote individuals and families

throughout the territory. I'm very pleased to be, as I said before, part of a government that has made these significant changes to our tax regime.

These changes proposed in this bill will most certainly benefit all of my constituents in the riding of Copperbelt North and I look forward to informing them in the coming weeks, months and years about these changes and how they will benefit those families living in my neighbourhood. This is going to mean more money in their pockets and more freedom for them to decide how they want to spend it. Any time we see a reduction in taxes, in my humble opinion, is a good step forward.

I was also pleased to see included in this bill the changes made to the Yukon child tax benefit as well, which applies to approximately 1,200 Yukon families. The maximum annual amount per child will rise to \$820 from \$690, and the Yukon income threshold for receiving the maximum benefit will increase to \$35,000 from \$30,000. These increases will begin with the July 2015 payment. I think that these changes will have significant positive impacts on lower income families and that the Yukon child tax benefit means that a single parent of two children earning \$35,000 will see a 45-percent increase in his or her benefit — again, an excellent step forward for lower income Yukoners who will benefit significantly by the changes brought forward in this bill.

The amendments to the *Income Tax Act* provided before us today also provide support to families with modest incomes by changing the Yukon children's fitness tax credit from a non-refundable credit to a refundable credit. This change ensures that parents will receive the credit even if their income is too low to pay taxes. That's an excellent step forward and one that I'm sure, will be even supported by the NDP. I know that they've noted before concerns about those types of tax credits in terms of whether or not they are refundable or not. I'm sure that this bill will receive broad support from hopefully all members of the Legislature.

I also wanted to add a particular small note in that I'm very pleased to see that pesky, anachronistic surtax removed from our tax regime. That feature of our tax regime has been something that I've always pondered about for as long as I have been giving thoughtful consideration to Yukon's tax regime. I've always wondered why it was that that surtax existed. I've learned over the years that it's really an anachronism of a bygone era when our tax structure was just simply very different. I'm very pleased to see that surtax eliminated. A tax on a tax, in my humble opinion, is a nonsensical proposition. I don't believe in it at all so I'm very pleased to see that change come forward to very much modernize our tax regime.

I don't need to go on any further. As I said, I am very proud to serve in a government that is reducing the taxes for Yukoners. I am very pleased to see this bill come forward and I look very much forward to voting in favour of lowering the tax burden on Yukoners, regardless of their income level, and reducing the tax rate for all existing tax brackets — a very excellent day for Yukoners. I am very proud.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?
Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. 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 second reading of Bill No. 86 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 86, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation*.

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. 86: Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 86, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation*.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It is an honour to have Clarke LaPrairie from the Department of Finance here with me in Committee of the Whole. He played a very significant role in this piece of legislation, and I want to thank him for his commitment and the excellent job.

It is indeed my pleasure to speak to Bill No. 86, *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation*. This is a sweeping bill, changing many aspects of the *Income Tax Act* and one related regulation. Given the complexity of the act, my explanation will be comprehensive.

I will begin by discussing changes to the Yukon child benefit. The Yukon child benefit is a refundable tax credit paid monthly to qualifying families. The current maximum benefit is \$690 annually for each dependent child. The benefit is reduced by either five percent of a family's net income in excess of \$30,000 for families with more than one child or pay 2.5 percent for families with one child.

Bill No. 86 proposes to raise the current annual benefit to \$820 per child and increase the income threshold amount that triggers the benefit reduction to \$35,000. Today a single parent of two, earning \$35,000 a year, receives a reduced benefit of \$1,130 per year. This will change to an unreduced benefit of \$1,640 per year. In other words, his or her benefit will increase by 45 percent under this proposal.

The new Yukon child benefit amounts begin on July 1, 2015. The annual cost of these changes is \$468,000. Approximately 1,200 families with 2,400 children will receive the Yukon child benefit. The Yukon government is quite aware of the challenges of raising children with modest family resources. Often people are poor only for certain stages in their lives. In other words, there is a longitudinal dimension to poverty. For example, many students would meet the definition of poor, but will quickly leave that group upon entering the workforce. However, children — and particularly children of single-parent families — tend to experience poverty for longer periods than other groups. This is why we are enhancing the Yukon child benefit.

Madam Chair, I would like to take a few moments to discuss why we are repealing the low-income tax family credit and transferring those resources to the Yukon child benefit. The low-income family tax credit was introduced in 1999. The credit reduces Yukon tax by up to \$300 for individuals and families who are resident in the Yukon at the end of the year. The credit amount is the lesser of \$300 minus three percent of net income, less the universal child care benefit in excess of \$15,000, or 80 percent of tax payable.

The spouse with the higher net income must claim the credit. The credit is claimable if net income is less than \$25,000. The low-income family tax credit, as you can tell, is kind of a complicated credit. It will take a few moments to

illustrate some of the problems and how this credit is structured.

First, as other sections of the federal and Yukon income tax have changed over time, this credit has become less effective at supporting families. In fact, left unchanged, the tax credit will eventually go to zero, possibly as early as 2018.

Second, while the act states the maximum credit is \$300, the maximum low-income family tax credit one could reasonably expect, if they also claimed only the basic personal exemption credit and the northern residents deduction, would not be the \$300 stated in the act, but would be approximately \$145. In reality, most taxpayers have other credits that would reduce the low-income family tax credit below this \$145 maximum. The average credit in practice is approximately \$42 a year.

Third, the current formula creates a bit of an oddity in terms of income support measures in that, within a certain income range, the level of support increases with income. A family earning \$40,000 a year could be entitled to the \$145 credit I described, while a family earning \$17,000 a year would receive no credit.

Ideally, in designing a credit for low-income families, you would want the lowest income individuals to be entitled to the maximum allowable. Today, less than two percent of taxpayers who claim this credit have children. In fact, almost 92 percent of those claiming the family credit have no children or no spouse. The remaining six percent of taxpayers claiming this credit are half of a couple without children. Clearly, the Yukon child benefit has been a more effective tool for supporting families.

Madam Chair, with Bill No. 86 we are eliminating the surtax of five percent of taxes payable in excess of \$6,000 and creating a fifth tax bracket that matches the large corporate tax rate in both rate and threshold. In other words, income in excess of \$500,000 will be taxed at a rate of 15 percent.

Eliminating the surtax will, in 2015, reduce taxes payable by \$604,000 and the new tax bracket increases revenue by an estimated \$660,000 for a net increase of \$54,000. The surtax, which is a tax on a tax, means that the effective tax rate one pays to government is higher than stated in the rate brackets — five percent higher for all income taxed in the third and fourth bracket, and a portion of one's income at the second bracket.

The tax code is complicated enough. Taxpayers do not need added complexity of trying to figure out how their effective tax rate differs from the stated rate on their tax returns. Madam Chair, the lion's share of the tax relief contained in this bill comes from lowering the marginal tax rates for the three lowest tax brackets. \$4.9 million in savings to taxpayers in 2015 alone is related to lowering these rates.

Taxes affect human behaviour and decision-making. In the cases of taxes such as tobacco or liquor taxes, a change in behaviour is a desired policy outcome of levying the tax. In the case of income tax, finding the optimal level of taxation with minimal negative impact truly is a balancing act.

Our tax system is based on marginal tax rates, meaning the rate that would apply to the next dollar of income one

would earn. Too high a rate creates a disincentive to work and to save and to invest in one's own education. These negative effects of taxation in the long run can lead to reduced economic growth and a corresponding lack in savings, job creation, and business investment.

With the new rate structure, Yukon taxpayers, whether they earn \$50,000 or \$100,000, will face the third-lowest tax bills in this country. Only the two other territories are lower. However, the other two territories — two-percent payroll tax, in addition to their income tax, effectively eliminates any tax advantage in Nunavut or Northwest Territories.

Madam Chair, this bill also increases the political contributions tax credit. This bill matches the amount of the federal credit and, therefore, increases the credit from a maximum of \$500 per year to a maximum of \$650 per year. Most of the increase in the value comes from increasing the amount of the credit on the lowest threshold. The current credit is calculated as the sum of 75 percent of the first \$100 of contributions, 50 percent of the next \$450 of contributions, and 33.33 percent on the next \$600 of contributions. The proposed credit is calculated as the sum of 75 percent of the first \$400 of contributions, 50 percent of the next \$350 of contributions, and 33.33 percent of the next \$525 of contributions.

After this bill is passed, the amount of the Yukon political contributions tax credit will be harmonized with the federal credit. Therefore, going forward, the decision of a Yukon citizen on whether to donate to a federal party, or territorial counterpart, will not be influenced by tax considerations.

This bill changes the nature of the children's fitness tax credit from a non-refundable to a refundable tax credit. This change ensures that parents receive the credit even if their income is too low to pay taxes. Their credit mirrors the federal credit, which was changed to a refundable credit as of January 1, 2015.

Bill No. 86 makes some minor changes to the Yukon small business tax credit. There are no operational changes to the program contemplated to this bill; rather, the bill improves the legal language that supports the program. The current language essentially requires the Minister of Economic Development to express his or her opinion on the validity of events that have not happened yet, prior to issuing any certificates under the program. This is clearly problematic. The suggested changes allow the minister to issue a certificate based on the evidence presented in the application.

Madam Chair, Yukon agreed to have the same administrative rules in our *Income Tax Act* as Canada to efficiently administer the income tax program. The bill aligns several Yukon income tax provisions with the federal provisions required by our tax collection agreement with Canada. The changes to the impacted provisions are relatively minor in nature and they are related to debt recovery of child tax benefit overpayments; child tax benefit false statements and omission penalties; foreign tax deduction rules; refunds of instalments regarding hardship; definition of tax years for certain trusts; and definition of advantage with respect to political contributions similar to the federal language.

Finally, the government is proud to lower the tax burden. High taxation rates are not the way to prosperity and a healthy society. This is the 13th change to the *Income Tax Act* since the Yukon Party came to power in 2002; all 13 changes have resulted in tax relief.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the official for the briefing that was provided to the opposition parties the other day on Bill No. 86. As I had said at second reading, just looking at the tome that was placed on the table in the briefing room, the *Income Tax Act*, which at over 3,200 pages is quite a massive, massive and complex document that we all deal with, one way or the other, because taxes are there — they are us.

Indeed, as the Minister of Finance has outlined, Bill No. 86 covers a broad array and a cornucopia of matters, from amendments to the *Income Tax Act*, as he mentioned and as his officials — I just need to find my act, here, sorry. A lot of those, or a number of them, were consequential amendments. A number of them are to bring them in line with the Canada Revenue Agency's agreements that we have with Canada and a number of them are to deal with modernizing, as I understood it, the legal language of the act — and we'll go into those as we go through the various sections of the act.

The other changes — in terms of the repeal of the surtax; the bringing into line or paralleling the territorial and federal contributions — political contributions — provisions; the issue of the language and the impact — or the clarification, I guess, is the way I understood it and certainly will seek as we go through the discussion on the small business tax credit, a tax credit that has been in place since an NDP government put it there. To clarify some of the responsibilities of both the Minister of Finance and Minister of Economic Development with respect to that, certainly those clarifying measures are always good and it's those opportunities that we take to review our legislation that is important.

As well as those issues is the matter of the refundable nature of the child fitness tax credit. Again, the importance of ensuring that the system is structured — as I had mentioned in my second reading comments, the importance of any progressive measures that ensure that even those peoples whose income are not great enough to attract significant or any income tax — so that their children and they can benefit from these systems that we put in place as part of our economic and our fiscal toolbox that we have.

We had asked at the briefing — and I noted in the Minister of Community Services' comments about the changes being made and reflected I think to a certain degree by the Minister of Finance's comments — that the more taxes that you can cut the better. I think that the reason why I introduced the comments from the Standard & Poor's report is that, in fact, there is a limit to what that philosophy can lead us to, because at some point in time cutting taxes, at least theoretically, I think does reduce our government revenues, that's a given, which can deplete a budget surplus.

There is a philosophy — and we've seen it at play and heard it in this forum too — that taxes are bad and that the best tax policy is just about lowering taxes. Our question — and it is the question I said at the second reading speech — is

ensuring that we don't push that argument so far that we forget that there is merit to a progressive tax system.

We saw that in Alberta. The flat tax is basically where everybody pays the same tax rate. We now have the mayors of the two major cities in Alberta — Calgary and Edmonton — and Mayor Nenshi, who was here earlier this winter and made it very clear that the flat-tax approach is really unfair to people on low incomes.

I am hoping that this notion that the Premier is positing that simply having a series of 13 different cuts is what he is trying to achieve here. If in fact he is trying to achieve an opportunity for greater stimulus, then we would be talking about the kinds of rationale beyond philosophical belief that cutting taxes is the measure of a government. What I would be interested in from the Minister of Finance is what his thinking and his analysis — what economic modelling was he looking for to propel the changes to the *Income Tax Act* and the regulations and what is the impact of these sequential tax changes?

So because the Minister of Finance of the Yukon Party government has now had, as he said, 12 years of successive tax decreases — what has been the impact of these changes on Yukoners' marginal propensity to consume and their marginal propensity to save? We would like to see the data, and I think all Yukoners would like to see that. It is certainly not reflected in the revenues that have accrued to this government. That is why I also referred earlier to the Standard & Poor's report, which said that the major contributor, the major foundation, of this government is government — that is the major foundation of our economy? We are looking to see, as this government has philosophically moved in this direction, what they think the projected impact is on economic multipliers and our territorial GDP because we have seen those decrease too.

The Premier made the comment that taxes affect human behaviour. He is clearly aware of that, so we are looking for some of the data that will support it because certainly the numbers right now are not bolstering his argument. It sounds good, but you have to have the data to back it up. These are significant changes because, as Standard & Poor's says, the more you keep going this way, the more you are affecting our ability as a government to grow into a real government as opposed to something that is 80 to 89 percent reliant on the federal government.

When the Minister of Finance referenced our sister territories and said that their taxes were higher because they have a payroll tax — well, let's be clear. That payroll tax only applies to those people who reside — they pay it. Everybody pays it, universally, but it's rebated for those who reside in Northwest Territories if you pay your income tax in Northwest Territories and Nunavut. That's not a tax. For some people and some young folks I know who live and work in camps, that's a savings account.

If you're flying in from Alberta or B.C. or someplace else to work in those territories — the government in the Northwest Territories made a concerted effort to consult with its citizens about what they could do, as a way of handling the impact of the fly-in, fly-out workers. They made the advised

decision, with consultation, to implement this payroll tax. The idea was, and is, that if you are paying your income tax someplace else, those two territories will not totally carry the cost of you being able to benefit from playing, having fun and working in their territories.

I just wanted to sort of clarify and correct the record in terms of the Premier's depiction of how that payroll tax actually does work in those two territories. I thought it was an interesting process that a legislature like the Northwest Territories actually went out and did engage with its citizens about a matter of taxation — go figure.

I had raised the concern, put a marker down, as to the rationale for the changes here. I just want to ask the Minister of Finance to clarify. In the changes that we're talking about — in all the tax brackets — there's this large group in the fourth bracket, which goes from \$138,000 to \$500,000. The question from the Official Opposition, the New Democratic point of view, is — seeing as we have in Canada generally accepted the notion of progressive tax structures to support a strong economy, an inclusive economy, and the notion that progressive taxes means that we do pay a higher rate of tax as we earn more — I think that most people would agree that there is a significant difference in income between \$138,000 and \$500,000.

The question is: Has the government considered the idea of splitting that fourth bracket into two and, if not, why not? The \$138,000 may be upper middle class, but somebody making \$400,000 is significantly more than middle class, even in the Yukon.

I'll leave that there for now, I think. I'll leave it for now at those, Madam Chair, and then we'll come back to other questions because I made lots of notes on this as we were going through.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I guess I would begin by just stating for the record and painting the obvious — but there is clearly an ideological difference between the Yukon Party and the NDP when it comes to taxes.

I think that's part of the reason why there was a *Taxpayer Protection Act* created — to reduce the risk of a tax-and-spend government like the NDP would have, where the focus is on spending as opposing to saving. I think that the statement by Standard & Poor's is correct. It does put a limit on government and that's not a bad thing, because what it does is also put on onus on government to be responsible on the expense side; to focus on exactly how much money they do spend and so I think it's a very good fit. I see how the NDP would take that comment as a negative. I don't take that comment as a negative, Madam Chair, because I think there is a difference when one government — one party wants to talk about giving us an ideology that essentially says, "Give us all your money and we'll spend it for you because we know what's important for you" versus a government that, with the passage of this act, will see that every taxpayer in the Yukon will pay less taxes.

Certainly I also see in this act simplicity in our tax regimen. I do agree that it is in fact still progressive and still is a progressive tax. But the good news is that in spite of putting

this money back — and I shouldn't say "in spite of" because we think this is a very good thing; to allow more money into people's hands to do with what they choose. We think that that's an important aspect of our freedoms that we have in this country, but in spite of that, we still have net financial resources, not only projected in this budget, but in the outboard years and we are also projecting annual surpluses as well.

We believe that allowing more choice and putting more money back into people's pockets is a good thing. We're also very proud of the child tax benefit and increasing the monies to parents with children, and seeing that they get that money on a monthly basis.

We are certainly focused, as we have been for the last dozen years, on growing a private sector economy. As we grow a private sector economy and we see the 7,000 people who, in that past decade, moved to this territory — creating more diversification; creating more private sector jobs — creates more people paying corporate taxes and personal income taxes as a result of that. We've seen the growth in our own-source revenues over that period of time.

I do want to speak briefly about the payroll taxes because, you know, really this a bit of smoke and mirrors — she's talking about Northwest Territories and Nunavut — because all of those residents pay that tax. Because it's not in the taxes, it appears that their taxes are lower, but then they have to pay this tax on their wages. I'm very surprised that the NDP are supportive of this because this is not a progressive tax. This is a tax that pays two percent on no matter what wage rate. If you're working for minimum wage or you're working for much higher, you pay that amount.

Not only that, something else that the NDP doesn't consider is the tremendous burden this also puts on businesses to administer this payroll tax as well — where there is no thought of that — and that, ultimately in the end, everybody pays more as a result of that.

Her final comment was around the fact that one taxation level ends at just over \$138,000 and the next one is at \$500,000, and why would we not slip another one in there — which I'm totally not surprised about. I know that the NDP would really salivate at the opportunity to stick another one or two tax brackets in there, but do you know what that would do? That would be raising taxes and we're not raising taxes. We haven't raised taxes since we came to power in 2002. As I have stated in second reading and in Committee of the Whole, this is the 13th amendment to the *Income Tax Act* since the Yukon Party has come to power. All of those changes have been to lower the burden on Yukoners. We won't be adding another tax bracket in there and increasing the tax rate because we have made that commitment.

For the record, we should just look at some of the — well, let's just call it the general tax environment that we have in the Yukon right now. We have the lowest fuel taxes in Canada — the lowest by far — at 6.2 cents per litre for gasoline, 7.2 cents per litre for diesel, and the next-lowest jurisdiction is Alberta. We are 31-percent lower on gas and

20-percent lower on diesel for our fuel tax but, as we know, they just raised their fuel taxes as well.

If you compare them to British Columbia, our rates are approximately 70- and 80-percent lower than the taxes that they are charging in British Columbia.

We have extensive exemptions for non-road use of fuel for commercial purposes. For example, diesel use for electrical generation is exempted from taxes here, whereas in jurisdictions like Northwest Territories, they do not exempt it. We have to pay the fuel tax on diesel used to provide electricity. This can be a very significant cost for an operation that must produce its own electricity. In the 2012-13 fiscal year, this exemption was worth over \$5.3 million in foregone taxes in Yukon.

As I have stated, we don't have a payroll tax and we are not interested in a payroll tax. We don't have a sales tax. Typical provincial sales taxes are seen as a significant tax on the bottom line. It really is a tax on investment; it's not a tax on profitability. I think our lack of a sales tax is a significant saving. You just have to go to B.C. or Saskatchewan, or any of these other provinces, and buy anything, and look at what the price was on the sticker or on the shelf and then what you pay after you pay that PST and that GST, or in some situations where you pay the HST.

Our small business tax rate — as the Minister of Community Services and through his leadership as Minister of Economic Development — reduces small business tax by 25 percent from four percent to three percent. We have the lowest manufacturing and processing tax rate in Canada at 2.5 percent. Despite all the tax savings mentioned, our general corporate rate is still a competitive 15 percent.

We have some of the lowest personal income tax rates in Canada, across all levels of income and family sizes and situations. As I just mentioned earlier, for people with \$50,000 or \$100,000 salaries, we only follow Nunavut and Northwest Territories, but then they have a two-percent tax on their wages.

Yukon offers a refundable research and development tax credit of 15 percent of eligible expenses, with an additional five-percent credit for research conducted at Yukon College. Yukon small business investment tax credit is a personal tax credit that reduces Yukon income tax for eligible investors who invest in eligible business corporations making qualified investments.

Our business incentive program provides rebates to contractors working on eligible government contracts, as an incentive to hire Yukon residents and to use Yukon-manufactured products when delivering contract requirements.

We are proud of our record of growth in this territory. We are doing what we can do at this time, when we're seeing an economic downturn in the mineral resource industry. We're making the largest capital investment in our territory's history, promoting and providing work for Yukoners today, but building and investing in infrastructure that will help us be ready for the future vision, which we've now talked about a few times during this session, and the lack thereof from the other parties.

Ms. Hanson: I guess the Minister of Finance believes that if you tell half the story, it's correct. I guess that's like half the truth. If he believes what he says, he doesn't need to tell the whole story about how the payroll tax works in the Northwest Territories and the fact that that's one territorial government that actually used a small tool at its disposal to try to wean itself off the federal dependency, which this government has been unable to do, as is reflected again in his favourite Standard & Poor's reports.

I just want to reiterate that, despite what the Minister of Finance has said about the much-lauded stimulation that his initiatives have done, the fact of the matter remains, as Standard & Poor's says, that transfers from the federal government drove the operating revenues almost exclusively. If there's anything that this government has done, it has been at the margin.

Madam Chair, my question is simple: Can the Premier explain — the Minister of Finance explain — why the income bracket \$138,000 to \$500,000 warrants the same level of taxation?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I have just a couple of comments I would like to put in around own-source revenues as compared to base transfers from Canada — since 2005-06, growth in our own-source revenues has been 93 percent, and the base transfer, TFF, has grown by 77 percent. Own-source revenues as a percentage of the budget, back in 2005-06, was at 14.3 percent, and in 2015-16, it's at 15.5 percent. Just another number out there; for 2015-16, our TFF increase was 2.68 percent. To put that into context, equalization payments for the provinces were 3.85 percent for 2015-16.

Back to the question though — I think I answered the question when I stood up the first time and said that this government is committed to not raising taxes, to living within our means. We can generate more money by increasing revenues through growth in our private sector economy. We are not going to create another tax bracket and raise the taxes for any of the individuals. We've made that commitment in 2002, we made that commitment in 2006 and we made that commitment in 2011. We will live with that commitment to live within our means, because we believe you need to be able to also control your expenses and the record will show that we continue to run surpluses. We continue to have money in the bank.

Ms. Hanson: I will just persist with trying to understand. The Premier then is saying that a family that is earning \$138,000 a year should receive that 0.6-percent decrease in their taxation and that's equally beneficial to them as the family who is making \$499,000? He's saying that the family that makes \$138,000 really should have no break in comparison to a family that is getting \$499,000? I guess I would question how he equates that in terms of the struggles that may accrue with a family with kids at \$499,000. I don't know if he's talking about putting money back into the economy. It seems to me that he's favoring the folks at the top end and not the folks at the middle top.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As I said after her first comment, the NDP would look at this and salivate at the opportunity to

create more tax brackets, to raise more money, and that's why the *Taxpayer Protection Act* came in. It is to limit a tax-and-spend government from doing precisely that. But I do believe, as I have said so far in debate, that all taxpayers in the Yukon will have more money and will pay less taxes in Yukon as a result of this, and I think that's what's important. I'm not going to argue the details on this specifically, but I would say that someone who is making \$138,000 will benefit from the effects of the lower bracket savings as someone who is making \$400,000.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Madam Chair, I know I still have the floor; maybe she's aspiring for your seat.

I again believe, as I said, that we're proud of the fact that, since 2002, we have not raised taxes and we are now in a position, after 12 previous amendments to the *Income Tax Act*, where we have reduced the tax burden for Yukoners, to put some money back into all Yukoners', all taxpayers', pockets. That is almost 20,000 taxpayers who will all see that they pay less tax.

So far, when I have been talking — and certainly members on this side have been talking to people out on the street. They think that is a good idea.

Ms. Hanson: I guess the Minister of Finance doesn't want to answer the question. I want to go back to two points and then we can move into reviewing the bill before us in detail.

The Premier, the Minister of Finance, has repeatedly made references to the fact that we have increased own-source revenues and have a lesser dependence on federal transfers. Actually, when we look at the Public Accounts, which are the definitive statement on our finances in this territory, it is not what might come from the political offices. In fact, over the last 15 years — that is from 2000 to 2015 — our dependence on federal transfers has increased more than three-fold from \$309 million in 2000 to about \$1.06 billion in 2015. It has increased 1.3-fold since 2011. This is the Public Accounts, Madam Chair, so our dependence has not decreased. The amount of money hasn't decreased.

Unfortunately, for what the Minister of Finance has put on the floor, the fact of the matter is that our own-source revenues, as a proportion of our total revenues over the same period, have decreased. In fact, they have decreased by one-third compared to 15 years ago.

Our own-source revenues in 2000 were 21 percent and they were 14 percent in 2014. You can throw all you want around about what we like to think is what our own-source revenues are. We like to talk about what we would like to think they are, but the facts in Public Accounts tell you something quite different. It would be good if we actually had a debate about the Public Accounts in this Legislative Assembly if the government opposite would take them seriously.

I gather that we are not going to see any flexibility of ideology from the Minister of Finance, so I think that rather than prolonging the discussion here, perhaps we could make better use of our time if we were to look at the actual

provisions of Bill No. 86 and move through the bill and its provisions. I no doubt anticipate that there will be some questions that we will have on the various provisions in the bill.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I guess I didn't expect the NDP leader to understand the explanation when I did give it just this week as well. Looking at a snapshot in Public Accounts doesn't tell the whole picture, of course, because we get different streams of money from the federal government. One of them is where we deliver programs that are the responsibility of the federal government and we do it on a —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Chair: Order please. Mr. Pasloski has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I know she just doesn't like to hear the answer, Madam Chair.

There is money that we receive to deliver programs on behalf of the federal government that are their obligations. Another stream of money is one-off money that we get from the federal government. Examples of that would be Building Canada money, and the money that we get for type 2 mine reclamation as well. These are revenue streams that are not especially unique to Yukon but in fact Canada offers them to all jurisdictions as well.

If you actually look at the base TFF — territorial formula financing arrangement — and comparing that — essentially then, where you have the base amount comparing apples to apples — as I have stated, we've seen a growth since 2005-06 of own-source revenues by 93 percent — a growth in the TFF by 77 percent. We've seen our own-source revenues as a percentage in 2005-06 of 14.3 percent — in the current fiscal year, 15.5 percent.

We continue to focus on growing our economy, but I have to ask the members opposite: Would they turn the money away? I guess I would like to know that. Would they then want to decrease money for health care, transportation, education? I guess I would also like to know: Where would they get the money from if they are so willing to turn it away? We'll continue to work with Canada. We'll continue to provide services and goods on behalf of Yukoners by Yukoners, whether they're our territorial obligations or obligations of the federal government that we are doing on their behalf. Madam Chair, we need to make sure that we compare apples to apples.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate?

We're going to move on then to clause-by-clause debate.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Ms. Hanson: For the record, could the Minister of Finance just explain the reasons for these changes?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It is to ensure consistency with the federal government. What it's doing is ensuring that Yukon defines "taxable income earned in Canada" in the same manner as Canada.

Ms. Hanson: Could the Minister of Finance explain why the definition "taxation year" is replaced with "taxation

year' has the same meaning as in subsection 249(1) of the federal Act"?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This is another housekeeping issue. Yukon's definition of "taxation year" under subsection 1(1) makes reference to federal subsection 104(23), paragraphs 104(23)(a) and (b), which provide the rules for the taxation year of a testamentary trust, were repealed. The rules are now provided in subsection 249(1).

Clause 2 agreed to

On Clause 3

Clause 3 agreed to

On Clause 4

Ms. Hanson: In clause 4, a number of subsections are repealed. Could the minister clarify the reason why those are being repealed?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: They are spent provisions that are no longer operative; subsections which consumer price indexing applies now either point directly to the federal provisions or, in the case of subsection 6(25), 6(31) and 6(56) are repealed.

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

Ms. Hanson: In section 9 of the act, this is, as the Minister of Finance — as I understand it — and I'm seeking his confirmation that this is the section — the section does deal with the small business tax credit. My understanding is the program is not changing. I understand that it clarifies what investments are eligible. I understand that it provides greater security or certainty for investors.

I understand the Minister of Economic Development requires the company to file an annual return and that the Minister of Economic Development, by these legislative changes, is no longer allowed to simply express an opinion that the company is in compliance in terms of providing this certification that the CRA, the Canada Revenue Agency, would accept as an eligible certificate. So I would appreciate if — the reason I'm saying these are — my understandings is that I would appreciate if the Minister of Finance could — because this is a small business, this does affect the operations of both ministers, with respect to Economic Development, as well as the responsibilities and obligations of the Minister of Finance. I would appreciate if the minister would walk through the investment tax credit amendment provisions contained in 9, with a view to ensuring that all members are clear about the intended consequences of those amendments.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: So 9(1) reflects a recent determination by CRA under the under the Canada-Yukon tax collection agreement. It provides for the Minister of Finance to provide for small business investment tax credits on receipt

of the small business investment tax credit certificates; the Minister of Economic Development is provided with the authority to determine and ensure continued eligibility of the small business investments and authorizes issuance of small business investment tax credit certificates.

So 9(1) refers to an investment issued pursuant to a certificate given by the Minister of Economic Development; provides for a means of describing the securities that a corporation issues, or proposes to issue, and in respect of which it has applied for a certificate; recognizes that some events in determining a qualified investment occur in the future and cannot be determined with certainty in the present.

Section 9(2)(a) provides a personal income tax credit if the individual's investment is a certified investment, i.e. was issued pursuant to a certificate. This removes a requirement that the Minister of Finance determine whether the investment is a qualified investment. Section 9(2)(b) references a certified investment. Section 9(2)(c) removes a requirement that the Minister of Finance determine whether the investment is intended to be a qualified investment. Section 9(3)(8) clarifies that the corporation is making application for the small business investment tax credit.

9(4)(a) references a prospective qualified investment; 9(4)(b)(ii) references a prospective qualified investment; 9(4)(b)(iii) removes the requirement for a corporation to disclose concurrent issuance of other securities in conjunction with the issuance of a small business investment tax credit securities; 9(4)(b)(iv) provides the Commissioner in Executive Council to require by regulation that certain information be disclosed to both the minister and the shareholders of the subject investments; 9(4)(c)(h) removes reference to object and spirit of the *Income Tax Act*; 9(5)(10) requires the Minister of Economic Development to examine the corporation's application in determining to authorize certificates, but allows, but does not require, the minister to issue a certificate provided the requirements of subsection 12 are met; 9(5)(11) requires a corporation that gets a certificate to deliver to its investors not only a copy of the certificate, but also any information that a regulation requires to be disclosed to both the minister and the shareholders; 9(5)(12) sets out the requirements for the Minister of Economic Development to issue a certificate; 9(5)(12)(a), the corporation's application must include all of the necessary documents and information; 9(5)(12)(b) the minister must consider the application complete and accurate; 9(5)(12)(c), the minister must have reasonable grounds to believe that the prospective qualified investment in fact will be a qualified investment; 9(5)(12)(d), two limits apply to the amount of investments for which certificates can be issued in any calendar year. The particular corporation and corporations associated with it cannot get certificates for more than \$800,000 and all corporations together cannot get certificates for more than \$4 million. The amended provision clarifies how these limits apply and removes the need for the minister to predict whether other applications may be in the same year.

9(6) corrects reference from non-existing definition to defined term; 9(7)(14) imposes non-discretionary

consequences to providing false, misleading or incomplete information to the Minister of Economic Development or failing to act in accordance with a certificate.

The minister must revoke a certificate if — and then we go to 9(7)(a) the corporation omitted or misrepresented facts to get the certificate; (b) the corporation did not use the proceeds as it said it would; (c) the corporation omitted or misrepresented facts in any of the annual returns required to be filed by a corporation for four years after the year of issuance of the certificates; (d) a person other than an eligible investor as issued the prospective qualified investment or the investment was not a qualified investment; and (e) the corporation failed to provide disclosure to the shareholders of the subject of investments at the time of providing the certificate to the shareholder.

Then 9(7)(14.01) provides for the reversal of tax credits provided to shareholders, and then 8 is housekeeping — the updated French term for the Minister of Economic Development.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for that. I appreciate, as he does, that it is complicated.

I would like to go back, if we could for a moment, to section 9(4)(b). In 4(b)(iii) and (iv) I just want to confirm and ask a question. I understood him to say that (4) removes a disclosure requirement and (1) adds a disclosure requirement. One adds a disclosure requirement and one removes it. Why is the requirement for disclosure removed?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: So 9(4)(b)(iii) was recommended by Economic Development. It is very defined and narrow, dealing with non-government. Section 4 — it really dictates disclosures to shareholders that are required, so Commissioner in Executive Council can dictate disclosures to shareholders. I think an example of that would be like a mini-prospectus.

Ms. Hanson: In keeping with the level of detail and the nature of the provisions with respect to disclosure, basically we're talking about the effective operations of this small business tax credit, which has been in place, as I understand it, for 13 years. I guess my question to the Minister of Finance is: What is the underlying reason that necessitates these amendments? Have there been problems with the operations of the program? Have there been instances where beneficiaries of this credit have not complied? I'm curious as to what's driving this series of quite detailed amendments to the legislation.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Through ongoing discussions with Canada Revenue Agency and Economic Development — through those ongoing discussions, what is identified as legal deficiencies — and it's working through the Government of Canada that we have made these proposed amendments that we have before us.

Ms. Hanson: If I'm correct, then the minister is saying that it's not driven by problems — operational problems or issues. It is simply to bring it into compliance with CRA's requirements vis-à-vis these kinds of tax credit programs.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: That is correct.

Ms. Hanson: Just as a matter of information, the minister identified — the legislation that we've just reviewed.

A limitation for an individual company or entity is \$800,000 and that entire envelope — I guess that is the phrase I would use — available for this credit is \$4 million.

How much of that \$4 million is currently subscribed to?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Yes, the estimated amount for 2015 is \$800,000. In fact, in any of the years outbound to the beginning of the century, we have not come close to the \$4-million maximum.

Ms. Hanson: I was asking for a bit more precision than that — “not come close to” is different from 75 percent, 50 percent, 20 percent. What percentage are we of the \$4 million?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: In one year in the past 12 years, we got to 50 percent of the total.

Ms. Hanson: Current year, please, Madam Chair?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I actually just said that a moment ago. I said the current year is \$800,000. We have in fact had some years where there is no subscription to it, but the maximum in the past 15 or 16 years has been approximately half of the subscribed amount.

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 Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Madam Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 86, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation*, without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Pasloski that the Chair report Bill No. 86, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation*, without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Chair: We're going to proceed now with Vote 8, Department of Justice in Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

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. 18: *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 8, Department of Justice, in Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

Department of Justice

Hon. Mr. Cathers: It is a pleasure to rise here in debate on the Department of Justice main operation and maintenance and capital budget for 2015-16. This is my first opportunity as the Minister of Justice to introduce a budget to this House, and I would like to thank the staff — the deputy minister and director of policy for accompanying me here today — and thank all of the staff at the department for the work that they do each and every day on behalf of the Yukon government and Yukon citizens.

The Department of Justice continues to invest in infrastructure and technology to ensure that we are able to achieve today and tomorrow's business objectives efficiently and effectively.

The department also continues to advance a variety of programs and services that make Yukon's justice system more accessible and easier for Yukoners to navigate. The estimates before us today consist of operation and maintenance expenditures of \$67.19 million and capital investments of \$5.24 million.

Thank you for the opportunity to highlight how this budget is supporting the good work done by the Department of Justice. Justice works closely and collaboratively with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to ensure a professional, efficient and effective territorial police service and this includes joint management of policing infrastructure and services throughout the territory.

I'm pleased to note that the Department of Justice and the Department of Community Services, along with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, are working together to move the 911 call centre — also known as the operational communication centre, referred to in the 911 context as the public service answering point — to the new emergency response centre at the top of Two Mile Hill, which as you know, the Minister of Community Services and I announced recently, jointly with Commanding Officer Peter Clark of RCMP M Division and with folks as well — the president of the Association of Yukon Communities, Mayor Wayne Potoroka and the president of Yukon Fire Chiefs, Jim Regimbal.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the work that they and members of their organizations have played in working with us in expanding 911.

With the \$334,000 in the capital budget that has been allocated for moving the 911 call centre into the new emergency response centre at the top of Two Mile Hill — \$334,000 for the capital budget has been allocated for this move and for some of the specific equipment, such as computers that are required to fit up the place to serve the needs of the RCMP. I am also of the understanding that some of the RCMP's current computer equipment and facilities

within their existing operational communications centre/public service answering point is in need of upgrade, and so this will also be an opportunity for them to have more modern computer equipment and phone equipment to serve Yukon citizens.

At the centre, emergency calls will be answered by trained 911 operators, who will then transfer calls to the appropriate dispatch agency, police, fire or ambulance services. The operation and maintenance budget for 2015-16 also allots \$733,000 to fund additional staffing capacity for the 911 call centre and what this will do is allow us to accommodate the expansion of basic 911 territory-wide through additional resources. Adding those additional resources is, of course, as members will likely know, something that the RCMP felt was necessary and that an operational review was done of their staffing needs and what those additional requirements would be. So the \$733,000 will go to fund RCMP staff for the 911 call centre five additional operators. It covers wages and training for five additional operators in order to resource police dispatch appropriately and handle increased call volumes.

Madam Chair, I should also note that because of the process that is required for training and doing the security clearance for operators in a 911 centre — particularly one that is also handling police business — there is both the training process and the security clearance process that do take a number of months, so therefore these positions will not be immediately in place, but, as the centre is fitted with computer equipment, this has given the RCMP the security they need to actually do that hiring and commence with the training of those additional operators for the 911 call centre.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the work that has been done by the staff of my previous department, Community Services, who worked hard on the expansion of 911. I also thank the staff of the Department of Justice for their work on this. Together we are proceeding forward in a way that will allow Yukon citizens across the territory access to basic 911 services and will better improve the response capacity across the territory and the timeliness of response.

In conclusion on that matter, we very much look forward to the move, the ensuing service launch and, of course, the completion of the network upgrades and other work that is necessary to expand basic 911 across the territory in 2016, as we have indicated that we intend to do.

To address community policing needs and as part of the Yukon's territorial policing agreement, a new RCMP detachment is being constructed in Faro. The project is well-underway. The design phase commenced last year and is expected to be completed in the summer of this year, with construction following thereafter. Approximately \$3.57 million has been allocated from the capital budget for this detachment and the project has a 30-percent recovery of \$1.07 million from the federal government, as per the *Territorial Police Service Agreement*. I should note that this is in addition to money that was booked in the previous budget for a total estimated project cost of about \$3.8 million at this point in time.

We anticipate that the new Faro detachment will help meet the unique public safety needs of Faro and the surrounding area and that the design can be replicated and modified for future detachment construction projects in the territory.

I should also note that the reason Faro's detachment was chosen was as a result of a review done by the RCMP with involvement, I believe, from Justice on the age of detachments across the territory. It was determined that the Faro detachment was their highest priority for replacement.

I should also note, particularly in reference to questions that have come from the Member for Copperbelt South, that the cost of opening and operating a detachment is not insignificant. The member has asked questions about Burwash Landing policing needs. As I've noted to the member, steps have been taken to improve policing services through a reservist during the summer. I should draw to the member's attention the fact that the cost of operating a facility — because the RCMP, through changes to its remote policing policy, doesn't operate single-member detachments any more, as the member may know. Staffing up a basic detachment comes at a cost of nearly \$1 million a year for the three RCMP officers who would be allocated to a detachment. When added to the other estimated base operational costs — and we're using as an example for this, estimates for the Faro detachment — it brings it to roughly \$1.5 million per year for operating costs for expanding services and creating a new detachment.

As the member, I hope, would appreciate, one of the considerations that the RCMP and the Department of Justice and government have to consider as we're talking about what Yukon's policing needs are and where the priorities are for additional investments, \$1.5 million invested in other areas — such as, services like the new specialized response unit that has been created to provide services. Pardon me — let me regain my train of thought here.

The specialized response unit, as the member probably is aware, is a unit within the RCMP that comes from a recommendation from *Sharing Common Ground*. It is focused on responding to domestic violence and sexualized assault. The aim of the team is to provide a more consistent, effective, coordinated and informed response to domestic violence and sexualized assault — that response coming from police, as well as from other agencies.

The unit was created and staffed in 2013 and worked closely with stakeholders to advance investigations on files related to its mandate, which includes the investigation of domestic violence, sexualized assault, child abuse and elder abuse cases. The specialized response unit seeks to provide a professional, integrated and timely response to all domestic and sexualized assault matters throughout the Yukon.

I won't go on at great length about that particular unit, but I just wanted to provide it to the member as one specific example of the other areas where — when choices are being made within a budget, even a budget that has increased for territorial policing — the expenditure of \$1.5 million in a remote community versus expenditure in the creation of

special units to serve vulnerable people in areas of higher pressure — those are the types of considerations that are made by the RCMP and the Department of Justice.

I should note as well that the Yukon's rate of police officers to population is one of the highest in the country. We as a jurisdiction, in comparison to other places across the country have done a better job than most in dealing with this area in providing the level of service. The police per capita ratio is in fact double the Canadian average, which is 402 officers per 100,000 people. Having double the average number of police officers per capita is a not insignificant investment by government in policing services.

I would also just add an additional note on the work of the specialized response unit for the reference of the member and others is that, during a one-year period from October 2013 to the end of October 2014, investigators from this new unit reviewed 1,142 casefiles and/or provided operational guidance to front-line police on 85 percent of these files, while leading investigations in 29 cases.

I hope I've helped provide an explanation to the member and others that will help them keep in mind the competing challenges that exist within the Department of Justice and within policing services. I hope that the member and others will appreciate the fact that the RCMP and Department of Justice do make a very sincere and considered effort to make investments where they will achieve the most good when the budget is being expanded.

Moving on to another area within this budget is in the area of radio reception and efficiency. The department continues to work with Highways and Public Works and the RCMP on a multi-year implementation plan to improve the territory-wide mobile radio system infrastructure, and that includes \$105,000 allocated in this year's operation and maintenance budget to contribute to the project and an additional \$28,000 in O&M will cover increases in mobile radio system operating user fees.

Since being sworn in as Minister of Justice, I have enjoyed the opportunity to work with the RCMP and of course with Department of Justice staff in dealing with the area of policing services and look forward to continue to do that in the future.

The Department of Justice is committed to working with community partners to deliver programs and services that are evidence-based, client-focused and reflective of best practices. We support community-based justice approaches and processes and a great example of this is the Community Wellness Court and the affiliated Justice Wellness Centre, which were implemented following the recommendations set out in the *Substance Abuse Action Plan, Yukon*.

I should note that the Community Wellness Court is a judicially supervised therapeutic court that works with offenders with addictions, mental health or cognitive issues. The associated Justice Wellness Centre was established in December 2010 in response to recommendations from an evaluation of the Community Wellness Court. It provides wraparound services and support to clients who are going through the therapeutic court. It also serves as a check-in

centre for individuals on bail and provides support and programming to offenders involved in the correctional system. As I have mentioned briefly before in the House, not only has the review that has been done recently on the Community Wellness Court demonstrated that it is working very effectively, but in fact other jurisdictions — not just from Canada but internationally — are taking a look at that model and considering what they can learn from it.

Through the Community Wellness Court, I should note that we extended this. What started as a pilot project was approved for three more years of funding for up to \$504,000 per year this year. I should note that the government regards this as a very positive program that we expect to be continued at the end of those three years. Because it is still a relatively new program, it was deliberately set up this way with the intention of doing an additional review nearing the end of those three years of funding which have been committed, and determining whether it needs to be adjusted, expanded or altered somewhat in its structure after we have had an additional two or three years of information to provide that information. The staff and contractors who were involved in that — as well the judges — should be commended for the success that it has had to date. I believe that you are indicating to me that I should wrap up my opening remarks, so I will do so.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to congratulate the minister on his new appointment and thank him for his opening remarks. I also want to thank the officials for the information they provided at the departmental briefing regarding the expenditures in both the operation and maintenance and the capital budget.

I believe that the minister did not conclude his opening remarks and has more to put on the record, so seeing him nod, I will turn the floor back over to him and I will begin my line of questioning after the minister has an opportunity to conclude his opening remarks.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I thank the member for that opportunity.

Moving back to the area of the Community Wellness Court, what I failed to mention in my opening remarks is that the yearly operating budget of \$504,000 a year includes, this year, an additional \$45,000 over what it was previously, bringing that total operating budget to \$504,000. The increase to the ongoing funding for the Community Wellness Court will help provide more culturally tailored services for First Nations. It will help provide additional alcohol and drug counselling services and resources to cover the Justice Wellness Centre rent, information pamphlets and program materials.

The costs of the therapeutic court are also offset in part with \$100,000 in federal funding per year. As I noted, the program will be re-evaluated before the end of this three-year funding period to verify its ongoing effectiveness in reducing incidents of re-offending and increasing public safety. It will also be reviewed to determine if lessons can be learned, if adjustments should be made and if services or any part related to it should be adjusted or enhanced in some way.

On a brief aside, I would also just like to note that, when I visited the office of the Community Wellness Court, I had the opportunity to meet with most of the staff. I was impressed with the passion and the level of detail that they displayed in providing me a briefing on what they do and the successes they've achieved. Truly, as a government and a society, we're taking advantage of the work that's being done by people who are obviously very deeply passionate about their jobs and feel good about the successes that have been achieved for clients of the court and the office to date. I look forward to seeing continuing work in that area.

Madam Chair, the FASD prevalence study, which is measuring the prevalence of FASD — fetal alcohol spectrum disorder — mental health and substance abuse problems in Yukon's corrections population, is in its third year of the program. The data-collection timeline has been extended into fall of 2015, and additional funding of \$251,000 has been allocated to cover costs associated with this extension.

Once the data collection phase is complete, the University of British Columbia will focus on data input and analysis, and the final research report is expected to be completed in 2016, with results shared at that time. This project is taking longer than was originally anticipated, and that is in part due to unforeseen delays in the start of data collection for the project, as well as the participation rate of people, because participation in this program is voluntary and was not as high as was originally hoped. That is something that can only be addressed through encouraging more people to participate, since it is voluntary in nature.

After a pilot run, the official launch of the prevalence study took place last summer, and the project is now fully underway. As I mentioned, due to those unforeseen delays in data collection and participation, data collection timelines have been extended into the fall of 2015, with additional funding of \$251,000 to cover the cost associated with that extension.

In answer to the question of how the study will help, or is intended to help adult offenders with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder in Yukon, I should note that the process for assessing adults for FASD requires a team of clinical professionals to administer multiple interviews, medical exams and neuropsychological tests. Regardless of meeting the criteria for an FASD diagnosis or not, each participant receives a personalized report that explains their cognitive strengths and challenges. The report will also provide recommendations to help each participant.

The research team met with participants and works with them to help them understand their test results. The report is owned by the participant and it is their decision whether or not to share it. Each report is intended to be written in a way to help inform service providers of where intervention should focus for that individual, should the individual decide to share that report.

An additional explanation, I should note, is that even for those individuals who are not diagnosed with FASD — as members may know — because of the process for diagnosing FASD, including determining whether alcohol was actually

consumed by a mother during pregnancy, there are times when someone may have FASD but they can't actually come to the point of making a diagnosis that they do. Additionally, there are people who may not have fetal alcohol spectrum disorder but may have other cognitive impairments caused by something other than alcohol, which also may cause cognitive difficulties that would be best addressed through additional supports.

After each FASD assessment is completed, 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 assist them, and again — much as with the information contained within the report — it will be up to participants as to whether or not they wish to follow up with those services. It will remain voluntary for them to choose to do so. As members should be aware, most of the suite of programs and services that are available to people with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and other cognitive impairments are on a voluntary basis unless, of course, they happen to be through court order that they are ordered to take part in any services, therapy or so on — but again noting that the FASD prevalence study and this follow-up report are on a voluntary basis.

To date, the money that has been spent on this includes — starting in 2013-14 — the original commitment to this project was \$643,000 for three fiscal years. The 2015-16 fiscal year is the third year for this project and, as I mentioned, \$251,000 has been requested to allow for extension of data collection timelines and completion of the study.

I would be remiss if I did not briefly mention that this is just one of the projects done by the Yukon government — by a number of different departments over the years since the implementation of our five-step fetal alcohol spectrum disorder action plan and, truly, the staff of Justice, as well as Health and Social Services and agencies including the Child Development Centre and the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon, as well as Many Rivers and Options for Independence — to name but a few. The staff of all of these departments and NGOs have really done an excellent job of improving the services that Yukon provides for people with FASD and other disabilities.

Yukon, through some of the studies done, is a leader as well in research in certain areas, and through the FASD network that Yukon is in partnership with — the Canada Northwest FASD Partnership is the proper name. The Yukon, along with the other two territories and the four western provinces, collaborates jointly to share information learned from individual work done by governments to share best practices on supports, to provide information about research and, as well, through the network itself we are a contributor to the work that is funded by the Canada Northwest FASD Partnership.

For a period of a number of months starting in 2008 in my then capacity as Minister of Health and Social Services, I chaired the ministers table for that body and appreciated that opportunity and was very impressed with the information

presented by researchers from across the country and, in fact, from the United States and other areas.

Through that work that has been ongoing since 2002 and the work that is being done both in cooperation with provinces and territories through the partnership and through the involved departments and non-governmental organizations within the Yukon, there are many people who are contributing to the good work that is being done, but the Yukon as a whole has been making progress in this area in providing better diagnosis, better intervention and better provision of supports to persons with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and other cognitive disabilities. While more remains to be done, we should all feel proud of the work done to date and continue to work together on identifying where there is further opportunity for improvement.

Having found the page of my notes I lost, I now understand what the next part of my introductory speech is.

Along with — I said that already. I won't repeat myself, Madam Chair.

Moving on to an area of modernization, I should note that many branches within the Department of Justice are within a phase of modernization. This includes continuing to adopt and implement new technology and systems that will improve day-to-day business, and this is especially true in the Court Services branch. I am happy to say that the preparatory work required to replace the outdated court registry information system with the integrated justice enterprise information network, JEIN — as members may know, one of the things you learn in getting briefed up on any new department is the acronyms you are expected to be able to understand when someone rattles them off in the course of a briefing. JEIN is the acronym that is used within Justice for this justice enterprise information network.

The criminal court operations phase of this project is nearing completion, and the systems development phase is anticipated to begin in late spring or early summer with the adult corrections components of JEIN following, once the criminal courts component is completed.

\$591,000 from this year's capital budget has been allocated to the JEIN project. The new integrated database is required to meet today's administration of justice demands, and will facilitate more efficient data and record entries, production report documents and creation of statistics and reports. The Victim Services team has been using their JEIN module since spring of 2013, which helps them manage almost 2,000 case files.

The team reports that it has streamlined case management between the offices, improved client service delivery and increased reporting capabilities. We anticipate that the same benefits will occur for other branches in Justice, once their modules are implemented.

This budget also allocates funds to continue to expand the court video conferencing capabilities. \$100,000 from the capital budget will be used to purchase additional video conferencing equipment for another Whitehorse courtroom, as well as for courts in Dawson City and Watson Lake. Using video technology is a good way to reduce travel costs and the

time associated with court appearances, and it's also a good way to protect young or vulnerable victims or witnesses of crime from additional traumas that could be caused in the courtroom with the accused.

Just to explain what that means to members — in the Whitehorse courthouse, they have rooms that allow a young witness or other vulnerable victim to testify in a smaller room without having to see the entire courtroom, and provides options for the judge and Court Services workers to determine who is able to see what. That could include their identify being protected from others within the courtroom, or them not being seen by the entire courtroom and them potentially not having to see anyone other than the judge as they're testifying.

As I'm sure members will appreciate, that is something that is important to helping those young victims or vulnerable victims of crime feel safe in testifying and to reduce the trauma that can be caused by testifying on something where that may already be a very painful and difficult matter for them to talk about. We regard this as a very positive investment. I know the staff who were involved in doing it believe that this is achieving its intended effect and is making it better for young or vulnerable victims who are testifying.

So this year, purchase of additional video conferencing equipment will expand video capacity to one more courtroom in the Andrew A. Philipsen Law Centre and provide the equipment for courts in Dawson City and Watson Lake. The equipment has proven useful in more than just video remand appearances by providing access to justice in the communities through video appearances by witnesses, closed-circuit appearances of vulnerable witnesses and other uses by the judiciary.

While I can't claim to personally be as familiar with how this works in the justice system yet and its effect, I know that when we implemented the telehealth improvements during my time as Minister of Health and Social Services, that having telehealth equipment in all Yukon community nursing centres and hospitals has improved service delivery and improved access to services, as well as reducing costs that are faced by individuals or by government in providing access to those services. We firmly believe that this will be another case where, through the better use of technology, it will, in some cases, reduce costs and will definitely improve the quality of service and interaction.

I should note as well that ongoing building maintenance and renovations are required to preserve buildings and government assets as well as provide healthy and safe workplaces for employees. The capital budget includes \$290,000 for Law Centre upgrades, which will be used to replace a 29-year-old underground fuel tank and, secondly, create better soundproofing between the courtrooms and the Law Library. It will allow the completion of roof upgrades to meet safety requirements. It will prepare for courtroom electrical upgrades, which are needed to meet the energy demands for courtroom technologies, including video conferencing, a digital audio recording system, e-proceedings and laptops. It will allow the changing of some old carpets, which date back to the construction from, as I understand,

1986 — and as members I'm sure would agree, we are reaching the point where it is maybe time for new carpeting. As well, it will include bringing the parking ramp drain up to health and safety standards. Also \$26,000 will be used to improve coroner service program space. \$120,000 will be used for cooling system upgrades in addition to \$80,000 for repairs at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre.

Justice has been involved in a multi-year furniture replacement schedule in order to uphold the decorum of the courts. That includes \$27,000 allocated this year for chair replacements in the five Whitehorse courtrooms and tabletop refinishing.

Madam Chair, you are indicating to me that I should sit down, so I will do so.

Ms. Moorcroft: I am not certain if the member had completed his opening remarks, but I will start with some questions related to the introductory statement on policing. The minister referred to community policing needs and a new detachment in Faro, which is a \$3.57-million capital construction cost. He indicated that the design work had begun last year and that construction would begin later this year.

The Yukon government and the RCMP signed a territorial police services agreement and I know there is an annual exercise of setting priorities. The minister has quite a bit of input into setting objectives and goals, and I would like him to respond to how far that ability does go to set goals and objectives, for instance, in the question of whether a police detachment is appropriate for Burwash Landing.

The minister referred to the fact that there are no longer single-unit detachments and the Yukon has a high number of police in relation to the population. I would note, though that when he's saying the Yukon has double the numbers, the number are based on per 100,000 and our population base is much smaller than that.

Could the minister express his view to the RCMP that the Burwash Landing community and nearby Destruction Bay does deserve a permanent detachment and that he would like to see one there?

I also wanted to put on the record for the minister some questions related to the new funding for expanding 911. He has indicated that there are funds for additional staffing and it will take some time for the move to the new call centre and then the recruitment, training and security process for the new call centre. I would like the minister to give an indication of when that new 911 service will be rolled out. The minister said 2016. Does that mean in this budget year prior to March 31, 2016 or would it be in the next budget year?

Then, the third question I had related to his remarks on policing. The minister indicated that the new sexual assault response team has reviewed 1,142 case files and they were leading in 29 cases or files. I'm interested in knowing what training is provided by the permanent members of the sexual assault response team to RCMP members in each of the rural detachments. I'm also wondering if the minister has the information available on what the reported numbers of sexual assaults have been. I think the Yukon, as elsewhere in Canada,

tends to have a relatively low reporting rate. I'm wondering if that rate has increased between 2012 and 2014, over that three-year period, during which the new response team was put in place following the completion of the police review.

I think that I'll just limit my questions to those on policing and allow the minister to respond and hopefully conclude his opening remarks. Then I will have questions on other areas of the budget.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: What I will note to the member in answering some of her specific questions is that earlier this year, I communicated Yukon's policing priorities to the RCMP.

Six identified priority areas include: enhancing prevention investigation and enforcement activities related to violence against women; connecting and supporting children and youth, including those at risk; reduction in drug trafficking through prevention, enforcement and education; continuing to foster strong relationships with communities and First Nations; contribute to and improve responses to vulnerable populations; and improve traffic safety and compliance with safe-driving measures.

Those priorities have been slightly revised from those set in 2013 and endorsed in 2014, and they are developed and informed through the recommendations from the Yukon Police Council which, as the member will know, the Police Council is an outcome from the *Sharing Common Ground* project. Through the work that they have provided and the recommendations — and the work done by the Department of Justice staff — those priorities have almost entirely been developed through that — the ones that are there for this current fiscal year. With very minor wording amendments, I did accept those recommendations and communicate them to the RCMP, so the credit goes to the good work done by members of the Police Council, including those who have recently retired from it, for the good work that they have done in this area, as well as Department of Justice staff.

Responding specifically to the member's question about whether the building of a detachment could be done through a policing priorities letter, my understanding is that wouldn't be the right venue for it. It has more to do with the 20-year police services agreement, which is signed with the RCMP. That is the one that deals with the financial issues, including how much is budgeted for certain services and the understanding that is set out in that agreement between Yukon government and the RCMP about replacing and upgrading additional RCMP facilities and continuing to work on this throughout the life of the agreement.

The simple answer to the member's question is, it's just not the right — the policing priorities letter is more of a high-level strategic policy indication to the RCMP, based on — and very heavily based on — the information that is received from the Police Council. It is not one that is dealing with large financial matters. To do that, we need to work directly with the RCMP because — as the member probably knows — the costs under the territorial police services agreement is a 70:30 split between what is covered by the territorial government and what is covered by Canada. Investments under there do

require discussion and agreement from the RCMP and, in some cases, from Public Safety Canada, for significant investments in that area.

Just drawing a conclusion to that for the member, that means that it isn't just up to the Yukon government to decide if we want to build a detachment; we need to have agreement with the RCMP and Public Safety Canada to do that.

Again, going back specifically to the member's questions regarding Burwash Landing — we will continue to work with and assess the needs of the community and we'll certainly not rule out future considerations or assessment, but to date the work that has been done by the RCMP and Department of Justice staff has resulted in the conclusion that they believe the best way to balance the various pressures and the opportunity for where things like the cost of an additional \$1.5 million to run another detachment — where those investments can best be spent and best utilized have resulted in determining that providing a reserve officer there in the summer, at an annual cost ranging between — depending on which budget year it is. For the last budget year, it was \$40,000 for this service. That was determined to be the best solution in the context of the competing needs, pressures and priorities across the territory.

I'm not going to rule out future discussions or future evaluations or work by the RCMP and Department of Justice, but I will note that I and government will be relying heavily on the front-line people and the RCMP and Justice staff to advise us on the competing pressures and priorities in there, and which areas are the most in need of investment and further work.

I hope that has answered the member's question.

With regard to the question of basic 911 expansion —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: Mr. Kent, on a point of order.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Kent: Just as they're exiting the Chamber, I wanted to pay special tribute to my wife Amanda and our little guy Eli. Tomorrow is a very special day for us as we will be going to the Supreme Court of Yukon to sign the final adoption papers. He has been with us for awhile, but —

Applause

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would like to thank the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for interrupting me and congratulate him and Amanda and Eli on the momentous occasion.

Returning to the topic of the member's question about basic 911 expansion, I should first of all note that that project and the expansion across the territory is the Department of Community Services' lead. I am quite familiar with it because of my previous role and the ongoing work with the minister and staff.

The expectation that we had given is that we intend to have basic 911 in effect territory-wide in 2016. That is not anticipated to be completed within this current fiscal year. It's expected to be done within the 2016-17 fiscal year, as there

are a number of moving parts and static parts that need to be dealt with, including the partnership with the RCMP, the specific engagement, and with municipalities that operate service agencies and ensuring that all of the key partners were involved in working out the bugs prior to implementation because there has, as I mentioned, in the past — we had in the past heard specific concerns from a couple of municipalities about how it would work with their fire dispatch in particular. As I have repeatedly indicated, we believe those issues are all resolvable and addressable. We have also made the commitment to municipalities that we want them to be comfortable with it.

We do not want to and we do not intend to force a municipality to come on to basic 911. We want to make sure they're happy with it and are joining us in celebrating it as an improvement to service.

I hope that answers the member's questions.

Ms. Moorcroft: The minister did respond to the questions I had but I also wanted to ask him about community policing and whether there has been any work on the option of having more community policing through a model that might include a First Nation community constable program.

I also wanted to come back to some of the recommendations that were in the *Sharing Common Ground* report in relation to policing and the follow-up implementation reports. There was a goal of increasing the numbers of First Nation and women RCMP members and, toward meeting that goal, the Northern Institute of Social Justice offered a program.

I'm wondering if the minister can give an update on how many recruits may have been added to the RCMP from First Nations and from women as a result of those initiatives that were part of the recommendations that were addressed following the completion of the *Sharing Common Ground* report.

Perhaps when the minister is responding to that, he could also give an update on Recommendation 2.2 to do with professional standards, duties and the addition of a new federally funded professional standards position and how the addition of that position to the RCMP complement in Whitehorse has played a role in improving the division's response to public complaints. What opportunity is there for members of the public, rather than going to the complaints process, to engage with the M Division of the RCMP Yukon and interact with the professional standards position?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I will be pleased to answer some of the member's questions. For at least one of them, I am going to need to get some additional information on before I can provide a response.

With regard to her question about First Nation policing and what is being done in that area, the Yukon government is a party to three inter-governmental agreements that aim to provide enhanced, dedicated and culturally sensitive policing services to Yukon First Nation communities. Those agreements include the aboriginal community constable program, which ensures that there are 12 RCMP officers

working in Yukon dedicated to specific First Nation communities.

The First Nation community police service framework agreement is the second of these agreements. It provides the framework for community tripartite agreements. The Liard First Nation community tripartite policing agreement provides for four officers dedicated to Liard First Nation and for a police board in that community.

Starting in the 2013-14 fiscal year, Department of Justice supported a new First Nation community policing coordinator in the territorial policing budget. This position supports Yukon First Nation community police services, including oversight for 16 RCMP members presently funded under the First Nation policing program. The position also acts as the liaison between Yukon First Nation communities and the Yukon RCMP M Division.

Yukon recently signed a four-year extension to the tripartite agreement with Liard First Nation and Canada along with a four-year extension to the framework agreement that provides a dedicated RCMP police member in First Nation communities across Yukon. Within the four-year extension of the program and the federal government's evaluation, there is opportunity to work together to innovate First Nation community police services within the scope of the First Nation policing program. Territorial ministers of justice — ministers from all three territories — have repeatedly raised our shared desire for revitalization of the First Nation policing program, sustainable funding and its full application to the north.

In the area of First Nation policing, the dedicated expenditures include \$1.6 million in 2012-13, \$1.7 million in 2013-14, and forecast \$1.6 million in the 2014 fiscal year. I hope that has answered the member's question about First Nation policing.

In the area of the member's question about women in the RCMP, the RCMP has a total of 149 employees. That includes civilian members and regular members. The breakdown is as follows: there are 35 employees in M Division who are women — that's 23 percent. That includes 12 female civilian members and 23 regular members within M Division.

I hope that has answered the question. As I mentioned, on one of the member's other questions, I need some additional information before I can provide her with a response.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 86, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, 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.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:25 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 202

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Monday, April 27, 2015 — 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 Tourism and Culture; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Justice; Yukon Development Corporation/ Yukon Energy Corporation
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Education
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Highways and Public Works
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Community Services; Public Service Commission
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Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
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Jan Stick	Official Opposition House Leader Riverdale South
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, April 27, 2015 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes which have been made to the Order Paper. Motions No. 97 and 742, standing in the name of the Leader of the Third Party; Motion No. 848, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King; and Motion No. 881, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake have been removed from the Order Paper, as the actions requested in these motions have been taken, in whole or in part.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Yukon Education Week

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to Yukon Education Week, which runs from April 27 to May 1.

Education Week marks a time when we recognize the value of public education. The social contributions of public education to our families, communities and economy are significant. We experience the benefits every day. Our schools and training programs prepare the citizens, leaders and workforce of tomorrow — dedicated to their communities and ready to meet the challenges of the future.

Education Week helps us to reflect on and appreciate how fortunate we are to live in a country where we have the right to education. This year we honour an important theme, “Many Paths to Learning”.

The events and activities during this year’s Education Week highlight how the Department of Education is supporting the success of every learner through individualized learning. Individualized learning means that the content, method and pace of learning are tailored to the diverse needs of Yukon students of all ages. I invite my fellow members and all Yukoners to come and see how Yukon students thrive through this support.

Partnership is an important element of supporting Yukon students. I would like to extend a big thank you to many of our partners in learning: the parents and families getting involved in their child’s education, who bring their little ones to learning together programs across the territory, who ask their kids at the dinner table about what they learned in class today, who give their time volunteering at school plays, carwashes and coaching and, finally, those who are always ready to help with homework and assignments from kindergarten to college.

The wonderful educators in this territory also deserve a huge vote of thanks: from teachers tailoring their lessons inside and outside of the classroom to help students achieve success; to paraprofessionals working one-on-one with students who need extra support; to administrators overseeing the safety and growth of Yukon schools and their students; to the trainers, guidance and employment counsellors of Yukon’s future workforce; to the language instructors helping newcomers and Yukoners to learn our country’s official languages and the languages of Yukon’s First Nations; to the school councils who are the voice of the public in our schools advocating for each student’s right to education; to the elders, educators, communities and the Council of Yukon First Nations who work with us to improve learning outcomes for First Nations students; to our dedicated community partners who promote and support education and lifelong learning, as well as work with Advanced Education on the labour market framework, the Yukon literacy strategy, the community training funds, the labour market development agreement, and other programs; to the case managers and organizations providing literacy, training and employment services through to the businesses and employers working with us to develop labour market programs that address the needs of Yukon’s work force, to Yukon College — a leader in post-secondary education in Canada’s north.

As we celebrate the individualized learning opportunities here in the territory, Mr. Speaker, let us honour the educators and front-line support staff who work directly with Yukon students of all ages every day to help them succeed in their learning. All Yukoners are invited to get involved and join us at any of the terrific events of Education Week being hosted in Yukon schools and by partner organizers.

I will be travelling to Watson Lake to enjoy the Watson Lake school programs being offered on Friday and I am really looking forward to it. I invite all Yukoners to come and see how Yukon learners are thriving in the schools and in their communities and careers in Education Week this year. More information and a full calendar of events for Education Week are available on the Yukon Education websites.

Mr. Tredger: I’m pleased to rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition on this first day of Yukon Education Week to pay tribute to education in the Yukon. I thank the minister for his update and his tribute to education.

As an educator and as a parent, I’m reminded how much we have to celebrate. Today we acknowledge the students, the parents, the teachers, the educational assistants and the many other people in our territory who are involved in education. We are honoured in Yukon to have a very skilled, dedicated and dynamic group of educators. In this special week, we extend our gratitude to the professionals involved in the wide range of education, understanding that learning is a lifelong adventure.

We thank the early childhood educators, elementary and high school teachers, educational assistants, remedial tutors, those who help adult learners and of course the Yukon teachers. We celebrate the passion, the commitment and the

dedication of those serving Yukon students and acknowledge that their commitment to lifelong education and training has a positive and lasting effect on the future of our children and our grandchildren.

These incredible professionals don't stand alone. They are supported by secretaries, office administrators, bus drivers, college instructors, school crossing guards, public servants and early childhood educators — all pieces of a greater mosaic. Every day they make a difference. They are often the first faces that greet our children. They are cheerleaders and encouragers.

The remarkable contributions of parents and volunteers who sit on our school councils and boards, who assist teachers in public schools with extracurricular activities, who work with children and adults with special needs — through various non-governmental organizations — are also recognized and celebrated this week.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to those many volunteers and staff at various NGOs, like Yukon Learn, Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, Yukon Literacy Coalition, the Child Development Centre and Skills Canada.

Businesses also play an integral part in our educational community. Professional engineers, scientists, tradespeople and others share their skills, their knowledge and their passion with young minds looking to the world for answers.

In this Yukon Education Week, we need not only focus on the successes, but acknowledge that we have far too many students who are not succeeding in our schools and slip through the gaps. How we react and meet these challenges is critical, not only for the health and well-being of our students, but it's important for all of our society. How we react says a lot about the inclusiveness of our community and the effectiveness of our education system.

We know research and experience tell us the involvement of families and children in programming and extracurricular activities is critical. We know that involved parents and family lead to more engaged and supported students. We need to find a way to make space for family involvement to ensure that they are involved and can find a way to contribute to their child's educational life and be valued for that contribution.

It is our collective responsibility to find a way to enable all parents a place in their child's education. Education should embrace that commitment like never before. It takes a whole community to educate a child.

Mr. Speaker, there are no simple answers. Education and learning are about working together. It's about taking risks and taking chances. It's about building relationships. It's about being a part of a team. Mr. Speaker, it is well worth it.

Many financial advisors talk about the value of compound interest and how money grows over time. It's the same with education. Money and time invested early pays long-term benefits. Small things grow to big things. Every life change; every lesson taught and learned; every moment in a child's life compounds over time.

We take this moment to celebrate and acknowledge our successes. Our continued success will depend on each and every Yukoner rolling up our sleeves, innovating, creating,

taking chances, caring and doing the hard work. We have an opportunity in the Yukon. School communities, First Nation leadership, parents, teachers, the Department of Education and principals have all made it clear they are willing to work together for our children's education.

Mr. Speaker, together we can make a difference. Thank you.

Mr. Silver: It's with great pleasure that I also rise today on behalf of the Liberal Party to pay tribute to Education Week. This year's theme, as mentioned by the minister, is "Many Paths to Learning" and it is a reflection on the different ways that each individual learns.

A one-size-fits-all approach to education never works when it comes to advancing the educational needs of students. There are many skills that a teacher needs to have in order to be successful, but few are more valuable than being able to understand the learning needs of a student. The earlier that a student has a learning plan, the better off the student will be in the long run.

By creating a system around that student, we promote inclusion and we ensure success and we build confidence in the student. By teaching self-worth, however, we enable the student with the ability to learn with a focus. Now I can't stress that enough. As a math teacher, my curriculum did not identify how to teach self-worth to my students. But if a student or if a school embraces a community approach to developing a whole child, and if the teachers willingly step outside of the confines of their classrooms and their standardized goals, students will benefit by understanding what it means to have self-worth.

I learned early on that in order for a student to succeed, the teacher needs to understand how that student learns. Every student retains information differently. But this year's slogan, "Many Paths to Learning", means a lot more to me than that. To me, it means that it takes a whole community to raise a child. A community with many people, from many of life's pathways engaged in education is a recipe for our next generation to have a more enriched life than their parents' generation.

As I pay tribute today to Education Week, I want to take the opportunity to thank every teacher, every parent and every student who I've worked with in my tenure as a teacher for all that they have taught me. I hope that I was able to teach them something as well.

I've said it before, Mr. Speaker, and I'll say it again: We have the best students in Canada here in the Yukon. They deserve the best education in the world.

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

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide a donation of \$25,000 in disaster relief to the Red Cross to aid the people of Nepal who suffered a devastating magnitude-7.8 earthquake on Saturday, April 25, 2015.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to play a key leadership role regionally and nationally to address the problem of violence against women in all forms by:

- (1) reaffirming the call for a nationally coordinated effort to address the large numbers of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in Canada;
- (2) responding to aboriginal women's recommendations on leadership, wellness and violence prevention;
- (3) supporting First Nation governments and aboriginal women's organizations to develop community-based projects designed and developed by and for aboriginal women;
- (4) supporting women to navigate and make decisions on issues that have legal implications; and
- (5) continuing to work on the finalization of a justice framework on violence against aboriginal women and girls with their national partners and with input from community and First Nation organizations across the country.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to release building plans for the upcoming \$72-million expansion of the Whitehorse General Hospital.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Lobbying legislation

Ms. Hanson: It comes as no surprise that in 2014, the Yukon Party coffers were once again awash with corporate money. Mining companies and oil and gas companies, largely from Outside, make up a large percentage of donors to the Yukon Party's war chest. I am not suggesting there is anything unlawful going on. Yukon's rules, or lack of rules, allow this. Yukon Zinc, the owners of Wolverine mine, has every right to contribute to the Yukon Party, and they have given \$9,100 since 2006, including \$600 last year. Again, there is nothing unlawful with this, but Yukoners can't be blamed for wondering about the benefits of donating. This perception is damaging and may be completely incorrect but, in the absence of lobbying rules, it persists.

Does the Premier agree that this perception is damaging to the credibility of his government?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: We have spoken about lobbying in this House on a number of occasions and, as I have said in the

past, we are not supportive of lobbyist legislation. This government — all members of this caucus and all ministers — are open and ready and willing to talk to all people in this jurisdiction.

As we know, we live in a very small jurisdiction where people wear many hats. We feel that the best way to ensure that there is an opportunity to hear what people have to say — like in the drugstore, like in the grocery store — and that that continues to happen, and we won't support lobbyist legislation.

Ms. Hanson: In 2009, Yukon Zinc wrote the then-EMR minister a letter calling for changes with how the mine was being regulated. Shortly after, the minister changed the regulations. On April 15, 2015, the EMR minister was asked if he had direct discussions with Yukon Zinc about missed security payments. He didn't answer the question. Then we see thousands of dollars rolling into the Yukon Party coffers from Outside oil and gas and mining companies, including over \$9,000 to date from Yukon Zinc. I'll repeat, there is nothing unlawful about this. The annual hundreds-of-dollars-a-plate Yukon Party cruise in the Vancouver Harbour may be perfectly fine, but there is a perception that access to government is for sale.

Is the Premier prepared to release information on the number of meetings —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Order please. Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Elias: I have a real problem with this question because it is casting aspersions and attacks on the reputation of the members on this side of the House and it is against the specific rules of Question Period. The member opposite should know full well that those types of words are going to cause disorder in this Assembly.

Speaker: Opposition House Leader, on the point of order.

Ms. Stick: The House Leader is using these points of order to dodge questions from the opposition. This question directly relates to the government's ability to do its job. It does not imply motives. We are simply asking the Premier to be accountable and open. I believe this is a dispute between members.

Unparliamentary language

Speaker: I have to disagree with you. It is not a dispute among members. The implication is that the members opposite are not honourable and that they can be bought is unparliamentary, and I take great exception to it. Rephrase your question please and refrain from using those types of statements.

Ms. Hanson: Is the Premier prepared to release information on the number of meetings he and members of Cabinet have held with corporations donating to the Yukon Party?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I have stood up in this House on many occasions and said that this government will continue to be open and talk to all people who are interested in talking to this government — whether it's business or whether it's an opportunity to enhance the social supports that we provide in this territory — and we'll continue to do so. The reality is that we don't solve problems, or perceived problems, with legislation and regulation, because we know that is what the NDP do. They think they can regulate and legislate and that solves all the problems. Quite honestly, Mr. Speaker, we are not here to implement the NDP's platform from 2011.

Ms. Hanson: No, we are asking about this government's lack of transparency and it is a matter of public interest. The late Steve Cardiff first called attention to the lack of rules on lobbying and every attempt by the Yukon NDP Official Opposition that we have made to bring in lobbying rules has been rejected by the Yukon Party. This issue should not be a partisan issue. People on all sides of the political spectrum have called for rules to increase transparency in order to address the public's negative perceptions.

In fact, Guy Giorno, Prime Minister Harper's former chief of staff, weighed in and said, "Yukon needs lobbying rules." Our conflicts commissioner has pointed to the gaps in Yukon's law. It is clear the lack of transparency about lobbying undermines public trust in government and our democracy.

Is the Premier prepared to support rules to increase transparency or will he allow perceptions of ethical lassitude to cloud his time in office?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This government is not going to make it harder for people to talk to the government. We're not going to put rules in that will make it more difficult.

As I have said, people wear many hats in this jurisdiction and it would become very confusing to enact such legislation. The reality as well is that I do believe that this is important legislation in larger jurisdictions where it is very, very difficult to have access to the government and access to ministers. All you have to do here in Yukon is go to the grocery store.

Question re: Alcohol and drug addictions

Ms. White: On Friday, the Member for Whitehorse Centre and I attended a forum on vulnerable people at risk that was organized by the City of Whitehorse and the Kwanlin Dun First Nation. The forum confirmed what many of us have been saying for a long time now: Yukoners with drug and alcohol addictions are not receiving the support they need from this government. In fact, the head of the RCMP in Yukon took the extraordinary step on Friday of calling for a new approach to alcohol and drug addictions in Yukon. He said that we need to deal with them in a compassionate, fair and supportive way without involving the police.

The chorus of voices calling on this government to do more in support of Yukoners with chronic drug and alcohol addictions is growing louder. Will the Yukon Party government listen to the police when they tell us that addictions are health problems and not police matters?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: First off, I would like to congratulate the City of Whitehorse and the Kwanlin Dun First Nation for taking the initiative to organize this very important forum. Likewise, I would like to thank the many individuals, the agencies and the representatives of the various organizations who took the time to participate in the forum.

A number of my colleagues and I were also present at the forum and indeed found the discussions to be thoughtful, to be engaging and to be very informative. Many of the initiatives that were referenced on Friday were in fact initiatives that our government has been working to deliver in partnership with many other governments and organizations over the past several years: Jackson Lake healing camp, collaborative health care clinic, Outreach van, working to expand emergency shelter, and creation of transitional housing for vulnerable persons. These are just but some of the examples as to how we have been working to support those most vulnerable in our community with those pertinent partners.

As the Mayor of the City of Whitehorse indicated, this is not about finger pointing. Rather it's about working together to support those we serve, including those most vulnerable in our territory. We will be engaging with all of those respective partners here as it comes.

Ms. White: It's about leadership and that's what I'm looking for. One-hundred-and-eighteen nights — that's how many nights a Yukon woman spent in police custody last year, and she doesn't even have a criminal record. There just wasn't anywhere else for her to go.

In 2010, the Yukon Party government asked Dr. Bruce Beaton and former Chief James Allen to co-chair a Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk. Beaton and Allen were clear. It isn't the 1890s any more. Alcohol addiction is a health problem, not a criminal problem. Yukon's out-of-date alcohol legislation authorizes non-criminal detention for intoxication, and last week, Yukon's top policeman added his voice and told us that it's time for a change. It's time for the government to follow through on the Beaton and Allen report and rewrite Yukon's gold rush-era legislation.

Instead of being treated as criminals, when will the government let Yukoners living with addictions finally be treated according to their health care needs?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I too would like to congratulate the City of Whitehorse and Kwanlin Dun First Nation for their leadership at the forum last Friday. A number of staff from the Department of Health and Social Services were in attendance as well. I would just like to note that we're taking steps currently to address many of the issues that were brought forth at the forum on Friday. We just need to look at recent announcements pertaining to the construction of the new Salvation Army, the construction of the new Sarah Steele Building, the construction of the new St. Elias group home, and the renovations and new programming offered at the mental health housing sixplex on Fourth Avenue.

Through a number of different departments, this government has been very proactive in working to address these issues, and we look forward to a continued relationship with the First Nations and the City of Whitehorse, as well as

other communities, in providing services, just as the ones that were discussed last Friday.

Ms. White: The inaction that allows the ongoing criminalization of addictions is our collective shame. Another of the Beaton and Allen report recommendations called on a downtown sobering centre attached to a medical detox. We know the government is rebuilding the Sarah Steele Building. It's a new space downtown that could, if properly planned, follow through on that recommendation and go a long way toward supporting the vulnerable persons who brought hundreds of Yukoners together for Friday's forum.

It's up to this government to tell us whether they're taking the right steps to help vulnerable Yukoners beat chronic drug and alcohol addictions. Will the new Sarah Steele Building fulfill this recommendation from the Beaton and Allen report and include both a sobering centre and a medical detox?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I enjoyed the opportunity to attend the forum and hear from some of the panellists. I would like to acknowledge the work of Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the City of Whitehorse on that, and the many partners that participated. It's a valuable addition to the work that has been done to date.

I would like to just briefly recap for this House some of the significant steps that have been taken to date by this government in investing in a number of the services that were referenced and commended by people at the Vulnerable People at Risk Forum on Friday. Those include: the investments in Many Rivers; the investments in the Outreach van, which would not be running without this government's support; the investments in alcohol and drug services; support for the Salvation Army; support for the land-based treatment centre; the collaborative clinic; transitional housing supports; investment in the emergency youth shelter; support for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon, including stepping in when the former federal Liberal government cut funding; construction of the new Sarah Steele Building, which was referenced by my colleague; and, of course, the Community Wellness Court — all examples of a number of initiatives that have been taken.

I would also note comments made by the representative of the Anti-Poverty Coalition at the forum that, in fact, there are a lot of supports and investments available. There is more room for collaboration and connection, and we look forward to continuing to work with partners on taking the next steps in this area.

Question re: Housing programs

Mr. Silver: In this year's budget, there is \$240,000 for a housing action plan. This is good news. The bad news is that it has been over two years since a former Yukon Party minister proudly boasted his government's plan to develop a housing action plan for Yukoners. It was March of 2013 when this announcement was first made.

Two years later, Yukon residents who have, and continue to struggle with, housing issues are asking, "Where is the plan?" This is yet another item that falls under the unfinished-

business column when it comes to this government's track record.

The question is: When will this long-overdue plan be released to the public?

Hon. Mr. Hassard: As the member knows, the housing action plan is being undertaken by groups of NGOs — all of the partners involved in housing issues throughout the Yukon.

The plan is in final draft, but until the budget is approved, the department cannot proceed with implementation. We are moving forward and in due time, this plan will come to fruition.

Mr. Silver: With all due respect, it has been a few budgets now since this announcement of an action plan. I am pleased to see the government is spending the last of the affordable housing money. Some of it is actually even being spent on affordable housing.

It took nine years, so I'm sure the minister can understand my reluctance to jump to my feet and applaud and hopefully he'll answer some questions that I have here today. For example, it is interesting that the government chose to spend the money before the housing action plan was put in place. Proper planning would have seen a plan developed and then spending decisions being made to implement that plan. The government is doing it backwards and that comes as no surprise as we've watched this government over the years. It's the same approach that they have taken with respect to many issues — for example, implementing decisions in mental health without a plan.

Mr. Speaker, why did the minister make these major spending decisions without having a plan in place?

Hon. Mr. Hassard: I guess I don't understand what the problem seems to be with the member opposite, but this money is being spent with collaboration and tons of planning. Many organizations, many NGOs, many different walks of life have got together and given input on this. I mean, I didn't just step in as the minister and say, "Oh boy, we have \$6 million or \$7 million to spend. Let's get it done." This government has talked to a lot of people. The housing action plan is just a part of this. The housing action plan doesn't direct how all the money is going to be spent on Yukon Housing projects for the next 100 years.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of thought put into this and this government continues to listen to the people and spend the money wisely.

Mr. Silver: I will give the new minister credit for getting this money out the door. It is certainly more than his predecessors accomplished. The only serious attempt made at addressing affordable housing collapsed last summer due to political interference by this government. It is disappointing, however, to see its willy-nilly approach behind it. There is no coincidence that big announcements are being made as we near a territorial election. These pre-election announcements are typical strategies used by the Yukon Party. They believe Yukoners have a short memory and will forget that this money was hoarded away through some very, very difficult times for people who needed that money. At this point in time, one has to ask the Premier why he didn't help those who were in need

in the past and why he has chosen now to announce spending on housing issues only now that there's a lead-up to the next election?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: There is no confusion on this side of the House, but there certainly is confusion with the Liberal leader.

As we've heard him say recently and through this session — telling us to spend the money; spend the money. Now he stands up and says, "How can you spend the money when you don't have a plan?"

The only confusion that we see is on the other side of the House. We have invested over \$150 million into housing. We have built seniors residences in many communities and we currently have a seniors residence under construction here in Whitehorse and also in Mayo.

This government has been committed to housing and committed to ensuring that not only are we building houses, but we're creating jobs for Yukoners.

Question re: Liquefied natural gas power project cost overruns

Mr. Tredger: When the Yukon Energy Corporation's new LNG plant was before the Yukon Utilities Board, many Yukoners came forward and questioned the claims that this new facility would easily pay for itself. These legitimate concerns were dismissed by this government as they pushed forward with their plans to increase Yukon's dependence on fossil fuels.

The new LNG facility is now \$8-million overbudget and the cost of LNG and diesel has fluctuated wildly. The president of Yukon Energy Corporation stated that the cost overruns of the LNG facility will be passed on to ratepayers through electrical rates and could wipe out much of the promised savings from the conversion.

Will the minister take responsibility for the increase in rates that will be borne by the Yukon public due to his government's inability to manage capital projects?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: First of all, the member seems unaware of the structure of the Yukon Energy Corporation. The Yukon Energy Corporation is a wholly owned subsidiary of Yukon Development Corporation, which is a government corporation. It is accountable, through the board of directors of Yukon Energy and through the board of directors of Yukon Development Corporation, ultimately to the minister responsible, but the corporation itself is a regulated corporation that is under the Yukon *Business Corporations Act* and it is regulated by the Yukon Utilities Board.

What the member in his characterizations has failed to realize, or failed to reflect to this House, is that in fact it was the boards of Yukon Energy and Yukon Development Corporation that reviewed the work done by staff and consultants and made the recommendation to replace the existing diesel engines with liquefied natural gas. That was based on their belief that that was the cheapest source of energy for providing that backup power. The member's characterizations of this project are quite incorrect, and I should note to the member that even with the increase in cost

— which as I previously noted, we're not happy about — this project is still the best course forward in terms of an economical solution to replace the 40- and 44-year-old diesel engines at Yukon Energy.

Mr. Tredger: Letters of expectations and directions are given from this government to the Yukon Development Corporation and its subsidiary, Yukon Energy Corporation. The fact of the matter is that this project was rushed through. Yukon Energy had already purchased the generators for the new facility before the permitting process even began. The Utilities Board hearings and the YESAB process were merely a formality for this government. At no point in the consultation process was the answer ever going to be anything but a yes to go ahead with the plan.

What alternatives did this government look at before pushing ahead with its now \$8-million overbudget LNG facility?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Quite frankly, the member's question and assertions are not only an insult to government, which we are used to hearing from the member, but are insulting to the dedicated Yukoners who serve on the boards of Yukon Energy Corporation, Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Utilities Board.

As the member should know, when the announcement was made of government providing a loan to Yukon Energy through Yukon Development to advance this project, it was noted in that press release that this was still subject to them actually being successful through the permitting process of YESAB and through the Yukon Utilities Board. If indeed they had not been successful, this project would not have gone ahead.

It is not just government, but in fact the boards of Yukon Energy, Yukon Development and Yukon Utilities Board that made the determination based on the best information in front of them — that liquefied natural gas engines were a cheaper solution than replacing the 40- and 44-year-old diesel engines with diesel units.

They made the choice that that was the best path to proceed with, and the member should check his facts before so casually casting aspersions, not just on government but on Yukon citizens serving on three boards.

Mr. Tredger: This government gives direction to Yukon Energy and the minister is responsible for Yukon Energy, so he should be taking responsibility for the cost overruns. Decisions on major capital projects should not be made before assessments are completed. It leads to delays and cost overruns, and in this case, those cost overruns are passed on to the ratepayer. The government sold this project to Yukoners on the basis that LNG would save them money over the long run. Now that the facility is overbudget and the price of diesel has dropped, the promise of decreased power costs is in question.

How will the LNG facility cost overrun and the fluctuating energy costs impact the promised savings that Yukoners were assured this new facility will provide?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Again, what I would note to the member — and the member should be aware — is that, in

fact, this government, including me and my predecessor as minister responsible for Yukon Development, has strengthened the accountability framework to Yukon Energy Corporation and strengthened that governance framework from what it previously was.

I would again note to the member that Yukon Energy Corporation did go overbudget due to construction and permitting delays on the diesel replacement project. Even with those changes and even with those delays, the fuel source is still a cheaper, long-term choice than replacing the aged 40- and 44-year-old diesel units with another diesel unit. I again remind the member that it was the board of Yukon Energy, the board of Yukon Development Corporation and ultimately the Yukon Utilities Board that reviewed this project and made the decisions about it and determined that it was a cost-effective solution.

As the member should be aware, certainly people have served on these boards from all walks of life and from all parties, and members of those boards are certainly independent Yukon citizens who are providing their best advice and making decisions that they believe are in the best interests of Yukoners, and the member should not be quite so casual as to cast aspersions on them while he is flinging mud at the government.

Question re: Silver Trail improvements

Mr. Barr: This weekend I had the pleasure of attending the Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association AGM with my colleague, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. The association represents the many businesses based in Stewart Crossing, Mayo and Keno, which provide services, meals, accommodation and shopping for locals and tourists.

This spring, the highway from Stewart to Moose Creek is in terrible shape. The association continues to call on government to invest in the Silver Trail, and for years these requests have fallen on deaf ears. This year's highways budget includes \$171,000 to develop a Silver Trail functional plan.

Will the Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association be involved in this functional plan? Will citizens and businesses of Stewart Crossing, Mayo and Keno have the opportunity to have their say?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The Department of Highways and Public Works last year undertook a number of functional plans, including work on the Freegold Road, the Nahanni Range Road as well as the Klondike Highway. This year, as the member opposite referenced, there are functional plans for the Silver Trail as well as a number of other highways throughout the territory. They are engineering plans — they are not consultative plans — so they are highly technical. They are done by engineering firms so there isn't an opportunity for public input until after, perhaps, we're done and then we can take a look at it, but that helps to inform government, inform government decisions, and it allows us to make the best decisions with the transportation budget that we have.

Mr. Barr: The Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association has written the minister on a number of occasions about the state of the Silver Trail and the north Klondike Highway. A June 13, 2012 letter states — and I quote: "Weather, road services and heavy ore truck traffic have degraded the roadbed to a point where there is no surface materials to work with and the soft spots are becoming dangerous."

At this year's AGM, it was the same refrain. The Silver Trail needs attention to many road signs that are out of date and damaged. We saw some falling on the ground, actually, when we went this weekend. Businesses want to see large up-to-date blue highway signs installed that tell the travelling public about upcoming services, accommodations, gas stations, restaurants and other services.

The summer tourism season is upon us. Will another season pass before these issues are addressed?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As members opposite know, the Yukon government manages thousands of kilometres of public roads throughout the territory, including important accesses for industry as well as tourism. The Top of World Highway and the Dempster Highway come to mind, as well as the Silver Trail. As he mentioned in his initial question, we are doing the functional planning to help us inform the improvements that we would like to make to the Silver Trail going forward.

If there are specific questions about signage or tourism signage that the member opposite or the individuals involved with the Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce would like to see, I'm certainly willing to welcome them to contact my office and we can put them in touch with the officials so that we can take care of those signage aspects. Signage is something that is important throughout the territory and we want to ensure that those businesses that would like signage in the highway right-of-way have the opportunity to do so. There are policies and procedures in place to have that done but, again, it's something that I'm more than willing to talk to constituents of the Silver Trail region about — with respect to the signage they're looking for.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 18, *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

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. 18: *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

Department of Education

Hon. Mr. Graham: It's a pleasure indeed to rise in the House today to present the 2015-16 budget for the Department of Education to members present.

The Department of Education's mission is to encourage Yukon learners of all ages to develop a love of lifelong learning, a strong commitment to their communities and the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in our workplace and society.

As this budget will reflect, the department's focus in 2015 will continue to be on supporting success for each learner. Partnership is an important element in creating and delivering programs and services that are responsive to the current and future needs of Yukoners. The Department of Education works with a wide range of partners and stakeholders. Engaging partners about the department's programs and services fosters new ideas about how to support the academic, cultural, language, employment, training and accommodation needs of Yukon learners.

Before addressing the numbers behind the 2015-16 budget, Madam Chair, I would like to acknowledge the many partners and individuals who work with the department. Together we explore new avenues of programming and to enhance existing services, including the educators of Yukon, including the dedicated teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, the Yukon Teachers' Association, and others.

It includes the Yukon school councils, students and parents, including Yukon First Nation governments and the Council of Yukon First Nations. It includes the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon and the many community, business and other educational institutes and organizations that work with Advanced Education through the labour market framework, the Yukon literacy strategy, the community training funds and the labour market development agreements, among other programs.

Input from partners is invaluable to the Department of Education, and the department will continue to seek their involvement and feedback as it moves forward this year with the programs and services outlined in this budget.

The total budget for the Department of Education this year is \$181,325,000. I will begin with the capital budget estimates for 2015-16. The capital budget for 2015-16 is \$26,481,000. It's important to note, Madam Chair, that the capital budget is based on need and cash flow requirements for each project; therefore, the funding requested each year varies. Investing in creating and upgrading facilities for Department of Education programs represents the majority of this capital fund.

The largest current facilities project is the F.H. Collins Secondary School replacement, where construction is well underway.

\$7,478,000 is requested for 2015-16 for construction, project management and administrative costs. The new school building was designed with leadership in energy and environmental design, or the LEED standard principles, and will hold up to 750 students in a variety of learning spaces from the central gym to the First Nation elders' space. We just had a walk-through within the last month — and last week on the functional design each individual space was also walked through — and the uses and the facilities contained therein were explained. I am very excited to take a look at this school when it's finished. I was one of the very first classes that went into the old F.H. Collins Secondary School, and I will be very interested to see the upgrade between that school in 1963 or 1964, I think it was, and this one.

The Department of Education is also responsible for furnishing the new school building in order to prepare it for use. To furnish the school and provide the necessary IT and other equipment and services for students and staff, \$2.970 million is required. Once the building construction is complete, the furniture and equipment will be installed. Once installed, the department will advise staff, students and parents of the timeline for moving in and opening the new school building. Relating to the replacement of the school is the separate technical education wing, for which the department is requesting an estimate of \$3 million.

We are also proceeding with the planned updates to playground equipment at many schools. The department is committed to providing outdoor spaces where children can safely and creatively play, build friendships and strengthen their minds and bodies. In fall 2013, Suncorp Valuations inspected the playground equipment at Yukon schools. As recommended in their report, the department developed a two-year replacement plan that began last year in 2014-15. The department anticipates this project will cost an estimated \$1.46 million over the two years to provide new playground equipment at 18 Yukon schools. For 2015-16, \$600,000 is requested to replace an assortment of play structures, rope climbers, monkey bars and slides. The following schools are scheduled for playground replacements and upgrades in 2015-16: Ghùch Tlá Community School, \$70,000; Hidden Valley Elementary School, \$80,000; Holy Family Elementary

School, \$70,000; Nelnah Bessie John school, \$70,000; Teslin School, \$40,000; Johnson Elementary School, \$70,000 — that includes playground and slide; Del Van Gorder School, \$70,000; Selkirk Elementary School, \$80,000; and Elijah Smith Elementary School will receive \$10,000 for a slide only.

Funding is also being sought in this budget for capital projects that help maintain other public school facilities: \$2,575,000 is requested to upgrade the Del Van Gorder School roof to support the long-term structural integrity of the building; and \$500,000 is requested to upgrade the Watson Lake Secondary School roof. I'm also pleased to highlight the construction of the new facility for Yukon College's Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, for which \$2,401,000 is requested.

This new building, designed by Kobayashi & Zedda Architects Ltd., will include a workshop and a section with three classrooms, offices and reception areas. The building will be capable of accommodating a variety of trades such as millwright and heavy-equipment mechanic. I look forward to the completion of these capital projects over the next few years.

Thanks to the Department of Highways and Public Works for working with Education to develop and deliver the facilities that Yukon needs for its educational programs. These facilities are home to the many programs that contribute toward meeting the Department of Education's vision and mandate.

I am pleased to now discuss the main items and initiatives under the Department of Education 2015-16 operation and maintenance budget. A total of \$154,844,000 is requested for the Department of Education's operation and maintenance budget this year. This will support the activities of the Public Schools, Advanced Education and Education Support Services branches, as well as Yukon College.

From literacy to experiential learning to First Nation programming to language instruction to First Nation support services, the department is investing in the supports our students need to improve their learning outcomes and succeed in their education.

To support the Yukon Literacy Coalition, which runs the Family Literacy Centre programs such as northern tales for northern kids, Apprentissage par Coeur and multi-age Mother Goose, the department is requesting a total of \$280,000 in funding for 2015-16.

To increase support for students, \$285,000 is requested for the home tutor program, a \$20,000 increase for this excellent program that is available at all secondary schools, including the Teen Parent Centre and the Gadzoosdaa student residence.

To provide more equitable programs and support to Yukon's rural and First Nation students, \$75,000 is requested to support the continued implementation of the rural equity action plan. This plan also responds to data showing a gap in terms of rural and First Nation student achievement compared to urban Yukon students.

Many rural and First Nation students do not have access to the same range of social, emotional, physical and academic supports that are available to urban students in the Yukon. This difference has contributed to a lack of equity of outcomes and opportunities. The rural advisory committee meets regularly to discuss the plan and issues faced by rural schools and First Nation students in order to provide advice to the department.

A great example of the work being done under the rural equity action plan is the rural experiential models such as the one being hosted at the end of this month in Watson Lake. The rural experiential models offer rural students in grades 10 to 12 a terrific opportunity to learn fine arts, applied skills and applied skills training from local and First Nation experts while connecting with their peers from other communities.

The success of past rural experiential models are thanks to the dedication and efforts of many teachers, administrators and department staff who engage these students at the workshops. The Department of Education recognizes that rural and First Nation students have lower attendance and academic achievement outcomes compared to their urban and non-First Nation counterparts. The department is committed to supporting these learners in order to improve their learning outcomes and to respond to the call from Yukon First Nations for new partnerships and strategies.

The Council of Yukon First Nations and First Nation governments are important partners in Yukon schools and in the success of First Nation students throughout the territory. The department supports the Council of Yukon First Nations in their delivery of education services and is collaborating on the implementation of the joint education action plan over the next 10 years. The department's First Nations Programs and Partnerships Unit liaises with local First Nations to create programming for schools that is inclusive of First Nation cultures, languages and traditional knowledge.

\$1,566,000 is requested for the activities of this unit, such as developing First Nation curriculum and resource materials for Yukon schools. Examples of resource materials made available include reading books for different grade levels from NorthWind Books, such as *Making Tea at Grandma's*, *Kaska Day at School*, *A Winter Camp* and *Finding A Medicine Tree*.

Great examples of programs coordinated by this unit include: the bilingual and bicultural Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Southern Tutchone bicultural program for kindergarten to grade 2 at St. Elias Community School, the elders in schools program and the cultural inclusion program, which supports cultural activities in Yukon schools such as carving, moccasin-making, beadwork, bison hunts, canoe building and other cultural activities.

Through these First Nations Programs and Partnerships initiatives, students are learning about the history, cultural traditions and the important role of First Nations in this region. We will continue to work together to improve outcomes for First Nation learners and to provide all Yukon students with opportunities to learn more about Yukon First Nation cultures and traditions.

The department also provides students with access to opportunities to learn First Nation languages, including Gwich'in, Han, Upper Tanana, Tagish, Kaska, Tlingit, and Northern and Southern Tutchone. \$405,000 is requested for the Yukon Native Language Centre with \$3,037,000 requested for the salaries of aboriginal language teachers.

The First Nations Programs and Partnerships linguist is also working with First Nations to create and update multimedia resources and databases of materials to teach several First Nation languages. These include Kaska, Southern Tutchone and Han with partners such as Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Ross River Dena Council, Liard First Nation, Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia.

Language is a bridge that connects us to each other and to the world around us. Learning the languages of Canada's diverse communities helps connect Canadians together, including First Nations and French Canadians. The Department of Education is pleased to offer a number of programs for French language instruction in Yukon schools from the French first language programs at École Émilie Tremblay and Académie Parhélie to French immersion and other French-as-a-second-language programs. The department continues to use the comprehensive review of French second language programs as a guide to collaborate with the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, Canadian Parents for French and other community partners to enhance French language education programs in Yukon. Language is one area where students may need additional support in order to succeed. Under this budget, the department is also requesting \$403,000 in funding to support additional instruction for English language learners.

The Student Support Services division coordinates other supports to meet language special learning needs of Yukon students. \$3,060,000 is requested for the activities of this division, which provides students with support for their learning successes based on their learning strengths and challenges. Teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators work together, often on school-based teams, to identify and assess the needs of individual students to adapt the regular curriculum to meet these needs. Student Support Services offers counselling, speech and language pathology, physical and occupational therapy, assistance for the hearing- or visually-impaired and paraprofessional support for Yukon students.

The funding request includes \$7,000 for the autism spectrum disorders prevalence national survey project, which is fully refundable from the Public Health Agency of Canada. Currently, comprehensive data on autism spectrum disorders does not exist in Canada and there is a need to address the significant emotional and financial challenges presented by these disorders as Yukon educators work to assist these individuals to reach their full potential.

Madam Chair, as you are indicating that I don't have all that much time, I will end there and go through the rest of the programs once members opposite have an opportunity to comment.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for his comments. I will try to be brief so that he can finish up and we can move along with the others.

First, I would like to welcome the officials to the Legislature and the minister to his new position. Welcome to the Department of Education and to education in interesting times. I think education is always interesting, and there are always challenges as we work together. I commend the minister for his efforts in reaching out to the teachers, to the schools and to the school councils in his efforts to build a team. To me, education is about relationships, and the primary relationship in education is the relationship between the student and the teacher. Our goal is to build a team to support that relationship, and that goal involves the community, it involves the Department of Education and it involves parents and the school.

In order to make that relationship the most effective, we need to provide our teachers and our students with the supports they need to do their best in the classroom. What research and experience have shown us is that the closer those decisions are made to that classroom, the more responsive they are, the more effective they are, the more efficient they are and the more successful they are.

I think it is important that we look at how we can decentralize decision-making so that decisions are made closest to the source, so that they are responsive, quick to evaluate and the most cost-efficient.

A lot of people go into that support and I think the ways that we can support that are through research, through ongoing evaluations, through encouraging our educators and through trial and error to take risks, to be supported in those risks and to learn from them. The best education is a continuous education — continuous progress. In order to progress continuously, we need to have our educators and our students supported so that they can grow and learn from opportunities, so they're not afraid to take chances or to experience failure — because failure is a part of learning.

To quote Wayne Gretzky: "You miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take." I think that's so true in education. You need our kids taking shots, taking chances, trying to learn.

The Auditor General, in 2009 when he was evaluating the Department of Education and subsequent evaluations of different departments, pointed out that: "Strategic planning is a management tool that focuses on the future. It helps us set priorities and goals and develop a plan to meet those goals. It also helps a department to assess how resources are to be allocated and gives it the scope to adjust its direction in response to a changing environment." We need to be able to assess where we are, where we want to go, the risks involved — and plan for the risks, but move forward.

There are many good initiatives underway in the Department of Education. The minister mentioned some of them: the rural experiential model, what's happening in Old Crow Flats, the projects in Watson Lake and Dawson City, the engagement of Ta'an Kwäch'än, Haines Junction with Champagne and Aishihik. All these projects are to be commended. They show much promise. Let's ensure they are

given acknowledgement they deserve by properly evaluating them: what priorities, what outcomes and what goals are being met? Let's ensure the resources to keep these happening and maybe to repeat them in other schools or similar projects. Let's ensure the resources necessary and the challenges overcome are acknowledged, identified and provided, local involvement is supported and successes and challenges are articulated. This will ensure that that success is sustainable and, with proper engagement, repeatable in other schools.

So that will be the focus of my questions as we go through looking at this year's budget, articulating how we've arrived at a decision to spend some money. What were the considerations and, because we are fiscally aware, what choices did we make? How did we choose the programs we chose and which ones didn't we choose? Again, I welcome the minister to the Department of Education.

I welcome the new deputy minister and my long-time friend, Cyndy — thank you. I'll leave that now. I will let the minister finish his introductory remarks and then we'll begin the questions.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I will just continue on here and try to hit the highlights of every department. Under program delivery in the department, we are requesting \$295,000 to create an additional 5.5 full-time equivalents of educational assistance staffing. Paraprofessional support staff, as members know, are allocated to schools through a needs-based system and we are currently reviewing that system in cooperation with teachers and school councils as well. This process accounts for student needs, enrolment numbers, student achievement levels, rural equity adjustments and student learning profiles. School principals then assign the FTEs allocated to their school to specific classes, based on the needs of students in that class.

The people who work directly with Yukon students as they explore the rural world through the classroom and on the land, from teachers to administrators to paraprofessionals, are the most important resource in our schools. In order to provide opportunities to Yukon educators for professional development throughout the year, \$352,350 is requested. This funding will help to deliver in-service training and professional development programs like the summer academy, which brings together school teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals from across Yukon before the school year begins each year to meet and learn about new developments in the field of education. This program gives school staff a valuable opportunity for professional development and collaboration on the shared goal of success for each learner.

The Department of Education is committed to providing a safe, engaging and supportive learning environment for all Yukon students and staff, where staff has the tools and knowledge to support the success of their students. Professional development through programs such as summer academy highlights the value of lifelong learning for Yukon's younger generations.

I would like to now talk about the Advanced Education operation and maintenance budget. A diverse range of educational programs beyond the public school system are

available to Yukon learners. The Advanced Education branch promotes adult training, post-secondary and continuing education and student financial assistance programs, as well as coordinating immigration programs for this region. A total of \$15,347,000 is requested for operation and maintenance for Advanced Education.

The Department of Education is committed to building an inclusive, adaptable and productive workforce and to encourage people of all ages to embrace opportunities for lifelong learning. In order to achieve those goals, Advanced Education provides Yukoners with a diverse range of opportunities to upgrade their skillset or to continue their education, many of which are targeted toward the demands of the job market in this region. For example, the governments of Canada and Yukon announced the Canada-Yukon job fund and the labour market agreement for persons with disabilities in 2014 — two major employment initiatives to assist Yukon workers to access training and skills development to improve their employment prospects.

The Canada-Yukon job fund provides approximately \$1 million per year for the next five years in federal funding to sponsor the Canada-Yukon job grant, employer-sponsored training and employment services and supports. This fund takes an employer-driven approach to help Canadians gain the skills and training they need to fill available jobs.

The labour market agreement for persons with disabilities provides \$1.25 million per year over the next four years to increase the representation of persons with disabilities in the workforce through services that assist individuals with disabilities to find, gain, maintain and return to employment.

Yukon also continues to receive \$3.949 million in federal funding through the labour market development agreement to assist individuals eligible for employment insurance to seek employment or pursue training to improve their employment prospects. Partnering with the federal government through these agreements enables Advanced Education to offer an extended range of education, training and skill development opportunities for all Yukoners. Addressing Yukon's skilled labour shortages through these kinds of programs enables Yukoners to participate in the workforce and to contribute to Yukon's economy and communities as well as provide Yukon employers with the skilled workers they need.

Another avenue for filling the gaps in our labour market is by promoting Yukon as a great destination for immigration. Yukon is the best place to live, work, play and raise a family, and many immigrants choose to make this region their new home. In order to attract talented workers with the skills that Yukon needs from overseas, the Department of Education continues to find ways to support and streamline the transition process for newcomers to the Yukon. In new funding, there will be \$192,000 from the federal government for the foreign credential recognition program.

In November 2014, the Department of Education began a two-year contribution agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada to promote the recognition of foreign credentials in Yukon, specifically for foreign-trained accountants in this first phase of the process. The process for

foreign credentials recognition helps ensure that immigrants to Yukon are able to transition into the jobs that are available in their field of work. This agreement will include a number of initiatives, the main task being the implementation of a bridging program for accountants trained outside of Canada starting this summer. The Department of Education is also exploring a partnership with BCIT's international credential evaluation service as a service provider. Furthermore, we will lead a one-day northern summit on foreign credential recognition.

The department is also working with Yukon College to ensure that qualifications and credentials of Yukoners are recognized by Canadian standards and employers. As Yukon prepares to deliver its first made-in-Yukon degree programs in 2017, the department is requesting \$250,000 to support the necessary groundwork related to quality assurance for the granting of degrees. In order to grant degrees, Yukon College must undergo institutional assessment and assessment for each proposed degree to ensure that made-in-Yukon degrees meet the Canadian standards.

Institutional assessments look at governance, policies, planning and financing to deliver a quality degree program, legislative authority to offer degrees, qualifications of faculty, support for scholarly work for faculty and students and appropriate educational facilities. Degree assessment considers the financial viability of the program, academic quality, the program's objectives, structure, institutional appropriateness, resources, student outcomes and their relevance. The department is currently reviewing the assessment systems for post-secondary education in other Canadian jurisdictions to determine the appropriate system to use in Yukon.

Advanced Education is also reviewing the *Students Financial Assistance Act* as well as the apprenticeship program this year. The review process for the *Students Financial Assistance Act* and Yukon student financial assistance includes seeking input from current, former and future students, parents, First Nations and educational institutions, and others. The apprenticeship program review will look at the efficiency and effectiveness of the program to define the benchmarks that the department can use for further evaluations. We look forward to hearing the feedback gathered during these reviews.

\$6,965,000 is requested to support the Training Programs division, which is responsible for these programs. The amount of funding requested includes \$4,728,000 for the ongoing support of post-secondary students through Yukon student financial assistance programs such as the Yukon grant, Yukon excellence awards and training allowance.

A total of \$25,463,000 is requested for O&M of Yukon College, under Advanced Education's O&M budget for 2015-16. This represents a base funding increase of \$562,000 to support this leading northern post-secondary institution. This funding from Advanced Education will support Yukon College's programs at the many community campuses throughout the Yukon — campuses in Carcross, Carmacks, Dawson City, Faro, Haines Junction, Kwanlin Dun First

Nation, Mayo, Old Crow, Pelly Crossing, Ross River, Teslin, Watson Lake, Whitehorse and the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, as well as Yukon College's Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining mobile trades training trailer.

Yukon College offers a number of post-secondary and training programs that prepare Yukoners to succeed in the workforce and in their careers, and that addresses the specific needs of our region. For example, \$75,000 is requested to support the delivery of the Yukon water and waste-water operator program. Yukon government is committed to maintaining and improving access to safe drinking water in Yukon. Training local people as water and waste-water operators ensures that there are qualified operators available in Yukon communities to safely and effectively manage water resources.

Yukon College also provides arts and culture programs and training to students. \$474,000 is requested to support the Yukon School of Visual Arts in Dawson City. At this accredited art college, aspiring artists complete a foundational year as the first year of study in a bachelor of fine arts/bachelor of design degree. This joint venture between the Dawson City Arts Society, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Yukon College attracts students from Dawson, across Canada and beyond to pursue their arts education in Yukon. This school is also an active contributor with a strong presence in the arts and cultural scene in Dawson City.

Turning to science and technology, the Yukon Research Centre at the college continues to establish itself as a major centre for northern research for climate change, cold climate technology and environmental science, society and culture. \$1,189,000 is requested to support the Yukon Research Centre as it continues its work, a \$101,000 increase since last year.

In September 2014, the Premier announced five more years of core funding for the Yukon Research Centre in the amount of just over \$6.3 million. This funding will help the Yukon Research Centre to attract third party project revenues. We look forward to the continued growth of the research and development industry in Yukon through the Yukon Research Centre.

\$1,200,000 is requested to support Yukon College's Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining. Yukon College is implementing its five-year program plan for the development of the centre to integrate and house mining exploration-relevant and industrial trades training programs within the territory. Courses continue to be delivered to Yukon residents, including First Nation students at community campuses, and through the mobile trades training centre, which is currently in Ross River delivering a dual credit, heavy equipment technician course.

The Government of Canada also has continued the targeted initiative for older workers through Yukon College. This initiative provides an opportunity for workers between the ages of 55 and 64 to develop new skills to transition to new fields of employment or to return to work. \$240,000 is requested to continue this initiative for 2015-16. This amount is fully recoverable from the Government of Canada and 72 participants are anticipated for this round of funding.

This program helps older workers to determine what type of work is suitable, how to deal with changes and barriers, skills upgrading and certification. It focuses on job search training, such as resume and cover letter preparation, interview skills and employment counselling and offers a four-week work placement for experience. The class size is around 12 participants at a time and 75 percent of participants who participated from fall 2007 to spring 2013 were employed at the program's completion.

I would like to thank Yukon College for developing and delivering a wide range of quality post-secondary programming to Yukon learners of all ages. Partners like Yukon College and others help education to evolve in this region through direct engagement committees and consultation.

A total of \$8,075,000 is requested for the O&M of Education Support Services. This funding will support the activities of the branch, which oversees a number of areas of responsibility. These areas include health and safety, student transportation, finance and accounting, facilities management and planning, procurement, human resources, policy, communications, evaluation, records management and the executive management of the department. \$3,867,000 of the funding is requested for school support services, which includes staffing for facilities and student transportation, including the contract for busing.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, the department encourages everyone to keep sharing ideas and being involved in its programs, working together to build a diverse range of programs that reflect the needs, values and vision of Yukon. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the Department of Education staff and my colleagues here in the House for developing a budget that supports the success of all Yukon learners. A big thank you to all Yukoners for their continued support and participation in our education system through the various councils and engagement processes that we offer.

With this budget, the Yukon government will continue to deliver on its commitment of education today for jobs tomorrow. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you and I thank the minister for his thorough introduction. I would also like to thank the officials from the Department of Education for their pre-budget briefing. It was much appreciated and very thorough, so thank you very much.

There have been a number of changes to the senior management positions. I assume there are severance packages and cost to the taxpayers. I would ask the minister: Do those costs come out Education or from the Public Service Commission? Does he have an estimate on how much they cost? I believe we have a new minister as well as a new deputy minister, a new assistant deputy minister and a senior director has left. What measures are being taken to ensure the continuity of programming and staffing to assure the staff that things will proceed — that they receive some assurances that things are under control with that amount of movement and I guess assure parents and students that programming won't suffer?

Adding to that, has the minister undertaken a review of the hiring procedures and protocols; in particular, reference checks and background checks to ensure that the people who are making those decisions are trained to do so and that we don't end up with situations that cost Yukon people — the taxpayers — considerable money as well as students', teachers' and schools' time and effort when members of their community don't receive proper scrutiny before they are hired to the positions?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, I can answer a couple of the questions.

If severance packages were paid to any employees, it would come out of the Education department budget, not the Public Service Commission's. We don't discuss those things — the individuals or whether or not they received a severance package — but I can confirm that yes, it does come out of our budget.

An interesting comment was continuity of programming. Madam Chair, sometimes change is necessary because what's going on isn't necessarily working. I think that the continuity of the general operation of our schools and curriculum is something that is going on. It never slowed down.

As you probably know, I had a new deputy minister come into the department, but she had previous working experience at the department level — a senior department level — and could pick up in a fairly seamless manner, but the continuity of everything in the department was one of the reasons changes were made.

We will continue offering the basic services we have always offered, but we are making changes. There is no doubt about it whatsoever; we are making changes. We are involving more and more the school committees and our other partners in decisions made at the department level and some of those changes that happened very, very early in the process were the changes in protocols and procedures that we use during the review of hiring new people in the department.

I have also stated publicly that that even included a second look at how we are using various committees, such as the Teacher Certification Board. I'm not necessarily saying that we are going to make changes in that area, but we are taking a look at that. We will also be consulting with the YTA and with the people who are part of that certification board to determine what they feel that their role in the process should be. If changes to legislation and regulation are needed, we will proceed with those changes, but that is not something that we are going to rush.

At this time, we have made several changes in protocol and procedures around hiring to ensure that the number of mistakes — because mistakes can always be made — but the number of mistakes in the near future will be drastically reduced.

I think those were the three that the member opposite asked about — I hope those serve.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that and I thank him for moving on the issues, as he saw necessary. There has been a lot of concern about how positions are filled within the

department in particular, and I thank the minister for addressing that.

One question that was raised to me around this was one of the new procedures — and I haven't seen it personally; I'm getting this second hand — but I would like the minister to comment on it. It is a decision that teachers will not be removed from schools during the year to positions within the department. I can certainly see the reason for that, but I would like assurances from the minister then that the majority — or whenever is possible and perhaps to make it a priority — of staffing be done between school years, so that the qualified people within our schools receive that opportunity and because they've taken a position within a school, they're not, as it were, penalized for doing so.

Hon. Mr. Graham: One of the very first things I did was ask my deputy minister to institute the policy of saying that teachers should not be taken out of the classroom for jobs in the department, especially those jobs that were a short-term requirement for the department, because we found, in one particular instance, that not only was the school from which the instructor came disrupted, but another school was also disrupted because the position was backfilled from another school.

There are a number of children who suffer as a result of these things happening. I can assure the member opposite that we will attempt, in all cases, to avoid removing a teacher from a classroom to work in the department, except in extreme emergency. If there's an emergency, then we'll still reserve that right.

I agree also with the member opposite that we will be attempting to fill those department positions at a time when it's not going to be disruptive to the classroom. We would love to fill them all in the summer so that every instructor has an opportunity to bid on jobs such as that. Unfortunately, that's not always the way people leave the department, but our department plans and the school plans — we'll be working on. That's what we'll be hiring — according to those plans.

It's our intent to make sure those jobs are all available to Yukon teachers and that it's done before the school year. That's what the department plans to do.

Mr. Tredger: I appreciate the minister's answers there. It is a valuable opportunity for people who are working in the schools to be able to go into the department if it's a wonderful professional development opportunity. I appreciate the minister. It comes down, I think, in large part to planning in advance so you know what positions are coming up and when they are coming up. Sometimes in education, we have in the past reacted to spur-of-the-moment ideas. I can remember long struggles, even trying to set a school calendar, when professional development dates and others were only made aware of during the school year.

Being able to plan in advance and determine the positions that are needed before the school year begins would certainly go a long way. The other thought on that might be that any positions hired to the department during the school year for which teachers or school-based personnel might be qualified could be filled on a temporary basis until the summer, or until

between semesters if it were a high school, when those accommodations could be made.

Hon. Mr. Graham: That was part of the solution too — that we would be able to hire on a contract or casual basis until such time as we were able to make it a fair competition for all Education employees. We see that as something that's definitely doable because we realize that department personnel, or department needs, may change during the school year and, if they do, we don't want to handcuff ourselves into a position where we can't fill that position until the next summer.

There are a number of options available to us, but one thing that we would like to say about the department is we're always interested in promoting from inside where appropriate, and we'll continue to do that.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for his answer.

The next couple of questions are around the importance of community involvement and the need for a whole child support system. As we are becoming increasingly aware, the health of a student support system, the health of the people around a student, happenings within communities — whether it is Whitehorse or within the individual communities — a student's socio-economic status and position have a major influence on success. Poverty, isolation, access to resources all affect a student's ability to succeed in school. We all know the importance of early identification and intervention, which can change outcomes, especially if we have community involvement and support. Critical to that are the support of other agencies, the support of other students, families, and ensuring a safe and secure environment. One of the more successful ways to involve communities and agencies — quite often in the Yukon we have settled into our silos, as it were, and Education was education, Health and Social Services was health and social services, and Justice was justice, and we had our silos.

I wonder if — recognizing that, will the minister direct, or has the minister already directed, schools and other departments — or talked to his colleagues about directing other departments — to coordinate provisions of services to the communities and to ensure that there is time for school staff, particularly administrators, to participate? Each community will have different mechanisms. In each community it is important that it be a community-based exercise.

Will the minister make this a priority for his staff and encourage ministers from other departments to hold regular inter-agency meetings with community members or within the community to support school administrators to support teachers and students and, most importantly, to support students so that they are ready to learn when they are in class?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I can confirm that we are working with a number of partners. When we talk about whole child support, it is not called exactly that maybe in the department, but we are working with Health and Social Services and First Nations in a number of ways. While I was Minister of Health and Social Services and the Child Development Centre — and the coordination between the Child Development Centre and

their work in the community and the Department of Education. In fact, during my time with the Department of Health and Social Services, we had an employee of Education seconded to the Department of Health and Social Services to work on joint initiatives between the two departments.

Health and Social Services and Education — just to give you an idea of the collaboration on a number of joint initiatives, including how to improve our service delivery and coordinate efforts to meet the needs of our common clients — oversee the joint labour market agreement for persons with disabilities and health behaviours of school-aged children sureys in Yukon.

In addition, the complex needs committee is co-chaired by Education and Health and Social Services, and the role of this committee is to plan for school-aged children and youth with complex needs who access programs from Education and Health and Social Services in order to better meet the needs of the students and their families. To further emphasize that, there are over 16 issues that the two departments are currently working on, and senior managers of both departments meet regularly to talk about these joint initiatives. I will name a few: I have already talked about the labour market agreement; bullying behaviours steering committee; healthy families; home-based family support program; healthy living committee; Canadian Joint Consortium on Comprehensive School Health ; From the Ground Up is another program that they work on; complex needs committee; four corners partnership; and transitions to adulthood for students with disabilities committee, which is one I'm particularly proud of because there was not a great deal of support for students transitioning to adulthood out of high school, and that committee is working hard to correct that problem.

There is regular discussion between the manager of Student Support Services in Education and the supervisor of these family supports for children with disabilities in Health and Social Services. We also carry out joint meetings related to the funding renewal of the practical nursing program at Yukon College. I believe that in the last two programs of the practical nursing program, every single graduate was hired by Health and Social Services.

We collaborate as well on the children's dental program. As I said, health behaviours of school-aged children, learning together, parent-child preschool program, and the classroom diversity committee — so, in all of those areas, Health and Social Services and Education collaborate on joint initiatives. That's something that is increasing. I know we're currently talking in Health and Social Services and Education about the birth to five-year-old children too and exactly how we can collaborate more closely because we all know that the children from birth to age five is one of the steepest learning curves of all ages, and Education would like to assist in any way we can to improve the outcomes for that age group.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for those comments, and I think that's important.

One of the things I was getting at, and I was thinking of it from a community perspective and what has been proven — I know it happens in some communities and not necessarily in

others — but the importance of an inter-agency group within the community, a group that might include the RCMP, the nurse, the directors of programs within the community from the First Nation, the social worker — so that they can coordinate their activities within the community.

In order to make that happen, I'm wondering if the minister would make that a priority and look at the staffing allocation formula to ensure that principals have time allotted so that they were able to have an inter-agency meeting one afternoon a month, or something. It does take time and it is an effort, and I know administrators' time is valuable, but this reaches out and involves the community.

The second part would be to look at administrator allocation time to ensure that administrators in the community have time within their day to meet with the First Nations and directors of the various departments of First Nation governments, so they can include that and incorporate it into building a whole support system around the children and around the schools.

I guess my question is: Will the minister make it a priority, or more of a priority, to ensure that principals, in their time allocation, have time so they are able to do that without having to rob other jobs or programs?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I know that in many of the communities at the present time Health and Social Services works with an inter-agency committee that includes many of the people the member opposite just mentioned — the local nurse, RCMP and any of the other professionals in the community that have a concern about the community's wellness. As part of the joint education action plan that the Council of Yukon First Nations and Department of Education are working on, this forms a part of that plan — working closely with groups in the community to ensure that we're planning not only the students' future in the school system, but the supports and interwoven — I guess it is — wraparound supports required to ensure the success of the student in the community as well.

So yes, it is a part of the joint education action plan and it is a priority with this government. I don't know, really, what else I can say other than that. It is part of the joint education action plan.

Mr. Tredger: Administrators are very busy people. I know there's staffing allocation, and I know that in some schools the administrators are not full-time because of staffing allocation. Maybe we can move on to the joint education action plan next but just to finish up on this one — just to ensure that administrators do have time to do that without having to take from their regular work.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Yes, Madam Chair, I can assure the member opposite that this is part of the negotiation process that will resume on Wednesday. We hope to be able to support administrators further in exactly the manner that the member opposite is talking about.

Mr. Tredger: I appreciate the answer. Is the staffing formula part of the negotiations with YTA?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Yes, it is. That's why we won't be able to talk about it at this time.

Mr. Tredger: Just further with that and in terms of supporting the students, superintendent of schools — one of the long-term goals from the Yukon Association of School Administrators has always been to ensure or find ways that superintendents could be in their schools and understand their schools more. They were looking toward parameters that allowed superintendents a window into the schools so that they could see what was happening in the schools and how the schools were going, as well as a window into the department for the schools. They were sort of a conduit between schools and the department. Over the last number of years, there have been a number of structural changes that have given superintendents less authority within the Department of Education and less time to spend within the schools.

That has had a couple of consequences. One is that the schools, in going to the superintendents, weren't always any longer going to the right person. They had to go, again, back to two or three different directors whereas, in the past, the hope was that they could go to the superintendent, who would then know what was happening in the schools and be able to advocate for them and then be able to take that position.

When the minister mentioned all of the committees and activities going on, usually — or in the past — superintendents are on those committees, lessening the time that they end in schools. I've heard stories of — in the last year or two — superintendents only having time to visit schools in the communities maybe once or twice a year and, when they're in the schools, having only time to sit down with the principal behind his closed door. An hour or two with the principal doesn't constitute necessarily a school visit so, on this, I'm wondering if the department has collected statistics over the last years as to how many visits the superintendents are going to each school, what reports are coming out of that, who are they visiting in the schools and whether there is a move to return some authority back to the superintendents so that they can make decisions — again, with the idea that they are closer to what the students need than some other officials within the department. If we are going to try to decentralize the decision-making, it is important that our conduits have the authority to make decisions.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I can assure the member opposite that superintendents have been in schools more this year than in previous years and part of our changes recently have been made to ensure that they are out there more often than they have been in the past. We are attempting to ensure that now all things from the family of schools that the superintendent has responsibility for go through that superintendent.

What we would also like to see happen — well, what we will ensure happens — is that more of the people who work in the department as consultants and as support services for the schools will spend more time out with the schools as well. What we are very sure of is that all things will go through the superintendent, so the superintendent can advocate on behalf of their schools with the various other support services. It is really important, I think, and it is one of the really pleasant things that I have seen happen in the department lately — we just met this morning — that department staff see themselves

as supports for the schools. I am not so sure that always happened in the recent past. It is really great to see that they believe and they know that their role is to support those schools because that is where the action is.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that. I encourage him in his endeavours. It has been a long-standing goal to get the dedicated employees in the department into the schools on a regular enough basis so that they can provide service, and it is also the same with superintendents. I hope they are going to spend more time in schools. I hope they spend some time in the staff rooms and in individual classrooms and get to know the teachers, get to know the school and be able to help the school work with the community.

I think that is the other aspect to that. I know your new deputy minister spent a fair bit of time in both Pelly Crossing and Mayo, building relationships that helped the new principals or the ongoing principal to work within the community. Those are the roles that a superintendent can play.

It is critical though that they have the time in the schools. One of the things that happens, I think, is that sometimes the department officials see their desk piling up and they work at it from — and it's a natural thing to work at it from your desk. I would encourage the minister to follow up on that and encourage everyone to get into the schools as much as possible and to find ways to support them on an ongoing basis, rather than a fly-by visit. I appreciate it and thank the minister for that.

The minister mentioned the memorandum of understanding with Council of Yukon First Nations and the joint education action plan. Do we have an update on that joint education action plan? How will that fit in — will the CYFN education committee and leadership committee have input into what the comprehensive review that the minister is undertaking will entail? What types of things are going to be looked at so that we can — if I understand correctly, there is going to be a comprehensive review — how is that going to interface with the joint education action plan? How will that lead in a few years down the road to the new education vision?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I will go back to the previous subject just for a second, because when we say that we are trying to bring the focus back to the schools, that is something that we are really actively trying to do. As an example, even Finance now has sent out some folks from the Department of Finance to assist schools in setting up their systems or improving their systems as well. We are trying to make it a department-wide philosophy. The schools are where the action is; we are here to support the schools and it is really important that everybody understands that and believes in it.

As for the joint education action plan with First Nations, we now have an action plan that has been signed. What we are doing — in fact, this afternoon there is a meeting. It is the implementation plan that will be agreed to in the very near future. As I said, there is a meeting just this afternoon, so department officials are attending that meeting. Once we have an implementation plan ready to go, we are ensuring, first of all, that the implementation plan is cross-referenced with the

strategic plan as well the rural education action plan. We are trying to make sure that the joint education action plan, the rural education action plan and the strategic plan are all interrelated so that each plan isn't saying something different. We want to make sure that they are coordinated, cross-referenced and proceeding lockstep down the same pathway.

When we talk about the new vision that we are proposing for education, I think it's fair to say that the joint education action group will become one of the foundation members for the group that moves forward. We said on a number of occasions that we'll be including all our partners in the consultation and in the planning for this new vision, and I think it's fair to say that the joint education action group will form a basis — a firm partner — for the initial discussions. I should also mention, because not all First Nations are on that, every First Nation will be part of it.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that. Sometimes I need a deputy minister here, telling me which words go where. I appreciate the input of the deputy minister there.

If I understand, then, before we begin the comprehensive review, the minister will engage with the various partners. Will that be done in a formal or informal way? Will there be a committee set up that would then drive the comprehensive review, or would that be done in-house with opportunity for the various partners to have input?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I think it's important that we just take a step back because, as I've said on any number of occasions, the work being done in this area is in its infancy. We haven't set up exactly what process we'll be using immediately. What we do know is that, internally and with some assistance from a few of our education partners, we'll be setting out a very basic design of where we hope to go, how consultations will occur, when they'll occur and who they will occur with. We'll get together a small group that's easily able to come up with a basic design and, from that, we'll then go forward. At this point, the department really hasn't had a chance to implement any of the thoughts the Premier expressed the other day, or that I've brought forward to the department in our conversations.

The first part will be developing an outline of where we hope to go, timelines, who we will consult with — and we'll try to put together some points where we hope to have certain things done. I guess it will be an action plan, more or less.

Mr. Tredger: Will CYFN, Yukon Teachers' Association and the Yukon Association of School Councils, Boards and Committees be part of that steering committee? Has there been any money allocated to set this in motion, or is it going to be done in-house?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, the member opposite is exactly right. Those are our primary partners that we'll be consulting with to put together at least the initial action plan, so it will be the Council of Yukon First Nations, the AYSCBC and the Yukon Teachers' Association. Those will be our primary partners in the very first stage. At that point, we'll decide where we're headed from this point on. As I said before, we have three reports plus the Auditor General's report that we have to take a look at. At some point, we have

to look at what we've accomplished or what the recommendations were from those three reports — what we've accomplished and what we have yet to accomplish, or even if we want to go ahead with some of the things that have not yet been done.

It's a big process just to even get started. We're really looking forward to it. We haven't put any money in — in discussions with the Minister of Finance and other caucus members. Once we get at least a preliminary plan in place with our other partners, then we'll be able to determine more accurately what kind of funding we're looking at, when it will be required and what kind of process is necessary.

Mr. Tredger: The Premier, in his Budget Address, referenced a new vision within a couple of months, but my understanding is that it's a beginning of a process that may, it sounds like, take — it certainly won't be done in this fiscal year but in future fiscal years, and it's an ongoing plan and, as it's being developed, there will be various pieces of action on it that will be rolled out.

Does the minister have any estimated timelines as to when we will see curriculum changes and when we will see the changes to the *Education Act* that were implied when the Premier said that 20 percent of local initiative wasn't enough? I believe that's in the act, so that would require a change to the act.

Those are fairly major undertakings and I assume they are going to cost money in the end, but do we have any timelines on that?

Hon. Mr. Graham: You know, Madam Chair, curriculum redesign is going on all the time, as the member opposite probably knows. We're working with the B.C. department at the present time with respect to some changes in the curriculum — that we'll be working with them on — and that will probably apply to Yukon schools as well. Just in the very recent past, we've had a First Nations unit in social studies 10. We've had a number of other items that have come forward in curriculum changes. I outlined some that were in my opening remarks today.

The curriculum design is something that goes on all of the time. We already said that — you know, I don't know where the two-month frame came from, because the Premier was very certain not to make any kind of time commitments until such time as we had an opportunity to work with the department. We will begin consultation with all stakeholders and all of our partners this fall in 2015 — we will begin the process. This is not a process that is going to take place over the next six months or even a year. I have also said that the initial bite will be to look at high school programming. I don't see a great pressing need to completely revise the kindergarten to grade 7 curriculum. We are making small changes in there — we are adding more Yukon content, more Yukon First Nation content — and we will continue to do that.

However, one of our real priorities was the high school curriculum. We are going to take a look at the best that's offered in academic subjects in western Canada — well, all over Canada — and we will learn and we will draw from the best as we see fit over the next little while. That is one of the

reasons why there is no money in this budget. We just haven't really had the time to do it. We will bring together some of our partners — our core partners, I'll call them — probably by the end of May, to ask: "How do you think we should proceed with this? This is what we would like to see happen." Then we'll expand that process by this fall. Again, as I said, it is not something that we are going to rush into because we want to make sure it's done properly, it's planned properly and we include everybody — including students. That is the one facet that I probably didn't mention before, but students have some very good ideas about where we should be heading as well — especially how they learn and what they prefer to learn in schools. We'll be working with students as well, but we intend this fall to bring the majority of our partners together to begin discussions.

Mr. Tredger: I do appreciate the minister's comments. I believe Education is going through a continuous process and continuous evaluation and is moving forward. I understand that the Premier did say — and I guess this is where he said: "Over the coming months, we will be rolling out a new vision for education in the Yukon." I much appreciate the clarifications from the Minister of Education saying that indeed we will begin the process in a few months and this will be a matter of ongoing — and lead to sustained education.

I guess we will see how that goes, and if we get to action that will be good. I guess part of me was pleased to hear what the minister said, because so often we jump into things in Education very quickly and we follow the latest thing and quite frankly, teachers, department staff and administrators would like to do their work and to evaluate their work and to make improvements on it there, not on stuff that sort of rolls through on a periodic basis. We'll be talking about some of the programs in a bit.

I did want to follow-up on one of the things the minister talked about in terms of changes in the department and over the last little while there has been quite a concern about centralization of decision-making around individual education policies and special programming. The *Education Act* is quite clear that the school administration, in consultation with professional staff and parents, will make the determination as to whether a student is a student with need of special education or if an individual education plan is appropriate to meet the student's needs. It also speaks to the involvement of parents in individual education plans and any changes to them. It has always been through the school-based team that that has occurred.

I just want to make sure I have my right spot here.

What is the minister doing to ensure that decisions around IEPs and individual student education plans and needs are being made at the school administration level, in consultation with professional staff and parents, and to ensure that parents are apprised of their rights and included in school-based team meetings, IEP meetings and alerted to any changes in the child's IEP?

Hon. Mr. Graham: These were a number of concerns that came to me at the very first school council meeting I went to and I also heard from a number of parents who felt that —

well, I went to the autistic society's meetings and there I was also apprised of the concern by parents that they weren't being involved in the IEPs, so we've heard those concerns. We made sure that we've taken those concerns back. We've asked the questions within the department about why these things are not happening. I know we had some staff shortages and perhaps we weren't getting out — or the department professional personnel weren't getting out or didn't have the opportunity to get out — and do as many of these assessments as we should have. We will be meeting in the fall with the ASA group and teachers to talk about this a little more, but we have every intention of including not only the parents, but the professionals in any further discussions around SLPs or IEPs programs, consistent with the legislation — because if that's the law, why would we want to do it any other way?

I think it's fair to say that we've heard the concerns of the parents and administrators and we will be changing the way we're doing things.

Mr. Tredger: One of the goals of Yukon Education has been to put children in the most enabling and least restrictive environment. When the minister is conducting his review of education and looking to a new curriculum — as he mentioned and referenced, there has been much concern about how special needs students and their needs are being met within the school curriculum, within classrooms, and the effect it has on school classrooms.

Will the review that the minister is doing look at the role of special programs and special needs students, how they are incorporated into our classrooms, and what the least restrictive environment is, and the most enabling, and where we can proceed with that — and also look at how we can return the decision-making to the school level with support from the department, rather than the decision-making being done at the department and dealt with at the school level?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I think I said in my opening remarks — we talked about a safe, caring environment with the best possible learning outcomes for all children. I should pass on a comment from a parent here, with an autistic student, who said that there are problems within the system, but some people are very satisfied with the way the system works. This parent, in particular, says they have always been included in their children's individual learning plan and they are very happy with the way things are going.

There are difficulties in the system — there's no doubt about it — but it's good to hear there are successes as well. I don't know if the first part of my answer answered the question that the member opposite had, except to say that, yes, we will be taking a look at how these people are integrated into the classroom.

It's very important to us too that not only they have a great learning experience, but that the children in the classroom aren't disrupted and their learning experience destroyed because of the integration.

Mr. Tredger: I know I moved off the education curriculum and the Premier's Budget Address, but I just wanted to refer back to it. He calls it a made-in-Yukon K to 12 education curriculum. The minister said that the primary focus

wouldn't be on kindergarten or elementary schools, but more on secondary schools, although that doesn't preclude, as the minister said, some changes at the elementary level. I understand from the minister that the review will focus primarily on, say, the secondary — grades 7 to 12.

Hon. Mr. Graham: That's correct. I think I said that we would focus, at this time, on secondary school.

I'm not saying that we won't return and take a look at what's happening in primary education, but that will happen at a later date. At this time, our focus is on the grade 7 to 12 curriculum and the pathways — how students are directed into certain pathways and how they are counselled in selecting a stream of education.

Mr. Tredger: I have just one further question. The Premier does state, "We will be rolling out a new vision" and, toward the conclusion, he says, "We do have the vision." I guess the vision is to conduct a comprehensive review.

Back to special programs — the concern I have heard expressed is that there was an effort on the part of previous ministers to have the number of special needs students designated with IEPs reduced, and we ended up with a categorical system rather than a needs-based system. I hear the minister is moving toward more of a needs-based system rather than a categorical system if students need support. If they need help as determined by their local school administrator, then the role of the department is to support them in those needs. Given that there are limitations in terms of our resources, schools won't receive instruction to reduce the number of IEPs — I believe that a number of them were moved from individual education plans, which are recognized by the *Education Act*, to individual learning plans, which aren't — thereby not having to meet the *Education Act* in meeting the needs of those students.

Would the minister confirm that we are moving toward a needs-based assessment of students rather than a categorical?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Yes, I would agree with the members opposite. The individual education plans for students will be needs-based to ensure that we have equity and fairness for everyone.

As an aside, at one of the school council meetings that I attended, the school council members indicated to me that it was interesting to see who was coming forward to ask for an individual education plan for their children. Non-First Nation parents saw the individual education plan for their child as a step to get some additional resources to help their child further their education, yet some of the First Nation parents did not want to see their child on an IEP because they felt that it was somehow degrading their student or their children's learning abilities and identifying their child as a slow learner.

The school council in this particular area is doing as much work as they can with individual parents to ensure that they understand the reason behind individual student learning plans. I found it quite interesting, but I think also that one parent or one school council member said that, in a perfect society, every single kid in the school system would have an education plan because every single kid learns in a different way and at a different rate. I thought that was an interesting

comment. We don't have the funds for that nor do we have the resources. As you can see, we've added some resources this year to bring in more educational assistants, but to implement a plan such as having an individual learning plan for every single student in the system, we would have to double the number of educational assistants and that simply isn't going to happen.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that. A couple of comments on it — the trust that is built up between parents and the school emphasizes the need for local school decision-making on situations because each student is different and comes with a different set of parameters. In many cases, parents have not had successful experiences in the school system and that makes them somewhat wary of the situation. One of the best ways to overcome that is through school-based decision-making.

The other part to what the minister said is — yes, each student is on, in a sense, an individual education plan. I have to take my hat off to the teachers who have differentiated instruction in each one of their classes. They have performed performance reviews three times annually on 20 to 25 students. They assess where they are, where they're going and how they're getting there, so, in a sense, each student is on an individual education plan. Thanks to the work of our teachers and their support system, we're able to deliver on that, but there are some students and some situations where they need extra assistance and that's what we recognize in an IEP.

I guess this sort of leads into our staffing policies. If I can just go back through some of my experiences, at one point the decisions were all made within the department and a school would receive a number at a particular time in the spring — about now usually — saying you had 23 or 21 or 10 staffing allocations and to go ahead and make your plan.

There was a lot of concern that some schools were getting more than others, and wondering back and forth, so the department at that point in time chose just to give each individual school their numbers. That certainly did not work. It wasn't in keeping with an open and transparent policy, so a staffing allocation committee was developed and that staffing allocation committee would review all the numbers. They came up with a staffing formula with the intention that they would continue to meet and evaluate to see how that would happen.

The other aspect to that — and it was a very important aspect — is that all of the administrators were given all the numbers for all the schools, so that relieved that idea of competition and they were able to say that's fair and that with this school — "I can see what's happening there; they need these kinds of resources and I can see what's happening there" — and the department has moved away from that under previous administrations. I'm wondering if the minister would entertain a return to that open and transparent system, where the cards are laid on the table and the administrators can work as a group, as a team, and feel included in the decision-making to do away with some of the competition or the who's-getting-what kind of thing, so that we're in this

together, we're part of a team. I would ask the minister if there are changes in that regard too.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The simple answer is yes, we're going to make it available to all schools.

The staffing allocation formula was developed back in 2011 and there have been tweaks to it since, but I think that at some point it will require another meeting with all the partners again involved in the allocation formula to ensure that nobody is being shortchanged.

I know I recently met with a rural Yukon school council and the principal was there too and, when she went through her staffing allocation — the principal went through the staffing allocation as well — and she said: "We don't know how we got as many people as we did, but we have to tell you that we're extremely happy with the Department of Education." When I asked her what their staffing requirements were, she outlined exactly how many people they had and I had to kind of — it took my breath away knowing the size of the school.

We also realize that enrolment is changing in schools all around the territory and, as you know, in the staffing allocation process you cannot — even though you may lose a large percentage of your students or a significant percentage of your students, your staffing allocation cannot drop by more than one FTE in any one year. It's to protect the smaller schools from a number of staff members all being moved in one year.

Enrolment is changing. We see that. All we have to do is take a look at the high schools and the changing enrolment in the various high schools. Those things are supposed to be compensated for within the formula, but I know schools such as Hidden Valley School recently made a request to us, because they have had a significant drop in their enrolment, and they see it affecting their school population, or their school programs. So they made a request to us to recruit students from the Crestview area, which is very close to Hidden Valley. Knowing there are going to be pressures on Porter Creek elementary schools this year, because of the expansion down in Whistle Bend, we thought it would be a perfectly good idea to take those kids, if they were interested, from Crestview and move them back to Hidden Valley, allowing the Whistle Bend children to come to the other Porter Creek schools.

Evidently, from my conversations with them, they have had a great deal of success in that area, so the department next year may be looking at increasing the staffing allocation in that school, just because they are successful in recruiting a number of students.

The staffing committee will be coming together in the fall. It's part of the process, I guess, but it's very important to me that it's transparent. As I've said to the member opposite on a number of occasions, we don't have anything to hide in the Department of Education and we're only too welcome to have people take a really close look at what we're doing. We're pretty proud of some of the things that are occurring in the department and we'll continue to do those things — and we're always looking for new ideas.

Mr. Tredger: There have been a number of studies done on school catchment areas and the effects of moving them around. I'm glad the minister is open to changing the catchment areas, because it does involve things like busing, siblings, tradition and all manner of things.

If the minister is changing catchment areas and looking at that again, I would encourage consultation with school councils and with the administrators of the schools, so that can be rolled out in a planned way. I thank the minister for reconvening the staffing allocation committee. I know, at one point, it was dissolved, and it's good to see it back and in operation. It's important, again, to involve local decision-makers in local decisions.

Another area that gets affected with this — there are a couple of transitions that our level of support changes at, and there are expectations. One of the transitions is from early childhood to kindergarten; another is from elementary school to high school. This is identified in resiliency studies and all manner of studies as critical points for students; points to particularly pay attention to.

Students moving from early childhood to kindergarten are going from being around their parents or in daycare to a kindergarten environment. They are going from the support of the Child Development Centre, which is excellent, to the support of the school system, which is also excellent, but of a different nature. The transition there is critical, as well as the transition from an elementary school — which tends to be smaller, which tends to have one class for the whole year — on to a high school.

Those are two very critical areas. Has the minister had discussions with ASA, with schools councils and with early childhood in terms of developing a transitional plan that would look at how we move students through the system and how we support them through the somewhat troubled times? I'll stop there.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The question is quite interesting because my grandson is currently attending the Child Development Centre. When anybody calls it "daycare", he is very, very quick to correct us and tell us that it is school that he attends at the Child Development Centre and it is just that this is the little school and soon he'll be going to the big school. He's not so sure that he wants to go to the big school. The transition will be that the Child Development Centre makes sure that these kids are introduced to the big school — as they put it — and they actually get to spend a little time in there and feel more comfortable when they go on an ongoing basis.

Porter Creek and Vanier schools both have transition plans. At Porter Creek, grades 6, 7, 8 and 9 are all together with a single program, so they are constantly working together to assist these kids in the transition. I think probably one of the greatest transitions I know as a child — I do remember that far back from time to time — was, quite frankly, going from elementary school to high school. That had to be the most difficult thing ever for us as children. We were fortunate, actually, for quite some time because we only had one school

in Whitehorse and it was kindergarten to grade 12, so the transition for some wasn't as difficult.

It is something that is on our radar. I don't know what else I can say about it, other than we will continue to work to make sure we have transition plans from elementary school to secondary school, to make sure we have school counsellors that are aware of the difficult time and especially to have the kids visit their new schools. One of the good things that I saw in the department when I first joined it was the idea of school families, where you have under one superintendent a number of schools and the elementary schools are feeders into the high school. It is actually a great system because they are working with the same kids throughout the system. That is something that a minister before me must have approved and I think whoever did it, did a good job.

Chair: Before we proceed, 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 are going to resume general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education.

Mr. Tredger: Just a quick question for the minister regarding the Yukon literacy strategy — when we talked about it in the supplementary, he mentioned that the Yukon Literacy Coalition, the Yukon literacy strategy working group and the First Nations Education Commission held a joint meeting. They are working to complete the strategy. He had a report three weeks ago. There was a great push to get the literacy strategy in place before this session. It wasn't done, but is expected in the near future.

Is there an update on that from the minister?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Madam Chair, the last draft will be coming over to me in the next little while and, shortly thereafter, we'll have something ready for my own caucus to take a look at and then would be only too happy to share it with everyone.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that answer.

Teaching literacy in the classroom — in the past, we've had a number of programs that targeted specific children with problems, like the Reading Recovery program. There was a move over the last five years or so to go to integrated literacy, classroom-based, and delivered by classroom teachers. It did have a training component and it was successful in many ways. But there were concerns raised that there was still a need at times for one-to-one instruction away from the distractions of the classroom and there's a need for more specialized teachers to support and promote literacy and numeracy with certain individual students.

The Reading Recovery program has years of data, anecdotal as well as empirical data, on the successes of that program. There was a concern that the program would be

neglected and thereby fade away. Reading Recovery — I would warrant most people in the Yukon are aware and know of stories of how much it has helped children who they've known and certainly teachers and administrators have spoken very highly of it. It does have some limitations; it's not the be-all and end-all, but it certainly has been a very, very effective program. Part of Reading Recovery that is important to remember is it needs ongoing support and ongoing training. The various governments — I believe all three governments over the last 15 or 20 years — have invested heavily in Reading Recovery. It means training trainers, it means ensuring that each school has a Reading Recovery teacher and that Reading Recovery instruction is ongoing. It has produced quite a few dividends.

If the minister could give me an update on Reading Recovery — the number of teachers currently being trained, the number of schools that are offering Reading Recovery and if there are any elementary schools that don't have Reading Recovery at this time — if he could also note that — and plans going forward. Are we going to continue to make significant investments for significant returns in this program?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The short answer again is yes. In 2013-14, four new teachers were trained in Reading Recovery. The department felt that at the time that it provided a sufficient number of trained teachers to address the needs of the programming and consequently no additional training happened in 2014-15. That will be reassessed again to determine whether or not additional training will be necessary. I'm informed that it is actually in process for next year.

The balanced literacy approach is an instructional tool and it is now being implemented in all classes, but we agree that supports for Reading Recovery — and I had an interesting anecdote given to me by a teacher in an elementary school where they had a number of children who were not reading at the assigned grade level. I think it was a grade 2 teacher who had been trained in Reading Recovery so, utilizing that approach, she took these students and worked with them over a number of months. At the end of the time that the teacher worked the Reading Recovery program with this small group of students, she said she found that grade 2 students were able to read at a grade 4 or 5 level, except they didn't know what the words meant. They could read them absolutely accurately, but many times they didn't understand what the larger words meant. To me it was an indicator of how good that program really is. If you can teach kids to learn to read at that level before they even understand what they're reading, it's amazing.

I'm a believer, just based on that story — and, of course, I've had some anecdotal stories from within the family too about Reading Recovery. I think it's very good.

We will definitely continue it for all kids who don't have the necessary reading skills. It was interesting that, in 2013-14, 132 students received Reading Recovery, and 70 percent were discontinued, according to the program's parameters: 21 percent were recommended to the school-based team for long-term support; three percent moved away from the territory before completing their lesson series; and six percent were

progressing but unable to continue for some other reasons. To me it was interesting that 70 percent were successful in the Reading Recovery program. This year — that number is an old number.

Last year, \$109,000 was allocated for Reading Recovery. That amount didn't include the salaries of the teachers involved, but included site licences, program materials and travel for training, and that kind of stuff. There were 14 staff positions last year allocated to Reading Recovery, and it hasn't changed this year.

Mr. Tredger: Are there any elementary schools that do not have a working Reading Recovery teacher at this time — which I assume would be on the list, which is why we're doing more training in 2015-16?

Hon. Mr. Graham: That's the intent — to have at least one in every school, but sometimes there are not sufficient numbers of students. It is program-based as well. It makes it very difficult, but it's one of the reasons why we're providing more training to try to keep up the number of Reading Recovery teachers in the territorial school system.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that answer. The Reading Recovery program and its companion in the Yukon, Wilson Reading, have many benefits besides the improvement of the individual student. Often the professional development teachers who have taken Reading Recovery and have taught in grade 1 use it, as the minister indicated, sometimes in grade 2 or in their regular classrooms. The direct instruction is a nice complement to the balanced instruction happening in the classrooms. The balanced instruction works for many of our students. Reading Recovery catches more.

I'm going to talk a little bit about Wilson Reading because it too is a very important aspect to many students in the Yukon school system.

I remember having a conversation at one point with, I think, the assistant deputy minister of the time — this is 10 years or so ago — and he mentioned that for the majority of students, reading comes through classroom instruction and we don't have to put a lot more money into it. For 20 percent, we need to put in more money and payback. As we get further along for another 10 percent, we need even more investment, but it is worth it. Those kids who need that extra investment benefit and become proficient, they become very able contributors to our society and, perhaps most importantly, through that instruction they feel good about themselves.

I guess I'll just ask the minister if he could give me an update on Wilson Reading and whether or not that is receiving the same care and attention that Reading Recovery is, because it is a similar kind of program, once it is built up at considerable investment. We need trainers and classroom teachers who are trained in the venue. It never did quite get its foot in as solidly as Reading Recovery did, and I think a large part of that was because Jeanette McCrie, who is recently retired, was a real champion of Reading Recovery and she put a lot of time and effort into that and inculcated Reading Recovery into all of our brains. I have seen Wilson Reading work in schools where it has been adapted and I know the

department was moving toward ensuring that it was available at all schools.

If the minister could comment on that and then we'll decide if we have to come back to it.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Wilson Reading system is still supported in Yukon schools, but as I understand it, recent research on the long-term success of the Wilson Reading program has shown that it is very effective for a smaller group of students with specialized learning challenges. What the Department of Education has suggested is that it should only be provided by learning assistance teachers to a smaller group of people, but we fully believe — as the member opposite has said — in the Reading Recovery program, because any intervention provided for students that clearly shows it improves results is something that we should support.

We are continuing to support it and when the member opposite talked about the training and the requirement for training for Reading Recovery teachers, it is interesting to see that training for new teachers in Reading Recovery requires four half-day assessment training sessions, 18 in-service sessions, and the receipt of five school visits over the year by the Reading Recovery teacher leader.

It should be noted that participation in all of the training can result in some rural teachers being out of their schools as much as 20 full days in the school year. It is a substantial investment in time and funding to train someone in the Reading Recovery program, but the results — as I enumerated earlier — 70 percent in this one cohort in 2012-13 appears to me, at least, to suggest that that training and investment is well worthwhile.

Mr. Tredger: It is very well worthwhile. As I mentioned earlier, as we go through our student population, we get to a percentage where I believe it is worthwhile, but it is increasingly more expensive for a fewer number of people, as the minister alluded in terms of Wilson.

I can speak from my experience in our school about a long-time grade 7 teacher who took the Wilson Reading training program. She took a lot of it on her own time because it wasn't available, and managed to use some of her prep time and some comp time as well. The results she found were spectacular and probably in her mind — and I go to her opinion as a long-time teacher, she felt it was extremely worthwhile. After she retired from teaching, she went to LDAY and continued to tutor in that way.

I am going to read a letter from a former principal who was involved in the Wilson Reading program by way of trying to emphasize that we are dealing with not a great number of students, but a significant number — and a significant number who are being held back by their literacy, not by their ability to perform. That is where the extra investment, I believe, pays off long term.

So if you will bear with me while I read the letter, I'll skip the parts that identify persons or schools or things: "The Wilson program was brought into Yukon Education by the Department of Education, initiated and supported by LDAY, quite a few years ago in an attempt to deal with a very serious issue: a considerable number of our students were leaving

Elementary school with a significant gap in their reading skills — a gap that then put them at profound disadvantage in Secondary school, with the all too predictable outcomes. Many of our students — especially First Nations learners — start dropping out by Grade 9 when the frustration of dealing with secondary school requirements with their deficient reading levels grows too great. Wilson Reading began to address that issue.

At the time of its inception here, Wilson Reading and later Foundations were provided with solid support: Learning Assistance teachers were trained to work with students in groups and individually, and classroom teachers were provided with training in Foundations. It seemed to work. Each school which embraced Wilson Reading started to provide evidence of progress — often dramatic — and parents began requesting that their children be given the benefit of the program. Then, after several years, things started to change. The Department of Education began de-emphasizing Wilson and making it clear that it was only one part of a larger integrated Literacy Strategy. That approach succeeded in elbowing Wilson Reading to the periphery with fewer and fewer schools having the resources to offer intensive Wilson Reading time to those of their students who needed it the most. Not long ago, I asked why Wilson Reading wasn't being used in a certain school and was told by one of the Administrators that it was no longer allowed! Maybe that is so, but even if it isn't, the benign neglect with which the program has been treated in the past few years means that effectively there are fewer and fewer teachers to deliver Wilson Reading and virtually no one qualified to train staff members.

“You and I know that many of these students stand out as early as Grade Three and Four. These are students who had difficulty with reading from the outset and who often went through Reading Recovery in Grade One ... and were frequently ‘exited’ and then put in the hands of Learning Assistance teachers for years thereafter for part of each school day.”

I noticed in the statistics about 20 percent of the students in Reading Recovery are exited rather than discontinued.

“They continued to struggle until the end of Grade Seven, often masking their lack of achievement by acting out or by withdrawing completely.

“I encountered a significant number of students — mainly boys, often but not exclusively First Nation learners — who fit into the above category. A few of them were able to get some intensive Wilson Reading training and it paid off for them every time. Learners who reached Grade Four as non-readers began to see the patterns of readings through the Wilson approach, and plenty of practice. The chances are these students had a profound reading disability — dyslexia, for example — which prevented them from seeing the letter patterns that you and I take for granted. Wilson Reading was able to unlock that door and give those students the foundation needed to continue through school.

“There are many parents out there who have seen the dramatic effect that Wilson Reading has had on their child's

progress and have been willing to attest to the fact and I'm sure will be still willing to come forward.”

I guess that's a testimony from a long-time educator. I would back that up with what I've seen in the schools. I'm pleased to hear that the educational assistants are being trained in Wilson. I would encourage the minister to take a very close look at it, to read some of the anecdotal reports and talk to some of the people who have been involved in the program. It is expensive, but it's more expensive to let these kids drift through the system and graduate with gaps like that.

If I can make a plea on this floor for Wilson Reading and Foundations to become more integral to our school system, then I would do so and I thank the minister for looking at that.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The statement that Wilson is no longer allowed in the schools isn't an accurate statement. That is simply not true.

The department is taking a look at what alternatives to Reading Recovery there are for kindergarten to grade 3 students. The member opposite mentioned one, and he probably knows that Foundations is one of the ones extensively used in Grey Mountain school — and it is a Wilson program. They have found it to be extremely beneficial to a number of students.

I think it's really important that we keep Wilson alive in the school system, but it's only one of a whole suite of interventions we need to put in place to make sure that literacy skills are great for Yukon children. That's where we have to focus — making sure that the program we use is tailored for the children who are there. If we can get 70 percent, as we did in 2013-14, with Reading Recovery, then what we have to do is take a look at the other 30 percent and determine which of the interventions we have currently at our disposal are correct for those students.

I can assure the member opposite that Wilson is not being killed off in the Department of Education. As I said, in one school in particular, Foundations is an integral part of the Reading Recovery program. It's something that's going to survive, but it's only going to be one of a number of initiatives that we have.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that. As the writer of the thing noted, he couldn't attest to whether or not it was an anecdotal thing. I would emphasize again that Wilson is not an alternative to Reading Recovery. It enhances our suite of options. It does require a fairly intensive investment, both in time and money, and it does require a buy-in from the schools. Grey Mountain is not the only school that has embraced Foundations and found great success with it.

The beauty of having a program like Foundations, and like Wilson Reading and like Reading Recovery, is that it sets a foundation in place so, when you have schools in rural communities or schools where there's a higher turnover, there's a basis already, it is a department-supported initiative and the process is in place to enable that to happen so that when you have new staff in Pelly Crossing or in Ross River or in Haines Junction, they don't have to go and reinvent the wheel. This allows us to invest and have a consistency of approach that helps us reach those hard-to-reach learners in

schools where there is more of a turnover and where, in many cases, there is a more evident need.

So thank you to the minister and I appreciate him looking into it. I'm wondering if the minister can give me an update on Learning Together.

I assume from his earlier comments that it is continuing to expand. I know that in 2013 there were three schools where it was implemented. Has there been an evaluation of the program identifying what were the successes; what were the challenges? Did it work in every school where it was used? What supports do we need to put in place? I am very excited about the program. I think any early childhood, family-oriented program is very important.

Again, if this is the program that we are going to use, let's ensure that it is available and that it is supported, and we know where the challenges are, we know where to expect the successes, and we can build that into the system. If I can just refer again to Reading Recovery — Reading Recovery has survived our school system with all its changes for 20 years because it was evaluated, because it was tracked very carefully, and there was anecdotal evidence, empirical evidence, and it was well-researched.

So when we have a program that we find works like, from my reports, Learning Together does, how do we make it so that it is going to have sustainability and that we can support it through generations?

Hon. Mr. Graham: The Learning Together initiative was something piloted for the very first time in 2010 in Whitehorse. It is similar to programs from other jurisdictions in the country. I think it was basically modelled along the StrongStart BC program from our neighbours to the south, but it was adapted to Yukon by the Department of Education. Since 2010, it has been offered at a number of locations. It is a drop-in style program. It was offered in Selkirk and Hidden Valley elementary schools in Whitehorse, Eliza Van Bibber in Pelly, and Johnson Elementary School in Watson Lake. From what I have seen, the creation of the programs in Watson Lake and Pelly included parent, community, First Nation consultation, and the program has since expanded to the Family Learning Centre at Kwanlin Dun First Nation and it first opened in October 2014 last year. The program appears to have been a success in many areas, so what we are doing is evaluating the program now to determine the effectiveness. From all anecdotal responses, the effectiveness has been pretty good, but we are going to evaluate it on a formal basis to determine and to see, because we also believe there are some modifications to the program necessary now that it has been running a number of years, so we'll have to tweak the program to ensure that it meets the needs of all of the learners, especially rural learners who are involved in the program.

So, evaluation and then, if the tweaks are necessary that we believe are indicated, those will be carried out as well — but there is no intention of cancelling the program. In fact it could even be expanded.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that and again I would just say that it's important to evaluate. If it is a direction that, after weighing the evidence, after seeing the

effect it has on kids and watching them for a number of years — which I assume we're going to see in a very positive light — but it's important that we have that information at our disposal so that we can make a decision, because in order for it to go system-wide, it is a considerable investment and there are other alternatives out there so we want to be sure that we get the right one or one that is adaptable to the varying needs in varying communities and for different parents. I thank the minister for looking into that.

I wonder if the minister could give me an update on the Teen Parent Centre. It has been a wonderful program. It has met the needs of many young parents and their children. I know a number who have benefited from the program. Is there any intent to upgrade the facilities? Are there plans for the future to expand? Are there any plans for involving or stretching that out so that it's more inclusive of communities and for young parents in communities to be able to attend and be supported in a more supportive environment and work with the staff at the Teen Parent Centre to enable them to continue at school?

Hon. Mr. Graham: At this time there is no intent to diminish the program or reduce the program in any way. We are continuing the program. It has a reasonable success. What we're attempting to do is increase the number of options that are available to students attending through on-line offerings that will be available, and we're also looking at the staffing of the centre.

Those are the things that we're attempting to do right now, but we're increasing the number of offerings — no intent to reduce the program in any way — and we're looking at staffing at the present time with an eye to changing the makeup of the staff to some extent.

I believe it was part of the educational review or the educational reserve review as well. I will look into that and provide an answer but, as far as I recall from those meetings, there was no intent to move the Teen Parent Centre from where it is at the present time until and unless a new Selkirk Street School is constructed. At that time we would have to evaluate exactly where we were to place the Teen Parent Centre.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that answer. Again, I would commend the staff at the Teen Parent Centre for the work that they are doing and the difference they are making, not only for the young parents but particularly for their children.

Just a couple of quick questions on Gadzoosdaa: Can the minister give me an update on the numbers attending and whether or not — I believe I have that — but whether or not there have been any students turned away? Is there a waiting list? How many rural people have found other accommodations? I know that the department does provide subsidies for rural students from some communities, especially those who are not able to get into Gadzoosdaa. There is a living allowance provided. Could the minister tell me how many fall into that category?

Last year, I asked about attendance at Wood Street programs and specialty courses. A number of times people

move in from the rural communities just so they can attend Wood Street or the specialty courses that are offered only in Whitehorse. Do those students qualify for residence in Gadzoosdaa? At one point, if they were from a community that already had a high school, they weren't given priority for Gadzoosdaa. Does that still remain? I guess the other part to it is that I had talked to a number of students at one point and they were under the impression that if they went to Gadzoosdaa, they weren't allowed to attend the Individual Learning Centre, which is a — well, we will talk about the wonders of the Individual Learning Centre after. I am not sure if that implies that I didn't know what to answer — so if the minister could tell me?

Has the graduation rate at Gadzoosdaa been compared to the graduation rate in the communities or territory-wide? Has Gadzoosdaa improved our graduation rate? Is it something that is working that way?

Finally, on Gadzoosdaa, is there an exit survey? I know a number of students begin the year at Gadzoosdaa and then leave and return to their communities through the year. Is there an exit survey done to see what causes them to leave, if there is a reason — whether it's just family back home or being homesick or whether there is something that the residence can do to convince them to stay longer in the residence, some type of programming or support that we could put into place to help the students who are living away from home at a young age and experiencing a large school compared to where many of them are coming from?

Hon. Mr. Graham: There are 38 beds in the Gadzoosdaa residence. As the member pointed out, they are for senior secondary school students who don't have a secondary school in their home communities. The first question he asked was about students who do not stay in Gadzoosdaa. There are about 15 rural students receiving living subsidies for residences other than Gadzoosdaa at the present time.

The member opposite probably is aware that we're currently conducting a review of the residence. In fact, the review may be over, but we haven't gotten the results yet. As part of the review, the students at Gadzoosdaa would have been consulted. As soon as we receive the results of that review, we'll have something upon which to base any further changes in the program.

I'll have to come back to you with answers on the graduation rates and if we have ever done any exit surveys. I simply don't know if we have. I'll get back to the member opposite with answers to those two questions and anything else we read in the Blues that I haven't answered while I'm standing here. We'll make sure that we answer all the questions.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that. I wasn't aware there was a review going on, but that is good news, indeed. It's an important part in the lives of youngsters who are living away from home, and anything we can do to support them and support their communities in that — and part of that is the continuous progress. I thank the minister for that. I look forward to the review, when it does come out.

While we're talking about residences, Dawson City has an excellent resource. They have built a real arts and culture centre there. The Yukon School of Visual Arts, the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the City of Dawson and local residents have really made an effort to make Dawson City a centre of excellence. I know the Member for Klondike will be speaking to that when it's his turn to come up. Where I'm coming from is I had a number of students from my riding, from my constituency, who wanted to attend SOVA and programming in Dawson and weren't able to find a homestay or to live with someone. The parents suggested — have they ever looked at a residence in Dawson that would allow students from across the Yukon to come to Dawson and participate in some of the wonderful programming that is being offered there?

I wonder whether the department has looked into that or whether they will look into it — if I could get an update from the minister.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Some years ago, we did have that problem, where there simply weren't enough spaces for students taking the program in Dawson City. What happened then is the college contracted with a local hotel — or motel — that regularly closed down in the winter months and, for a fee, they stayed open — this motel did — in order to house the students going to the program. Actually, the dates worked out fine, because it was from mid-September until April, and the hotel opened only for the summer months anyway.

That has since gone the way of the dodo bird, I guess, because the last I understood, that was something that was no longer happening. I'll check to make sure my facts are correct. At the present time, that program in Dawson costs about a half million dollars a year. That cost is to the government for up to 12 students, so it makes it a fairly costly program for the government to run, and I'm afraid that, if we planned to open a residence there at the same time, it would have to be cost recovery. It is, as I said, a very expensive program for the number of students we are graduating every year.

Mr. Tredger: It is a centre of excellence and may be unique in the world — certainly in the Yukon — and it's an opportunity that we need to invest in — those kinds of opportunities. It has many different effects. It helps communities — in this case, Dawson. If we develop centres of excellence in various other communities, be they around mining or skills training or fine arts, it will be expensive, but I think it pays off in many different ways. I encourage the government to look at options. Maybe a residence is too expensive, but maybe there are other ways to go about supporting the program. I thank the minister for that.

Last year, when we were talking, the Premier spoke — rather than augment the Canada Pension Plan, he felt that an emphasis and a re-emphasis on financial literacy for our students would be important. We talked about the importance of credit cards and of debt management. I've heard similar comments from many sources — parents, in particular, and many students who come back and say, I wish I had learned about investing and finances in school.

We talked about the lack of formal financial planning courses in our school and education for our students. Given that the Premier had cited this as a direction to go, rather than through augmenting the Canada Pension Plan, my impression is that we were going to improve the financial literacy in our schools. I know there are individual pockets of classrooms — I can think of a particular teacher who taught my daughter at one point, and had a wonderful class on financial literacy — but it seems, from my understanding, that it doesn't get to all the kids across the system.

I'm wondering if, in the past year, there have been advances made in financial literacy courses, and whether we followed up on those promises from the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Graham: The apprenticeship and workplace math 10 and 11 currently offered has some financial literacy component and we're currently looking at new math programs in other jurisdictions that have, as part of their core competencies, the financial literacy component. We are still in the process of looking at these new math programs and, at this point, haven't made a decision or even a suggestion as to which programs we should be following or which ones we should be utilizing.

I'm not sure — I haven't spoken to the Premier lately to know if this was an actual promise, or perhaps it was just a suggestion that he felt should be done, but it's a suggestion being taken seriously by the department in that we're looking at some programs that would offer, as part of the core competencies, financial literacy.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that and I concur that financial literacy is an important aspect, and I would look forward to all our students receiving some training in financial literacy, given the importance it plays.

I would just like to go back to the shared resource room. We had been talking about IEPs and special programming. Last year in September, the school councils were told that strategic goal 3 for Yukon education is: "Yukon Education demonstrates organizational excellence through alignment and accountability. Within the spirit and intent of that strategic goal, a plan to review Shared Resource Programming within Yukon Education will occur between October 2014 and January 2015, completed by an external consultant.

"The purpose of the review is to: review best practices in special education as they relate to Yukon policies and procedures relevant to shared resource programming; review existing service, policies, procedures and programming for students in attending shared resource programs; provide recommendations for shared resource program improvements; facilitate a plan to implement recommendations in shared resource programs that best address student needs."

I guess my question for the minister is: Has that review been completed, and will it be incorporated in the staffing and the planning for the coming school year?

Hon. Mr. Graham: It's an appropriate question, because we just completed the review. The review is currently in — or has just been delivered to the department, so the timing is excellent. The department hasn't even had a chance to look at it and consider the recommendations at this time

but, once we've done that, we would be happy to share it. I can't give you an exact timeline, but I would say that we'll take a look at the recommendations and we will be able to share it with the member opposite as quickly as we can.

Mr. Tredger: Last year, there was considerable controversy on the public schools' Safe and Caring Schools policy, especially as it related to the One Heart policy in Catholic schools. I am wondering if the minister has an update. Have all the schools now adopted Yukon's Safe and Caring Schools policy? As an adjunct to that, I know last year we were working on a hiring policy for Catholic schools and teachers in Catholic schools. Has that policy been finalized and updated?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I can say that there appears to have been a glitch in the system in working with the Safe and Caring Schools policy. It has been put on hold for a little while, while further discussions are undertaken. I did float the idea, though, and I did mention it this morning on a CBC radio interview, where one of the suggestions that I have made to the department is that we take a look at a Yukon-wide student behaviour code of conduct — call it whatever you want — but this is something that we would develop as a department.

It may be that we set a minimum level of what we consider acceptable student conduct. That would mean that you know the very basics of anti-bullying — no sexual discrimination, no violence in the school, respect and tolerance for others, and no violence toward teachers. That is where it basically came up, because of the perception that there has been a large increase in violence toward teachers. This was an idea that I brought to the department and said that we should be looking at this. I'll take some time over the next month to discuss it with school councils and see if they're generally in favour of it. It's not something that we would be able to impose, but it would be something that, if we instituted a code of conduct, would be the bare minimum. Then we would ask school councils — this is the bare minimum — to increase or to expand on our basic code of conduct if they so desired. It's something that we will be looking at over the next month or so, and I will be consulting with partners to determine if this is something that would be acceptable in the schools in the territorial system.

As far as the teachers and the violence toward teachers, as I have stated before, that is part of the collective bargaining process that is happening again on Wednesday, so I will stay away from that one right now.

Mr. Tredger: I was particularly wondering about the Safe and Caring Schools policy. The previous minister had talked about it being the policy that would be in all schools. At the time there was some concern about the LGBT incorporation of that — so that children weren't bullied or discriminated against based on their sexual orientation or their gender — and the adoption of a supportive policy for students in our schools that way. At the time, there was some discussion around whether or not the Catholic schools would be included. The minister of the day said that the Safe and Caring Schools policy would be in place, but there were

discussions about — I believe it was the *One Heart: Ministered by Love* policy that the Catholic school system was proposing instead of it. I wondered whether the minister has an update on whether the Safe and Caring Schools policy would enable LGBT students wherever they were to attend schools under a Yukon-wide Safe and Caring Schools policy.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I should just say that we will get back to you with an answer because I am quite sure that that policy has not progressed too far. I will assure the member opposite that my personal commitment to the whole school community is that that policy will be enacted or a code of conduct will be in place that will include such things as an LGBT — anyway it will include that policy for all schools in the territory.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister very much for that.

I have just one question on the college that I would like to get to before we reach the end of the day. In 2011, the then college chancellor was speaking about the future of the college and his hope of receiving a large portion of the McIntyre Creek area as endowment lands so that the college could move toward the development of a university. Since the fall of 2013, when the college received a letter stating that they had five years to complete their land use plan, they have been working hard at leading an inclusive planning process.

I must say that they have been working hard. They've held a number of open houses and planning processes that I know members — from Takhini-Kopper King and myself — have attended — and from Whitehorse Centre — to take part in that. On March 31 of this year, they held the second as part of their ongoing design-your-campus project. Once they complete their planning exercise, the Yukon College will be bringing the completed college land use plan back to the Yukon government where they hope that the conditions will be lifted and the college will receive the held land as endowment lands. This land transfer will bring us another step closer to a northern university.

Will the Yukon government lift the conditions and transfer the promised endowment lands once the Yukon College brings their final plan to the table?

Hon. Mr. Graham: It's not something we've discussed as a caucus. At the time the land use plan is completed, we will determine, in cooperation with — again, there are a number of players in land use planning and in zoning in that area. We'll have to come together to talk about what we're going to do.

We have already committed, in the longer term, to working toward a university of the north. I have to say that I am being a stickler to ensure that the things that have made the college so popular to this Yukon are continued. That means that the trades and technical training programs that were offered, that Yukon students attend, has to be continued. The upgrading programs that we would love to get rid of in the long term are still essential. Those programs are attended by a huge number of students and they are an entryway for many of those students into the world of employment. Those things have to continue and so I want to make sure they are not lost in a rush to become a university.

Consequently, I am not saying I would slow down the process, but I want assurances that those things are continued and I guess we have to look at a way forward. The other interesting part of the equation will be the cost — the cost of a university is going to be probably substantially higher than what we're currently paying for the college — and I want to have some kind of assurance that we are not funding a university of the north that will be utilized strictly by people from outside of the territory. I want some assurances that Yukon students will utilize the college too. If we're subsidizing students' tuition fees to the extent that will be necessary in order to make this a viable thing, then I want to make sure that Yukon students fully intend to come to university in the Yukon.

As a young guy growing up in the territory myself, I know that probably one of the last things I wanted to do when I completed grade 12 was to stay in Whitehorse and attend university here. I don't know, at this point, how many graduating students in the high schools here in the territory are wildly enthusiastic about coming to a school here.

Those are the kinds of things that we have to take a really close look at in the next while, and our decisions will be predicated upon that kind of information coming forward.

Mr. Tredger: In 2013, three schools piloted a project around self-regulation and social emotional learning. This was a pilot project. Can the minister report on how that pilot project turned out, and whether that program has been expanded to other schools? Is it a program that we're looking at and will put into all our schools? If so, what supports are going to be necessary to keep it viable going forward, so that it doesn't become something we do for three or five years and then we move on to the next event?

Hon. Mr. Graham: It's interesting to hear the member opposite use that particular phrase, because it's one of my favourites. Too often in the territory, we go along with the fad of the day and we implement too many things. We don't evaluate them properly, and then we simply build on top and keep layer after layer after layer.

As you probably know, since 2013, we have been working with the Canadian Self-Regulation Initiative to implement the self-regulation initiative here. Eight schools are involved at the present time. There was a first wave of schools, and now the second wave of schools — Takhini Elementary, Ghùch Tlâ, Teslin, Hidden Valley, Ross River, Johnson Elementary, Robert Service and École Whitehorse Elementary. During the summer of 2013, Dr. Stuart Shanker and Mike McKay from the Canadian Self-Regulation Initiative presented a keynote address to all Yukon education staff on self-regulation practices.

They provided in-depth support this February — February 2015 — in the area of anxiety and self-regulation. Over the next three years, all Yukon schools will be involved in the self-regulation initiative. The total budget will be approximately \$85,000 a year. It's being funded within our existing budget.

At the end of this time, we will evaluate the program to see if it has actually met the objectives. The goals were to

improve outcomes for all Yukon students, training and working with individual students and school staff in the use of the self-regulation framework; identifying children for focused clinical work; and helping to generate community interest in the self-regulation framework and its sustainability.

Those are the goals upon which the program will be evaluated, but an interesting aside was when I was visiting a rural school. I chatted with a young fellow who was pedalling a bike and I said, "Oh, is this your punishment for being bad?" He very seriously turned to me and said, "No. No, I wasn't bad, but I knew I was going to be pretty soon." It is an interesting concept, Madam Chair.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, 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.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:24 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 203

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, April 28, 2015 — 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 Tourism and Culture; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Justice; Yukon Development Corporation/ Yukon Energy Corporation
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Education
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Highways and Public Works
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Community Services; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Environment
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

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

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New Democratic Party

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

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, April 28, 2015 — 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 National Immunization Awareness Week

Ms. McLeod: I rise on behalf of all members of the House today to acknowledge April 26 to May 2 as National Immunization Awareness Week.

We all know that immunizations save lives. In fact, they have saved more lives in Canada than any other health intervention over the past 50 years. It wasn't too long ago that childhood diseases such as polio, German measles or whooping cough caused severe sickness and complications and sometimes even death.

Here at home, despite the safety of immunizations, a robust publicly funded immunization program and the importance of immunization in keeping healthy, hundreds of Yukon children remain under-immunized. Immunization is the safest, most cost-effective public health approach to decreasing vaccine-preventable diseases in the Canadian population and yet there has been a decline in immunization rates in Canada. This is partly due to complacency and partly as a result of misinformation.

While Canadians have easy access to vaccines, a number of us are behind in our immunizations. We might forget to bring our children in for their booster shot or we might keep putting off making an appointment until we have more time. This can lead to outbreaks such as the measles outbreak recently seen in other Canadian jurisdictions and the United States. To help Yukoners get up to date on their immunizations, the Whitehorse Health Centre has weekday clinics from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with extended hours every Tuesday until 6:30 p.m.

In addition, the Whitehorse Health Centre is hosting a health fair for children entering kindergarten. It's an opportunity for 4- to 6-year-old children to get a checkup for their vision, hearing and other health services, including having their immunizations updated. The fair will be held on May 7 and 8 at the Whitehorse Health Centre between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. In communities, people are encouraged to call their local health centre for immunization times and dates.

Children are not the only ones susceptible to vaccine-preventable illnesses. Many immunizations require a booster after a number of years, and teenagers and adults are encouraged to call or visit their local health centre to ensure

that their immunizations are up to date. Not only are under-immunized adults at risk of contracting the diseases themselves, but they can also infect others, such as infants who may not yet be fully immunized.

Finally, a word on misinformation — there are a lot of websites and other sources of information that seek to discourage us from getting immunized, and I urge Yukoners to obtain their information from credible sources that provide solid, scientifically accurate facts. Immunizations truly are remarkable at preventing the spread of infectious disease and I encourage all Yukoners to take the time to have their immunization status checked and get their immunizations updated if needed.

In recognition of rural experiential models

Hon. Mr. Graham: I rise on behalf of all members today to pay tribute to the rural experiential model taking place this week in the wonderful community of Watson Lake. Rural experiential models bring together students in grades 10 to 12 and educators from seven rural Yukon communities for an intensive week of learning and teaching in fine arts and applied science skills. The Department of Education is committed to increasing the diversity of programming options and improving learning outcomes for rural and First Nation students in this territory. This initiative supports equity in education for rural students by delivering similar opportunities to the participants as those made available to urban students.

Students from Carmacks, Dawson City, Haines Junction, Mayo, Pelly Crossing, Ross River and Watson Lake work together in larger groups, practising fine arts and applied skills with rural teachers and local experts, and learning about Yukon First Nation culture and traditions on the land. Students are able to choose from several daytime-session options and evening activities as well that appeal to their interests that have been developed and delivered by rural teachers, administrators, local experts and departmental support staff. The choices vary from ancestral technologies on the land, hair and esthetics, mini-med school, Dene games, sports, crafts, music, hiking, movies and many others.

The rural experiential model is an excellent example of how successful collaboration between teachers, administrators, Public Schools branch, school councils, First Nations and rural communities can support Yukon students. The success of the rural experiential models is thanks to the dedication and efforts of many terrific teachers, administrators and departmental support staff who work together to create a program that engages students and offers opportunities for students and staff alike to connect with peers and colleagues in other rural communities.

I would also like to thank the community of Watson Lake, which is hosting a rural experiential model for the very first time this year.

In recognition of the Yukon School of Visual Arts graduates

Mr. Silver: It is with great pleasure that I rise on behalf of the all of my colleagues here in the Legislative Assembly to

pay tribute to the graduates of the Yukon School of Visual Arts. SOVA is an incredibly important institution to the residents of Dawson City and I hope that the students graduating look back on their time in the Klondike with great fondness.

I spoke today to Dr. Curtis Collins, the director and program chair, and he had this to say — and I quote: “This year’s group can be characterized as being extremely entrepreneurial and community-minded.” The direct programming of SOVA has a lasting impact on the social fabric of the community, but this year’s cohort stepped up more than ever and participated in many community events. The students helped organize, for example, a fundraiser to provide a local summer girls’ rock camp for Dawson students. The fundraiser was called “Punk-Rock the Night Away” and was held at the YOOP Hall. It was organized and featured performances by SOVA students.

Students also participated in a “nuit blanche”-style project in the dead of Dawson’s winter called “(s)hiver” that involved indoor and outdoor projects, events and functions at a number of locations — including KIAC hall, the Alchemy Café, SOVA and the farmers market — in the dead of winter. There were circus performances; there were art projections on buildings all around town; and even an Outside DJ on Front Street complete with dancing and wood-chopping.

Mr. Speaker, both of these events and many more examples — far too many to list here — are examples of volunteer work that is done outside of the course requirements for these students and they are welcome contributions to the dynamic of winter life in the Klondike.

I’m a huge believer in SOVA and Dawson’s artistic community as a whole. It has a positive effect on our image, both on the national and the international stage, and continues to gain recognition, whether it is in galleries, theatres, or film festivals. It is interesting to note that the majority of full-time students this year in SOVA came from outside the territory — just showing the strong reputation that the school has developed.

So, on behalf of Dawson City residents, I would like to thank the students for choosing SOVA and for the contributions over the year to our town. To the graduating class, you have achieved a great milestone and deserve credit for your accomplishments. I would just like to congratulate the class of 2015. Congratulations to Izzy Burgwin, Robin Henry, Courtney Holmes, Ben Lamarche, Joe Sims, Jon Vanneste, Carly Woolner and part-time students Joyce Caley, Elise Ebner, Cathie Findlay-Brook, Haylie Griffis-King, Susan Holland, Andrea Pelletier, Max Sims and Nina Vroemen.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

In recognition of National Day of Mourning

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise today on behalf of Yukon government in recognition of the National Day of Mourning begun by the Canadian labour movement in 1984 and formally recognized by Parliament through the *Workers Mourning Day Act* in 1991. Today is set aside by Canadians

as a day of mourning to remember workers killed, disabled or injured in the workplace and workers afflicted with industrial disease.

Yukoners and Canadians mark this day because we seek earnestly to set an example of our commitment to the issue of health and safety in the workplace. Last year, five Yukoners died on the job. That is the highest number of workplace fatalities in the territory in more than 20 years.

These workplace deaths took loved ones from wives, children, brothers, sisters, friends and colleagues. In addition to those deaths, more than 430 workers were injured so badly they could not immediately return to work. Mr. Speaker, if one is too many, then 430 is far too many.

The impact reaches beyond the workplace. It reaches into our homes, into our community and throughout the entire territory, as we saw during that moving Day of Mourning commemoration less than a year ago. Sixty-three Yukoners have been killed on the job since the founding of the National Day of Mourning in 1984. The National Day of Mourning stands as a reminder that the simple act of going to work changed workers’ lives and the lives of all those around them for the worse.

Mr. Speaker, as I thought about why we observe today, I asked myself: What does it mean to remember the five Yukon workers who were killed and the 430 who were injured? For me, it means a renewed emphasis on safety as a shared responsibility.

It means reminding ourselves that we each must be vigilant and use a high level of common sense to protect ourselves and our colleagues on the territory’s worksites. We must work harder to make a difference in our workplaces to keep each other safe. That is what we committed at today’s ceremony. This year, let us commit to doing better. Let us work together to protect each other from harm to ensure we all return home to our loved ones at the end of the day. There is no better way to honour those who were killed than to prevent another workplace death or injury.

Ms. Hanson: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition to commemorate Canada’s National Day of Mourning. April 28 is a day of remembrance. It is a day of mourning for workers who have been killed, injured or suffered illness due to workplace hazards and toxic exposure, and it is a day of recognition that, for each worker killed on the job or who dies from a work-related illness, there is a family, there are friends — a community left to mourn.

As was mentioned, the motion to establish a National Day of Mourning was passed at the 1984 convention of the Canadian Labour Congress to honour workers in Canada who were killed, injured or disabled on the job or who suffer from occupational diseases. The date was chosen because it was on April 28, 1914 that Ontario proclaimed the first comprehensive workers’ compensation act in Canada — 70 years later. The Canadian labour movement lobbied for legislation to identify April 28 as National Day of Mourning. Their efforts were rewarded in February 1991 when the federal Parliament passed a Democratic Party private

member's bill, Bill C-223, which became the *Workers Mourning Day Act*. The idea caught on as labour organizations around the world adopted April 28 as a day of mourning. Today more than 100 countries recognize April 28, although many refer to it as the Workers' Memorial Day. Today, the Canadian flag on Parliament Hill will fly at half-mast. As we did today in the foyer of this building, workers, family and employers light candles. A moment of silence is observed.

April 28 monuments are often inscribed with the words, "Fight for the living. Mourn for the dead". As much as it is a day to honour the dead, today is also a day that reminds us that we need to protect the living. As we mourn the five Yukon workers killed on the job in 2014, we realize that the fight is not over.

Bill C-45, also known as the Westray bill, was created as a result of the 1992 Westray coal mining disaster in Nova Scotia where 26 miners were killed after methane gas ignited, causing an explosion. Despite serious safety concerns raised by employees, union officials and government inspectors at the time, the company instituted few changes. Eventually the disaster occurred.

Reaction to the Westray mine disaster in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, rebounded across Canada, including here in Yukon where the Westray mine owner also was involved in Faro. One legacy of the Westray disaster was a song, *Pictou County Coal*, co-written by Bob Hamilton and our colleague here in this House, the MLA for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. Part of the chorus expressed the anger felt by many: "How the hell can a man be dealing for the money, when 26 are buried in the mine?" The fact is that after the accident, the police and provincial government failed to secure a conviction against the company when three of its managers led Parliament to pass another legacy — the Westray bill — which amends the *Criminal Code* so that all organizations and individuals who direct the work of others anywhere in Canada are covered.

I raise this, Mr. Speaker, because, while I pray that there is never a situation in Yukon where a lack of worker safety leads to criminal charges being laid, I am mindful as I drive down Fourth Avenue and I glance at the injury tally where there is a daily increase in the numbers or I look at the statistics on the workers' compensation website regarding workplace safety violations in Yukon — many of them serious and potentially life-threatening — I am reminded that we all, too often, take workplace safety for granted. There is no room for complacency.

The statistics are chilling. In Canada, every year approximately 1,000 workers die — every day three workers die across this country. Every year, Canadian workers suffer from 250,000 workplace-related injuries or diseases and every day workers suffer from 680 work-related injuries or diseases. Five of those Canadian statistics in 2014, those fatalities, were Yukoners. They did not come home at the end of their work day.

I rarely share this, but I too, form part of these statistics. Like many little kids, I loved to get up early when my dad was

going to work, just as I did that day — a few days before Thanksgiving. My dad was a flight instructor, a pilot and an air traffic controller. He went to work; he was killed on the job. He left me, my three sisters, my brother and my mom — who was pregnant with my little brother. Worker deaths have impacts that last long beyond the headlines. As we vow to fight for the living, we know that in the hearts of those left behind, the mourning never ceases.

Mr. Silver: I rise as well today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to the National Day of Mourning. On April 28 every year we come together to remember the workers whose lives have been lost and those who have been injured while on the job, and to renew our collective commitment to healthy and safe workplaces.

Today we join the rest of Canada and countries around the world to honour the millions of lives that have forever been changed by workplace injuries. Although we continue to make gains toward stronger health and safety regulations, workplace injuries and work-related illnesses are still way too common. One workplace injury is still too many injuries in the workplace — although this year, 360 people have reported workplace injuries already.

The Day of Mourning reminds us how critical it is to enforce and to follow all health and safety regulations. All workers have the right to work in a safe and healthy environment and no one should ever become a victim of an unsafe workplace. One of the messages that we heard today from union representatives at the ceremony was: "Take these safe practices that you learn at work and take them home and share them with your family."

Workplace health and safety is a shared responsibility. It is up to both employers and employees to follow workplace safety procedures and to report any unsafe conditions immediately. Even something that may seem small could have catastrophic effects if ignored. By working together, then and only then can we not only prevent and reduce, but eliminate, workplace injuries.

As we gather to renew our commitment to preventing further workplace injuries, we also pause to reflect and to honour all workers who have been injured or killed on the job, and mourn with the families who have been left behind. As we pay our respects, we must not allow the memories or suffering of these workers to be forgotten. We remember the tragedies suffered and the triumphs achieved.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Graham: I would like all members of the Legislature to join me in welcoming the social studies 11 class from F.H. Collins Secondary School, along with their teacher, Michael Toews, who is a teacher and the vice-principal at F.H. Collins. I hope that your time here at the Legislature leaves you with a positive impression of the proceedings. Thank you for coming.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I would like to introduce to members today a couple of people from my riding. Mr. Dan Poelman has joined us. Dan is a friend and neighbour. He is also heavily involved with the judo association here in Yukon, and he is a pilot with Yukon's airline, Air North. I would like to ask all members to welcome him today to the gallery.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I would also like to introduce Michael Swainson. Michael is also a friend and neighbour who has been actively involved in ensuring that Yukoners and people who are involved with providing support services have a better ability to deal with some of the challenges they face. I would like to invite everybody to welcome Michael here as well.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I would like to ask members to join me in welcoming someone to the gallery. We have with us today big, bad Jon Rudolph, who is a defenceman with the Whitehorse Huskies senior men's hockey team.

Applause

Ms. White: I ask the House to join me in welcoming a constituent of the Member for Mountainview, my friend, Steve Hahn, who has taught me a lot of things that I think will be brought to light for him today. Thank you so much for being here, Steve, and thanks for the lessons and the guidance you have shown us.

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. 106: *An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, with Respect to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* — Introduction and First Reading

Ms. Hanson: I move that a bill, entitled *An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, with Respect to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition that a bill, entitled *An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, with Respect to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 106 agreed to

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue working with the Yukon Outdoor Sports Complex Association to develop the proposed soccer fields and running track in Whistle Bend that would address a sports infrastructure gap in Yukon and be a valuable public investment for children and other users.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to examine the causes, effects and implications of post-traumatic stress disorder in the workplace, with a focus on the impact of traumatic stress in high-risk occupations and professions, with a view to creating a comprehensive, proactive, education, training and prevention framework to give workers the tools and supports they need to cope with traumatic stress in the workplace.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before proceeding with today's Question Period, the Chair will make a statement regarding yesterday's Question Period.

During Question Period yesterday, the Leader of the Official Opposition asked the Premier a series of questions about lobbying legislation. The Chair is not going to repeat in detail what was said yesterday. A point of order was raised by the Government House Leader. The Official Opposition House Leader responded and the Chair ruled on that point of order.

Instead, the Chair will speak more generally about parliamentary language. On page 618 of the 2nd edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, we are advised that parliamentary proceedings — and I quote: "... are based on a long-standing tradition of respect for the integrity of all members."

Furthermore, annotation 487(2) of the 6th edition of *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms* says — and I quote: "Words may not be used hypothetically or conditionally, if they are plainly intended to convey a direct imputation. Putting a hypothetical case is not the way to evade what would be in itself disorderly."

The phrases "access to government is for sale" and "ethical lassitude", which the Leader of the Official Opposition used yesterday, are disorderly. Saying that these charges represent perceptions held by others is procedurally irrelevant. The member is responsible for having used those phrases in the House. In other words: you say it, you own it.

As the Chair said in his ruling yesterday, the facts are not at issue. The Chair has, on a number of occasions, said that he is not in a position to determine the facts that underlie questions and responses. What is at issue and what the Chair can rule on is the manner in which the members express

themselves, particularly when members speak in ways that question the ethics of other members.

The Chair does not wish to obstruct members in asking questions or in providing responses; however, members must be careful of the words they use to express themselves.

We will now proceed with Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Post-traumatic stress disorder support

Ms. Hanson: Today is the National Day of Mourning, a day upon which we commemorate workers who have been killed, injured or suffered illness due to their work. It is our duty as legislators to ensure that workers have the supports they need to do their jobs without the risk of injury or illness.

Today I tabled a private member's bill that would add a presumptive clause to the *Workers' Compensation Act* for first responders with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder. Under this legislation, if a first responder suffers from PTSD, the disorder would be presumed to be a workplace injury unless proven otherwise. We ask first responders to do a tough job. We have a duty to give them the supports they need.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier support the principle that first responders dealing with PTSD should be covered by presumptive legislation?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As the minister responsible for Community Services — obviously we oversee the work with first responders, whether they be EMS or otherwise. Presumptive legislation has been something that has come forward previously with regard to fire, and that's obviously in place in a number of places throughout the country as well as here.

With regard to other first responders like Emergency Medical Services, I should first of all note that Yukon government certainly has a great respect and appreciation for all of our EMS professionals and volunteers, whether they are professionals paid in the department or volunteers throughout the Yukon communities.

Community Services' focus has been to promote prevention and early incident stress management. This approach has been proven to reduce the need for after-the-fact treatment or the use of legislative benefits. Protective Services has a phased program in place to support all emergency staff and volunteer responders exposed to traumatic events, including post-traumatic stress and critical incident stress. This support includes defusing and debriefings, counselling services, and workplace accommodation where required. CS and the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board continue to work together to prevent and identify stress reactions and to provide affected individuals with the assistance to deal with these types of stresses.

I can't comment on the actual bill that the member has put forward today as I haven't had a chance to read it yet, but of course we'll give it due consideration upon reading it.

Ms. Hanson: When we reached out to leaders within the first responder community, we were told that while there are some government supports for first responders, when it

comes to dealing with PTSD, they are mostly reactionary in nature. That is to say that they are available after first responders come into contact with traumatic stress situations.

First responders receive hours and hours of safety training for dealing with dangerous situations, but dealing with traumatic stress is often left out of that training. As I am sure the minister is aware, many in the first responder community have been advocating for a more proactive approach to education and training when it comes to PTSD.

I asked if the government supported the notion in principle that first responders dealing with PTSD should be covered by presumptive legislation. I'm also asking the minister if he agrees that a more proactive approach to providing first responders with support and training for dealing with PTSD is needed.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we would like to express on behalf of the Yukon government the great respect and appreciation that we have for Yukon government EMS professionals as well as our volunteers throughout the territory.

I believe that we do try to take a proactive stance with regard to this issue in providing prevention and early incident stress management. As I indicated previously, this approach has been proven to reduce the need for after-the-fact treatment or the use of legislative benefits. If we look across the country, we see that most jurisdictions — in fact, I believe Alberta is the only one that has presumptive coverage for first responders. We see that that's the similar approach taken by other jurisdictions. We see that's the similar approach taken by other jurisdictions, except for Alberta, across the country.

Of course we're willing to explore options when it comes to providing enhanced supports if necessary and as I said, once we read the bill provided by the member opposite we will have a chance to analyze it and understand what it's saying. One of the concerns or issues associated with this type of legislation is if there is a significant cost to it. That's not to say it's not justified, but it's something we have to take into consideration, as the department operates within a finite budget.

We do have supports in place. We do take a preventive approach to this and we try our best to ensure that Yukoners — professionals and volunteers who are first responders — have access to the tools they need.

Ms. Hanson: The Official Opposition does recognize there are some supports for first responders and workers who have experienced traumatic stress and I commend the government for having those policies in place, but more can be done.

We have heard from first responders that a greater emphasis is needed on providing education and training to workers on an ongoing basis so that, should the day come when they experience serious traumatic stress, they have the tools they need to deal with it. We need to support those who are there for us 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Is the minister willing to move forward in a constructive way to create a comprehensive training and education program for dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The short answer is yes, of course we're willing to work with EMS professionals — both professional and volunteer EMS individuals throughout the territory — to ensure that they have the adequate tools to address these challenges.

As I have said, we do have a number of tools in place and the member opposite did reference that so I thank her for that. It is something we will have to give some consideration to as to whether or not we want to go to the presumptive model. As I've indicated, the only jurisdiction in Canada to do that has been Alberta and that is something that came with a fairly significant cost. I'm not saying the cost isn't warranted, but it's simply something that we do need to take into consideration as we do operate our departments within a finite budget, so we have to determine whether or not that's an appropriate step forward.

As I said before, there are tools in place, there is training available either through the — there are certain services that are available at the Yukon College or through the Public Service Commission. We have taken steps to ensure that volunteers throughout the territory have access to the counselling services that are available to Yukon government employees so that if they need to call on those services they can with ease. As I've indicated previously, we do provide a number of other preventive measures to try to address this, as well as ex post facto services. We do have a fairly comprehensive suite of programming, but we are always interested to see if we can move forward in other ways.

Question re: Whistle Bend development

Ms. Hanson: Last night, the Member for Klondike and I had the opportunity to attend a city council meeting and saw a rather heated debate on the proposed zoning amendments for this government's new outdoor sports complex. Ultimately, the city decided not to approve the Yukon government's request to rezone the area in Whistle Bend. Council members raised concerns that government had not articulated their plans clearly enough nor given the city strong enough assurance that they would not be saddled with operation and maintenance costs if the complex ran into financial difficulty.

The outdoor sports complex was a major plank in this year's budget with plans to spend \$7 million on the project. The city's refusal to pass the zoning change put the brakes on the project. What is the plan now and what is the government's next step?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: First of all, I should correct the record for the member opposite that this budget contains a line item of \$400,000 for this project, not the amount she specified.

Obviously the vote that was held last night at city council was very disappointing to Yukon government. I have expressed that to the city. We are very much disappointed for two reasons. First of all, I feel it is very unfortunate that the grassroots group of sports organizations that came together to address an identified gap in Yukon's recreational infrastructure had their proposal shot down by the mayor and a few councillors without what I felt to be an adequate

explanation as to why. Obviously the Yukon government, those sports organizations, and I personally have provided information, explanations, and assurances that responded to each and every concern raised by the mayor and council about this project. I have done so verbally; I have done so in writing; and I have done so at other meetings.

Also we have had ongoing discussions with the city about this for over a year now — since this time last year — when there was an appropriation in last year's budget for this, and we have been working with the city very closely. Obviously we are disappointed at the direction they've gone with regard to denying this request from the local sports organizations for this wonderful facility that would come at no cost to the City of Whitehorse.

So we will continue to work with YOSCA, the Yukon Outdoor Sports Complex Association, to find out the next steps forward.

Ms. Hanson: Anybody who has attended the city meetings will know that the City of Whitehorse's refusal to approve the zoning changes is a reflection — and it is a perfect case study — of how not to engage in intergovernmental relations. The City of Whitehorse invested time, money and many hours of consultation work in developing their official community plan, only to have the Government of Yukon drop this outdoor sports complex into their laps as a fait accompli. This government has put city councillors between a rock and a hard place when it comes to the outdoor sports complex. The result of that is yet another Yukon project being delayed. This government needs to realize that municipalities are a level of government. They need to be respected.

Does the minister realize that a top-down approach to dealing with the City of Whitehorse is disrespectful and causes more problems than it solves?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: We know that the NDP have been against this project for some time. They passed a press release a few weeks ago criticizing the Yukon government for moving forward on these soccer fields for Yukon children and Yukon athletes, but I need to correct the record as well. The member opposite is suggesting that Yukon government is the initiator or the primary initiator of this project. That is not the case. This is an example of the sports community approaching governments — both the Yukon government and the city — seeking support for, what is, in their opinion, a very much-needed piece of infrastructure for this territory.

They approached Yukon government over two years ago and received CDF funding to do the work to plan for this project and to work with other sports organizations to develop the case for this building — and they did that. Now they have come forward to the Yukon government and received our support when we indicated that last spring in last year's budget. Over the course of the past year, we have collaborated at the political level, at the administrative level and through the sports organizations with the City of Whitehorse. We have provided every bit of information we can to them and provided answers to every single question they have asked.

I don't know how we could have been more clear. I know the member opposite is suggesting we weren't clear enough. I provided answers in writing and verbally to the mayor about this, and we're very disappointed that they chose to move in a different direction against this project. I'm also very disappointed that the NDP is against this wonderful facility.

Ms. Hanson: Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. The New Democratic Party is not against the facility or the idea — it's how it is being imposed upon the city, without a business plan, without a needs assessment.

One of the concerns that was repeatedly raised last night was that the city did not want to be left holding the tab for the O&M costs for the outdoor sports complex if the user groups could not cover the costs. That was not demonstrated by the business plan. Despite some assurances from the minister that Yukon government would cover the costs, they were not convinced — and you can't blame them, given the current state of disrepair of some of the Yukon government's own soccer fields in Whitehorse.

The current poor state of Yukon government soccer fields is the responsibility of this government — all 14 of them. They are Yukon government property. Why does the minister expect the City of Whitehorse to trust the assurances that they will cover the O&M costs of the new sports complex when the government does not adequately maintain —

Speaker: Order please. Minister of Community Services, please.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: First of all, I should note that, as the sports community has identified, Yukon has never had an adequate regulation-size soccer pitch in this territory. In the case of the track, my understanding is that that facility is also inadequate.

The sports community has clearly identified a need for this facility. It has identified that it would be a wonderful addition to our recreational assets. Obviously there are challenges with our existing fields, given the fact that we are in the Yukon and we have a challenging growing season for grass that's comparable to the rest of Canada. That's why we took the direction we did in moving toward an artificial-turf system, because that would reduce our operation and maintenance that would be necessary on that. You don't have to water, fertilize and mow artificial turf.

With regard to the operation and maintenance, I made very clear in writing and verbally to the city and to the mayor that we would own this facility. It's on Yukon government land. We would enter into a lease agreement with the YOSCA sports organization to run the facility and that we weren't asking for a dime from the City of Whitehorse.

When the member opposite and the NDP muddy the waters around this, they do a disservice to Yukoners. The fact that they are against this project has been evident throughout the past number of weeks when they have opposed this vociferously.

Mr. Speaker, we'll sit down and meet with YOSCA and find a way forward for this wonderful facility for Yukoners.

Question re: First Nation education

Mr. Silver: As mentioned earlier, visiting in the gallery today is Mr. Toews and his grade 11 social studies class from F.H. Collins. They provided the basis of the questions that I am going to ask the Minister of Education today.

The Auditor General's report of 2009 stated that, for the 2007-08 school year, the average graduation rate for Yukon students was 58 percent, whereas the Yukon First Nation students' graduation rate was 38 percent. The Yukon Department of Education annual report for 2010-11 found that half of rural First Nation students didn't graduate, whereas graduation rates for other rural students were at 72 percent.

What is the government doing to ensure that the educational issues among Yukon First Nation students are being addressed in order to improve graduation rates?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I would like to first of all thank the students for providing the basis for these questions. I would like to thank the member opposite for giving me a little tiny bit of advance notice so I can provide some meaningful information.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there are achievement gaps between Yukon First Nations and non-First Nation students, and we're working to provide those First Nation students with meaningful opportunities to engage in learning so they can improve their success at school.

Just to give you an idea, Mr. Speaker, Yukon Education is developing specific curricula, educational resources and awareness programs to address the legacy of residential schools. We have integrated learning outcomes with on-the-land experience to engage learners, especially young aboriginal boys. We have developed high school accreditation for culture camps delivered by First Nations, and we're enhancing opportunities for skills training and trades in rural areas at the high school level.

Mr. Speaker, we've also developed a program specifically for First Nation students called the CHAOS program. The community, heritage, adventure, outdoors and skills program, more commonly known as CHAOS, runs out of the Wood Street School and it enhances opportunities for First Nation students in the secondary school system.

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

Mr. Silver: For the minister's sake, welcome to the wonderful world of opposition. We hit the ground running and the minute that I got the question ready, I went to his office.

Mr. Speaker, I can agree with the minister that some good work is being done — absolutely. However, the most recent statistics we have available show that little progress is being made. In 2013, the graduation rate for non-First Nation students was 77 percent. For First Nation students, it was only 47 percent — a gap of 30 percent. We know that the government has introduced some new programming to try to close that gap. However, we can see by the statistics that there has been no improvement in the graduation rates, so what mechanisms, if any, are in place to assess the outcomes of the new programs that the government has brought in?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, a couple of the new programs are self-evident already — the rural education action plan that we have recently introduced, as well as the tripartite education partnership agreement between Canada, Yukon and the CYFN and Yukon First Nation governments to develop an education action plan.

The partnership agreement commits all three parties to create and implement a joint education action plan designed especially to produce successful rates for Yukon First Nation students. The education action plan working group held a series of meetings to move forward with the plan. The MOU for the development of this plan included the potential for all 14 Yukon First Nations as potential signatories as well as CYFN. Currently, CYFN and 12 First Nations, Yukon and Canada have signed the MOU. I'm looking forward to taking a look at the draft joint education action plan so that we can move forward in working with First Nations and First Nation students to improve the situation in Yukon.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, it's worth noting at this time that the actual graduation rates are actually lower than what's reported by the government. The rates are calculated as a percentage of students who graduate from the total number of students who were enrolled that year in grade 12. In other words, they don't even include those who have dropped out before grade 12.

They also include those who depart after a leaving certificate. These graduates who have a leaving certificate would actually have to complete a GED type of program if they wanted to do any post-secondary education. It is just that — it is a leaving certificate.

One of the ways to improve graduation rates would be to work with those First Nations who are interested in drawing down responsibility under their self-governing agreements for education. It is a great way to provide a culturally inclusive education for Yukon students.

Will the minister consider adapting the way that his department collects graduation statistics to include not only students registered in grade 12, but also all graduation-age Yukoners, and not include leaving certificates in that total?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Certainly, just to elaborate a little bit on what the Minister of Education has said, we certainly do have bilateral agreements with many of Yukon's First Nations when it comes to education. Two Education ministers ago, we were in Dawson City signing off on some unique parts of their self-government agreement that now other First Nations have been very eagerly involved in — in terms of partnering with us.

What I wanted to say was that during the budget speech, I did articulate a vision that this government has for education — a vision that is focused on Yukon students' success. We said that, over the coming months, we would begin to engage with all of the stakeholders who are involved and chart a path to achieve that vision. That includes such things as the creation of a new Yukon curriculum as opposed to using a curriculum from British Columbia. We look forward to working with all stakeholders. We look forward to finding the path to achieve that vision, and it is my hope that all parties in

this House will put away the politics and the partisanship because they understand how important this is and to support that vision.

Question re: Workplace safety

Ms. Moorcroft: Every year on this day, we pay tribute to the National Day of Mourning, but is that enough? On their morning drive to work, Yukoners in Whitehorse saw the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board tally reporting 360 workplace incidents already this year. That is an average of three incidents per day reported in 2015. We can say that work is safer today than it was 100 years ago, but it doesn't make these figures acceptable. We are failing people at work, but we and all Yukoners have the power to ensure safe working conditions and to do more to prevent injuries and deaths.

What is the minister doing to bring Yukon closer to the goal of no injuries, no disabilities and no workplace deaths?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: This government continues to work with the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board to address issues around the territory. This health and safety board does a terrific job at education and reaching out to employers across the territory to try to minimize the amount of workplace injuries and fatalities in the territory. I would like to give them credit for the hard work that they do and the relationships that they build with the large number of employers in the territory. There is good work being done and we will continue to work with those stakeholders.

Ms. Moorcroft: According to the most recently available WCB annual report, there were 1,164 workplace incidents in 2013, and 974 workers required time away from their jobs to recover from injuries. Yukon workers in trades, transportation and equipment operation were far and beyond those at highest risk of injury. Workers under the age of 30 were also at higher risk.

This is not about costs. It is not about penalties, lost time at work or claims paid out. What we are talking about is the right to come home safe and sound from a hard day at work.

Last December, we were told information was forthcoming on why Yukon WCB does not have legislated timeframes within which to respond to requests to reactivate or reopen a claim. Does the minister have that answer now?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I was — the word I want to use is "delighted", but it's not delighted. I was honoured to be able to provide some remarks in the gallery of the legislative building here today for the National Day of Mourning ceremony. We certainly heard comments from a number of stakeholders and groups from around the territory and there is a clear message that people want to work together to ensure that we reduce the number of workplace injuries and fatalities in our territory. So we'll continue to work with the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. As I understand it, they will be here as witnesses in the fall, but I can commit to following up on that question from the member opposite with the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board and will provide a written answer to the member in the coming weeks.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to thank the minister for his pledge on behalf of government to keep workers safe in the ceremony this afternoon.

There is a saying in wilderness training that three mistakes lead up to every tragedy. You can survive one or maybe two, but not three. This government says they're putting Yukon workers first, but too many Yukon workers are being killed by their jobs. Last year was the deadliest year in recent history for our workers with five deaths.

It should never be the case that when you go to work in the morning you don't go home. Yet over 60 Yukoners have died as a result of events in their workplaces in the past 30 years. These deaths may have been prevented if hazards in the workplace were caught earlier.

How does this government integrate the findings of its investigations into workplace incidents into their work on an ongoing basis?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I just want to cover off a couple comments I made in the tribute today; one being that Yukoners and Canadians mark this day because we seek earnestly to set an example of our commitment to the issue of health and safety in the workplace. Also, we know that when a worker is injured or killed in the workplace, it has deep-reaching impacts in our homes and our communities and on the territory as a whole. But we need to be vigilant. As workers, we need to use a high level of common sense and we need to protect ourselves and our colleagues in the work sites around the territory. This government takes this matter very seriously and I do thank the member opposite for the question. We will continue to work with the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board on this very issue and determining the next steps.

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. I have asked in this House previously about the number of assessments being completed by Health and Social Services.

In the 2013-14 fiscal year, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon managed to coordinate and complete seven assessments for under \$80,000. In the last fiscal year, this funding was not extended to FASSY, as the department determined that they would be completing these assessments with a new diagnostic FASD team.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell this House how many FASD assessments have been completed by the department in the last fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I don't have those statistics at my fingertips right now, but I can certainly commit to looking into that with the department. We're very excited about the new FASD diagnostic treatment team that is being put in place — very important work across all government departments. This issue reaches all Yukon communities.

We're proud of the work the Department of Health and Social Services and Yukon government does on this issue and we look forward to continuing on with this good work.

Ms. Stick: Over a year has been lost when FASD assessments could have been completed. FASSY had a proven track record of completing these assessments in a timely and cost-effective way. From 2006 to 2013, FASSY completed 67 FASD assessments, with follow-up case conferences.

Why wasn't FASSY allowed to carry on with the coordination of these assessments while the department recruited and trained their own team?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The member opposite raises a good point. FASSY — Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon — does tremendous work and we pride ourselves in having an ongoing relationship with that organization. Health and Social Services continues to fund and/or provide a comprehensive range of initiatives, services and programs related to FASD, in partnership with others.

For example, Health and Social Services provides prevention programming, including public awareness campaigns, priority admission to detox and alcohol and drug treatment for pregnant women, and development of a new healthy relationship curriculum for Yukon students.

The department also provides a range of support services for children and adults with FASD to address the individual needs of clients as part of our overall approach to supporting individuals with cognitive disabilities and their families. Health and Social Services also is developing a local team, as the member opposite alluded to, to assess and diagnose adults with FASD. These assessments will provide valuable information about the individual's strengths and their needs.

The department partners with a number of organizations around the territory on this very issue, and we will continue to work on those relationships and with those organizations on the very good work that is being done.

Ms. Stick: To date, FASD assessments completed have been focused on individuals in Whitehorse. We know there are a number of individuals living in the communities awaiting assessment too. Communities are also looking for support for their community members — supports like supported independent living workers, group homes and employment training. These do not exist in most communities.

Will individuals from the community be able to be referred for assessment to this team? What will the follow-up be for these individuals, once a diagnosis and recommendations are made?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Certainly with the diagnostic team that this government has put in place, we are very proud of the work that will be happening in the future years. I think there will be some great work and meaningful data, and obviously seeing individuals with a final diagnosis so they can move forward in treatment. The department also partnered with the Yukon Housing Corporation and Options for Independence to support the development of a new housing complex for persons with FASD, which opened just last year, as you will recall. We also worked with the Department of Justice — and I would like to thank the Minister of Justice — to develop a

protocol agreement that sets out a process for case coordination for common clients with complex needs, including those affected with FASD or by FASD.

Mr. Speaker, you will see that there is good work being done across a number of different departments — the Department of Education and many different departments — within Yukon government and we will continue to break down those silos, work department-to-department and work with the good stakeholders doing the good work in this territory.

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 item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, April 29, 2015. That is Motion No. 893, standing the name of the Member for Klondike.

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, April 29, 2015. They are Motion No. 792, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt South, and Motion No. 892, standing in the name of the Member for Riverdale South.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 86: *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation — Third Reading*

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 86, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 86, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 86, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It is indeed my pleasure to introduce Bill No. 86, entitled *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Yukon Child Benefit Regulation*, for third reading.

The bill continues our legacy of providing tax relief to Yukon taxpayers. In fact, this tax relief is the 13th and most comprehensive since the Yukon Party began its mandate. We are quite proud of our ability to provide tax relief; therefore, before I discuss Bill No. 86 specifically, I would like to recap the highlights of our 12 previous efforts.

First, on May 1, 2003, Yukon government extended the temporary Yukon mineral exploration tax credit until April 1, 2004. Second, on May 18, 2004, we further extended the Yukon temporary mineral exploration tax credit until April 1, 2007. Third, on December 14, 2004, Yukon government

lowered the small business tax rate from six percent to four percent, effective January 1, 2005, and raised the small business tax deduction limit to \$400,000 from \$300,000, effective January 1, 2007.

Fourth, on December 6, 2005, we provided a one-time energy rebate of \$150 effective January 1, 2006 to low-income Yukon families that were entitled to receive the quarterly GST rebate. Fifth, on December 9, 2005, the Yukon government harmonized the Yukon tax brackets with the federal brackets, representing an annual savings to taxpayers of approximately \$473,000 a year. Sixth, on May 24, 2006, a minor amendment to the Yukon mineral exploration tax credit set a cap on the maximum entitlement to \$300,000 for the last year of the program.

Seventh, on December 13, 2006, we doubled the pension income credit, increased the personal exemption credit and the eligible dependent credit and introduced credits for adoption expenses, public transit passes and employment income. Eighth, on December 13, 2007, the Yukon government introduced the Yukon child fitness credit and the Yukon child tax credit. Ninth, on December 31, 2007, we increased the Yukon child benefit from a maximum of \$37.50 per child per month to \$57.50 per child.

Tenth, on November 9, 2010, we modernized the dividend tax credit provisions of the *Income Tax Act* and increased the small business tax deduction limit to \$500,000 from \$400,000 effective January 1, 2010. Eleventh, on December 6, 2012, we established the children's arts tax credit. Twelfth, on May 8, 2014, the Yukon government lowered the small business tax rate from four percent to three percent, effective July 1, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, that brings us to today. When this bill is fully implemented, we will be providing in excess of \$5.5 million in annual tax relief primarily from lowering rates. The lowest three tax brackets are being reduced, resulting in a tax savings of \$4.9 million in 2015. The first bracket, which covers income up to \$44,700, sees the largest percentage decline at 9.1 percent. The rate will fall from 7.04 percent to 6.4 percent. The second bracket, which covers income from \$44,701 up to \$89,400, sees the second largest percentage decline at seven percent. The rate will fall from 9.68 percent to nine percent. The third bracket, which covers income from \$89,401 up to \$138,585, sees the rate fall 4.7 percent from 11.44 to 10.9 percent. The fourth bracket, which currently covers income in excess of \$138,586, sees the rate rounded up from 12.76 percent to 12.8 percent in order to move to a single-decimal tax rate consistent with the other brackets.

Mr. Speaker, I am extremely proud to stand here today in the Legislature to close debate on Bill No. 86. This bill is a testament to our government's ability to manage the public purse in a fashion expected by Yukoners. Taxpayers expect excellent service from their government, but at the same time, they need and they deserve a break.

Again, I'm very happy to be able to provide that tax break. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Hanson: I'm not going to reprise the comments I made at second reading or in Committee of the Whole. I would just note — as I had expressed at both of those opportunities — that the Official Opposition does support the notion of increased progressivity in the taxation regime and, as I had said previously, we are concerned that we see, in the way this legislation is crafted, that the treatment of incomes between \$138,000 and \$500,000 is exactly the same. It just seems passing strange.

I will not reiterate the cautions that were expressed, both by me, as the Leader of the Official Opposition, and by Standard & Poor's with respect to the challenges that the government has created for itself and with its lack of fiscal flexibility. Those are on the record, Mr. Speaker, and the facts will stand. The proof will be in going forward as we see how this plays out. The fact is, as Standard & Poor's pointed out for the government and for all citizens, that increasingly this government's approach is tightening the box, making it smaller in terms of the ability of governments to respond with nimbleness and with flexibility to changing circumstances, to challenges and to opportunities.

I'll leave that there, Mr. Speaker, and we'll move on to the vote.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It is a pleasure to rise again at third reading to speak to this bill, the changes made to the *Income Tax Act*. I did provide some comments at earlier readings but wanted to reiterate my sincere support for this initiative and this bill. I'm very proud, as I said at second reading, to support a bill that will provide sweeping personal tax cuts to Yukoners across all existing income brackets.

This bill is obviously something that we feel will significantly enhance the quality of life for Yukoners by putting more money back in the pockets of those Yukoners.

As I mentioned previously, I had the pleasure of tabling changes to the *Income Tax Act* last year to reduce the small business tax rate from four percent to three percent. I should note that, in the most recent federal budget, the federal government has announced that they will be reducing their portion of the small business tax rate another two percent as well, which I think was actually a commitment made by the federal NDP so, for once, we see some convergence of policies between the NDP and federal Conservative parties, which is a rare occasion.

That bill I tabled last year, of course, was passed. I believe it was passed with unanimous support, and I am anticipating unanimous support again today for these comprehensive, sweeping personal tax cuts to all Yukon income brackets.

I'm also very supportive of the changes to the child care benefit and the child fitness tax credit. These are positive changes that will enhance the lives and quality of life of a number of my constituents who enjoy access to these programs and, in the case of the fitness tax credit, the shift to making it refundable will negate the problem that could have perhaps existed previously with regard to someone's income being too low to receive that tax credit.

This is a very positive step forward, not just for the purpose of the financial health of parents, but for the encouragement of young folks to engage in sporting activity throughout the various opportunities that exist in Yukon.

I would also like to note my support for the elimination of the surtax that had been in place for some time now. I don't know when exactly that surtax came into effect, but I believe, as I said at second reading, that it was anachronistic and due to be removed. I am quite content to see it removed here today.

I will conclude my remarks at third reading but I simply wanted to get on the record again as being strongly in favour of these sweeping personal tax cuts and putting \$5.5 million back into the pockets of Yukoners.

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

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I am proud to close debate for passage of third reading of this legislation that, in fact, this government is very proud to do, and to talk about the fact that this is a government that understands how and what it takes to manage Yukon's finances.

There certainly are two ways to manage. One is through growth of revenues. The opposition feels that growth in revenues is done by increasing taxes. We believe that by growing the private sector economy, it creates revenues for governments to provide programs and services.

There is another option, of course. Governments, just like homeowners and people who live in this community — if their revenues go down, the other opportunity is to ensure that they can live within their means. Definitely there was a reason that the Yukon *Taxpayer Protection Act* was implemented in this territory after the results of the opposition's governance in this territory. It was to ensure that tax-and-spend politics would not occur again unless there was support from Yukoners on that.

I appreciate the comments by my Cabinet colleague and the Minister of Community Services highlighting as well the Yukon child benefit, which is also amended with a 35-percent increase in that program. Also, the child fitness tax credit will be mirrored — the federal government's — and also will go from being non-refundable to refundable, meaning that even those families whose income is low enough that they don't pay taxes can still receive the benefit of this credit.

I would also just mention that we are also matching, or becoming consistent with, the federal government when it comes to political contributions. That way, when people are willing to donate with consistency to the federal government, it doesn't leave one to be deciding to donate, for example, federally instead of territorially simply because there is a better tax break with the federal. We will now match that. A note to that, too, is that the greatest impact will be on those people who don't donate a lot of money — will see the benefit of that.

I also just wanted to comment for the record again, as I had said previously, that we are reducing the tax rate across all

brackets. I did mention in the fourth bracket that, with rounding, it's going from 12.76 to 12.8, but, for the record, every taxpayer in the fourth bracket benefits from the changes in the lower three brackets and will therefore see lower tax bills despite the rounding adjustment in this bracket — meaning that everybody will see tax relief as a result of these amendments.

In closing, with this new rate structure, Yukon taxpayers, whether they earn \$50,000 or \$100,000, will face the third-lowest tax bills in this country. Only the other two territories — Nunavut and Northwest Territories — are lower. However, those other two territories implement a two-percent payroll tax in addition to their income tax, which effectively eliminates any tax advantage that Nunavut or Northwest Territories have.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. 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 third reading of Bill No. 86 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 86 has passed this House.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*. 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. 18: *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Hon. Mr. Kent: Madam Chair, before I begin with my remarks with respect to the EMR mains for 2015-16, I would like to again welcome Ms. Shirley Abercrombie to the Chamber here to provide assistance to me, as acting assistant deputy minister of Mineral Resources and Oil and Gas Resources. I would also like to thank Deputy Minister George Ross and the entire team at Energy, Mines and Resources throughout the Yukon for all of their work that they put in on a daily basis to ensure that we're leading the responsible integrated management of Yukon's natural resources.

It's my pleasure to introduce the 2015-16 main budget for the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. We fulfill the mandate that I mentioned by continuing to modernize and clarify resource legislation, regulations and policies to maintain a positive investment climate and foster sustainable development. We facilitate orderly land development through planning and zoning and we make land available for community, residential, agriculture, recreation and industry purposes.

EMR also supports responsible development and use of Yukon's resources to meet the energy needs of Yukoners. Another important mandate of EMR is that we work to ensure Yukon receives net economic and social benefits for the use of our resources. This goal is partly accomplished through increasing awareness of Yukon's land, agriculture, forestry, oil and gas, mineral and energy development opportunities.

Our work in this regard is to ensure accessibility of our natural resource knowledge, programs and services with our partners and the public. EMR's accomplishments span across the Yukon and I look forward this afternoon to talking about how this department contributes to our economy, our quality of life and protection of the environment.

This budget provides details on how EMR allocates funds and collects revenue in carrying out this important work. The overall budget for the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources for 2015-16 is \$92.758 million. Of that, the operation and maintenance budget is \$85.335 million and the capital budget is \$7.423 million. Revenues this year are estimated to be \$51.043 million, including \$45.103 million in transfers from Canada and \$5.94 million in taxes, fees, royalties and others. I would like to take a moment to share some highlights of EMR's main budget and outline some key initiatives the department is leading, starting with Land Management and Land Planning.

Under Land Management, the Yukon government recognizes the high demand for land over the last decade, which is in large part due to Yukon's economic growth and increased population. The demand for residential and commercial lots has been constant in most communities and high within the City of Whitehorse. Government continues to demonstrate its commitment to make land available to meet demand and we have an inventory of developed lots for sale in the City of Whitehorse and all rural communities.

The O&M budget for the Land Management branch is \$2.932 million and the capital budget is \$5.488 million. Land availability has increased in Yukon through the following: efforts of government working with municipalities, communities, First Nation governments and with the private sector; the agriculture planned land program, which provides land sales through multi-lot subdivisions and infill projects; government's work to identify additional remote recreational lots in southern Yukon for lottery; our spot land application program, which approved approximately 142 rural residential applications and approximately 96 successful agriculture spot applications from 2002 to 2014; and finally, creating over 130 new lots since 2009 through subdivision of private residential and agricultural land in the Whitehorse periphery.

As part of Yukon government's commitment to streamline community-based land-development initiatives, government has entered into land development protocol agreements with Dawson City, the Town of Watson Lake, Carmacks, Faro, Haines Junction, Mayo and Teslin. These protocols are assisting government and the communities in identifying lands for development. As of April 2014, the rural land development program was transferred from Community Services to the Land Management branch in Energy, Mines and Resources. With land planning, development and sales now combined, the Land Management branch has been able to streamline the approach for identifying, developing and selling lands within the smaller communities throughout Yukon.

Of the total capital budget for the branch, there is \$4.95 million in capital budget for rural land residential projects. The Yukon government is following through on our commitment to make land available to Yukoners for a variety of purposes, including recreational land. We demonstrated this through a successful lottery release of 19 recreational lots at Little Teslin Lake in 2009 and the September 2014 release of 19 recreational lots at Bennett Lake and Tagish Lake. These

projects resulted from government's partnerships with the Teslin Tlingit Council and Carcross-Tagish First Nation.

Our government's relationship with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation has led to a joint memorandum of understanding on a variety of development initiatives, resulting in the previously mentioned release of 19 remote recreation lots, the pending extension of Tagish Avenue in Carcross to provide access to both settlement and Yukon land, and consideration of a potential eco-tourism development at Millhaven Bay through an expression-of-interest process.

Other land lotteries planned for 2015 include industrial lots at McCrae, lots in the Marwell industrial area, residential lots in Dawson City, recreational lots on Bennett Lake and Tagish Lake — six recreational lots that were not claimed in the initial lottery — and we'll be putting those back out for lottery, I believe, later on this summer once the ice is off the lakes and individuals are able to get out and view them — two lots in the Fox Lake area, and 50 additional residential lots in the Whistle Bend subdivision.

Under land planning, EMR's Land Planning branch assists communities in developing local area plans and zoning regulations to ensure orderly development. The branch also resolves competing land uses by providing residents and First Nation governments the opportunity to develop balanced land use policies that provide certainty over future land use. The operation budget for Land Planning is \$1.074 million.

Yukon government is continuing to prioritize planning and zoning initiatives in the Whitehorse periphery, where the population continues to grow and land development pressures are the greatest. An example of this work is allowing subdivision of rural residential and agricultural lots in Mount Lorne, approved in March 2014, similar to what has been approved for other areas.

The Carcross local area plan was approved in February 2014, and the Marsh Lake local area plan is expected to be recommended for approval by the steering committee later this year. Planning is also underway in Fox Lake and Tagish. All of these processes are good examples of First Nation, community and Yukon government collaboration, and we look forward to continuing these positive processes.

Madam Chair, when it comes to agriculture, the Yukon government supports our homegrown agricultural industry through policy, programs and enabling legislation.

The Agriculture operation and maintenance budget for this year is \$2.086 million; \$845,000 in capital funding has been identified specifically for agricultural land development.

Energy, Mines and Resources is in the process of developing a comprehensive local food strategy aimed at significantly increasing the production and use of locally grown vegetables, meat and food products. It gives me pleasure to announce that we have provided funding to the Yukon Agricultural Association to assist us with the development of that strategy, and I'll look forward to attending their AGM coming up, I believe, a week from this Saturday here in Whitehorse and to getting an opportunity to talk to the many individuals from throughout the territory who are engaged in this important industry.

Some of the other branch programs that support the industry include: release of agricultural land by way of spot land sales for farming and livestock grazing; planned land sales through multi-lot subdivisions and infill projects — and those are planned agricultural land sales; expert services that provide professional education and technical services to farmers, along with research and demonstration projects designed to improve the economic delivery of northern agriculture; meat inspection services, including operation and maintenance of the mobile abattoir and animal health and testing programs; and delivery of the Canada-Yukon Growing Forward 2 policy agreement that will provide up to \$1.48 million per year on a 60-percent federal/40-percent territorial cost-sharing basis to deliver programs.

I would like to talk a little bit about the forest industry and where we see opportunities there. Energy, Mines and Resources' Forest Management branch supports the forest industry, provides services to industry and continues to develop operational tools and products to assist industry operating under the *Forest Resources Act*. The operating budget this year is \$3.592 million. There is \$350,000 in the capital budget dedicated for forest road engineering. To support continued investment in the forest industry, the Yukon government is committed to ensuring that wood is available through new timber harvest planning areas in all communities. The Forest Management branch is also working collaboratively with the Yukon Wood Products Association, Economic Development and Forest Innovations program, which is a national non-profit advisory group, to stimulate industry development. Our government has successfully developed forest resource management plans for Haines Junction, Dawson and Teslin regions, with full First Nation collaboration and planning input. Having in place these plans provides certainty for the land base, identifies sustainable forest management practices and fosters economic opportunities for all Yukoners and First Nation partners.

Forest planning in new areas continues to be prioritized. Key examples include partnerships with the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, the Kwanlin Dun and Carcross-Tagish First Nation to advance planning in the Whitehorse-Southern Lakes region.

To support economic development, timber harvest plans for commercial harvesting of fuel wood are continually prepared for all regions of Yukon with the most recent approvals in Haines Junction, Mayo and Dawson. Yukon government's continued efforts to find new fuel-wood opportunities near communities and along existing and new travel corridors aim to reduce operator costs and increase the supply of fuel wood for commercial and personal use. Personal use fuel-wood permits are free and available over the counter, with over 1,200 permits being issued annually. New personal fuel-wood opportunities have been made available throughout the territory, including Haines Junction, Carmacks and the Fox Lake area.

Madam Chair, the forest industry has an annual economic impact of slightly over \$3 million. I believe it's about \$3.3 million that that industry drives and is able to deliver for the territory and we look forward to growing that industry and

growing opportunities for that industry. Again, the recent release of the biomass strategy for consultation will assist with that. What we're seeing right now is that there's an estimated \$3.3 million in economic benefits annually related to commercial fuel wood. That estimate is based on 30,000 cubic metres harvested, which equates to 13,215 cords of wood at an average cost of \$250 per cord.

Madam Chair, when it comes to the Mineral Resources branch, the budget is \$4.482 million and this budget supports a wide range of initiatives for Yukon's cornerstone resource industry. The Yukon government is committed to set a long-term vision for the mining sector by producing a mineral development strategy. This will set a course for achieving a revitalized mineral industry in Yukon by positioning us to take advantage of a turnaround in markets. This is one of the top priorities for our government and the strategy will indicate paths of success for regulatory certainty, and First Nation relations, and will stress the importance of geoscience, infrastructure, business climate and environment.

A multi-step process will be used to guide the strategy, which will include early engagement with First Nations, the mineral industry and stakeholders, followed by consultation on a draft. I did sign off on letters to all the First Nation leaders as well as a number of industry stakeholders yesterday and attached a very high-level document that will serve as the starting point for the development of this strategy. The final mineral development strategy is expected to be completed by early 2016.

The mineral development strategy will also provide the context for the mine licensing improvement initiative, which is working to improve our regulatory system. As part of the larger mineral development strategy, the mine licensing improvement initiative — or, as it has become known, as MLII — is streamlining and building certainty in Yukon's regulatory regime, providing direct benefits to claimholders, mine developers, First Nations and Yukoners.

We are working with official regulatory bodies, including the Yukon Water Board, the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board and First Nations to address regulatory and procedural improvements. The consultations on this project are expected to take place over the spring and summer of this year. The initiative has support from the Yukon Chamber of Mines and the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board, which of course is an industry-led organization that provides advice and recommendations to the Yukon government regarding mining and mineral development in the territory.

In addition to our regulatory work, we also conduct strategic work. We are also preparing for new mining projects in the territory. The proposed Casino mine is a large mining project by Yukon standards. Development expenditures are forecasted at approximately \$2.5 billion. As a comparison, this represents development costs that are approximately 10 times higher than those associated with the Minto mine.

If approved, the project's development phase is expected to run from 2016 to 2019 and production from 2020 to 2042. Again, these are estimates that I believe the proponent has put

forward as far as timelines. This project is still in the early stages of a YESAA review. I know they have not been deemed adequate to start the executive committee screening that will take place.

The project will require approximately 1,000 personnel during construction and will employ 600 permanent mining personnel during operations. An additional 100 to 200 contract support personnel will be on-site throughout all phases of the project. The company expects to generate annual GDP of \$274 million in Yukon during the operation of the mine and anticipates that approximately 69 percent of operational spending will occur in the territory. Several Yukon government departments are working to ensure that this proposed mine will have maximum benefits for Yukon and will proceed with minimal environmental risk.

There are a number of other projects that are also in the queue, such as Victoria Gold's Eagle project, a number of deposits at Alexco's property in and around Keno City — the Mactung project has also gone through the environmental assessment phase, and we have many projects in advanced exploration and early exploration.

When it comes to the mining sector, the pipeline is in very good shape, from grassroots exploration and the success that we have seen in exploration coming out of the most recent exploration boom. Again, we'll see some additional projects come on. In addition to the ones I mentioned, there's also the Selwyn project that is moving quite rapidly and seeing tremendous expenditures. We're very supportive of that project and proud of where we are with respect to the mining industry.

Finally on minerals, I would like to emphasize that, along with First Nations, it's also important to involve our industry partners in ensuring our success in this sector. On this front, we have put in place an enhanced funding agreement with the Klondike Placer Miners' Association to ensure their regulatory issues are addressed and to enable long-term success and vitality in Yukon's oldest mining industry.

We have also increased funding for the Yukon Chamber of Mines so they can provide advice and expertise to Yukon government as we move forward on a number of important projects.

Madam Chair, I know I'm just about out of time and I would like to turn the floor over to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. I'm about halfway through my opening remarks, but perhaps I'll pick them up after I turn the floor back over to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you to the minister for his introduction. I'll be brief so he can conclude before we begin our discussion on the various topics. I did want to mention and thank Ms. Abercrombie for coming to the Legislative Assembly again — much appreciated and thank you to her and the officials for the very instructive briefing that I received prior to our debating that. It was very helpful.

Over my years as the Energy, Mines and Resources critic, I have had occasion to meet quite a few of the public service members who are supporting this department. I must say that I have been very impressed by their enthusiasm, the knowledge

that they demonstrate, their care and concern. I did want to express that, because it's a very big department. It covers a lot of things that are going to be very important to Yukoners today and Yukoners in the future. How we go about getting our energy, producing our resources, developing agriculture and energy solutions will have a lot to say about what our territory will look like in five, 10, 100 years down the way.

My hats are off to them for the work they do. I have mentioned in the past the Yukon Geological Survey, which, to my mind, is one of the best in Canada. I have talked to colleagues in different jurisdictions, to people in the industry who have spoken highly of the information they get from there and to people who are working with the industry, the Agriculture branch, the many farms in my area. I'm a small gardener myself. I live next door to the Pelly River Ranch, which is the oldest operating ranch in the territory, and I found that the information, openness and willingness to help from the people in the Agriculture branch — they make agriculture important. Their efforts on behalf of agriculture and our burgeoning agriculture community — we can see that when we go to the farmers market, whether it is in Whitehorse or whether it's in Mayo or Dawson City. The seed library is a prime example, and I have heard many people talking about that and saving their tomato seeds. I even found out what a stupice tomato seed was, and I was assured by Bob Sharp that that was the best tomato to grow. I recently attended a Yukon College and agricultural symposium on greenhouses. The energy and enthusiasm from the department officials as well as the farming community was infectious. I thank them for that.

The Energy Solutions Centre continues to do excellent work and works with people looking for ways to produce and use energy more efficiently. The compliance monitoring inspections group has a challenging job and a balance to maintain, and my hats are off to them.

So having given my thanks, I thank them again for putting forward this budget and the work they have done on that. I will turn the floor back over to the minister so he can finish his remarks and we'll go from there.

Hon. Mr. Kent: This is obviously an important budget and there is a lot to be proud of in Energy, Mines and Resources so I'll continue with my opening remarks. We're on to Assessment and Abandoned Mines right now.

The Assessment and Abandoned Mines branch directs and oversees planning, care and maintenance and closure of type 2 mine sites identified under devolution. The branch enters into funding arrangements with the Government of Canada to carry out this work. This year's budget for Assessment and Abandoned Mines is \$44.115 million.

Yukon government's project team at the Faro mine complex is currently executing a five-year remedial plan. This plan includes a series of capital works designed to address emerging risks to human health, safety and the environment, the further development of a long-term remediation solution, and ongoing care and maintenance activities.

Major works executed at the Faro mine complex offer opportunities to promote aboriginal and community

participation through training, employment and business opportunities. We are also actively managing care and maintenance activities at the Mount Nansen site. We continue to work with Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to responsibly address water management at the site. The Yukon government, Government of Canada and Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation agreed on an option for remediation of the Mount Nansen site in 2012. The option is currently being developed into a formal plan for future implementation.

Also, Assessment and Abandoned Mines branch is working with the Government of Canada and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to develop and implement a cost-effective approach to remediating the Clinton Creek site. Due to health and safety concerns identified through the 2012 annual engineering review, Assessment and Abandoned Mines branch has closed the site to public access. Site access will remain prohibited until such time that remedial work is completed in order to adequately protect human health and safety. Our officials are working with the Government of Canada to undertake an engineering review of site risks to develop a short-term care and maintenance plan for Clinton Creek. This plan is intended to aid in the management of the site until remedial work can be completed.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention that, under this branch, eventually the Ketza mine site will be the responsibility of the Assessment and Abandoned Mines. Of course, as a type 2 site, in devolution it fits into that category, and the care and maintenance will eventually be turned over to Assessment and Abandoned Mines. I believe officials are working on a timeline as we speak with respect to when that will be transitioned over to Yukon government to manage on behalf of the Government of Canada.

Yukon's Oil and Gas branch oversees regulations that are robust, modern and designed to regulate all oil and gas activities that protect the safety of people and the environment. It has a budget of \$2.913 million for this year. In addition to the important day-to-day work the branch undertakes in regulating and managing Yukon's oil and gas industry, this government has recently come to a pivotal point in seeing a responsible future for the sector. On April 9 of this year, the Yukon government announced its response to the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing and outlined a clear position on future shale gas development in the territory.

Yukon government is open to responsible shale gas development opportunities only in the Liard Basin, and any shale gas development activity must have the support of the affected First Nations. In this case, those First Nations are the Kaska First Nation, as well as Acho Dene Koe, which is a Northwest Territories First Nation that is based out of the community of Fort Liard, which is the closest community, I believe, to the actual Liard Basin.

That basin is located in the far southeast of Yukon, or sometimes what we refer to as the "toe" of the Yukon. It comprises less than two percent of Yukon's land mass. My understanding is that it is about 1.3 percent of the land mass,

but the resource potential and existing infrastructure make the basin the most viable option to develop for shale opportunities.

In specific response to the select committee, the Yukon government agrees and is addressing the 21 recommendations put forward and accepts all of them, of course.

As a result, government is committed to learning more about the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing. We intend to address the recommendations through existing activities, as well as through new projects.

Much of the baseline data collection and research will support projects in other natural resource sectors as well. Yukon government will continue to work government-to-government with First Nations regarding their concerns around hydraulic fracturing. We will also continue to meet our legal obligations to consult affected First Nations on matters relating to oil and gas exploration and development.

As I mentioned earlier, the Yukon government will require the involvement and support of affected First Nations prior to any potential oil and gas development that would require the practice of hydraulic fracturing. The select committee recommends that more knowledge and meaningful engagement are needed. We intend to participate in and expand the dialogue around shale gas development with First Nations, the public and industry.

We support the development of a strong and robust oil and gas industry in Yukon and recognize that the development of these resources could contribute to significant economic growth and diversification of our economy. Consumption of oil and gas continues to be a significant component of Yukon's energy use and the development of a local supply could help to meet Yukon's energy needs, as outlined in the *Energy Strategy for Yukon*. We remain focused on how to best develop Yukon's resources in an environmentally responsible manner. It is important to note that approximately 15 percent of Yukon is underlain by eight sedimentary basins which have the potential to contain oil and gas. Roughly one-third of these basins, corresponding to 5.4 percent of Yukon, are currently available for oil and gas disposition. The Liard Basin and Eagle Plains Basin currently have active dispositions and are the most accessible.

Madam Chair, I'm going to turn my talk now to the Yukon Geological Survey. This is a survey that continues to provide information on our geology and mineral potential. This supports mineral exploration efforts and land and resource management decisions. The survey also conducts important research on landscape hazards, permafrost and other community-based projects.

Their operating budget for this year is \$6.56 million. The YGS also manages the Yukon mineral exploration program. Yukon government has increased its assistance to the mineral exploration industry by maintaining its funding commitment at a level of \$1.4 million for YMEP in 2015-16. The intent is to sustain exploration activity and the economic benefits it provides for Yukon.

YMEP is the oldest continuing prospectors' assistance program in Canada. For the 2014-15 fiscal year, the \$1.4-

million program supported 51 projects. From their original YMEP funding, companies running these 37 hardrock and 14 placer projects leveraged an estimated \$2.1 million in industry investment.

Another key component of YGS is to deliver publications of direct relevance to the mineral sector. Some recent publications include the bedrock geology maps of the Rakla belt, Bear Creek area and south coast belt area, new stream sediment geochem data for nine 1:250,000 scale map sheets, and the release of the 2010-14 placer industry report.

Projects underway that will be published in 2015-16 include: bedrock mapping in the Aishihik Lake, Frances Lake and Tay River areas; an evaluation of the gold fertility of the Selwyn Basin; compilation of a new surficial geology map for the eastern Coal River map sheet and placer potential studies in selected creeks; new interpretive maps of stream sediment geochem data for 14 map sheets; and a new airborne magnetic and electromagnetic survey over the Kluane Range in the Burwash Landing area.

This project was recently announced and the survey work is already underway. The important thing I think to mention about this is that it is a partnership with the Kluane First Nation. They are investing some of their own resources so that their settlement lands can also be included and they get a better understanding of the mineral potential on the settlement lands that they have in the Kluane ranges — again, in the Burwash Landing area.

Madam Chair, with respect to Compliance Monitoring and Inspections, this branch works diligently to ensure that all requirements under natural resource legislation and regulations are enforced in a timely and professional manner. Careful scrutiny by qualified inspectors is applied to activities authorized under mining, water, timber and lands legislation and regulations. Their operating budget this year is \$7.109 million. EMR inspection and enforcement activity is governed by policy and principles and is consistent with the practices of all modern regulatory law enforcement agencies. EMR is organized to ensure that the Compliance Monitoring and Inspections branch can fulfill its mandate neutrally and objectively. The branch provides service to the public and maintains an effective field presence by staffing offices in eight Yukon communities. In general, compliance monitoring and enforcement activities adhere to the principles of education, encouragement and enforcement.

A major project for the branch this year is to undertake a five-year review of the fish habitat management system for Yukon placer mining. Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Yukon government continue to work collaboratively on fish habitat management matters related to placer mining. This system was implemented in April 2008 and has replaced the Yukon placer authorization in 16 watersheds in the Yukon River Basin.

DFO has reviewed the authorizations and determined that they are entirely consistent with amendments made to the *Fisheries Act* on November 25, 2013. A review of the results of all monitoring programs is forthcoming and will include engagement with stakeholders and First Nation governments.

This review may result in improvements to our regulation, which will be based on five years of data collection and communication with those who are involved the most.

Madam Chair, the Energy branch develops and delivers energy policy projects and programs, which increase the sustainability of energy use in the Yukon. The 2015-16 budget for the Energy branch is \$2.441 million. Our storefront at the Energy Solutions Centre currently offers a comprehensive suite of energy-efficiency programs and services to Yukon's public to encourage energy conservation and efficient energy use in the Yukon.

For fiscal year 2014-15, approximately \$202,000 in good energy rebates were issued. Approximately 10,000 rebates have been issued to almost 7,000 clients since the inception of this program. In January of this year, I was very proud to launch the new good energy residential incentive program, which provides an incentive to install HRVs, windows and doors, rebates on homes that achieve an EnerGuide rating of 85 or better and assistance with existing home air sealing and home insulation, as well as renewable energy systems, which are part of the microgeneration program that we announced last year. Since January, 52 clients have received \$155,496 in total from this program. On April 15, we announced the commercial energy incentive program, which makes energy-efficiency upgrades in larger, multi-family and commercial buildings more accessible and affordable. All of these incentive programs will not only work to make Yukoners and Yukon businesses more energy efficient; it will also save them money and create less impact on the environment.

Yukon is in an excellent position already with regard to its energy generation and use. Most of Yukon's electricity — approximately 94 to 95 percent — is produced from renewable sources, primarily hydro, with a small portion coming from wind and an even smaller portion coming from solar.

We are investigating a number of new renewable and clean energy technologies and new energy-efficiency initiatives. As was recently announced, the Yukon Geological Survey and Energy branch are working with the Canadian Geothermal Energy Association to develop geothermal favourability maps to support exploration for geothermal energy resources in Yukon. This project received \$126,000 from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, or CanNor, and the research undertaken from this project will build the knowledge base required for companies that have an interest in geothermal energy production. The initial mapping will decrease the costs associated with geothermal exploration and help promote development of this renewable resource. Information learned from this project will advance commitments in the Yukon government's *Energy Strategy for Yukon* to increase energy production from renewable sources. In the long term, we expect Yukon will benefit from geothermal energy, which is a clean, renewable resource that can provide dependable and economic base-load electrical capacity.

Later on this year, we are expecting to introduce or release the independent power producers policy and program.

As well, just recently, on April 27, Energy, Mines and Resources put out a press release that we are currently seeking public feedback on a draft strategy for the development of a biomass energy sector here in the Yukon. Six key action areas are being proposed for that strategy: using biomass energy for government infrastructure; developing regulations, policies and programs for a biomass energy industry; managing air quality to protect public and environmental health and safety; facilitating the development of a biomass energy industry in Yukon; ensuring a sustainable timber supply; and ensuring biomass fuel quality and security.

I am very excited about this initiative, as next year — in 2016 — the Yukon will be hosting the federal/provincial/territorial ministers responsible for forestry. I am very excited to showcase what we are looking to do on value added through biomass energy and the other opportunities that exist in the forest industry here.

In conclusion, what you have heard today are many, but far from all, of Energy, Mines and Resources' important initiatives for this upcoming year. More importantly, what I have described is Energy, Mines and Resources' role in responsibly building a strong and diversified economy that benefits all Yukoners. I would like to take a moment to again recognize the professionalism and expertise of the staff at Energy, Mines and Resources, thank them for their commitment and thank those who participated in putting this budget together. It is no easy task to achieve responsible development that balances economic opportunities with environmental protection and human health and safety. Again, I would like to thank all Energy, Mines and Resources staff for the hard work that they put into achieving this goal.

That concludes my introductory comments for the 2015-16 main estimates for the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, and I look forward to questions from the members opposite.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for his opening remarks.

I might as well start with relationships with First Nations and some recent and some not-so-recent developments.

One of the key points of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* was land use planning. In the last, I guess, 12 or 13 years, we have developed one land use plan, the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan*. The *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* seems to be bogged down in legal wrangling with opposition coming from the territorial government to the final recommended land use plan. That is in the courts. The land use plan for the Dawson City area has been suspended.

If the minister could give us an update on land use planning — what he sees as the challenges, why we aren't able to proceed as neighbours working within the context of our final agreements and our treaties, and why the minister feels it is necessary to resort to taking our treaty partners to court and are there any plans to proceed with any new land use plans.

The concern I have, of course, is that by not having a land use plan in place, we're crippling many of our industries. We're creating a lot of division among our citizens. Much of

the territory — I talked to one of the First Nation chiefs in my area and he said it's almost too late for land use planning because it has all been staked already. I talked to a number of tourism operators who were contemplating building lodges and developing their opportunities but they were concerned that the land they chose was going to be staked, and indeed one of them explained to me how his land had already been staked after he considered investing in a lodge.

I guess I would like some direction from the minister — what his plans are. Are we going to sit back and let the courts decide what is best for Yukon, or will the minister sit down with our partners, with the governments that are involved in our treaties and our constitutionally protected agreements and in a way of respect to consider today and the future?

Hon. Mr. Kent: With respect to the Peel watershed case, I know the members opposite are supportive of the final recommended plan that was brought forward by the Peel Watershed Planning Commission and we were not. Certainly the government side was not supportive of that recommended plan.

We believe, again, that it's not only important for the Peel watershed, but it's also important for other land use planning areas that the democratically elected government retains the authority to make final decisions with respect to public lands.

These plans that come forward from the commissions are recommended and, with respect to the Peel watershed, a vast majority of the land up there is Crown land, or public land. We disagreed with the recommended plan that was brought forward by the planning commission there. Efforts were made earlier on in this mandate to modify the plan. The First Nations, as well as a couple of environmental NGOs, took us to court on that and we've appealed that decision. The goal is very consistent for us — that, as an elected public government, we need to retain that authority to make final decisions on public lands.

When it comes to additional land use planning exercises, the Dawson regional land use plan — the governments of Yukon, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation mutually agreed to suspend the Dawson regional land use planning process. The three parties decided to take this step prior to the recent Peel watershed land use planning court decision and subsequent appeal. The parties agree that, since the eventual outcome of the Peel challenge could impact current and future regional land use planning processes, it would be prudent to receive clarity on that process from the courts prior to moving forward on the Dawson process.

The parties will re-engage when there is a final resolution in the Peel watershed court challenge to determine how best to proceed with the Dawson regional planning process. The commission's records are being looked after by the Yukon Land Use Planning Council until such time as the commission is active again. The commission members' terms will remain in effect until they expire, at which time the parties will determine whether to continue with appointments to the commission. The expiry date, I understand, is in 2017.

The Yukon government is reluctant to enter into a new regional planning process prior to a revised common land use

planning process being approved and supported by the parties. We're optimistic that a revised process and the clarity provided by the outcome of the Peel court case will establish the framework to develop approvable regional land use plans on time and on budget.

We continue to collaborate with the Yukon Land Use Planning Council and CYFN on a third party review of the common land use planning process currently used by the commissions and the council, and Yukon government has stated our support for a revised process with a focus on producing approvable plans in a cost-effective manner.

We look forward to the resolution of this with respect to the court action that is currently underway. Our main goal is to ensure that not only our government, but future governments, retain that right to make decisions with respect to what happens on public lands. We think that's very important for us, and we think it's important for future governments to have that ability to not be bound by a recommended plan put forward by a planning commission.

Mr. Tredger: I guess I wouldn't argue with the ability of a government to retain their authority to make final decisions on land; however, those decisions must be respectful and honour our final agreements and our treaties. Those decisions must follow the law and the Constitution of Canada in order to be valid. Those treaties and agreements were negotiated over a long period of time with considerable thought and energy put into them. They were built on a basis of respect and trust. They were built on relationship-building and they were put in place with the understanding and the hope and the trust that people and future governments, this one included, would be respectful of what was put forth, respectful of all the governments and would work together — neighbour to neighbour, friend to friend, steward to steward — so that together, we can work these out. That was the genius of the agreements and the treaties.

So yes, there is a retained authority, but it must be respectful of the law. Nothing in our Constitution gives any government the authority to break laws, treaties and agreements. I guess my concern is that it doesn't have to be this way. I believe — the NDP believes — in the ability of the people of the Yukon to come together to work together, to come up with solutions and to meet the challenges. That was the genius of the land claim agreements, the self-government agreements and our treaties — so we would work together.

The minister mentioned a mineral development strategy and a mine licensing improvement initiative. Is his intention to go ahead with those before working with the First Nations on successor legislation, as recommended coming out of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*? I know we had successor legislation in one area. Last year, the First Nations were asking and looking for successor legislation. Now it appears we are looking at a mineral development strategy and a mine licensing improvement initiative. It sounds like the minister has already had discussions and consultations with the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board as well as the Yukon Chamber of Mines and Chamber of Commerce and he is taking what they

have developed with him and then putting it to — sent out a letter yesterday, I believe he said, to Yukon First Nations.

Part of the final agreements and treaties was that the governments work together to initiate — I think that is where we are running into a bit of trouble. Is this current Yukon Party government coming up with an almost-finished product and then taking it out to consult? That doesn't capture the spirit and intent. So I guess I'm asking the minister if he has had discussions with the First Nations around successor legislation and whether this has flowed from that or whether it is his intention to have a mineral development strategy and a mine licensing improvement initiative done prior to successor legislation?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I'll just briefly touch on and make my concluding remarks with respect to the Peel court case. Again, we're looking forward to the court resolution. We felt that all along throughout the process that we were following the process and the laws with respect to how that process should be undertaken. I know that my predecessor — the previous Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and now the Minister of Justice and current Minister of Community Services — worked tirelessly to try to find modifications that would work. We weren't able to reach those and now we'll be going to the Yukon Court of Appeal. Again, while we feel we followed the laws to a T — the process to a T — we'll look to the courts to determine whether or not that was indeed the case.

Madam Chair, when it comes to the mineral development strategy and the mine licensing improvement initiative, I can't remember exactly when it was, but the Premier and I were at leadership and we introduced this concept — I believe it was perhaps in February, I think, of this year that we were there. I'm not 100-percent sure of the timing of that, but we did go to leadership and we talked about a number of things that are underway with respect to mining, including the mineral development strategy. What we're looking forward to with that strategy is to set a course for achieving a revitalized mineral industry in the Yukon. It's part of our overall goal to ensure that Yukon is competitive on the global stage for investment. We'll also be looking at the 2014 Fraser Institute report and what other jurisdictions are doing to provide input into this strategy.

There's a multi-step process that's envisioned. Right now we are at step one, which is early engagement, so there will be meetings one-on-one with key representatives of First Nations, the mineral industry and stakeholders, which include industry groups and conservation groups, to obtain background information and identify initial issues for the strategy. So the timing of that is, again, this month and into May, perhaps early June 2015. We want to conclude that before the summer hits and Yukoners take their time to enjoy our beautiful summer. Consultation is normally not at the top of the agenda for many of them in the June, July and August months — and even into the fall traditional harvest season.

The second step of this process is document preparation: developing background documents seeking Cabinet approval of a draft of the strategy for consultation. That work will be

done in June and July. Step three is the formal consultation: conduct First Nation, industry, stakeholder and public consultation on the draft strategy. Opportunities for general public consultation will be focused around websites and on-line opportunities, so the timing for that — we are anticipating — is mid-August to mid-October. Step four is to finalize the strategy: review consultation input, prepare the final mineral development strategy and develop an implementation plan. We are looking at a timing of November and December of 2015 and, if all goes well, we will have an approved mineral development strategy and implementation plan in January of 2016, but in my experience, sometimes those timelines will slip for various reasons. We are hopeful that we are able to meet these timelines, but I think it is more important to ensure that we have a strategy that positions us to be a top destination for investment dollars when the markets come back, and we know that they will come back.

With respect to the mine licensing improvement initiative — sorry, just stepping back to the MDS — and I guess this is more of an answer to one of the member's questions. We did need to put together a document to take out for this early engagement. We have had consultants and officials from Energy, Mines and Resources put that document together. As I mentioned earlier, letters went out to all First Nation chiefs, as well as the Grand Chief, and we have included some of the transboundary First Nations. The Taku River Tlingit, the Acho Dene Koe and the Tetlit Gwich'in have also received them. I am not sure if it went to the Inuvialuit or not, but that is something that I could look into. Again, to industry stakeholders, environmental NGOs, industry NGOs — the letter and this document went out. I signed off on it yesterday so those organizations and First Nations should be receiving that initial document for early engagement soon, whether it was e-mailed out or put in the mail yesterday or today.

With respect to the mine licensing improvement initiative — or MLII — this initiative has the Yukon Water Board, the YESA board and numerous government departments meeting to determine ways to better coordinate the regulatory process, with the main goal being to reduce overlap and duplication during the mine licensing process. When complete, this initiative will provide more certainty for companies wanting to do business in the Yukon. This initiative will help ensure that Yukon's management systems around exploration and development are comprehensive, responsive and predictable for all parties involved, and we are looking forward to having it help boost industry confidence and revitalize the mineral sector in the territory.

I should also mention that work is currently underway with respect to class 1 activities that are regulated by the operating conditions described in schedule 1 of the quartz mining land use regulation. Class 1 programs can be characterized as including activities defined as grassroots exploration and activities generally having low potential to cause adverse environmental effects. The work and reclamation is expected to be completed within a one-year time frame. These programs do not require government

approval, and the operator must comply with the operating conditions.

Of course, members will know that last year, I believe it was, we added the Ross River area to an area that required notification. We have also included First Nation settlement lands and the traditional territories of the other two unsettled First Nations in the Yukon — the White River First Nation and the Liard First Nation — and our goal is to bring class 1 notification in, territory-wide. There was a meeting in early 2014 between me, the Premier and a number of chiefs that resulted in an initiative to develop an MOU between the parties — Yukon government and settled First Nations — to establish a process to facilitate consultation on proposed amendments to the class 1 threshold regulation.

Chief Alatini of the Kluane First Nation and former Chief Champion of the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun and I were designated as advisory committee members. We then met with First Nation officials in early 2015. I felt that the process — while it took some time to get to the MOU development process, there was a willingness for First Nation officials to meet with our officials. I'm very pleased with the work — I should mention Bryony McIntyre, who is one of our EMR officials, and I have heard great things about the work that she is conducting at this table to identify potential thresholds.

I met recently with members of the Yukon Prospectors' Association and let them know that we have adjusted our deadlines with respect to this. We wish to meet the goal of completing the discussions by the end of 2015 for new rules to be in place for the 2016 exploration season. We have prepared a letter and I believe it perhaps hasn't gone yet, but it will be forwarded to all First Nations and industry providing rationale for a revised implementation date. While we had hoped to have it in for this exploration season, the timing and a few extenuating circumstances did not allow that to occur.

When it comes to successor resource legislation, the member opposite I think mentioned the UFA, but it was actually the devolution transfer agreement that triggered successor resource legislation. The first legislation to go through that process was the forestry act. It took quite some time and we were concerned that the forest industry — hopefully with the implementation of the value-added opportunities through biomass energy, increased fuel wood opportunities and some of the incentives that we hope to provide Yukoners so that they can burn fuel wood to provide heat for themselves will kick-start that industry, but we didn't really see the successor resource legislation with respect to forestry grow the industry. In many respects, it contracted it. I'm not saying that that is solely because of the successor resource legislation, but certainly we don't see a strong or robust forest industry coming out of that.

That said, I believe that the next piece of legislation that was agreed to by the parties was work on the *Lands Act*. That work hasn't started yet but, again, we look forward to working with First Nations on successor resource legislation there. There are always opportunities, we find, to improve the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act*. There have been several changes to both of those pieces of legislation

over the past number of years, and we feel they are changes for the better, such as the class 1 notification and other aspects that were recently brought in. I know there were some royalty changes, I believe, that were done and some other changes that were made to the act that have improved it. It certainly has undergone a number of iterations since its implementation.

Again, we look forward to working with First Nation partners, not only on identifying areas through the mineral development strategy where we can improve what we're doing here, but work on the mine licensing improvement initiative, the class 1 initiative and a whole host of other initiatives across Energy, Mines and Resources and, indeed, across government where we're cooperating and collaborating with First Nation governments.

Mr. Tredger: The class 1 activities and notification — can the minister tell me what areas are now off-limits to staking and what areas we have agreement on the class 1 notification? We'll just leave it at that. What areas are now off-limits to staking? What areas are under class 1 notification with an agreement with First Nations around notification? Which areas are not affected by that but, as the minister suggested, may come under the auspices of this new agreement?

Hon. Mr. Kent: There are a couple of different issues that the member opposite has brought on with his question. Just so we're clear and we don't confuse them, the first issue that I'll talk about is class 1 notification. I did spell out what class 1 activities looked like. They are grassroots exploration generally having low potential to cause adverse environmental effects, work and reclamation expected to be completed within a year — programs that do not require any type of government approval, so there's no permitting that would trigger a YESAA assessment.

This was one of the declarations of the Yukon Court of Appeal decision of a couple of years ago. What we're doing now is working to phase in class 1 notification requirements to cover the entire territory. As I've mentioned, we had hoped initially to have that notification in place for 2015. It now looks that, in order to meet our consultation requirements and the internal requirements of our government, we will not be able to have that territory-wide until next year.

However, currently there is class 1 notification that exists. It applies to the Ross River area, the Peel watershed region, class 1 notification areas that encompass the traditional territory of First Nations without final agreements — including the Taku River Tlingit and their asserted traditional territory in south-central Yukon — as well as category A and category B settlement land. Right now, discussions are underway with First Nations and industry to clearly define the class 1 thresholds with the intent to amend the mining land use regulations to clearly define which level of activity would trigger a notification requirement.

As for areas that are currently not available for staking, there are a number of different classifications, including, of course, national parks and territorial parks — the Ross River area. There is work underway on the other declaration that

was brought forward by the Yukon Court of Appeal to identify areas within their traditional territory that will be made available for staking. We recently extended that deadline. That particular aspect is being led by the Executive Council Office, and I am sure the Premier would be happy to provide an update to members opposite when we get to Executive Council Office as to the status of those negotiations.

Again, there are a number of different areas that are not available for staking. There are a whole bunch of different designations for where lands are withdrawn. Actually, we have a land status map on our website. It shows which lands are withdrawn from staking — a very useful tool for prospectors and those who are engaged in the industry.

Mr. Tredger: One of the concerns that was expressed by the First Nations that did not have self-government agreements and weren't party to the UFA was capacity, of course. I am just wondering how that was expressed by Ross River, certainly. I believe the minister said that class 1 notification was in effect in all unsettled, traditional areas. That would include White River, Ross River, the Liard First Nation and the Peel River watershed.

Is there a process in place for potential prospectors to stake? Is there a contact person and has there been some effort to ensure that White River boundaries are clarified so that a prospector knows where they can go and not go? I know in the case of White River, certainly, there are areas that overlap with some settled areas. What decisions are made there? What can we tell the prospectors — where they can go, who they have to notify — and have there been allowances made or efforts made to ensure that the First Nations have the capacity to receive the notification to assess whether it is acceptable to their other land use plans and that it meets their requirements for exploration on their land?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I don't have the exact number with me. Perhaps I'll be able to bring it back at a future date when Energy, Mines and Resources is up for debate.

We do provide capacity funding for the First Nations to participate in a number of initiatives, including the class 1 initiative.

Just to be clear, the amendments that we brought in through Bill No. 66 in December 2013, the mining land use regulation describes a 25-day review period following receipt of a notification. The chief of mines has the discretion to extend the review period, if necessary. If any regulatory requirement prevents an operator from performing assessment work within the required time frame, consideration can be given to providing relief under the *Quartz Mining Act* or the *Placer Mining Act*.

The notification from the prospectors is provided to First Nations through the Yukon government. They would notify us — that is my understanding of the process — and we would notify the First Nation, but I should say that we live in a very modern mining jurisdiction, and whether it's prospectors, grassroots prospectors, or even some of the junior mining companies that conduct class 1 activity or any type of activity, we always encourage them to ensure that they maintain good

lines of communication and relations with First Nations whose traditional territory they're operating in.

In June 2014, White River First Nation and one of the junior mining companies entered into an exploration, communication and cooperation agreement, which will guide the relationship between the company and White River First Nation during the exploration phase of the project.

Madam Chair, these companies, prospectors and explorers are very sophisticated and they spend an awful lot of time on community engagement. They should be commended for the amount of time they spend. Many of them are recognized yearly at the annual geoscience banquet for the work they do in the community. One of the recent examples was Casino Mining Corporation providing salmon to the elders of, I believe, Carmacks and Pelly Crossing when the fishery was closed last year.

It's things like that that these companies do, not for a lot of fanfare, but they certainly do these types of things to ensure that they have the social licence to operate in the traditional territories. They're good corporate citizens. I meet regularly with mining companies, as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and now the Minister of Highways and Public Works. It's important to recognize the good work that the prospectors and the mining companies do to engage First Nations right from the outset. Many of them have tremendous working relationships with the First Nations whose traditional territory they operate in.

Mr. Tredger: I too would echo that many of our resource extraction companies are very proactive and work with the First Nations. Casino mine and Kaminak Gold Corporation in my area are two — Casino, Kaminak and Minto are mines in my area that have gone to work with very well with it, but I am concerned about the initial notification. We don't have a lot of staking going on right now but, as the minister mentioned, it is very cyclical. While we are in a low time, it is beneficial to work some of this out, so my questions are related to how it is working.

There is a 25-day limit, and are the First Nations able to respond in that time? Have there been any for which they have requested extensions? I know that when it was initially proposed, they were very concerned about that, especially absent land use planning. They wanted to ensure that they had the resources and the capacity to meet the timelines as well as to assure their people that they were being responsible stewards of the land and addressing the potential multiple uses of the land. I guess I am asking the minister how many notifications have happened in the last — I guess we are just entering another prospecting season. But since it has been installed, has he consulted and talked to the First Nations about their ability to meet the deadlines? Are they happy with the process? What manner of consultation or discussions or agreements has he had with, say, the Ross River Dena or the White River First Nation? I know there have been individual companies that have signed agreements. I am more concerned about people moving in and wanting to prospect on land and not wanting to have that delayed by wrangling like we have seen over Bill S-6 or the Peel land use plan, which does

nobody any good because it slows all the process down and it creates a lot of division. The class 1 notification — it is important that we put the work in ahead of time so that it's effective for a long time.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I don't have the exact number of notifications that have taken place, but I understand that there have been less than 10. The areas that currently require class 1 notification are the Ross River area, the traditional territories of First Nations without final agreements as well as anything on category A and category B settlement land, so there have been less than 10. I know that 25 days isn't the number that we landed on with respect to the legislation. I can tell you that the industry wanted much shorter and First Nations wanted a much longer time, so that was really splitting the difference and meeting in the middle with respect to what that notification would be.

Of course First Nations' concerns were, I'm assuming, with respect to being able to provide a response, but industry — we have a very short exploration season here, Madam Chair, as you know, and they also need to have timely responses to what they're looking for so that's why we landed on that 25-day period.

Again, there is the ability for the chief of mining land use to extend that if they feel it's necessary, but again we haven't heard from First Nations with respect to how this is working. As I said, there is a very small number of class 1 notifications that have been going out or that have been done.

Again, if First Nations do have concerns, I haven't heard them personally from the chiefs of the affected areas, but again as we move toward next year's exploration season and look to bring this in territory-wide, I'm sure that we'll hear more and more about the time frame and the ability of First Nations to respond within that time frame and how it's affecting industry — whether it's having a detrimental effect on industry or if they're able to adjust what they're trying to do to ensure that the notification doesn't affect what they're trying to accomplish in the field. Hopefully the revised thresholds that we're looking to bring in will also allow them to do some of the less impactful activities associated with class 1 in the field without any notification being required, and then the more impactful activities that are currently under class 1 will require notification.

I haven't heard from any of the chiefs with respect to this. I talked of course very recently with Chief Ladue on a couple of the files that were active in his traditional territory and this was not something that was brought up at that time.

Mr. Tredger: How has the minister determined what the traditional area for White River First Nation is? I know there is some dispute certainly between Yukon government and White River, as well as between the various First Nations. When a person goes to prospect, they would like to be sure whether they are in a class 1 notification area or whether they can go in otherwise and whether that has been arrived at through discussions with not only White River First Nation but the adjoining First Nations.

The second part of that is that I would encourage the minister to — given the amount of concern that was raised by

the affected First Nations around the class 1 notification and the fact that it had to go to court and was a court decision — rather than wait for a complaint to be brought forward or a concern to be brought forward, to reach out as a partners and say, “Are there problems? You had mentioned these instances in situations and were concerned about that. Have we come to something that is going to be workable? Is this going to work for you or not and what can we do?” So this — rather than wait until it is a problem, because as the minister again has said, we are in a low cycle in terms of the industry and we have an opportunity to work on it, to discuss it and get it right while the big pressure isn’t on us. When we end up getting thousands and thousands of claims being staked in a year or two, it is too late. Now is the time to reach out and say, “Is it working?” So that’s just a question on White River and around reaching out to First Nations.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I think the most useful tool for prospectors with respect to areas where they can stake or not stake is the land status map. Also included in there, I’m assuming — and I would have to confirm this — is where notification is required with respect to class 1 activities. Class 1 activities are much more than just staking out a claim. I did outline some of the activities that would be caught up with respect to class 1. As far as the asserted traditional territory of the White River First Nation. I think that is a question that I would ask members opposite to direct to the Premier when we are up in Executive Council Office. That is something that his department, of course, has responsibility for — Aboriginal Relations.

Talking about reaching out, I think the sample size is so small with less than 10, so it is hard, not only for us, but probably hard for First Nations to determine whether or not the 25-day period is adequate. As we move to next year and territory-wide class 1 notification, that number will surely increase and we’ll be able to get a better idea of whether or not the 25-day period is sufficient to do what we’re intending to do as far as notification with respect to class 1 activities.

I think that it is important to note that all members on this side of the House and I, whether Cabinet ministers or MLAs in the ridings, meet regularly with First Nations on a variety of initiatives and I certainly am no exception to that. First Nation governments are extremely important to advancing what we want to accomplish here in the territory, not only on the economic side, but on the environmental and social side as well. Whether it is Education, or Health and Social Services, or Highways and Public Works or EMR, First Nation engagement is something that we all do and we have many different files where we are talking to First Nations about different initiatives.

Mr. Tredger: I will just switch from this aspect to agriculture for a few minutes. Agriculture has been very important to the Yukon. It fed our early peoples in many jurisdictions. It certainly fed the mining community. I know a number of First Nations were gardeners and, as I mentioned earlier, I am neighbour to a farm that has been there since 1897.

Lately we’ve become increasingly aware of food security and working very hard to increase our ability to produce local foods. In this, I would like to recognize the department of agriculture and the work they’re doing, the outreach they’re doing to farmers, and the training sessions that are happening. As I mentioned, I attended a couple and I’ve been part of a couple of gardening courses that department of agriculture personnel have put on. I want to also recognize the Growers of Organic Food Yukon and the Yukon Agricultural Association for the work that they’re doing, and the education and work they’re doing to involve all sorts of people. Whether it’s the people in their backyard growing gardens, people on small market gardens or larger farms, like the Yukon Grain Farm, it’s a real treat to see Yukon produce being in our grocery stores and in our markets. I know it’s exciting times in our office when the egg man shows up with farm eggs.

Just a question for the minister — the land on Mayo Road — there have been a number of different suggestions as to how that’s going to be developed and what the plans are for it. I know I’ve asked about that over the last several years since it was allocated. There has been talk about it being an abattoir — or a place to bring your animals and drop them off. It has also been talked about as food storage — or a dispenser of food.

I’m wondering if the minister has any firm timelines on the development of that. What are the plans? What is the decision-making process around that? Who’s being consulted? I know different farmers have different needs and different ideas. The farms that come from a further distance would like a central area where they could drop off their produce, where it could be a distribution centre, where it could be taken — allowing smaller farmers who can’t meet the entire demand of a restaurant or of an institution, but are able to then bring in and contribute, without having the pressures of being unable to meet the demand.

I guess my first question on agriculture is asking the minister to please update us on that land — what it’s going to be used for, what it’s currently being used for, and the planning process around that.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I have to apologize to the member opposite. I know the Yukon Agricultural Association was leading the strategic planning for that particular parcel of land, but I don’t have an update with me here today. Obviously their AGM is coming up — I believe it’s next weekend. It’s a week from Saturday. I’ll be attending and looking forward to hearing some of the initiatives that are underway.

In the meantime, I will commit to get back to the member opposite with an update on exactly what’s happening on that Mayo Road land and get a status update. It may be very brief. I may just flip him an e-mail or something when I hear from the department, but hopefully that will suffice. Otherwise I can do that in a more formal process through a letter. I apologize for not having that information with me here today. I know that that process was being led by the Yukon Agricultural Association, so I will get an update for members on what’s happening with that particular piece of land on the Mayo Road.

Chair: Before we go to another question, 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 going to resume general debate on Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Mr. Tredger: As I mentioned, it is nice to see more Yukon food products at the grocery stores than in the past. I am wondering if some of the new Growing Forward 2 funding is going to help our local producers and our local consumers get together. Are there any plans for marketing eggs, meat and vegetables? Is there a plan to get more Yukon food into the stores, to have the government — internally and key institutions like the hospital or Copper Ridge — buying local produce? Is there a plan to use some of the Growing Forward 2 money that is coming in to facilitate that, either through a distribution centre or a working arrangement with our producers and our consumers?

Hon. Mr. Kent: This gives me an opportunity to give members an update to where we are with the Yukon local food strategy. I think members will know that we debated two motions — one government private member's motion, I believe, and an opposition motion — with respect to local food. What came out of that was the choice to pursue a Yukon local food strategy. Promotion of local food production and consumption in the north will provide fresher, higher quality food that uses less packaging, conserves energy, supports local farmers, builds community and economic diversity, and creates durable farms and farm support businesses.

The member opposite is quite right. There are a number of businesses, including the Yukon Grain Farm. That was one of the farms that I had the opportunity to visit last summer. A lot of their product, of course, is on the shelves of two of our bigger retailers. I believe they actually get some of their product into most of the local food retailers here in the City of Whitehorse. I am not sure what type of exposure they have in the communities as far as their product. It is a great farm, and it is a real testament to locals and how they are able to build a business and get some of their product into stores and accepted by some of the national retail chains.

An analysis of our agriculture industry shows that production and consumption of local food in the Yukon could be improved. Objectives for a local food strategy could be met through a variety of tools that will 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.

There are a number of initiatives that have been considered that would lead us toward our objectives. Some are expected to be inexpensive with significant potential while

others will require an investment of funds to increase production. Concepts are under development and will be presented as a draft policy or strategy to the public and stakeholders. I can't remember the exact amount, but we have provided some funding to the Yukon Agricultural Association to participate and help us to develop this local food strategy.

What we expect the strategy will do is augment our existing policy and program tools, including the Yukon government agricultural policy, the multi-year development plan and the Growing Forward 2 program that the member opposite mentioned.

There are a number of different opportunities that we're looking at. I know the Member for Klondike — I believe it was his motion that was brought forward — called for a local food act, but having reached out to Ontario — officials reaching out to Ontario — they felt that much of the things that were in the act could be accomplished through policy or programs so that's why we decided to go down the road of a local food strategy rather than a local food act, as suggested in a motion by the Member for Klondike. I can't remember when that was. It was in May 2012 — sorry, second motion, April 2014. I believe that was the Member for Klondike's motion.

I think there are some real opportunities with the local food strategy. Just to commend the farmers — I think there are farm-fresh eggs that are delivered to our offices on a weekly basis as well, and I know from talking to many of the officials in the Agriculture branch, much of the product that they use on a day-to-day basis is sourced locally from meats to vegetables and other opportunities.

Working with our partners, the Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee, which includes Growers of Organic Food Yukon, the Fireweed Community Market, Agricultural Association, Yukon Young Farmers, and Yukon Game Growers Association — these are opportunities to address the food security issues and enhance the industry that is here with respect to providing more opportunities for local food to be consumed by Yukoners.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that and would encourage him to work and push this forward as quickly as we can. I know it has been a hope and dream of many producers for many years, and consumers are realizing how wonderful it is to get locally grown carrots and vegetables and produce. It is a real treat and special to the Yukon.

Central Yukon has been a breadbasket for the Yukon. I must commend Yukon College. I know that in Pelly and in Mayo they are running gardening courses. The First Nations there are running greenhouses there as well as in Carmacks, and they are starting to produce quite a bit of locally grown produce, and the community has really bought into that. I also congratulate the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Yukon College for their farm initiatives in Dawson City.

Has there been an effort to increase land availability and to work with the First Nations in central Yukon to take advantage of some of the prime growing conditions that are there and the opportunities to develop an agricultural industry? I know First Nations have talked to me about interest in it, and I'm just wondering whether the minister has

reached out and looked for ways to make land available and to work with the First Nations to develop that industry — as well as non-First Nation people — to be able to have land that they could either lease or buy, where they could farm or become market gardeners or produce products.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Some of the current agricultural land initiatives — I know I highlighted a number in my opening remarks that have taken place or are taking place but, in the communities, there are two phases of planned land sales for the Haines Junction agriculture subdivision. Those are complete. Access road construction for phase 3 is underway. Public consultation is complete, I believe, on planned agricultural lots on lands designated for agriculture in the Sunnydale/West Dawson local area plan. One inventory lot at Upper Liard will be released, as demand occurs.

I think there are a number of different land options that we're looking at. Work on directed spot land application areas is taking place with the cooperation of First Nations in both Na Cho Nyäk Dun and Selkirk First Nation traditional territories to meet anticipated future demand in central Yukon. As I mentioned, since 2002, approximately 94 spot agriculture applications have been approved.

The summary of land sales since the start of YG agricultural land program, 1982 to — this is the end of February of this year. Sold and titled lands equal 34,071 acres. There are currently 47 agreements for sale for agricultural land. Land sales are predominantly in the Whitehorse area, with over 70 percent of agricultural lands within 60 kilometres of the City of Whitehorse.

When it comes to the disposition of agricultural lands, I know we're looking at some other opportunities and options within the Agriculture branch of Energy, Mines and Resources, including opportunities for leasing land and how that would work. I think there are some tremendous opportunities to partner with First Nations, as mentioned.

The higher cost of some of these land parcels is a bit of a disincentive, I guess, particularly to some of the young farmers who are trying to get into the market. I know one of the people who spoke at the North 60 agricultural conference and banquet that was held this past fall was from Alberta agriculture. He was there to talk about a number of things, but I think one of the topics was with respect to land leasing.

There are a number of things we can do to increase the access to land for individual farmers, making sure that we continue to make opportunities available to them to have agriculture-producing land, whether it's soil-based or non-soil based agricultural opportunities.

Mr. Tredger: Just a quick question on genetically modified organisms. There has been some discussion around that and I believe that the department of agriculture, or the minister, has developed a policy. Is that policy in effect now and have there been any — if he could just describe where it's at in terms of the development stage and whether or not there have been any applications to bring GMO crops into Yukon, and subsequently gone through the policy?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Currently, the Agriculture and Land Planning branches are working on a consultation strategy for

implementing this discretionary use for all development areas that have an agriculture zone. I know that we were going to reach out to the LACs in particular, as to whether or not they were looking for a public meeting with respect to these discretionary opportunities that were going to come out with the GMA. Genetically modified alfalfa seems to be the one that is getting the most attention.

What the proposed regulatory amendments would allow for is the development for zoning areas to regular genetically modified organisms as a discretionary use, if farmers and citizens within the area decide that is how they want to proceed. I know this has been a very difficult issue and the MLA for Lake Laberge, the Minister of Justice, is very well-versed in it and I thank him for his help and assistance as the previous Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources in getting this very difficult issue, I think, to a place where individuals can move forward comfortably on it.

The Yukon is working proactively with the industry through our Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee and that is where we are exploring regulating these GMOs in Yukon. It is unlikely, though, according to my officials in Agriculture — it is unlikely that this genetically modified seed release will have an effect on Yukon farms. We grow only small acreages of alfalfa and the genetically modified varieties are unlikely to be suitable for our production system in the Yukon. The alfalfa has been genetically modified for herbicide resistance and is approved for use in Canada, with the first variety registration completed April 26, 2013, but as I mentioned, according to Agriculture officials, it is unlikely that it would be suitable for our production system in the Yukon.

Mr. Tredger: Is there a process now in place for a grower who wants to bring in GMO seeds or are we still working on developing that process?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Yes, we are still working on the process. As I mentioned, the Agriculture and Land Planning branches are currently working on a consultation strategy for implementing this discretionary use for all the development areas that have an agriculture zone. As I mentioned, we have been working proactively through the Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee and these proposed regulatory amendments would allow for zoning areas to regulate GMOs as a discretionary use, if farmers and citizens within that area decide that is how they want to proceed.

My understanding is that there hasn't been any use of this in the territory yet, and we are going to be working on this consultation strategy so that we can identify areas where there could be a discretionary use — again, allowing the farmers and citizens within that area to decide that that is how they want to proceed.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that. Just to jump back to land quickly, I have an Energy, Mines and Resources document on Yukon government lots for sale. I know that has been a concern of communities in my jurisdiction for some time, and I have heard it from other communities as well that in order for the communities to grow, they need to have lots for sale. I know a number of people have been transferred

within government and then turn down jobs to go to the communities because there was no land or housing available. The concern, certainly from Carmacks and from Mayo, is that as we proceed with mining operations, unless we have available land, people are not going to move to our communities. When I look at Carmacks, for instance — and this is as of March 30, 2015 — they have two commercial lots, two industrial lots and three residential lots. When I talked to the Village of Carmacks council about that, they said it was a long and involved process to get those three lots. In fact, they mentioned about five years working with Energy, Mines and Resources. The three lots are not in an entirely desirable area, which is why they haven't been picked up yet.

I look at Dawson City and they don't appear to have any residential lots. They have 16 industrial lots. I see Destruction Bay has three country residential lots. Faro has four country residential lots. There are certainly a lot in Grizzly Valley available — 17 lots — and the price on those is rather exorbitant. I can see why the 17 lots are still there. As I recall, there was quite a to-do around the expense and the building of those lots in that area. Haines Junction has more lots, and it looks like it is well-ready to go. Teslin has 18 country residential lots. I don't see any just residential lots. Watson Lake has only one residential lot, while they do have seven country residential lots. I don't see anything for Mayo and for many of the other communities.

My concern is that we have been — both from the government and from the opposition — talking about the lack of lot availability in our communities and the opportunity for people to move into those communities because of that. We've been talking about it.

I know that occasionally lots do come available, as those three lots in Carmacks have just come available. My concern is that we're in a down cycle but, as things pick up, if our communities are going to benefit, if our children are going to move back to our communities, if we want people to move from various departments to our communities, we need to have lots available. I'm not sure — I know there have been a number of initiatives started and changed but, after 10 years, that's a real concern.

I hear it in virtually every community I go to — that we need lots. Would the minister make that a priority? Does he have some timelines? When can I tell the residents of Mayo or Carmacks or Dawson City or Beaver Creek or any of the other ones, "soon"? How soon — within a year, within five years? In Yukon, one thing we do have is land, so how soon can we expect some lots on those lands?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I mentioned during my opening remarks, Energy, Mines and Resources is responsible for land development, particularly outside the City of Whitehorse. Just to give a little bit of background, the Yukon government's approach to providing planned land development over the period of 2002 to 2015 is demonstrated through the creation of approximately 1,353 lots. Of those, 729 were residential, 119 were townhouse lots, 19 were agricultural lots, 50 were rural residential, 32 were multi-family lots, nine were commercial

lots, 234 were country residential lots, 44 were recreational lots, 73 were industrial lots and 44 were duplex lots.

Those are spread out, not only through Whitehorse, but also developments in many of the communities mentioned, including Dawson City, Haines Junction, Carmacks, Teslin — to name a few. There are opportunities for the development, we believe, of new residential lots in Dawson and Mayo that we need to consider.

I agree with the member opposite that, as some of these projects that progressed quite significantly during the more recent upturn in the mining cycle move toward eventual production, we're going to need to ensure that we have land opportunities in our communities, in particular, for people who choose to live in those communities to take advantage of, so they can own their own homes or even for potential landlords to build rental accommodations.

The recent announcement by the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation with respect to the northern housing trust money will hopefully facilitate rental development, not only in Whitehorse, but in the communities.

Energy, Mines and Resources has signed land development protocols with Watson Lake, Carmacks, Dawson City, Faro, Haines Junction, Mayo and Teslin. What these protocols do is outline a proactive and collaborative approach to fostering planned development to meet community needs for affordable lots.

We've seen a number of partnerships with First Nations, including Carcross-Tagish First Nation and Teslin Tlingit Council, to get different land opportunities out to citizens who live there or are interested in moving to those communities. There is work to be done. I think there has been quite a bit accomplished over the past 13 years, as I mentioned, but I do agree with the member opposite. We do need to continue to look for land opportunities.

He did mention that the one thing we have a lot of in the Yukon is land, but I don't think there is any land development without some sort of controversy or some individuals who either live in that area or have a particular lifestyle that they have become accustomed to in that area and who have concerns. Many of those concerns are legitimate concerns about their lifestyle and what they appreciate with the type of accommodation they have chosen, but it's always difficult.

Most recently, the McGowan lands out on the Carcross Road have received quite a bit of scrutiny from area residents as far as developing those opportunities out there. That would be another significant development and add quite a bit of land, but we also have to be respectful of the people who live in that area.

I just wanted to mention that it sounds easy to get land and develop it, but it's often a very long process and there are people on either side of the issue when you're working on these types of projects.

Mr. Tredger: I guess I'm just going over those numbers and the land that is available. The majority of our communities do not have lots available. They can't expand and that's a very serious problem. They are looking for the

territorial government to take leadership and to develop those lands and to work with them.

I guess I just hope that the minister is serious and that we may see some action in the near future on that. To me, it's critical. If we want to build our communities and build our infrastructures, we need to support them and we need to work with them.

Part of that would be to sit down with the communities and see each one as unique. What are their ideas and how can they work? Yes, there is often some controversy around it, but the way to avoid that is to sit down with the communities, with our municipal governments, and talk about it and say, "What are your ideas? How can we go forward?"

So —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Tredger: Pardon me?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Tredger: Okay. I just wondered what the member opposite had said. I'm not sure what's wrong with sitting down with municipal governments and talking and trying to find resolutions to problems. Maybe that's why we are where we are — that people find a problem with that. Certainly the NDP would be sitting down and talking about it and looking for solutions.

I would like to move on to climate change. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, how we get our energy, how we use it and how it enables us to move forward are critical not only for today, but for our children and for our grandchildren. We can't leave today's problems for our grandchildren. Science has been very, very clear. Climate change is real. It is caused by humans and the largest contributor to climate change is the burning of fossil fuels. The largest collection of scientists in the world working on climate change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has come out with increasingly dire warnings. In their last report, they mentioned that two-thirds of our known fossil fuels must remain in the ground.

The world is waking up to that. The United States and China signed a major agreement. European countries — Germany, Norway, Sweden, Great Britain, Scotland. Each day we hear of advances in renewable technology. Each day we hear of countries receiving more and more of their production from renewable energies. In Yukon, due to the foresight of previous leaders, the majority of our electrical production is renewable, but we have sat and watched as our consumption has moved more and more close to our ability to produce, to the point where at times in the winter we exceed our capacity to produce electricity. Lately I have read a number of studies by acclaimed economists pointing to the jobs that are being created, the investments that are being made and the potential of jurisdictions moving to safe, reliable, renewable energy.

Indeed, the global economy is pivoting away from the burning of fossil fuels. From a situation a number of years ago where economists wondered whether or not we would be able to curb our appetite to now, where our demand for fossil fuels is slowing. It is decoupling from the gross domestic product, which means we have reached a point where we can move

away from our dependence on fossil fuels economically. It will be a challenge, but we can do it.

As I said, the global economy is pivoting away from the burning of fossil fuels and those jurisdictions that remain invested or invest — those investors that invest in fossil fuels — will be left with stranded assets. We need to divert our public funds from supporting the fossil fuel industry to building renewable energy. The science is very clear. You can either protect our climate or you can frack and develop a new oil and gas industry, but you cannot do both. It is becoming increasingly clear that you cannot do both. The world does not need our oil and gas fracked. Economically, it makes no sense; environmentally, it makes no sense.

My question for the minister is: Will he heed science, heed the opinions of Yukon people and divest Yukon from the oil and gas industry and invest in a renewable energy industry?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Just to close on the rural land development — perhaps the member didn't hear one of my responses — but we have put in place land development protocols. They've been signed with Watson Lake, Carmacks, Dawson City, Faro, Haines Junction, Mayo and Teslin. What those protocols will do is outline a proactive and collaborative approach to fostering planned development to meet community needs for affordable lots.

I know when we put the news release out on this, there was a quote — I don't have the news release in front of me — from the president of the Association of Yukon Communities applauding our efforts. I think that's a great way to start to move forward because, as I mentioned, there has been a very high demand for land over the last decade, in large part due to Yukon's economic prosperity and growth and the increased population. The demand for residential and commercial lots has been constant. Again, over that period of 2002 to 2015, there was the creation of approximately 1,353 lots in the territory. We've also brought in initiatives to allow for subdivision in areas out in the Mount Lorne area that could bring in additional opportunities for people to purchase land.

When it comes to energy, I'm very proud of not only our government's record and our commitment with respect to renewable energy, but also previous Yukon Party governments, those governments that brought Mayo B online, those governments that expanded power capacity at the Aishihik dam, and our government of course is very committed to clean power. It's bookended with the next generation hydro project that is being led by the Yukon Development Corporation, and we're excited about that as a larger power project that has the opportunity to meet future generations' demand, not only for Yukon citizens, but to allow for Yukon industry and the economy to expand.

Some of the priority actions that were identified in the 2009 *Energy Strategy for Yukon* — the first one was to increase renewable energy supply in Yukon by 20 percent by the year 2020. We hit that target in 2013, or perhaps it was even 2012 — I can't remember the exact timing of it, but I know it was one of the first news releases that went out after I was shuffled into the Energy, Mines and Resources portfolio

in the fall of 2013. Some of the other opportunities were to support and demonstrate renewable energy projects in communities off the electrical grid to reduce diesel use, and support the development of wind, hydro, solar, wood or geothermal projects in the diesel-powered communities.

In the supplementary budget, we did provide \$1 million to the Kluane First Nation. I know they're planning on a wind power project there, and we're happy to support them in that endeavour through providing capital assistance. I believe they're looking for capital assistance from other sources, including CanNor, but we feel that it is a solid investment we can make in that community.

In the community of Old Crow, they have solar panels on most of the government buildings, if not all the government buildings there, that provide that type of renewable energy. So we're looking at opportunities in these diesel-powered communities to bring forward cleaner energy.

Some of the priority actions in the energy strategy are to look at new or expanded district heating systems. The wood-chip-fired plant in Dawson City that I had the opportunity to visit earlier this year — it's working very well. It's an interesting tour for anyone who hasn't had the opportunity to see it working. The folks at Highways and Public Works who manage that project up there for us do a tremendous job. The late Bill Bowie, and now his family, deserves a lot of credit as well for supplying the chips that, I believe, heat the Dawson waste-water treatment facility, as well as heating the water lines in the community in the wintertime. It is a tremendous initiative for district heating, and I am looking for other opportunities in communities like Haines Junction, Watson Lake and Whitehorse to bring in similar types of opportunities.

There are a number of action items that are included in the energy strategy, but one of the things that we have been successful at introducing in the last year is the microgeneration program, which I mentioned in my opening remarks. It has had very good uptake, along with our new and expanded residential energy efficiency programs. So if you are looking to purchase a renewable system for your home, or to use as part of the microgeneration program, we will provide up to \$5,000 in funding through the residential energy efficiency program. There are enhanced rebates. I would argue that this is one of the best rebate programs and energy efficiency programs in the country, because we were able to take a lot of what was going on — cherry-pick, I guess — from other jurisdictions and pick some of the best things.

Obviously, there are incentives for windows, there are incentives for thermal wraps, and we have expanded that beyond residential, most recently into the commercial side. Some of the older, less energy-efficient multi-unit residential buildings in the City of Whitehorse are eligible for — I believe — up to \$100,000. There is a percentage of expenditure that is associated, but a tremendous amount of rebates for them to take a look at with the commercial energy incentive program — so thermal enclosures, including up to \$100,000 in funding for air-sealing insulation in windows and doors, and a commercial building lighting upgrades incentive,

with up to \$10,000 available for LEDs. One of my neighbours works for the Energy Solutions Centre and has told me that the uptake for the commercial program has been very good. There are a number of companies that have come in and asked about it.

Later this year, we would anticipate having the independent power producers program released. That is a step up from the microgeneration. It is the larger-scale power producers that are involved with that program, and the biomass program that we just announced that we are consulting on. The biomass strategy that we are consulting on is another great opportunity for us to enhance our renewable energy portfolio here in the territory and build an industry around that, when it comes to working with our Wood Products Association and the wood producers, to ensure that we can give them an opportunity to have and grow their industry.

Other opportunities that we're exploring or investing in — research to identify renewable energy sources such as geothermal. The Energy Solutions Centre and YGS are currently working with the Canadian Geothermal Energy Association to develop a favourability map and geothermal direct use of heat applications and opportunity report for the Yukon. The \$168,000 project will receive \$126,000 from CanNor and the balance will be contributed by various Yukon sources through direct cash contributions and in-kind contributions, I believe.

There are a number of opportunities that are out there, and I think that we're doing some tremendous things and we're really punching above our weight when it comes to renewable energy. In 2014, according to the Yukon Energy website, 99.6 percent of the Yukon Energy power was generated by renewable sources. That's something that we should be proud of as Yukoners. I think there are great opportunities but again, as I have said in the past, we also, for human health and safety concerns, need to ensure that we have reliable backup power and that reliable backup power has to be able to meet demand.

There was an incident, I believe last fall, where there was an ice buildup in the Whitehorse Rapids facility at the turbine and they had to take the hydro facility offline, and that's when the fossil-fuel-burning facilities around the territory kicked in and ensured that we were able to continue to have power and heat our homes and keep our families safe and warm during the winter months.

So as much as we would like to not be reliant on fossil fuels — and again that number that I mentioned of 99.6 percent of the 2014 power being renewable is tremendous. Yukon Energy does a great job and I know that recent announcements by the CEO of Yukon Energy — they are looking at wind farm opportunities. I know wind monitoring equipment has been moved to Mount Sumanik here in Whitehorse. It has come from Ferry Hill — or Tehcho, I think is the First Nation name — that is by Stewart Crossing. So there are opportunities at both of those areas for potential wind farms to be developed, but again they will need that

reliable backup power and that backup power is burning with fossil fuels.

I know I have mentioned before in the House that members opposite like to use the example of Kodiak Island, as far as renewable energy generation and I would be interested in their numbers — if they hit 99.6 percent with renewable — because they have a windmill there, but their backup is diesel generation. The solar arrays that we hear from members opposite that Northwestel has at their towers — there is still diesel backup. They still have diesel that they haul in and use at those sites. All their power needs are not met strictly by the solar panels. A number of colleagues and I had the opportunity to tour Northwestel's facilities earlier this year at a number of locations around town. We asked specifically about that, but again it has reduced their reliance on fossil fuels, but they still require fossil fuels to provide backup energy for what they are doing there.

I think we have been clear when it comes to oil and gas opportunities. It's one of the areas where we disagree with the opposition New Democrats and the opposition Liberals, as far as oil and gas development and the development of shale gas opportunities. We've accepted and are addressing the 21 recommendations of the select committee. The member opposite referenced that there's no economic case, but one of the recommendations from the committee he sat on was for us to explore the economics and to go out and look for what the economic opportunities are with respect to shale gas opportunities in the Yukon. The other is, of course, to enhance and continue the public dialogue, which we will do as well.

There are a number of research and scientific opportunities as well. Again, we feel that, by allowing shale gas development in a very small fraction of the Yukon — I believe it's 1.3 percent of the land mass of the Yukon Territory — it is something we can manage. There's existing infrastructure down there. The Liard Basin is a world-class basin. It's something we're very — as the Yukon Party, we believe this is an opportunity to diversify our economy beyond just the traditional mineral economy and tourism and other opportunities we have here in the territory. This gives us an opportunity to diversify and look for additional opportunities.

I've mentioned the conventional gas production at the Kotaneelee well, which has contributed, I believe, \$45 million in royalties to the territory, \$10 million of which was distributed to a number of First Nations with self-governing agreements. Again, that provides opportunities for them to invest in their communities and it provides opportunities for us, as Yukoners, to invest in what our priorities are, such as education, health care, housing infrastructure and other initiatives that keep us safe.

It's an opportunity, as I have mentioned a number of times, for us to be a net contributor to this country. We can't rely on the hard work and let people in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan do all the heavy lifting with respect to oil and gas development. I think this issue is something that we spent, a couple of Wednesdays ago, all afternoon talking about — the Member for Copperbelt South and I. We talked

about this extensively. It's something that we disagree on. We believe there are opportunities in oil and gas here in the territory and we believe that we can take advantage of those opportunities through shale gas. Of course we will not proceed without the support of the affected First Nations, and in the Liard, it's the Kaska First Nation and the Acho Dene Koe.

This is about bringing jobs and opportunities for Yukoners — bringing those Yukoners who are working in this industry outside of our borders — bringing them home and giving them opportunities to work within the Yukon. We feel that's important. Unfortunately the opposition parties don't believe in shale gas opportunities. The New Democrats don't believe in shale or conventional. I guess the Leader of the Liberal Party is guffawing over there. I know he's sort of on the fence, not unsurprisingly, but he supports conventional industry but doesn't support a shale industry. We support the oil and gas industry. We think it will be an important part of our economy going forward, and I know that the Member for Klondike — I think Hansard shows that he has chosen to flip-flop on this issue, so Yukoners will be the judge of that. We're a party that supports responsible resource development in the territory and we think it's important not only for our present, but for future generations of Yukoners.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that. There were a number of points there but, as the minister mentioned, we have debated it. I guess what I can say is that the science is becoming increasingly clear. We cannot continue to burn fossil fuels at the rate we have. Currently, the world knows of more fossil fuels and is able to produce more fossil fuels than we can burn if we are to avoid catastrophic events — looking for new fossil fuels, developing new sources of fossil fuels when we have the option to develop renewable. The minister talks about backup. Technology is showing us the way. Yes, we need some way to store energy. It is being developed, and by the time we come up, 15 years down the line, with another dam and hydro source, it doesn't make any sense to continue to develop an oil and gas industry that's going to be left stranded.

The world is waking up and, again, you can either believe in climate change and move to protect the climate and the future for our children, or you can develop an oil and gas industry, a novel one, and develop the infrastructure and spend the money to do so, but you can't do both. It doesn't work; it doesn't compute.

In the Yukon, most of our emissions come not from the production of electricity, but from transportation and home heating. This government is currently on a building spree. How many of those homes are taking advantage of district heating or biofuels or geothermal? We saw what happened at F.H. Collins. We had economists come in, we had engineers come in — they proved the case that we could have geothermal heat at F.H. Collins. The payback period was less than 10 years, and our carbon emissions would be next to none. Yet this government went ahead and put in a fossil fuel —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Silver: I'm sorry for interrupting, but I would like my colleagues in the House today help me in welcoming in the gallery Mike Gallant and Maura Gallant.

Applause

Mr. Tredger: We are going on a building spree. We have options. The minister referenced today the district heating system installed in Dawson City — a good news story. The biofuels being used at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre — a good news story. We have examples already, yet the minister is going out and consulting on the wood industry again. We know it works; we knew it works; we knew five years ago it works. When I was in Pelly Crossing, we had biofuel. It employed local people, they brought wood into the building, we chipped it and it ran the school. Actually, it was 15 years ago.

We have options — F.H. Collins — now we're looking at the trades wing. Is it going to be biofuel? Is it going to be district heating? Is it going to be geothermal? The dwelling is already there. We continue to talk about making changes. We have watched our two windmills since 1993, while other jurisdictions have progressed. You can drive through Alberta and see windmills. We have two, still. We can continue to talk and we can continue to talk, but that is the equivalent of doing nothing. Quite frankly, we are at a position in climate change where we cannot afford to do nothing.

We need to aggressively move toward a renewable energy future. Other jurisdictions are doing it. They are proving it is economical. They are proving that it creates jobs. They are proving it can be done. Relying on commodities is putting us in a position where it's only going to cost more. Renewable energies are based on technology; technology is making advances all the time. We are looking at storage. I understand that storage is a problem, but it's being resolved. When I first looked at solar panels for my home on the river, it was in the neighbourhood of \$20,000. I was able to put in a system for which I have not used the backup diesel generator for two years, because I conserved energy and I have a battery system in place. I was able to put that in for \$12,000. The same thing would be less than \$10,000 now, and the price is going down. Renewable energy is long term and cheaper and better for our economy.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2015-16*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

The House adjourned at 5:27 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 204

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, April 29, 2015 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Government House Leader Vuntut Gwitchin
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
Wednesday, April 29, 2015 — 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: To start with, the Chair wishes to inform the House of changes that have been made to the Order Paper. Motions No. 56, 129, 394 and 504, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, have been removed from the Order Paper as the actions requested in those motions have been taken, in whole or in part.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I rise today on behalf of all members of the Legislature to recognize National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day, which is being celebrated across Canada on May 2, this Saturday.

This is a new national initiative led by FireSmart Canada, the National Fire Protection Association, and their partners to encourage Canadians to work together to protect their communities from risk of wildfire.

Many Yukoners live in the fire-prone boreal forest. While wildland fire is a natural part of the ecosystem and is critical to the overall health of the forest and the endemic and migratory species that rely on it, wildfires can have a devastating effect on Yukon communities.

In Yukon, around many of our communities, elevated levels of deadfall and forest debris have accumulated over the years and as a consequence of the necessary fire suppression efforts of Wildland Fire Management and local fire departments to safeguard communities and residents over the years and, in the event of a major wildfire, these heavy fuel loads could have disastrous consequences.

The Government of Yukon works to reduce wildfire risks nears communities by supporting community-led FireSmart programs on public lands. It also encourages private property owners to safeguard their homes and properties using FireSmart recommended techniques.

Many Yukoners are aware of the territory's FireSmart program, which provides funding and technical expertise to First Nations and municipal governments, registered non-profit organizations, community associations and school councils interested in reducing wildfire risk on public lands around their communities. Much of this work involves hiring local contractors and crews to reduce excessive fuel loads from surrounding forest areas. By removing deadfall and low

branches and increasing spacing between trees, the fire is less likely to spread quickly, providing firefighters with assistance as they work to contain a fire.

FireSmart encourages homeowners to think about protecting their properties based on zones or in concentric rings that extend 100 metres out from their homes. The first and most critical zone for reducing wildfire risk is the 10 metres immediately outside the home. By thinning and pruning, removing fire-prone conifer trees and planting fire-resistant species such as aspen, constructing fuel breaks and cleaning their properties, homeowners can safeguard themselves, their families and their homes.

National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day was created to encourage community members to work together to reduce property loss by taking action within their communities and on their properties. For example, community associations or groups of neighbours might host an educational event or hold a community work event. Neighbours could work together to stack firewood away from homes and buildings, remove lower branches, space out trees and removed deadfall, tall grasses and shrubs from around homes.

As a part of National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day, community groups were invited to submit project applications in late March to win one of 20 national prizes of \$500 to implement neighbourhood FireSmart-related projects. I am pleased to announce that the Yukon Wildfire Management program was selected for a national prize. The \$500 award will be used to fund prizes for an upcoming competition that the program is holding in an effort to get Yukoners to FireSmart their properties.

On Wildfire Community Preparedness Day, Yukoners are encouraged to join communities across Canada and participate in local mitigation projects to help reduce the risk of wildfire damage to their homes and neighbourhoods.

I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge Yukon's wildland firefighters and all that they do to safeguard us and help keep us safe. Yukon's Wildland Fire Management branch protects Yukon communities and infrastructure at risk from unwanted wildland fires and other natural or human-caused disasters.

Its full-time staff and seasonal Yukon government and First Nation contract firefighters help to prevent personal injury, loss of life and property damage by means of preparedness, early detection and rapid response. In addition to managing wildland fires, Wildland Fire Management is also responsible for managing the FireSmart program, for supporting other emergency and non-emergency response events such as flooding, and delivering wildfire prevention education. I want to thank them for being there when we need them the most and for working in demanding circumstances to help keep us, our homes and our communities safe.

On May 2, this Saturday, on National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day, I urge all Yukoners to take time to get together with their neighbours and friends to improve their own properties and their community's preparedness for wildfire. Through a few simple actions, much can be accomplished to reduce risk for wildfire to

neighbourhood homes and the whole community. Yukoners' peace of mind and improved safety is well worth the effort.

Before I conclude, I wanted to ask members to join me in welcoming some of the folks from the Wildland Fire Management branch in the gallery today. We have, first of all, Mike Etches, who is the director of Yukon Wildland Fire Management and who has taken the occasion to wear a tie; Mike Sparks, who is the wildfire operations supervisor; James Kathrein, who is the area protection officer, Southern Lakes; Lorne Harris, who is the manager of aviation and telecommunications; Jennifer Young, who is the wildland fire risk management specialist; and David Milne, who is the planning and science supervisor.

I would ask members to join me in welcoming them.

Applause

In recognition of National Canadian Film Day

Hon. Mr. Hassard: It is pleasure to rise today to pay tribute to National Canadian Film Day, which just so happens to be today.

National Canadian Film Day is an initiative of Reel Canada, a non-profit organization committed to growing audiences and appreciation for Canadian film by bringing those films to high school students, new Canadians and the public in general.

This year it will feature over 150 public and private screening events taking place in every province and territory. From its earliest days, filmmaking has been a powerful form of cultural and artistic expression and a highly profitable commercial enterprise.

From a practical standpoint, filmmaking is a business involving large sums of money and a complex division of labour engaged in three sectors: production, distribution and exhibition. Canadian cinema has existed within an environment where access to capital for production, to the marketplace for distribution, and to theaters for exhibition has been challenging.

Despite these challenges, the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century has seen increased production of world-class cinema in Canada. The industry as a whole has become a multi-billion dollar business built over 50 years and, despite numerous challenges, it's thriving in many regions in Canada.

Locally, Mr. Speaker, through the Film and Sound Commission, the Government of Yukon supports the industry through training, development, production, marketing and location incentive support to benefit Yukoners and Yukon businesses. The Film and Sound Commission also encourages established film and television production companies to co-produce with Yukoners.

The Government of Yukon continues to work to increase the diversification and sustainability of Yukon's economy by identifying and exploring significant economic development opportunities, and the film and sound industry is an important contributor to that diversification.

This year's Yukon Film and Sound Commission has committed \$3,000 to support National Canadian Film Day to recognize the importance of Canadian cinematic culture and

reinforce the significance of the film and sound industry to Yukon. Screenings of Canadian films will occur in Carmacks, Dawson City, Faro, Old Crow and Whitehorse.

With the help of film lovers and proud Canadians across this country, the second annual National Canadian Film Day is poised to be almost twice the size of last year's inaugural event.

National Canadian Film Day gives us an opportunity to celebrate our country's extraordinary cinematic accomplishments. I encourage all Yukoners to participate by attending a screening or taking advantage of one of the many on-line or broadcasting options available today, April 29.

Mr. Barr: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to National Canadian Film Day. Canada has a proud film history and a great tradition of telling our stories through film. A few days ago, the film *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*, by Nunavut director Zacharias Kunuk, was voted the number one Canadian film of all time by film insiders and academics from around the world.

This is my favourite Canadian film. It is a beautiful film shot entirely in Inuktitut and it has won a number of awards, including the best first feature film at the Cannes International Film Festival when it was released in 2001.

I had the great fortune of being involved in a storytelling session at the Beringia Centre with Zacharias Kunuk shortly after the film's release. My stories were told through song, Mr. Speaker, but his movie was preceded by his early childhood stories of being born and raised in the high Arctic. I found him to be a very humble man. As he talked with the audience and shared his story about his childhood, his culture and his traditions, it was very fascinating. He really went on to explain how detail was paid attention to in the making of that film — to the trueness from the clothing that was made by the elders. It was to a T of what would have been worn, with authentic materials. I know that probably a lot of people have seen this, but it is worth a second watch. I have watched it a couple times. It is just great.

Among our vibrant and growing cultural industries in the Yukon, we have filmmakers, film editors, sound technicians, actors and others involved in filmmaking. The non-profit Yukon Film Society has been screening films since 1984 but has evolved to become a professional organization that puts on workshops and training sessions, loans equipment and provides ongoing support to a growing community of filmmakers here in the territory. Max Fraser, Moira Sauer, Dennis Allen, Allan Code, Troy Suzuki, Dwayne Aucoin — just to name a few — and some of them have won several awards.

I would like to make mention that tonight you can see films on-line as the minister opposite just noted, but tonight you can go down to the Yukon Film Society and its screening of the Canadian film *Fido*, a zombie comedy shot in the Okanagan Valley, at the Old Fire Hall in Whitehorse. The tickets are \$10, or \$9 if you are a YFS member, and they are

available at the door and the doors open at 7:30, so maybe we'll see you down there, Mr. Speaker.

In recognition of Yukon Robotics Challenge

Hon. Mr. Graham: I rise in the House today on behalf of all members to pay tribute to the students, educators and volunteers who participated in the second annual Yukon Robotics Challenge. Under the guidance of enthusiastic teachers, students in grade 6 learned to program robots to navigate a competition course. All of the teams start with the same basic kit, and it's up to the students to decide how to arrange the sensors, wheels and robot features. Once they have done that, the real fun begins.

Working in groups of four or five, the teams program the robots to drive, reverse and detect and follow the path as they pick up objects. While they are having fun in hands-on activities, students are also learning the basics of design, mechanical engineering and computer programming. They also present their projects, thereby honing their public-speaking skills and showing confidence and great pride in the work that they have accomplished.

These skills and the applied knowledge will serve students well in this global-knowledge economy. What starts as fun becomes a valuable skill in a world where everything from banking to health care to transportation is being revolutionized by technology. It is essential for students to not just know how to use technology, but how to build and create with it.

The Robotics Challenge highlights the creativity, collaboration, communication and critical-thinking skills focused on in Yukon's 21st-century learning approach. The development of these four skills is crucial for the success of each learner.

I extend my thanks to the Yukon robotics challenge organizers for making this experiential learning opportunity available to students in the territory. I would also like to thank Superintendent Penny Prysruk and long-time educator Glenna Howard for championing the competition and initiating this now annual Education Week event.

I would also be remiss if I didn't thank the Association of Professional Engineers for providing volunteer judges as they do from time to time and the Porter Creek Secondary School for providing the location.

Teachers from Jack Hulland Elementary School, Elijah Smith Elementary, Takhini Elementary and Whitehorse Elementary also deserve our thanks, because it was these folks who brought robotics into their classrooms in the schools and got their students excited about computer programming. I congratulate also the students on their robot designs, teamwork and spirit of friendly competition.

One of the things I am really quite proud of is the fact that Porter Creek's own Jack Hulland School swept seven of the nine competition entries, with honourable mention going to the Elijah Smith Elementary and École Whitehorse Elementary School teams. Also, special thanks to the Takhini Elementary School group who won the spirit award. All

participants and volunteers deserve our thanks, and I congratulate them all.

In recognition of Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I am very pleased to rise in honour of Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month. Cystic Fibrosis is the most common fatal genetic disease affecting Canadian children and young adults. This disease affects mainly the lungs and the digestive system. Therapies have helped to address the malnutrition issues, but the reason for most deaths is related to lung disease. Still today, there is no cure, but with drugs and medical interventions, the outlook is brighter.

A child diagnosed with cystic fibrosis in the 1960s was not expected to live long enough to reach kindergarten. Today, the median age of survival of Canadians with cystic fibrosis is among the highest in the world — around 49 years of age. Almost 4,000 Canadians are battling this fatal genetic disease, and they are counting on research advancement, care and advocacy to improve their lives.

The Government of Yukon is doing just that by advocating on behalf of Yukon families. Last year, with Alberta, we led discussions with the drug company Vertex Pharmaceuticals to find affordable pricing for families needing this particular drug. The negotiations took more than a year, but last June we reached an agreement on the cost of covering Kalydeco. Also, I am pleased to say that since this past December, Government of Yukon has been covering the cost of this drug for a resident, one of about 100 Canadians with a particular mutation of the disease that can be treated with this drug.

Cystic Fibrosis Canada has a Yukon chapter that raises funds for cystic fibrosis research and care as well as promotion and services as a local resource and a support for people with cystic fibrosis and their families. I would like to thank the chapter for their extraordinary work. Together we can make a difference and help to breathe life into the future of Canadians with cystic fibrosis.

In recognition of Food Allergy Awareness Month

Ms. McLeod: I rise today in this Assembly to pay tribute to Food Allergy Awareness Month. I have a little quiz for my colleagues today to name the top 10 things most frequently associated with food allergies and allergic-type reactions. I bet that, like me they can't name all 10.

Most people can't name all 10 correctly, which is why the recognition of May as Food Allergy Awareness Month is so important. Most of us would probably confidently name peanuts or peanut butter as being a strong contender for the top 10 and we would be right. We would likely say eggs, milk, wheat, and maybe seafood or shellfish. Some of us might bet sesame, soy, tree nuts and sulphites, but how many of us would guess mustard? That hot dog topper is among the top 10 food allergens.

It is estimated, based on clinically documented cases, that approximately 1.8 million Canadians may be affected by food allergies. Some studies indicate that these numbers are increasing, especially among children. It is estimated that food

allergies put one in every 13 children at risk. That is two children in every classroom. Most of us as parents are aware of the prohibition on peanut butter sandwiches in school and the banning of any product that could potentially contain peanuts, but there are other just as dangerous allergens.

We need reminding of the importance of allergy awareness. For those individuals with food allergies, severe allergic reactions can occur quickly and without warning and, in fact, can be life threatening for people of all ages, including children. When someone ingests even a tiny amount of an allergen, the symptoms of a reaction may develop quickly and be very serious. So when someone next says, "No thanks, I'm allergic", we can all be a little more understanding.

In recognition of Yukoners cancer care fund

Speaker: Before moving on, I will take the opportunity to remind everybody that tomorrow, after we finish in the Legislature, we have the Speaker's reception. It's a fundraiser for the Yukoners cancer care fund, a fund that helps all Yukoners and their families who are dealing with cancer. Just to note, there have been to date 22 families who have been helped from the communities and Whitehorse out of this fund.

So I look forward to having you all there. Don't forget to bring your cash, cheques or Visa. We take them all.

Introduction of visitors.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I have for tabling an NDP news release dated February 19, 2015, that outlines concerns with the proposed sports complex in Whistle Bend.

Speaker: Are there any other 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 Government of Yukon to use the 2015-16 budget to invest \$850,000 in funding FireSmart projects across the territory to reduce the risk of wildfires.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2015-16 budget to increase funding for museums and cultural centres by 20 percent over the next two fiscal years.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2015-16 budget to invest \$2.5 million in the Marwell tar pit remediation project.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the 2015-16 budget to invest \$11 million in tech infrastructure, including \$4.8 million for e-health initiatives and \$2.1 million for school-based information technology.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that all Yukon communities have a runway and operational capability to handle medevac flights in a timely manner.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to publicly release the mandate for negotiating reconciliation agreements with the Yukon's three unsigned First Nations.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to take responsibility for:

(1) Yukon having the second worst GDP numbers in Canada for 2014 at minus 1.2 percent;

(2) Yukon being the only place in Canada to record two consecutive years of negative GDP growth in 2013 and 2014;

(3) telling Yukoners in 2013 that economic growth in 2014 would be 8.8 percent; and

(4) telling Yukoners as recently as January 2015 that economic growth for 2014 would be one percent.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Economic growth

Ms. Hanson: Clearly the evidence is in; we just heard it. This government has guided Yukon's economy straight into recession. According to Stats Canada numbers released yesterday, the Yukon's economy shrank 1.2 percent in 2014. We now have the dubious honour of being the only jurisdiction in Canada with negative growth for two consecutive years.

Last year, the Premier told Yukoners that this negative economic growth was a mere blip in 10 years of annual GDP growth. In truth, this economic recession is the inevitable outcome of this government's irresponsible management of the economy, which has caused Yukon's annual economic growth to decline every single year since this Premier took office. This stands in sharp contrast to N.W.T. and Nunavut, which had the highest GDP growth in the country.

Can the Premier explain why he has blocked the tremendous potential of Yukon to the extent where Yukon was once a leader and we are now last in line?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This government has stated on many occasions that mining is indeed the cornerstone of this economy. The results of the latest GDP numbers reflect that. Mining affects our entire territory. We also know that, as mining grows, so will this territory prosper. That is why we

are making the investments that we are right now, Mr. Speaker. We are doing the things that we can so that we can be more ready when this downturn in the mining industry will uptake again.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, the Premier should read the Standard & Poor's report that he keeps referring to. Those aren't consistent with the facts. Canada is recovering from the 2008 recession and, despite our territory's incredible wealth of land and people and the ever-increasing federal transfer payments, the Yukon is less economically stable today than it was back then.

Since the Yukon Party took office, major indicators of long-term economic well-being and standard of living have fallen or declined. The Premier knows this. That is why he has committed the last quarter of his term to injecting record levels of public money into Yukon's stagnating economy — but this desperate Hail Mary to save face is too little, too late.

Can the Premier tell Yukoners why, despite our incredible natural wealth of land and people, Yukon is not recovering from the 2008 recession as quickly as the rest of Canada?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I know it pains the opposition that there is, in fact, a *Taxpayer Protection Act*. The Leader of the Official Opposition continues to quote Standard & Poor's. The result of previous NDP-Liberal governments has created this government putting forward a *Taxpayer Protection Act* to ensure that NDP-Liberal governments don't tax and spend.

We believe that we continue to foster investment in the private sector — that the success of this territory will be in growing the private sector. This government has a vision in the long term that we become net financial contributors to this country. We will continue to do the things that we can do — invest in infrastructure, continue to invest in training and invest in upgrading our regulatory and our permitting to ensure that Yukon, in fact, is a great place to invest.

Ms. Hanson: The Premier seems to be of the same view as Canada's Finance minister — put it off to our grandchildren; put the debt on to them.

The Yukon Party government was eager to take credit for Yukon's economy when the territory was riding high on record commodity prices and record federal transfers, but now that times are tough, it's a who's who of who else is responsible for the recession. It is time for this government to take responsibility for its mismanagement of Yukon's economy.

You know, the Premier may have donned a pair of work boots for his budget speech, but it's really clear that his government is out of touch with how things really are on the ground. During his recent proclamation that this government will make Yukon a net contributor to Canada's economy — that's not true. In reality, the Yukon is more dependent on federal transfers than it was 15 years ago.

Can the Premier explain to Yukoners how his government has mismanaged the economy to the extent that today only 15 percent of Yukon's revenue is self-generated, down from 21

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

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: The Leader of the Official Opposition is wrong. Since the beginning of the 21st century, we have seen our own-source resources as a percentage of our budget continue to increase. We are very proud of the financial management that this government has done. Since coming into power in 2002, almost every year there has been a surplus. Certainly, a surplus isn't the best indicator — really an indicator at all — as to the financial health of a government. It goes to net financial resources.

This territory is truly the envy of this country because we have money in the bank. As other provinces and territories struggle with how they're going to pay the debt that they have and the —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I'm sorry, I'm trying not to lose my train of thought with the deriding that's coming from the lone Liberal in the House. But we continue to be the envy of this country by having no net debt, allowing us to ensure that we're not mortgaging the future to pay for debts today. Sadly that was the case when the NDP and the Liberals were in government, where they were using the credit card just to pay wages.

Question re: Lobbying legislation

Ms. Hanson: When answering questions on lobbying on Monday, the Premier said — and I quote: "It would become very confusing to enact such legislation." He also said he's concerned people would no longer approach him in the grocery store if we had a lobbying registry. Clearly the Premier is very confused.

Lobbying legislation isn't about restricting anyone's access to government. It also has nothing to do with citizens and non-profit societies. It is simply about making government more transparent by reporting on meetings with private interests. If the Premier has nothing to hide, he shouldn't be concerned about this for a second.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier understand that lobbying legislation is not about restricting anyone's access to government but simply making government more transparent?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, I've said it before and I'll say it again: We are not going to make it harder for Yukoners to talk to this government. Our government has excellent access to officials and elected leaders, and we meet with Yukoners on a daily basis, as I said before. We are not here to implement the NDP's election platform.

Ms. Hanson: If the Premier doesn't understand the difference between speaking with constituents at a grocery store and private-interest lobbying, Yukoners do have a reason to be concerned and it is one more good reason why we need a lobbying registry. There is nothing wrong with lobbying as long as it is transparent and Yukoners know who has the ear of this government. It's not a partisan issue. Guy Giorno, Prime Minister Harper's former chief of staff — and I'm sure he's not an NDP supporter — has praised the Yukon NDP's proposed lobbying legislation. The Northwest Territories has recently passed a motion to study the creation of a lobbyist registry, and their Premier has said there is no reason why the

public should not know with whom ministers are meeting and why.

Mr. Speaker, does the Yukon Premier see a reason why the public shouldn't be allowed to know with whom his ministers are meeting?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Mr. Speaker, this is a wonderful territory that we live in. We don't have a lot of people here. Yukoners are very engaged. As such, they all wear many hats.

As I've said before, certainly I do believe that, in a large jurisdiction, it is important to have lobbyist legislation because it is very difficult to gain access to the elected officials on the government side. That is just not the case here in the Yukon because we do see people on a daily basis — whether it's at the grocery store or whether it's at the soccer field or whether it's at the hockey rink, or at one of the many cultural events or one of those many fundraising events that members of this side of the House are very well-known to support.

Ms. Hanson: Yukoners are scratching their heads over this comment from the Premier — and I quote: "We don't solve problems, or perceived problems, with legislation and regulations." These talking points sound more at home in the Tea Party and the record shows that the Yukon Party does use regulation and legislation to solve problems. It just picks and chooses. With oil-fired appliance safety and landlord tenants rules, for instance, the public gets new legislation but no regulations that would actually do something about the problem.

The Yukon Party has brought in reams of legislation and bills in the 13 long years in office. Let's not forget that they are the ones who brought in a bill on civil forfeiture and changed Yukon's access to information act to make Yukon one of the most secretive jurisdictions in Canada. Why is the issue of lobbying and being transparent about the corporations that meet with government not a cause worthy of some simple rules to increase the public's right to know?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Of course, again, the implication there is that there is a targeted attempt toward corporations. As I walk up and down the offices on a daily basis, I see our ministers and our elected officials meeting with many different people every day, Mr. Speaker. Many Yukoners wear many different hats. It would be very difficult to create exactly what she is looking for, but then again, the opposition always looks to legislation and regulation to solve their problems — put it on a piece of paper and pat each other on the back and say they did a good job. We are focusing on talking to Yukoners and our door is open to all Yukoners.

Question re: Economic growth

Mr. Silver: For many years, the Yukon Party insisted that the upturn in our economy was due to its great management in the territory. This was particularly true of the mining industry. The Yukon Party has also taken credit during the good times. They have been unwilling, however, to accept any blame for the current economic slowdown that we are in. A report yesterday from Statistics Canada shows that our economic growth has stalled under this government. For the

second year in a row, our economy has actually shrunk. In 2014, it shrunk by 1.2 percent. By most economists' definitions, we are now in a recession.

Does the Premier accept responsibility for the fact that our economy has gotten smaller two years in a row, under his government's watch, and that the Yukon is now in a recession?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: This government is not going to take credit for lower commodity prices. We are seeing it around the world, and there has been a significant reduction in exploration — especially at the junior mining level, which comprises most of the exploration that occurs in this territory. What it does show us is that we are a small economy. Mining has truly been the base of our economy, so while we are dealing with this downturn, we are doing those things that we can to ensure — coming out of it — we are ready: investing in infrastructure like roads and bridges and aerodromes; investing in telecommunications; investing in energy. We are making sure that we're building schools and we're building hospitals, and we are also ensuring that we are looking at training opportunities to make sure that Yukoners are ready, and we're also looking at our permitting and our regulatory process to make sure that Yukon is the place in the world for mining.

Mr. Silver: It wasn't that long ago that the Yukon Party was promising 8.8-percent economic growth for 2014 in one of its forecasts. The minister stood in this House and said in 2014 — and I quote: "So you generally see a positive outlook and a positive trend going forward." According to Statistics Canada the real number for growth in 2014 is minus 1.2 percent. The government was off by 10 percent, and we know from a former Minister of Economic Development that, I guess the numbers don't matter.

Yukon is the only place in Canada to record two consecutive years of negative GDP growth for both 2013 and 2014. Yukon had the second worst GDP numbers in Canada at minus 1.2 percent. We are only one of two places in Canada to go backward last year.

Does the Premier accept responsibility for the fact that Yukon jurisdiction is the only economy to get smaller two years in a row in Canada?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It's disappointing, Mr. Speaker, because I guess maybe the Liberal leader doesn't get it. He certainly has asked that question, and the former Minister of Economic Development has articulated many times that we trust and we look at the numbers that are put forward by the economists. Essentially what the member opposite is taking a shot at is those good working people within the Department of Economic Development who put forward those estimates based on the knowledge that they know at that time. Of course it can be volatile when we have an economy as small as we have.

What I will take credit for is the \$5.5 million that is going back into all Yukon taxpayers' pockets this year and the increase in the Yukon child benefit by 35 percent, supporting families with children.

Mr. Silver: Imagine that: the Premier is taking the credit for the good things and the good news but will not take responsibility for the bad news. It is very disappointing to watch this government duck responsibility for having the worst economic performance of any jurisdiction in the country for the last 24 months.

In 2013, the government forecasted 8.8-percent economic growth for 2014 and have instead delivered two straight years of economic contraction. In 2013, the government said this about the forecast — and I quote: “... what they do point to is a direction — direction of growth and what we hope to be further prosperity for this territory.” Instead this government has delivered a stalled economy and a recession. The prospects for 2015 look no better with uncertainty hanging over the mining sectors thanks to this government’s ongoing court battles with our Yukon First Nations.

In light of the poor numbers released yesterday, can the minister tell Yukoners whether he is still —

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

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Yukoners are excited and proud that they have a government that looks past the end of its nose.

This is a government that has just tabled the largest capital budget in Yukon’s history, putting Yukoners to work, keeping Yukoners at home, investing in infrastructure not only for today but for the long-term, setting the stage, because this government has vision. We’re looking to the future, whether it’s building regional hospitals in communities or expanding the hospital here, whether it’s building new schools or whether it’s looking at fibre optics or new hydro.

We are looking for the long term. We are preparing this territory to be ready for what we know will be strong economic growth in the future.

Question re: Pelly Crossing airfield

Mr. Barr: For years, my colleague from Mayo-Tatchun has been asking about the state of the Pelly airfield and its inability to handle medevac flights. At present, patients being evacuated out of Pelly Crossing are taken by ambulance from Pelly Crossing to Stewart Crossing, where they are then transferred to the Mayo ambulance, which takes them to Mayo. From there, they are medevaced to Whitehorse. Stories of families arriving in Whitehorse before the patient gets there by medevac are not uncommon. This is an unacceptable standard for Yukon.

When this question was last asked in the House, the previous minister indicated that he was looking into an interim runway extension that would allow medevac flights to take off and land. What is the status of the interim extension to the Pelly Crossing airfield?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I will look into the specific question asked by the member opposite and get back to him with an update. I can inform the House that HPW, with responsibility for Yukon’s airports and aerodromes, strives to protect those who live, visit and work in the territory. We take that responsibility very seriously.

In 2014-15, we committed nearly \$18.5 million to capital improvements at Yukon airports. We are also responsible for managing 25 aerodromes and five airports throughout the territory. We want to ensure that we work hard to provide an appropriate level of maintenance and investment at each one of those aerodromes and airports in consideration of the levels and types of aircraft to facilitate safe operations throughout the territory.

Mr. Barr: We are aware that this government has committed to upgrade the Pelly Crossing airfield, but our understanding is that those upgrades will not be complete until 2018. Pelly Crossing’s medevac issue is clearly not a new one and not one that the NDP has been alone in raising. Selkirk First Nation and Pelly community members for many years have been vocal about the need for improved medevacs. Does this government have any plans to improve the medevac service to Pelly Crossing before the runway extension or will Pelly residents be left with the status quo for another three years?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Just to respond to the member opposite, when it comes to the specifics of the Pelly Crossing airport, perhaps we could delve into that in a little bit more detail when we get into the Highways and Public Works debate during budget debate later on in this session.

Again, with expenditures from 2014-15, as I mentioned, we are committing nearly \$18.5 million to capital improvements at Yukon airports. For last year, that included \$18.1 million invested into the Whitehorse airport. There was \$4 million over two years to repave and extend the secondary runway at the airport, which contributed an estimated \$2 million to Yukon’s GDP and an estimated 23 jobs for the Yukon’s economy; substantial completion of a two-year \$7.6-million project to expand water and sewer systems at the Whitehorse airport. We have made several investments outside of the community of Whitehorse, including investing in Dawson City, as well as the airport at Faro.

As I’ve mentioned, we manage 25 aerodromes and five airports to ensure that the levels and types of aircraft that operate there are able to operate safely. Again, with respect to the specific question asked by the member opposite, I would be happy to get into further detail during debate, but you can see that we were making substantial investments in our airports and aerodromes last year and we will continue to do so in this budget.

Mr. Barr: Mr. Speaker, Pelly Crossing is not alone in having problems with their airfield for medevac purposes. Last week, I raised the concerns that had been passed on to us about the Beaver Creek airfield and their lack of automated runway lights. In Ross River, if there’s an emergency requiring a medevac in the winter, someone has to drive to the airfield and test the snow depth by dipping a credit card into the snow. If it’s too high, they then call Highways and Public Works to clear off the runway. However, the response time is not always sufficient and they are often forced to drive their medevac patients to Faro to get them out.

Again, for a modern jurisdiction, these medevac conditions are not acceptable. What is the government doing

to ensure that all Yukon communities have access to a modern and effective medevac system?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Once again, just to restate, Highways and Public Works protect those who live, visit and work in the territory and we take that responsibility very seriously.

We manage 25 aerodromes and five airports and we work hard to provide an appropriate level of maintenance and investment at each one of those facilities to ensure that the types of aircraft that utilize them are able to operate in a safe environment.

I've mentioned the fact that we invested in 2014-15 \$18.5 million in capital improvements at Yukon airports. There are significant investments being considered for this year, not only at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport, but also at the community airports and aerodromes that service the Yukon. We want to ensure that we use the capital dollars that we have assigned to airports and aerodromes effectively to ensure that we can have the best safe operating environment as well as maintenance on those airfields.

Again, it's something that it's important to this government and we continue to invest heavily in transportation infrastructure with over \$60 million being invested in this current budget for this year. We're proud of what we've been able to accomplish and we're even prouder of what is going to be expended in the 2015-16 budget.

Question re: Housing for abused women

Ms. White: Over the last number of days, the conversation concerning vulnerable Yukoners finally seems to have caught up to some of the live realities on the ground.

Officials like Yukon's top policemen are openly discussing how to tackle addictions as the health care problem they are — the justice issues they aren't — and how to ensure that vulnerable people have the resources they need to be as healthy and as safe as possible.

However, Yukon women are in an especially vulnerable position due to the lack of transitional housing for women who are not in immediate danger of violence or abuse. The government has an important role to play in supporting all vulnerable Yukoners.

What is the government doing to ensure that vulnerable Yukon women have a safe place to stay during their time of need?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I would like to thank the member for the question and note that a number of steps have been taken by government to improve supports for women, particularly those fleeing abusive situations, through a priority within the Yukon Housing Corporation placement and also the investments in second-stage housing through Betty's Haven.

There is of course more work to be done, but as I noted previously in responding to a question from the member's colleague, there have been significant investments by this government in supporting a wide range of services, including the Outreach van and many partners, including women's shelters across the territory. We look forward to continuing to work with all of our partners in this area to take additional steps and continue to improve the system and the supports.

But the latest example of our investments in supporting women accessing the justice system is the new legal advocate position — a partnership between the Women's Directorate and the Department of Justice that will be a further enhancement to help women navigate the legal system and understand their rights and the services that are available to them.

Ms. White: I appreciate the minister's answers, but it doesn't reflect the realities on the ground. The existing spaces in Whitehorse and around the territory can't offer support to women who aren't immediately in danger, like those who have been released from custody and need safe housing to help them get back on their feet. The minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation, just like his predecessors, has had trouble adding his voice to those at the United Nations who say that housing is a human right. The lack of halfway housing for women in Yukon is a prime example of how the Yukon Party government is continuing to fail to address this territory's housing crisis.

Will the government commit here today to using their net surplus for the establishment of a halfway house for women that gives vulnerable Yukoners a safe place to stay when they aren't in immediate danger but are still in need of housing?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I would like to thank the member opposite for her question. Indeed, this government has over the last decade-plus been working on a number of housing initiatives in support of women and children and in support of a whole spectrum of Yukoners, dealing with emergency shelters right through to continuing care.

As my colleague, the Minister of Justice just articulated, we are very proud of the partnership that we were able to generate with Kaushee's Place, the Yukon women's transition home, and coming up with 10 new units of second-stage housing here in Whitehorse. Likewise, in the Town of Watson Lake, we are working with Help and Hope women's shelter, expanding on — for the very first time in rural Yukon — second-stage housing as well. Likewise, I am very proud of the work of the Women's Directorate in being able to champion securing housing for women and children, especially those most vulnerable — that of the Whitehorse family focused housing initiative, which provides 30-some new units of housing for women, particularly geared for single-parent families, the lion's share of which is comprised of women and children.

We are working on new transitional housing through the Salvation Army. We continue to work with Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre on a safe place and many other innovative programs in support of women —

Speaker: The member's time has elapsed.

Question re: Alaska Highway corridor functional plan

Ms. Moorcroft: The minister says that work on the Alaska Highway corridor is needed to address safety issues, congestion and future growth. I have constituents who have lost loved ones in the corridor because of accidents and the

driving public sees the tragic markers where lives have been cut short.

Is increasing safety in the Alaska Highway corridor the number one objective of corridor development work?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I think that is certainly one of the priorities that we are looking at when we are redeveloping the Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway. Of course, members opposite know that we are currently in the public consultation phase for the plan that was released for the Whitehorse corridor. I delivered copies of the functional plan to both the offices of the Official Opposition and the Third Party — I believe it was last week. This past weekend, the open houses were held at the Yukon Transportation Museum with respect to the corridor. I have personally met with a number of the business associations that have concerns with redevelopment of the corridor for economic reasons, which I guess is what they cite as their main concern.

Again, we're listening to the concerns of Yukoners with this and we're engaged in the public consultation process. We look forward to the conclusion of the public consultation process where department officials will make recommendations to me and I will take them forward to caucus, so that we can prioritize what needs to be done within the Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway.

Ms. Moorcroft: I will take the minister's comments to mean that he places a very high importance on making upgrades to the corridor that will result in safer driving conditions. Yes, the public is being asked their views on the Alaska Highway corridor functional plan. The plan is hundreds of pages long and filled with highly technical issues. A traffic safety analysis in the plan lists 14 locations on the highway corridor that are particularly bad. Some of these locations have higher rates of collision; some are where severe collisions have occurred. But the plan in the immediate term would only make changes in two of those 14 locations. The remaining 12 high-collision and severe-collision locations would only see any attention if the population hits certain thresholds.

If increasing safety is so important to this minister, why wouldn't attention be focused first on high- and severe-collision locations?

Hon. Mr. Kent: In 2013, the Government of Yukon retained the services of an engineering firm to develop the functional plan to address safety, traffic efficiency and capacity in accordance with national guidelines and standards. The draft plan establishes a framework to address the community's immediate needs and provides for additional capacity to meet the needs of a growing population in the future.

No decisions have been made with respect to what we're going to do with the Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway. We are currently in the public consultation phase. Again, I encourage all Yukoners, including members of the opposition, to go on-line to fill out the on-line surveys. Each and every Yukon mailbox received one of the summaries — of course, that is why we didn't make the larger piece of the functional plan available, because it is such a huge document

for Yukoners to get. It is available upon request and it is available on-line, but there is a summary document that was put together by the folks at Highways and Public Works as well as our consulting engineer so that we can solicit feedback. I can tell members of the Legislature that the feedback on-line and mailed in has been very strong and we look forward to individuals continuing that for the next two weeks or so.

Ms. Moorcroft: The intersection of the Mayo Road and the Alaska Highway is a dangerous location, as is the intersection of the south Klondike and Alaska Highway at Golden Horn, the Fireweed-Engleman area in Spruce Hill and around McCrae, but these high- and severe-collision locations will only be fixed in the long term, when and if — and it's a big "if" — the population reaches 46,000 people.

Dangerous accident locations in Porter Creek, like Rabbit's Foot Canyon, wouldn't see any attention until the population hits 35,000. The work to be done immediately, in the plan, is to twin the seven-kilometre length of highway between Robert Service Way and Two Mile Hill at a cost of a minimum of \$52 million.

Why would the government decide that twinning the highway between Robert Service Way and Two Mile Hill is a more urgent priority than fixing the high- and severe-collision locations?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I take it from the member opposite's comments that that will serve as the basis for her submission to the Department of Highways and Public Works for the draft consultation that is currently underway.

This is a draft plan and there are a number of issues that the engineering firm used to develop the functional plan — looking at safety, traffic efficiency and capacity in accordance with national guidelines and standards. We're hearing from a number of Yukoners with different perspectives on what they would like to see in the Whitehorse corridor. I would assume from the member opposite's comments that she would like to see more attention paid to the parts of the road where the south Klondike Highway meets the Alaska Highway and where the north Klondike meets the Alaska Highway. I certainly would welcome her submission on that and will add that to the hundreds of other submissions that we're receiving from Yukoners during this consultation phase.

This is a consultation phase dealing with the draft plan. There have been no decisions made yet. We don't have a Management Board submission or a tender document prepared for May 16. We're listening to Yukoners. We're listening to their concerns and we're looking forward to the final results of the public consultation so that we, as legislators, and my caucus and Cabinet colleagues can make an informed decision when it comes to the Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 893 — *adjourned debate*

Clerk: Motion No. 893, standing in the name of Mr. Silver; adjourned debate, Mr. Silver.

Mr. Silver: As the debate was adjourned with only a couple minutes of debate, I will start again, just for flow and ebb.

On April 2, I raised the issue of mental health services, a topic that I've been hearing a great deal about in my community. I would like to paint the picture here of the timeline.

Back in 2011, the Premier committed to spending new federal money to design a mental health plan. In 2012, a former Yukon Party Health and Social Services minister told a local radio station that the government was planning a mental health strategy as well. In 2014, the former minister told Yukon — and I quote: "We're working on a mental health strategy and when it's available I will be only too happy to present it to this Legislature." As the clock struck 2015, Yukoners had a new Minister of Health and Social Services, but still we await a mental health strategy. We are one of only two jurisdictions in Canada without such a strategy, which shows in my mind where mental health lies on this government's priority list.

In 2013, the government released a needs assessment for the newly built hospitals in Watson Lake and in Dawson. The report said — and I quote: "That the implementation of a territorial mental health prevention and treatment strategy be a priority that includes local support workers who maintain contact with those in need..." A full 18 months after receiving the report, the recommendation has not been acted upon.

Just over a year ago, the government released a report called *A Clinical Services Plan for Yukon Territory*. One of the report's key findings was quite blunt and it said — and I quote: "Mental health services are in a significant deficit outside of Whitehorse." The report went on — and I'll quote again: "Not addressing ... mental health services in Yukon Territory risks failure for a clinical services plan.

"Central to a clinical services plan of value to the residents of Yukon Territory is the expanded resourcing of ADS and mental health services, especially in the communities. There is no greater need."

Finally the report went on to say — and I'm quoting again: "No provider or service interview conducted during the study was silent on the enormity of the problem with, and impact of, the management and challenges of mental health services in Yukon Territory.

"The full spectrum of mental health issues is prevalent and generates a huge burden on available resources and family members."

"...not a single interview during this study was silent on the critical need for expanded and re-tooled..." mental health services "...to be central in service planning."

Mr. Speaker, there has been no response from the government in the year since it received this report — this \$200,000 report on how it plans to address the lack of mental health services in rural Yukon. The overwhelming message from the government's own report is that things need to change. Unfortunately, the new minister stood in this House and continued to defend the status quo. The basic message is that we're putting money here, we're money putting here, everything is fine — and he refused to acknowledge that more needs to be done. Without a plan to implement, it's hard to assess whether or not we're hitting those marks.

I would like to speak to the rural experience for a minute if I can, as I think this is where some of Yukon's biggest deficiencies lie. We need to consider the importance of understanding the reality of rural community living and the opportunities and challenges that are provided, based on this reality. We also need to acknowledge that there are gaps in health and social services to rural communities and that finding solutions to creating equitable services does not necessarily mean looking at our Whitehorse model for guidance. Blanket policies for both rural and urban Yukon are not necessarily working for rural community needs. Again, a comprehensive mental health strategy should be able to address this issue.

I want to talk a bit about the mental health nurses. There are two — two mental health coordinators, two mental health nurses for the rural communities. One is based in Haines Junction, the other one in Dawson. They both have huge areas for which they are responsible. The one in Haines Junction deals with Watson Lake and southern Yukon and then Old Crow. The Dawson coordinator is responsible for Ross River, Mayo, Faro, Carmacks and Pelly Crossing. In each community, the nurses told that the services they can provide are different, based on the additional services that a specific community may have access to. Some communities are fortunate enough to have a Many Rivers counsellor — but not all of them — who can deal with severe mental conditions — Dawson being one of those communities that's extremely fortunate to have the Many Rivers counsellor.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Silver: The minister will get his opportunity. I hear him heckling over on the other side of the House, but I will continue to talk and I will continue with my time while he continues to heckle.

Now, where was I, Mr. Speaker?

In Ross River and Faro, Many Rivers' services are not provided, so the nurses will carry that responsibility. Child abuse treatment services are available, but only if the family signs into the program. Otherwise, in these communities, it's back to the mental health nurses. It gets a little confusing, depending upon what community you're living in, as to who provides what services. Imagine if you moved?

In Dawson and in other communities, depending on the other services available, the mental health nurse is told to only

see patients with severe mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, and not patients with severe depression or suicidal tendencies, because that would fall under the jurisdiction of the Many Rivers counsellors. The problem is that doctors are referring patients to the mental health nurses, while the department is telling the nurses that they cannot see these patients, because they don't fall within the mental health mandate for the Dawson area.

The Many Rivers counsellors are effective — absolutely — but often become overwhelmed and, sometimes, clients fall through the cracks. Imagine being the mental health nurse who is sitting there listening to the doctors, who are saying, “We need your services”, and then having to say, “Well, my hands are tied.”

If the mental health nurse steps outside of her working hours, or any other minor infraction, to help a patient who may have been self-admitted, they are slapped on the wrist for overstepping their mandate. This confusion over patient responsibility is creating turmoil and preventing patients from receiving the help they need.

So they're being slapped on the wrist in Dawson for a service that they would provide in Faro. You can see how without an actual plan and without a strategy that this gets really confusing, Mr. Speaker.

Policy tends to be developed to prevent these community mental health nurses from building trust within the communities as well. Nurses are being discouraged from speaking too much with the locals when travelling to the communities, when the opposite needs to happen in order to form trust in the relationships to be in place for nurses to effectively help the community. These nurses are being told, “Don't pat the dogs, don't talk to people in the streets; do your job and move, because you have such a schedule.”

It's really hard to gain people's trust if you're not part of the community, and imagine being a travelling rural community nurse, who has to go to Dawson, check in at Dawson with the RCMP and with the caregivers there and, on the same day, to Stewart Crossing, and check in there with care providers, and on the same day to Pelly, and the same day to Carmacks and the same day to — you can see how it's hard enough to develop the trust of the community when you're just dropping in from time to time.

So why not coordinate the services? It doesn't matter who I talk to, Mr. Speaker, whether it is parents who are dealing with mental health issues with their children, or with their young adult children still staying at their homes, or people suffering themselves from anything — like alcohol abuse, and wanting to get into some after-care — or the service providers, or the EMS — it doesn't matter who I talk to, coordination of services is so important. So why not coordinate the services?

Resources should be shared to develop proper implementation of services, based upon need, instead of quotas from the department that dictate the rules based upon administrative ease. Again, we're heeding our information from Whitehorse to deal with the problems in the rural

communities. Too often, these can be very counterproductive and, in some cases, insensitive to the communities' needs.

The second topic that I would like to approach here today is the use of health NGOs to Yukon's communities. Rural communities benefit only marginally from NGOs whose core funding comes from the territorial government to meet the needs of our Yukon population. Since rural Yukoners struggle to be able to access most of the NGOs' services, it might be possible that we need the government to re-evaluate its services in rural communities, taking into consideration the lack of NGO services. When NGO services are available, it has been reported that these services have been essential in supporting individuals who would otherwise have no or little options. When government and/or NGO services are withheld — as in the case of where it takes over six months to a year in some cases to replace essential services like mental health practitioners, counsellors and social workers — this leaves the communities with little to no appropriate preventive or reactive services.

Some of our rural communities have risen to the challenge of limited resources and have come together to support communities. For example, some self-governing First Nations have established programming in rural communities to support positive development in youth. These programs are not limited to First Nation youth. That is one thing that I love about First Nation governments — they don't limit their services to just members of their own First Nation. They support the whole community.

In addition, opportunities for inter-agency collaboration and integrated services are high in rural communities. Where there may not be enough work for one individual in one specific government agency, there will become room for that individual to work in two different government agencies to do the same amount of work — again, collaboration of services, Mr. Speaker. Neither government agency is able to provide enough full-time funding for an FTE, but together this might be possible. It is also difficult to provide equitable services when the services are all based in urban settings. In some cases, this is all that is possible, but there are individuals ready and willing to work in rural communities who are not being utilized because the current system does not allow for decentralization of those services. Creating rural hubs for specialty work has also been successful in some of our rural communities. Developing a plan to increase this type of service availability seems to me to be extremely justified and justifiable.

To try to wrap up here on some of the rural issues, there have been hundreds of thousands of dollars commissioned to assessments of health care needs — for example, the McMaster report, the Peachey report and others — all of which have basically come back with relatively the same conclusions — but their suggestions are not being acted upon. Instead of paying workers to travel such distances, there should be improved collaboration between Mental Health, addictions, Many Rivers, et cetera — the stakeholders. Having workers based in more areas, as suggested, would improve support for rural communities and would lessen the anxieties

of the populace and the health workers. Even if employees were hired for part-time work, I am sure that they would be more interested in and able to recruit for other positions.

Mr. Speaker, we are in an interesting situation with our rural mental health nurses, where I am extremely afraid that burnout is going to happen. Imagine — I mean, dealing with one school as a teacher is enough — going to all of these communities and keeping track of not necessarily just the individual people who are suffering from mental health, but the families and the interconnections between the communities. It is amazing.

For a mental health worker to drive from Dawson to Faro to Ross River for one week per month and to pay travel time of eight to 10 hours each way — not including meals, meal breaks and also depending upon road conditions — it doesn't seem like good financial management and could lead to extremely unsafe work conditions. I could only image the stress of thinking that you just cannot be effective enough in these situations and the people who you've missed, or the ones who you should have reconnected with, but don't have the time. It has been suggested to the department that it would be more effective for our rural mental health nurse to do the work trip over a 10- to 14-hour day period to better serve the communities.

Now there is a major lack of semi-independent and supportive living accommodations for people with severe mental health and dual diagnosis in the Yukon. To access such places in Alberta or B.C. is extremely difficult, but there is a serious need, as is obvious by the number of people with mental health, FASD and addictions who end up in the care of the criminal justice system, residing in the correctional facilities. The biggest thing that we can do is work toward the collaboration of services in our communities through shared positions and intergovernmental relationships with different departments and NGOs.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues that I have heard from concerned Yukoners about and I am not going to have the time — I could filibuster away the day with all of these issues if I wanted to, but I really do want to have the debate here today, sir. I would like to highlight a few more areas of concern before I sit down and listen to my colleagues.

By the minister's comments last week, it seems that, in his opinion, mental health services are needed for at-risk people, but mental health is much more complicated than that. One example of this is postpartum depression. According to the Pacific Post Partum Support Society, postpartum affects one in six women and one in 10 men and is likely to strike affluent, well-educated parents. PPD does not discriminate — it can happen to women who have no history of mental health issues, to women who are successful in many aspects of their life and to women who are looking forward to becoming mothers. How are we helping Yukon's new moms?

Another idea I would like to speak to is child services. Mental health does not discriminate by age. Recently there have been parents who have gone public with the issues that they have had in securing an education assistant. When they broke the story, parents from the school in question said that

they did not have enough resources to support the education assistant's needs and the department disagreed with that statement — not to mention the teachers are not prepared to deal with students with mental health issues — or the EAs for that matter. If we want to give everyone the chance at success, then we need to be able to identify these issues early on. We need to ask the question of the education system: What is the secondary school completion rate for students with mental illness? What steps can we take to increase that?

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other topics and areas that could be addressed by talking about a comprehensive strategy and as I noted with speaking to Education, a mental health strategy should not be limited to Health and Social Services. It should have implications for every department.

Just to sum up here, I would like to go back to something that the Minister of Health and Social Services said last week I believe — I'm quoting here: "*A Clinical Services Plan for Yukon Territory* was released in April 2014, as you know, and sets a long-term plan for the evolution of health and social services delivery in our incredible territory. While the report's recommendations have not been accepted by government, the department continues to utilize the plan as a foundation for innovative, evidence-based decision-making and maximizing system efficiencies."

Mr. Speaker, the point of developing plans and strategies is to look at the recommendations and make smart decisions based on needs identified — not to put them on the shelf or to put a checkmark by a box. I've tried to use my time here to highlight some of the deficiencies in our current health care system. I do not see how a government that has continued to promise a strategy could vote against this motion, although I wouldn't be surprised.

I know the minister will likely respond to tell the House that the government is spending money, and they are. I imagine he will also tell me, as he has before, that I should be ashamed of myself for questioning the services being provided, as this has become his default reaction to this topic this session here in the Legislative Assembly. But the reality is that Yukon still does not have a mental health strategy. It's one of two jurisdictions in Canada without one. A strategy would identify the mental health needs in the territory and give direction to the department on where to spend its money.

It would also — and this is so important — assess that implementation. Isn't that the most important part of any strategy or plan — the assessment? We're all going to make mistakes. We're going to have failures as we try our hardest and then we're going to reassess. We're not going to blame; we're just going to pick ourselves up and we're going to continue down that road — but without a plan, Mr. Speaker.

I guess I'll just end by saying that, as it stands, the minister is spending money and the government does have deep pockets, but by not building a long-term plan, it's so hard — it's so hard for these individual people who are working to get their ideas implemented and to make sure that we have the same access to services in the rural communities as we enjoy here in Whitehorse — not to say that there aren't

problems here in Whitehorse as well, but obviously I'm speaking a lot more on the rural side of things right now.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time here today. I look forward to an open and honest debate about this issue and, for a government that has promised a mental health strategy, I would assume that this would be a great motion for all of us to agree upon — and hopefully amendment-free.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: The question of how the government addresses mental health is one that is of great importance to all of us in this Assembly. This motion calls on us to follow through on a commitment to develop a mental health strategy, so I'm going to respond to the motion in a number of ways.

First, I would like to lay out my game plan for this afternoon. I want to talk about the personal importance of mental health. Second, I'll go over our platform commitments regarding mental health. Then I want to talk about the projects, programs and services that we provide concerning mental health. Fourth, I'll address the government's response to substance abuse. Next, because I believe we should also be talking about healthy, positive alternatives and their impact on mental health, I'm going to spend a little bit of time talking about some health and wellness initiatives. Finally, I'll highlight the child and youth mental health and addictions framework that was just completed in 2014.

I know each and every one of us has a connection to someone for whom this issue is of great importance. One of my good friends and a candidate, who would eventually have to step down as a candidate, in the 2011 election, very courageously shared her story with us. When we talk about mental health, I think of friends who have lost loved ones. Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that we take very seriously.

Some of my own experiences with mental health issues stem from having a son with autism. In fact, the Kelty resource centre out of British Columbia reports that having a child diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder can be very hard on the whole family, and I can attest to this. Adding mental health problems to the mix can make things a lot harder. There seems to be a huge connection between autism spectrum disorders and other mental health problems. The exact numbers are different from study to study, but researchers find that just under half to about three-quarters of children living with ASD may also be diagnosed with another mental disorder.

Other mental disorders can have a big impact on your child but, as with others without autism, treatment does help. The Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre goes on to say that researchers know that these mental disorders are common, but they can be very hard to diagnose in children living specifically with ASD.

Here are a few reasons why: symptoms of one disorder can look like another disorder; symptoms of one disorder can hide symptoms of another disorder; it may be difficult to tell what your child is feeling; your child may not be able to tell you how they feel; other people may misread your child's symptoms; your child may not think that something is wrong. There are a few guidelines and tests to help professionals

diagnose other mental health problems in children living specifically with ASD.

Also, Mr. Speaker, many studies on mental health and ASD include high-functioning children. These are children who don't have as many intellectual, social or communication problems. This means that there are very few research studies done on the mental health of lower functioning children, such as my son Jack. This doesn't mean that lower functioning children don't have mental health problems. It also doesn't mean you can't find help if you think your child might have a mental health issue.

In speaking about mental health this afternoon, I also believe it's important to talk about substance abuse. Whether you think that substance abuse causes or triggers mental health conditions, or whether you think people abuse substances as a way to cope with their mental health conditions, I think it's fair to say that there is often — not always — a link between substance abuse and mental health. I'm going to talk about a response to the substance abuse when I talk about mental health.

We committed in our "Caring for Yukoners" section of the platform that we would improve Yukoners' access to family doctors, nurses and medical specialists by implementing a new health human resource strategy. We committed to pilot a collaborative care medical practice in cooperation with the health care community.

We committed to allocate funding for a new emergency department at the Whitehorse General Hospital to accommodate the increasing number of visits and reduce pressure on the emergency department staff. We committed to continue to build a new regional hospital in Watson Lake.

We committed to continue to build a new regional hospital in Dawson City. We committed to provide support services for children and adults with severe disabilities such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and Down syndrome in addition to the services already provided to children with autism. We committed to providing assistance to Yukoners with disabilities to modify their homes to accommodate their disability. We committed to establish a new caregiver tax credit for families caring for a relative with a disability including seniors, adults and children with severe disabilities. We committed to provide additional funding for therapies as well as money for specialized equipment, ramps and lifts to assist children with disabilities through an expanded family support for children with disabilities program. We committed to help seniors stay in their own homes longer by assisting them with minor home repairs and upgrades, and we committed to enhance the home care program including providing more help for respite care of children and dependent relatives.

We committed to these because they matter when it comes to people accessing health care.

As I indicated earlier, I would like to touch on the projects, programs and services we provide pertaining to mental health. On the capital side, the government has committed to rebuild the St. Elias adult group home and has set aside \$4.2 million for its design and construction. The new

facility will continue to prove a safe and supportive group home environment for Yukoners who suffer from cognitive disabilities. The current capacity for residents will increase by 10 spaces. It will have an improved building layout for client safety and security, dedicated programming areas, increased bed capacity and a measure of independence to better meet the needs of those residents, many of whom are dealing with mental health issues.

Yukon has sole sourced the project to Kwanlin Dun under the Yukon asset construction agreement. The expected completion is in the fall of 2015.

The Adult Services branch currently provides group home services to a total of 22 individuals who require significant support and supervision to live safely. Eight clients who cannot be accommodated in Yukon because of extremely complex care needs live in homes outside the territory.

We also committed to the replacement of the Sarah Steele facility, which will enable the delivery of an enhanced continuum of alcohol and drug services. The new building will be purpose-built to include medically supported detox, a separate youth detox unit, youth stabilization and assessment programs, continuous intake for residential treatment and expanded treatment capacity. The expanded space also allows for better integration and collaboration with other service providers, such as First Nation health programs, land-based healing, Mental Health Services and Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services. Approval for the implementation phase was provided on August 12, 2014, with a total targeted cost of \$20.989 million.

The current Sarah Steele Building was built in 1961 and has been updated many, many times in its lifetime. Breaking ground is planned for the spring of 2015 with programming beginning in the new facility planned later in 2016 — by fall. In the current building, detox has 10 beds and in the new building it will have 18. In the current building, there are no transition unit beds; in the new building there will be eight. In the current building, there are 10 in-patient treatment beds; in the new building there will be 20. In the current building, there are no youth treatment beds; in the new building there will be four.

Mental health affects everyone, even seniors. The new Alexander McDonald Lodge is expected to open in Dawson City in early 2016. Replacement of the existing facility was identified as a priority project by the government as part of its supports for seniors. The project team met with the Dawson City Heritage Advisory Committee to ensure compliance with the heritage bylaws and community meetings were held to keep Dawson residents apprised of the work of this particular project. The project was shut down for the winter months and work will resume this month, pending the weather. The existing McDonald Lodge was built in 1970 and currently houses 11 residents. The new building, as you will know, will be a 15-bed facility. The new facility is being built adjacent to the new hospital on the site of the old Dawson centre.

Locally, two needs assessments and a business case conducted for the government and the current patterns of usage of long-term care confirmed the need for a significant

number of new care facility beds in the territory. The government is being proactive in planning for the care needs, including mental health needs, of our seniors and elders and the significant number of individuals who will be living with dementia and mental health issues in the near future. Design and procurement phases are underway with construction set to begin in January of 2016.

The request for qualifications was issued just a few short weeks ago — March 10. Partnerships B.C. is being used to assist Yukon government during the procurement phase of this project. Stakeholder input from key groups will be sought throughout the design phase. Continuing Care representatives spoke before the city council on March 16, 2015 regarding the need for this facility to proceed and how it would fit into the neighbourhood of Whistle Bend. As of February 16, 2015, there were 42 individuals waiting for services in a continuing care facility. The planning is for a 150-bed facility to open in 2018. There is the option for expansion, when and if needed.

You will know that this government has invested in an interim continuing care facility in the downtown area of Whitehorse to assist seniors with complex care needs, including mental health issues. Residential property on Sixth Avenue has been purchased and will be renovated for use as a small interim continuing care facility. This will provide 10 more beds for seniors/elders care and will be opened later this fall. These beds will address the immediate need and the growing waitlist of numbers of individuals waiting for long-term care in the hospital.

Once the first phase of the new Whistle Bend long-term care facility is completed, Health and Social Services have other residential needs for the Sixth Avenue building, which will transition to meet the needs of perhaps a different population. That building, as you are well aware, is known as the Oblate Centre, the former retirement home for Oblate priests. Mr. Speaker, here is an interesting fact about that centre. The purchase of the property actually had to be approved by the Vatican. I found that quite interesting.

When I was preparing for debate today, I found it interesting to learn that in the 10 years from 2004 to 2014, Yukon's population increased by 19.7 percent. In 2014, Yukoners 65 years and older made up 10.7 percent of our population. In the next 10 years, the same age group will almost double, as the current Yukon population has 19 percent in the age group of 55 to 69. In correlation to population, the Canadian Mental Health Association reports that mental illness indirectly affects all Canadians at some time through a family member, a friend or a colleague. Twenty percent of Canadians will personally experience a mental illness in their lifetime. Mental illness affects people of all ages, education and income levels and cultures. Approximately eight percent of adults will experience major depression at some time in their lives. About one percent of Canadians will experience bipolar disorder or manic depression.

They also reported that schizophrenia affects one percent of the Canadian population. Anxiety disorders affect five percent of the household population, causing mild to severe impairment. Suicide accounts for 24 percent of all deaths

among 15- to 24-year-olds and 16 percent among 25- to 44-year-olds. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in both men and women from adolescent to middle age. The mortality rate due to suicide among men is four times the rate among women.

It is known that a complex interplay of genetic, biological, personality and environmental factors cause mental health illnesses. Almost one-half — 49 percent — of those who feel they have suffered from depression or anxiety have never gone to see a doctor about this problem. Stigma or discrimination attached to mental illness presents a serious barrier, not only to diagnosis and treatment, but also to acceptance within their community.

It is also known that mental illness can be treated effectively. “The economic cost of mental illnesses in Canada for the health care system was estimated to be at least \$7.9 billion in 1998 - \$4.7 billion in care, and \$3.2 billion in disability and early death. An additional \$6.3 billion was spent on uninsured mental health services and time off work for depression and distress that was not treated by the health care system. In 1999, 3.8% of all admissions in general hospitals (1.5 million hospital days) were due to anxiety disorders, bipolar disorders, schizophrenia, major depression, personality disorders, eating disorders and suicidal behavior.”

“It is estimated that 10-20% of Canadian youth are affected by a mental illness or disorder — the single most disabling group of disorders worldwide. Today, approximately 5% of male youth and 12% of female youth, age 12 to 19, have experienced a major depressive episode. The total number of 12-19 year olds in Canada at risk for developing depression is a staggering 3.2 million. Once depression is recognized, help can make a difference for 80% of people who are affected, allowing them to get back to their regular activities. Mental illness is increasingly threatening the lives of our children; with Canada’s youth suicide rate the third highest in the industrialized world. Suicide is among the leading causes of death in 15-24 year old Canadians, second only to accidents; 4,000 people die prematurely each year by suicide. Schizophrenia is youth’s greatest disabler as it strikes most often in the 16 to 30 year age group, affecting an estimated one person in 100. Surpassed only by injuries, mental disorders in youth are ranked as the second highest hospital care expenditure in Canada.”

Mr. Speaker, about a month ago, I had the opportunity to travel to Dawson to tour the new hospital and the existing McDonald Lodge. I also had the opportunity to see the construction of the new McDonald Lodge. During that time, I had the opportunity to make a very special announcement. Yukon is one of 15 sites and the only northern territory that was chosen to participate in a national antipsychotic reduction initiative funded by the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement.

Since beginning the project, the use of antipsychotic medications has decreased by approximately 50 percent at the special care unit in Copper Ridge Place. The goal is to reduce the use of antipsychotic medications among continuing care

residents by 15 to 20 percent of current use — as of August 2014 to September 2015.

The project will now roll out to other continuing care facilities in Yukon where that program will be appropriate. The majority of residents in continuing care facilities have a diagnosis of dementia. Dementia syndromes have different symptoms — not just memory problems — and changes in thinking, behaviour and personality are all important to pay attention to. Many individuals with dementia display behavioural challenges that make their care challenging, and antipsychotics have sometimes been used to manage those behaviours. There is an increasing recognition that antipsychotics are not the best way to manage these behaviours due to significantly increased risk of morbidity as well as mortality when these medications are used in this population.

This project is a shared initiative with the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement, an organization committed to maximizing the efficiency in health care spending, providing a more coordinated approach to complex health care needs, as the Member for Klondike had indicated, and improving patient- and family-centred experiences and outcomes through innovative and collaborative practices.

Similar projects have been launched across the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and through Alberta Health. Across these jurisdictions, rates of antipsychotic medication use were significantly decreased without significant increase in complex behaviours by those residents with dementia.

We have been looking at greater use of telehealth and other technologies — the role and options for both psychiatry and telepsychiatry. In addition, we’ve consulted with our provincial and territorial colleagues and reviewed their work in this area, some of which are now updating and expanding their strategies. We’re aligning with new capital projects and have changed some internal roles to ensure greater integration of mental health and addictions, resulting in an increased capacity and responsiveness. For example, a new community addictions program has been developed to address some of the gaps that were identified. The community addictions program will provide supports within the community, including prevention, pre-treatment, counselling and after-care supports.

There has been ongoing consultation with communities, First Nations and other key stakeholders on alcohol and drug services as part of the Sarah Steele Building redesign. This discussion included programming gaps and limitations, and we have planned changes based on this feedback as well as research. It will also provide those who have completed the in-patient treatment program with additional supports and services after they leave treatment to help them maintain sobriety and wellness in their home community.

As part of the department’s move to client-centred collaborative care, the community outreach model will collaborate with existing services with First Nation health programs to provide a broader range of substance use programming in communities, including prevention, pre-treatment, supportive counselling and after-care.

Dawson City and Watson Lake, as identified by previous needs assessments and the clinical services plan, are priority areas for innovation and delivery. We're looking to boost capacity also in Haines Junction.

I would like to extend a thanks to Many Rivers, which was contracted by Health and Social Services, for their extraordinary work. They have made significant improvements in wait times for services.

All jurisdictions and systems are challenged with meeting the needs of the population in the area of mental health and addictions. We're certainly looking at innovative and sustainable options to support the communities as well as integration across the system. We will continue to innovate and adapt our delivery, but this does not happen overnight. Many of the initiatives we are doing link together and this work on mental health addictions is supported by the wellness focus. As we know, exercise and activity are important in both prevention and during intervention.

Our focus on seniors also includes a mental health focus, including mental wellness as well as dementia.

We have introduced mental health services for continuing care clients under the direction of a clinical psychologist. We are placing a greater focus on child and youth needs through our policies, structures and youth mental health services. This will continue under the mental health and addictions strategy. Most will know that Yukon has access to a child psychiatrist.

We're continuing to seek opportunity for participation in national research such as the CIHR grant work on child and youth mental health and the current CFHI initiative on antipsychotic reduction in long-term care.

The other day I had a constituent share with me that they have a parent living in one of our facilities. They talked about the change they have seen in their parent since we began the project addressing the use of antipsychotic medications in long-term care. As an example, we're working with the Yukon Mental Health Association regarding potential training based on a B.C. Mental Health Association model for those with mild to moderate depression and anxiety.

We're still in the early stages for our strategy, which we will continue to implement, revise and address based on changing needs, evidence and best practice. I talked before about another example I would like to share.

We've partnered with Yukon Housing Corporation for the fiveplex and we are working now to secure an NGO partner to operate this new program of transition housing for clients who have been diagnosed with mental health issues. Health and Social Services will provide supportive transitional housing for individuals with mental health conditions in that fiveplex that is owned by Yukon Housing Corporation. Although led by Health and Social Services, an NGO will be selected through the request for proposals to partner with Health and Social Services in providing that type of therapeutic transitional living environment for homeless or under-housed persons with persistent mental health challenges.

As you'll recall, a sprinkler system was installed to ensure the safety and well-being of staff and residents of this complex. Yukon Housing Corporation and Health and Social

Services are sharing the cost of this, with Yukon Housing Corporation putting up \$130,000 and Health and Social Services putting up \$50,000. The building will be staffed on a 24/7 basis for five to 10 transitional clients at any given time. In conjunction with Community Services supports, daily operations will be managed by the Health and Social Services-employed mental health practitioner assisted by the NGO-hired team lead residential support worker and general residential support workers.

The focus will be twofold: stabilization, increased mental health support through treatment, counselling and medication adjustments and skill development — cooking, finances, cleaning — for a realistic reintegration into independent living situations. Referrals will come through a range of service providers such as Whitehorse General Hospital, Health and Social Services, Mental Health Services and community-based NGOs, but will likely not include Yukon Review Board clients, due to supportive housing providers in place for that clientele group already. Individual length of stay will range from six months to two years depending on the individual mental health needs, life skills, general progress and adherence to treatment plans. We will report back to government in two years on this program. We anticipate that this program will result in less admission and readmission to the Whitehorse General Hospital emergency department for acute inpatient mental health episodes and decreased ambulance transport associated with less emergency department presentation and an overall reduced use of associated acute health and social interventions for clients and an increase in community involvement to support individual stabilization and integration into safe, long-term housing.

I think it is fitting to speak about some of the assistance available for people who want to talk about their challenges. Second Opinion Society launched a distress and support line in November of 2014. The concept for this program was spearheaded by the Second Opinion Society, independent of government. Funding for this program has come primarily from private industry. Yukon government has contributed \$8,100 to assist with operations for the first six months of this initiative. The toll-free line operates each day from 7:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. and is staffed by a group of 32 volunteers who take turns taking shifts at the call centre.

Effective March of 2015, Many Rivers Counselling assumed the responsibility of the support call line. This decision is supported and endorsed by the Second Opinion Society, which will use this opportunity to focus more on its core service delivery. The distress and support line provides phone crisis distress support and information about where people can go for additional services for their mental health issues. This line is available through a toll-free number sponsored by Northwestel and Bell Canada, making it accessible throughout the territory. The phone line is open for calls nightly, as I indicated, from 7:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.

The administration, training and overseeing of the distress and support line is now managed by Many Rivers Counselling under an agreement with SOS. We know that phone line volunteers were recruited through various means, including

outreach to other community agencies, Yukon College and Volunteer Yukon. Each potential volunteer was interviewed to determine if they were a fit for the distress and support team. This was assessed through demonstration of personal interest, responses to situational questions, willingness to commit to a week-long training session, evening and nighttime availability, and the dedication of at least one year volunteering on that line.

Funding to date on particularly this program has been from the following sources: Northwestel, \$15,000 a year of value-in-kind services for phone, Internet installation, phone Internet use and advertising; the City of Whitehorse for free city-wide advertising in city facilities and on transit; Kobayashi & Zedda Architects for one year of rent-free office space; CHON-FM for 450 free radio advertisements; Yukon College for free computer systems; The Brick for free furniture; Northwestel for \$10,000 cash contribution; and Bell for a \$30,000 cash contribution. I want to thank each of our community contributors for their extraordinary donations. Yukon government Health and Social Services also donated, as I indicated, \$8,100 in cash donations for the first six months of the project.

Mr. Speaker, the fourth point I would like to address this afternoon is the Yukon Party government's response and our commitments to substance abuse. We committed to continue to implement the *Substance Abuse Action Plan*, which focuses on education and prevention, harm reduction, enforcement and treatment. Mr. Speaker, we have delivered.

We committed to continue to provide resources directly to NGOs assisting Yukoners with substance abuse and addictions issues, and we have delivered. We committed to replace the Sarah Steele detox centre with a larger, more modern facility that incorporates an after-care program, and we are delivering. We committed to continue to work with First Nations to explore opportunities for land-based treatment of substance abuse, and we have delivered. We committed to support an alcohol and drug services addiction counsellor for the Community Wellness Court.

My colleague, the Minister of Justice, can talk more about the very positive results we're seeing from the Community Wellness Court. As former Minister of Justice, I continue to be impressed by the Community Wellness Court and the community wellness centre itself. This Yukon Party government committed to review current programs for adults and youth with substance abuse and mental health issues to determine how to better address their specific needs. We committed to protecting and supporting the family. We believe supporting families with children in difficult situations can go a long way in preventing mental health issues later in life.

We committed to coordinate responses with the RCMP through the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coordinating Committee and develop a domestic violence response team. We have again delivered on our commitments to Yukoners. We committed to invest in second-stage housing for Kaushee's Place in Whitehorse. This Yukon Party government committed to working with the Government of

Canada to continue counselling services to children in homes where there have been incidents of violence. We committed to continue to work with the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to develop a made-in-the-north solution to domestic violence.

We committed to continue to engage the Government of Canada in exploring creative solutions to respond to violence against women in the north. We committed to improve the services offered to families engaged with the justice system and we have delivered. Those are our commitments.

Now let me provide an update on the strategic program redesign at Alcohol and Drug Services and operational changes that are now underway. Our government made a number of changes to Alcohol and Drug Services recently to address gaps and improve integration. ADS continues to collaborate with key stakeholders and partners on the redesign of ADS programs to ensure that enhancements address identified needs and identified gaps. It also continues advancing the medically supported detox model to provide safe withdrawal services. A new program outlines all of the programs to be offered through the new Sarah Steele facility, including a community addictions program.

As I have mentioned, the new Sarah Steele Building will begin construction this spring and it is slated for occupancy in summer 2016.

In spring 2012, Health and Social Services began working on an alcohol and drug services initiative aimed at improving services and programs for our Yukon citizens struggling with substance abuse issues. The initiative integrates several separate streams of activities. Delivery of service is greatly restricted to the current building and the new Sarah Steele Building will provide a larger environment, which will certainly improve withdrawal management and in-patient services.

ADS programming uses a trauma-informed care approach and it recognizes the potential for concurrent addiction and mental health disorders. As a result, program enhancements include a combined mental health and addiction approach to delivering services, including collaboration with mental health and formal protocols with Whitehorse General Hospital and the Department of Justice. Key activities include: transition from a social detox to a medically supported detox, which has resulted in a number of key changes; implementation of a new staffing model with additional staff, including front-line LPNs to provide medication to support clients' withdrawal; an RN to oversee quality assurance and risk-management practices; and a social worker to assist in case planning, community liaison and all necessary clinical training.

There was a decreased use of emergency services at Whitehorse General Hospital, purchase of new medical equipment, supplies and medicines, training of new staff and implementation of pharmacological protocols by nursing staff for when and how medications can be administered to clients going through acute withdrawal and for determining when clients must be sent to the Whitehorse General Hospital emergency room.

Key activities also include support services and protocol agreements that are being developed with service providers to

formalize appropriate and timely information sharing, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and responsibilities and service coordination. The focus has been on developing agreements with the Salvation Army, Whitehorse General Hospital emergency room, RCMP and the Department of Justice. Key activities also include ADS's work with the Northern Institute of Social Justice in consultation with Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon College's First Nations initiatives program, the Department of Justice and RCMP, to develop training on Yukon First Nations cross-cultural awareness and the impact of trauma on addictions. This training is mandatory for all ADS staff and has been taken by many other departmental staff.

The design of the new purpose-built Sarah Steele facility will offer further enhanced programming that includes continuous intake into in-patient services, better withdrawal management, better services to youth requiring detoxification and treatment and the transitional living unit for pre- and post-treatment.

It's important to note that since 2011, Health and Social Services has seen a 58-percent reduction in the number of referrals from detox to the ER as a result of the medically supported detox within ADS.

I would like to provide you with a bit of an update on services provided by ADS for youth and families. Mental health and addiction services for youth and their families is a collaborative process within the department and work is ongoing to ensure effective integration of supports. Alcohol and Drug Services offers a range of services to support youth and families to prevent and/or reduce the harm associated with substance abuse and improve health and well-being.

The new Sarah Steele Building will have a space dedicated to family and youth counselling, which in the past has been limited. ADS will continue to work collaboratively with other government and community partners to provide effective mental health and addiction programming for youth and their families. Health and Social Services' Alcohol and Drug Services' outpatient services operates a youth counselling program that provides specialized services for youth and their families here in Whitehorse. With the new Sarah Steele facility, ADS will offer a youth stabilization and assessment program. This program will assist youth and their families in obtaining appropriate treatment options.

ADS youth counsellors also provide services in three of the high schools here in Whitehorse. Work is underway in Health and Social Services to develop a broad, integrated case management approach across the spectrum of care. For example, ADS has worked collaboratively with Family and Children's Services to ensure that substance abuse treatment services are integrated for youth and parents. Similar work is underway with Mental Health Services to ensure a cohesive service. Youth services are being delivered throughout the patient counselling program at ADS in the form of the provision of youth and family counselling at F.H. Collins, Porter Creek Secondary and Vanier Secondary schools. Support is provided to the students who reside in the

Gadzoosdaa student residence and counselling services are offered at the Sarah Steele Building.

The new Sarah Steele facility will include detoxification services specifically for youth that are separate from the adult detox program, and enhanced program space for our youth and their families. The majority of these youth are already receiving support from the department.

I would also like to provide an update on the community addictions program provided by ADS that the Member for Klondike touched on. The department has been collaborating with key partners and stakeholders — including First Nation health programs, Mental Health Services, Many Rivers, Community Health as well as the Department of Justice — to identify the gaps in services, particularly in these communities. Community needs assessments were completed in Watson Lake and Dawson City, and subsequently a clinical service plan was developed. This information has been very helpful in reframing and directing service planning.

A new community addictions program has been developed to address the gaps that were identified. The community addictions program will provide supports within the community including prevention, pre-treatment, counselling and after-care supports. It will also provide those who have completed the in-patient treatment program with additional supports and services after they leave treatment to help them maintain sobriety and wellness in their home communities. That was part of the department's move to client-centred collaborative care. The community outreach model will collaborate with existing services and First Nation health programs to provide a broader range of substance use programming in communities including prevention, pre-treatment, supportive counselling and after-care.

Alcohol and Drug Services offers a range of services to support individuals, families and communities to prevent and/or reduce the harms associated with substance abuse and to improve their health and well-being. The bulk of after-care programming is provided here in Whitehorse, as you'll know, Mr. Speaker. Detoxification, in-patient and outpatient services provide after-care support to Yukoners who have substance use issues, but this is almost exclusively available in the city.

I will note that the department is aware that First Nations and others have identified the lack of community-based after-care services as a significant barrier to maintaining sobriety once clients leave treatment. Other self-help forms of after-care include AA or Narcotics Anonymous and SMART Recovery. I know AA is available in Dawson City, Watson Lake, Carcross and Teslin as well as Whitehorse. All communities have access to telehealth AA meetings every Friday, I believe, at 1:30 p.m.

ADS is realigning its prevention and outreach programs to more effectively deliver services in a collaborative manner with other agencies. I can advise the members opposite that we will be undertaking more with respect to this program in the near future.

I spoke earlier about the correlation between autism and mental health issues. It is not uncommon for people living with other types of developmental disabilities to also suffer

from mental health issues. The services to persons with disabilities, or the SPD program, currently serves approximately 160 adults with cognitive and developmental disabilities. In the past year, the department has collaborated with service providers to enhance residential and day-programming services.

In 2014, the department also enhanced stakeholder input by creating an advisory committee comprised of adults with disabilities, families of children and adults with disabilities, and department officials. Services to persons with disabilities continues to collaborate efforts across the department in transition planning for youth with disabilities aging into the adult support system. The new services to persons with disabilities program component of the adult assessment team and FASD diagnostic clinic developed over the past year is currently taking referrals for adults who will be assessed during this spring.

The department is in the process of hiring a manager to oversee the continued redefining and the expansion of the services to persons with disabilities program. I am given to understand that there are 65 individuals in residential programs, 53 individuals in supportive independent living programs, and 26 individuals in day programs.

The services to persons with disabilities unit provides or funds a range of different services for adults with cognitive and developmental disabilities, including mental health issues. There are case management services — collaborating with clients and advocating on behalf of clients within a variety of systems, information and referral services. There are the residential care services — so both in-group residents or approved caregiver homes — and the supported independent living — or commonly referred to as SIL — services. There is also day programming, I know, at Teegatha'Oh Zheh, Helping Hands and Aspen. There are employment supports for adults with disabilities through Challenge — Disability Resource Group. There is respite care to families caring for adult relatives with developmental disabilities. New in 2015 is the adult assessment team and FASD diagnostic clinic.

Services to persons with disabilities has hired a new adult assessment coordinator to oversee Yukon's new local assessment and diagnostic clinic. Effective this spring, assessments and diagnostic clinic for adults with FASD and complex care needs began taking referrals. That was in February of this year. Services to persons with disabilities is working internally and interdepartmentally to enhance transition planning to ensure a seamless transition into adult programming.

I would also like to note that a new approved caregiver home fee structure was developed in 2013 to more accurately reflect levels of care provided by these contracted homes. It was implemented on January 1, 2014. Caregivers now receive vacation pay and funding for respite care.

Having a son with a severe disability, I know the benefits of respite care. Recently I read an article on how respite care provides the opportunity for parents to take time away from the pressures of parenting in order to recharge their batteries, allowing them to return to their family feeling refreshed and

ready to continue down that journey. The article went on to say that if you look into the possibility of using respite care, it in no way means that you are a bad parent. In fact, it indicates quite the opposite. Respite is meant to give you a rest, a break, so that you can be a better parent. It is important to remember that respite care is neither a punishment nor a reward for your child. It's really about you as a parent and, as I understand it, an opportunity for the parents to take care of their mental health needs. Parents who seek respite services are not punishing their children by sending them away; rather they are asking for time to recharge and rest so they can be the parent that their child deserves.

It says: "Nor is respite care a reward for children with challenging behaviors. Yes, children in respite care may be spending recreational and enjoyable time with adults who are not their parents, but the purpose of respite care is to allow everyone some time away from the pressures of family so that, when they come back together, they are better able to move forward."

On improving mental health: "Respite is not only for families in crisis." The article I read recommends "...that parents take a regular respite break rather than wait until a crisis builds. Regularly scheduled respite care can give you the strength to strive forward knowing that a rest/break has been planned. It can also be a time that your child looks forward to."

Moving along, Mr. Speaker — the Yukon Party government remains committed to providing social work services through qualified staff who reside in rural Yukon. I'm pleased to see that we are working with Yukon First Nations and with Yukon College to support students by offering practicum opportunities in rural Yukon, that we're also actively promoting regional social work positions as a rewarding career opportunity to Yukon social work graduates, and that we are providing housing for practicum students in a few select communities.

As part of the discussions today, I would like to talk about homelessness in Whitehorse, housing vulnerable persons and some of the challenges we face when trying to help people with difficult mental illnesses. Addressing homelessness is a challenge faced by many jurisdictions across Canada, and our government remains committed to ensuring housing needs for Yukoners are addressed. This is why Health and Social Services continues to work with Yukon Housing Corporation and other community partners to provide long-term housing solutions and support services for vulnerable Yukoners, particularly persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

We don't know how many people in Yukon are truly homeless; however, we do know that there are individuals without shelter. The Yukon Party government contributes over half a million dollars annually, through Health and Social Services, for the operation and maintenance of costs of the new 14-unit Options for Independence complex on Fourth Avenue. Health and Social Services continues to partner with the Salvation Army to support the development of a new, larger facility in the Whitehorse area.

In March of this year, the Premier, Salvation Army Lieutenant-Colonel Jim Champ and I announced the construction of the Salvation Army Centre of Hope in downtown Whitehorse. The Premier acknowledged that the Salvation Army has a long history of serving and supporting vulnerable populations in Yukon, and we are extremely pleased to be working in partnership with them to build this new facility.

The Salvation Army Centre of Hope will provide a range of support services and will feature a 25-space emergency shelter, drop-in space, increased dining room capacity and 22 transitional housing units. It will replace the Salvation Army's aging facility at the corner of Fourth and Black Street.

During the announcement, Mr. Champ said, "The Salvation Army greatly appreciates the support and partnership with the Yukon government so that we can continue to serve some of the most vulnerable in this community and be a transforming influence."

He also went on to say they "...look forward to the day that we can open the doors of this new facility so that those who need it will have a safe place to live and the supports they need."

Earlier this year, the Yukon government purchased three lots bordering Fourth Avenue and Alexander Street as the future site of this centre. I've seen first-hand the many ways the Salvation Army serves people with complex needs. They are important contributors to the health and well-being of our community. My colleagues and I are so pleased to continue to support this organization.

In total, the Yukon government is contributing over \$10 million for the lot purchase, design development and construction of this centre. The Salvation Army will work closely with the departments of Health and Social Services and Highways and Public Works, which will provide a project manager as well as technical expertise and project oversight to deliver the facility on time and on budget. The Salvation Army plans to sell its existing facility once it has moved its operations into the new building.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal strategy to deal with homelessness in Yukon is to destroy the economy and to drive Yukoners away. The unemployment rate was high and no one needed a home here because they all left to work someplace else. This government is proud to deliver on our commitment to replace and to expand the homeless shelter in Whitehorse. I'm proud that we have rebuilt the economy.

I've already talked about our transitional housing for persons with mental health issues, so I won't go over that material again. But for my fifth point this afternoon — because I believe that we should also be talking about healthy, positive alternatives — I'm going to spend a little bit of time talking about some health and wellness initiatives. Health and wellness initiatives have been proven effective in decreasing mental health issues. The Yukon Party government is supporting sports and recreation. We've worked with communities to access funding for improvements and upgrades to recreational facilities. We've rebuilt the Ross River arena. We've invested in the improvements to

recreation infrastructure in Dawson. We've assisted the City of Whitehorse to host the 2012 Arctic Winter Games, including financial support for the upgrades to Mount Sima. We've provided funding for Softball Yukon to assist them in hosting the 2012 Women's World Fastpitch Championships. We've renewed the active living strategy. We've continued to support Yukon athletes and coaches in the pursuit of excellence.

I think it's important to drive people to the department website, as there are a number of very helpful links for wellness. There is far too much information about health and wellness to discuss here this afternoon on the floor of this Legislature and I am mindful of my time, although I've got a lot of content that I want to get into this debate.

Let me summarize some of the comments on our wellness webpage: Wellness grows in communities that are safe and inclusive, and provide cultural, sport and recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

Goodness knows that we have done our part to create safe and inclusive communities. We have worked to provide cultural opportunities. We are working to create sport and recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. Wellness includes curiosity and lifelong learning that begins in the home and is nurtured in schools, workplaces and the community at large. Wellness is supported when there are employment opportunities for all. Wellness is about eating healthy foods and being physically active. Ideally, activities that promote wellness are a part of our everyday life, allowing us to live, work, play and raise a family in one of the most incredible places in the world.

It is important to pay attention to all aspects of well-being. The government provided funding when the federal THAF ended and, as a result, Health and Social Services will be increasing rural mental health nurses from two to three, as well as support workers as required in communities on a case-by-case basis. They will also be working in collaborative practice with the rural community addiction workers.

Part of the new federal funding is for chronic disease. We know that with complex chronic disease, there is a risk of depression. The system focus will include identification and transition to the mental health supports from the chronic disease group.

We are also building on the work we did with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, which will ensure we are moving ahead based on the best practices and the best evidence. We are involving stakeholders and First Nations, through CYFN, in this work.

The new Whistle Bend care facility includes a dedicated mental health unit that will provide specialized services for those seniors with complex mental health issues. Our focus and that of our partners is on addressing access. Already we are seeing significant improvements — Many Rivers Counselling, a significant partner of the overall system, has reduced wait times in Whitehorse from two or three months to two or four weeks. In regional communities, the wait-list is typically a week. Urgent needs are seen earlier as a priority.

To provide better intake and counselling services for postpartum depression, two Many Rivers' counsellors undertook specialized training. Postpartum depression individuals are seen on very short notice.

We are now taking those learnings to see how we can spread the innovation within addiction services and Mental Health Services. Health and Social Services and Yukon Housing Corporation are also jointly addressing the issue, and I have already noted the role with the new fiveplex transitional housing. On a case-by-case basis, Mental Health Services support workers are providing support to identified residents in the Yukon Housing Corporation accommodations to assist in ensuring management and ongoing housing. This may include dealing with persons whose mental illnesses result in hoarding behaviours, difficulties with neighbours, or other issues that create issues in their housing.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I want to spend some time talking about the very good work that the Department of Health and Social Services has been doing with stakeholders, particularly around the child and youth mental health and addictions framework for the territory that was just completed last year. This framework was developed through a partnership of researchers from McMaster and Dalhousie universities and a working group from across Yukon — Department of Health and Social Services, and Education department, KDFN and CYFN.

The framework incorporates feedback from interviews and focus groups with nearly 100 people in Yukon, including the voices of young people with mental disorders, families, services providers and policy-makers from Whitehorse and rural Yukon that identified strengths and gaps in services.

Key informants from elsewhere in Canada and other countries share their approaches and advice with our territory. General support and suggestions on a draft of the framework were received at a policy dialogue held in May 2014, which brought together young people with mental health disorders, service providers, policy-makers and individuals from First Nation communities. The proposed child and youth mental health framework espouses a needs-based approach that uses severity of mental health care needs as the metric for access to mental health care and for designing a framework to meet those needs.

The starting point for all components of the framework is to address the most serious acute mental health care needs and then continue down the spectrum of needs. The framework was based on the best available evidence on what works when it comes to meeting the mental health and addictions needs of children and youth combined with the experience and wisdom of practitioners, service recipients, program managers and policy-makers in Yukon.

It lays out a vision for a comprehensive continuum of mental health and addictions care programming across the domains of promotion, prevention, treatment and ongoing care, and research and evaluation tailored to the Yukon context. It recognizes the importance of promoting mental well-being, preventing and providing care for mental health

problems, and providing evidence-based treatments for mental health disorders.

It adopts an integrated approach to mental health and substance use disorders. Youth who present with substance abuse disorder should be assessed for mental disorders and treated — vice versa for youth with a mental disorder. It is made up of several components — core values, common language, mental health needs, comprehensive programming, service delivery model — and is informed by Evergreen, Canada's national child and youth mental health policy framework.

This framework is intended to assist decision-makers in strategic planning, priority setting and resource allocation. It emphasizes the need for collaborative processes across government departments, First Nation communities, agencies and the private sector as they work toward common goals. It is built upon and supports the notion that young people and their families must help shape all mental health and addiction care activities. A system of care must be based on and responsive to their needs.

It recognizes the importance of strengthening child and youth mental health services in all Yukon communities. It allows children, youth and their families to receive care in their home communities to the greatest extent possible and establishes a rationale and efficient means of ensuring that children and youth with more complex needs are able to access care from the most appropriate and specialized service providers.

Located in Whitehorse, the most specialized mental health services for children and youth with severe and persistent mental disorders and complex needs will be provided by existing MHS staff with linkages to out-of-territory child and youth psychiatrists and specialists. In addition, mental health staff, pediatric and psychiatric physicians, private psychologists and other practitioners and interested family physicians will receive enhanced competency training in the area of child and youth mental health. This creates a pool of providers who can provide consultation to health and human service providers across our territory. An expanded Mental Health Services will supervise training and mental health competencies, as discussed further in the report.

Regional hubs — mental health care will be provided in primary health care settings by existing primary care providers and/or by human service workers with advanced competency training. The hub-located mental health services providers will be available on-site for consultations and provide collaborative care for youth referred by communities. Each hub would be supported by a telehealth consultation service from Whitehorse and will be able to refer to Whitehorse for more complex mental health needs.

There are also community-based providers who will receive basic competency training and will provide basic mental health care. Depending on interest, availability and skill set, advanced training may also be offered. Youth health centres in schools enable young people to easily access a range of services, including primary health, public health

services and basic mental health care. Integrating mental health services can also play a role in reducing stigma.

Universal and targeted promotion and prevention programs will be offered by a range of primary health and human service providers with appropriate training across all of these sites and within schools. With basic competency training, teachers, student support and administrative staff in schools, and youth service organization workers connect as gatekeepers to identify and refer children and youth who require mental health care.

Peer mental health educator programs for youth are recommended. Peer mental health literacy education programs can be useful, but peer support or mentoring or peer counselling programs were not recommended in the report.

The following options for enhanced treatment services and supports were also identified. Out-of-territory support can be enhanced by developing a network of specialists to offer support augmented by rotating residency placements in Whitehorse. Also, a three-bed community crisis intervention centre could be established in Whitehorse on a trial basis with the possibility of being replicated in individual communities, depending on its success. The purpose of that would be to stabilize young people in crisis and conduct an initial assessment, provide a step-down option from the hospital and provide respite for parents. This strategy is expensive and we need to look at it very carefully. It would require considerable development and planning, additional staff and additional staff training.

During basic competency training, community-based providers will be assisted to develop community-specific plans for responding to an individual family crisis. The purpose of a mobile crisis team would be to use community-based resources to manage crises before they escalated to a level requiring a crisis bed or hospitalization in another community, where possible.

Housing needs were also recognized: supportive housing for youth with severe and complex mental disorders and substance abuse; also crisis, short-term and stable housing for at-risk youth who do not have a stable housing situation; and stable housing options for young people more generally. I know there has been a considerable amount of work done already in this area. There were also suggestions, including options for enhanced prenatal and parenting programs, on-the-land First Nation programming, and school-based as well as family support programs.

Dialogue participants prioritized supports for children and families from infancy through high school years as follows: first, support for parents to improve mental health of infants and preschoolers up to age five, which was seen to be particularly important in First Nation communities; second, social and emotional learning in schools for middle-school children; third, mental health literacy for young people in secondary school.

School-based programming would be adapted to realities in different communities and supplement existing programs. These promotion and prevention measures should be

consistent with the wellness plan for Yukon's children and families.

The group was in agreement about the importance of establishing a consistent approach to evaluating programs' effectiveness and setting standards across all mental health care services as enhancements to the framework recommendation of a common data set. Emphasis was placed on the importance of selecting a small number of mental health care indicators and creating an annual score card on how well these indicators have been achieved. Note that suicide rates should not be chosen as an indicator of effectiveness of mental health care, as they reflect upon complex factors beyond the provision of mental health care.

This framework is a basis for the joint planning of child and youth mental health care in our territory. It supports collaborative actions, setting goals, managing budgets, conducting evaluations and research and transparent reporting. Mental health care must be easily accessible and available through the entire health and human services systems, not compartmentalized within Mental Health Services if it is to meet the needs expressed by Yukon stakeholders.

Children, youth and families in every community will have expanded programming to promote early childhood development, socio-emotional learning, mental health literacy, self-help resources and more timely and appropriate responses to mental health and substance abuse problems and disorders.

Mr. Speaker, this approach will require transformative thinking, participant understanding of an adherence to a new way of working and the establishment of structural and funding approaches that don't fit existing frameworks.

All mental health care activities must be shaped and co-directed by young people and families to help develop a system of care that is based on, aligned with, and responsive to their needs. This will require meaningful participation of young people and families in all aspects of planning, delivery and evaluation. Adherence to best available scientific evidence to guide all interventions and ongoing evaluation will continuously determine what is working well and what is not working well. The willingness and mandate to change what is delivered as new and better evidence becomes available as an evaluation results become known is required to make this framework a living document.

A general consensus on both the overall direction of the reforms needed to achieve these goals and a willingness to look at existing self-interest and traditional ways of operating among people and organizations that currently are involved in the delivery of health and human services is needed. Priorities and timelines will need to be set, new and existing programs require development and evaluations of expected outcomes must reflect economic, cultural and socio-political realities.

Moving forward, we'll be looking at this report to establish an implementation committee that includes Yukon government, First Nations and NGOs, private practitioners, family members and service recipients. We'll look at reallocation and expand existing training resources toward mental health competency development through the health and human service workforce, under the guidance of an

expanded mental health service, as follows: just looking at basic competency development, working with communities outside of Whitehorse to identify health and human service workers in each community who would be best placed with appropriate training to deliver mental health care; also advanced competency development for existing primary health care and health and human service workers in selected regional hubs in the territory; child and youth mental health treatment for mental health clinicians, pediatricians, psychologists, psychiatrists, and interested family physicians within Whitehorse; also reviewing existing telehealth capacities in communities throughout the Yukon to offer rapid mental health consultation between communities, regional hubs and specialized services in Whitehorse and other outlying communities; pursue research to develop elements for a common dataset tailored to Yukon circumstances to develop a web application to offer specialized support to families, children and health and human service providers throughout the territory in line with the framework recommendations; and review of the out-of-territory placements for youth with behavioural disorders and interventions offered to this population.

We also need to consider the development of cost-effective, in-territory, evidence-based interventions and modify the use of resources for out-of-territory placements based on this review.

Those were just some comments from the child and youth mental health and addictions framework for the Yukon that, as I said, was completed in 2014, but as this motion speaks to Motion No. 893 — that this House urges the Government of Yukon to follow through on its commitment to develop a mental health strategy — that is exactly what this government is doing.

Ms. Stick: I want to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing forward Motion No. 893. It is an important one and it's one that the NDP Official Opposition has been asking questions about in this House for many years now — a mental health strategy.

In 2012, a committee came here to Whitehorse to launch the national strategy on mental illness and mental health, entitled *Changing Directions, Changing Lives* — and that was the Mental Health Commission of Canada that came here. This was the first stop; this is where they launched quite a thick document that really looked across Canada at all the territories, provinces, age groups and our diverse populations, and came up with a strategy.

Its aim was to help improve the mental health and well-being of all people living in Canada and to create mental health systems that could truly meet the needs of people living with mental health problems and illnesses and support their families. There were over a hundred recommendations. I won't read those off, but I will speak to the six strategic directions that to me were critical and were important.

The first one was to promote mental health across the lifespan of people in homes, schools and workplaces and prevent mental illness and end suicide wherever possible. The

second one was to foster recovery and well-being for people of all ages living with mental health problems and illnesses and, importantly, to uphold their rights. The third one was to provide access of the right combination of services, treatments and supports when and where people need them. The fourth one was to reduce disparities, risk factors and access to mental health services, and strengthen the response to the needs of diverse communities and northerners. That one strategic direction spoke to northerners. They recognized that our needs were different, given the breadth of our areas and the smallness of the populations. The fifth strategic direction was to work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to address their mental health needs, acknowledging their distinct circumstances, rights and culture. The sixth was to mobilize leadership, improve knowledge and foster collaboration at all levels.

This was to be the foundation of how Canada, the provinces and territories could move forward in developing their own mental health strategies. This covered about three days, I believe, and I attended the last day. I distinctly remember hearing from the members of the commission who came, who travelled here — I listened to them give their commitment to come back to the Yukon to help. It was their desire to assist the Yukon in coming up with a strategy.

When I say the Yukon, I don't mean just the Yukon government. There were a lot of people there, Mr. Speaker. There were community nurses, mental health workers, social workers, early childhood educators, teachers, Justice staff, Department of Health and Social Services staff — the list goes on. They came, they participated, they came up with their own goals for the Yukon and they were eager — eager to get on with it, to get on with the work of coming up with not just a strategy, but implementing a strategy that would address the mental health needs of all Yukoners in all communities.

That was three years ago. This government should be well aware of the need for a mental health strategy. They have their own reports, their own assessments — many that have been done over the years — saying this is what we need. I'll only go back as far as 2008 — a report that came out from the Department of Health and Social Services called the *Yukon Health Care Review*, which identified mental health as one of the top four areas needing attention and programming for all Yukoners.

Another report, entitled *Improving Treatment and Support for Yukon Girls and Women with Substance Use Problems and Addictions*, spoke to the need for collaboration and working together with different units, organizations and governments, including mental health. We have the *Kids Count* report, the *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy*, we have the *Health and health-related behaviours among young people in Yukon* and we have the clinical services plan. We do have a wellness strategy, Mr. Speaker, that talks about our need to be sure that we're eating the right foods, we're getting the exercise, that we have early childhood education, and all those things that will lead us to wellness — and it's all on-line.

If you're a family living in poverty, if you're a single parent, you don't have time to be looking up wellness strategies. Your stressors are: How are you going to feed your kids? How are you going to pay next month's rent? How is that heating bill going to be paid? Those are the stressors, Mr. Speaker, and those stressors can lead to mental health problems. A wellness strategy is good, but it needs to meet the needs of everyone.

The clinical services plan was, for me, a call to action. It was released in March 2014 — just over a year ago — and the information in it is striking. They spoke to health care professionals across this territory in all communities. They talked to social workers. They talked to First Nations. They talked to physicians. Over and over, recommendations came back about mental health in the Yukon and about the need for a strategy that takes into account our population, our diversity, our many small communities, our health care costs and, finally, our lack of coordinated and collaborative mental health care and services.

The Member for Klondike read this report into the record, but I think it bears repeating. I think that these findings need to be listened to and reacted to, and a strategy completed. In that report we read — and I quote: “Mental health services are critically deficient outside of Whitehorse...” It goes on: “...not a single interview...” — not one. They spoke to people in every community and “not a single interview during this study was silent on the critical need for expanded and a re-tooled mental health service” — critical, expanded and re-tooled mental health services. It went on and talked about access to care — to a psychiatrist. A psychiatrist — limited supply and certainly not able to get to all of the communities. It talked about wait times for mental health services for children and youth and mentioned that it would take up to one year, although many were triaged on an urgent basis. I imagine that every parent who has a child who is suffering — or for whom they have concerns about their mental health — is not okay with the wait, is not okay with the triage that says, “Not critical — you will have to wait.” I can't think of one parent who would think that is okay.

It talked about referrals and access to mental health services being impeded by the requirement of a diagnosis, which brings us right back to a limited number of psychiatrists. Lower functioning groups of patients who would benefit from care continue to be underserved. We hear talk about dual diagnosis, whether it is autism, a person with a cognitive disability or anything else — dual diagnosis. They are underserved. An increasing amount of mental health assessment and treatment is being sent out of the territory, generally at a significant cost to government. I imagine it is always a significant cost to government to send people away.

I'm sure the treatment out there is great, but you are taking them away from their family, you're taking them away from their communities and you're expecting them to come back and family is to understand everything that has happened. It's not a great way for people to be treated. The other great way not to treat people is to hold them in jail. That is not appropriate and it happens. It happens.

One of the other statements in this was that social and support services are the largest deficit in rural and remote Yukon Territory. We talk about wanting collaborative care and mental health nurses working with social workers and with other individuals in the communities, but if our social and support services are the largest deficit in rural Yukon, that makes it difficult.

Rural access to mental health services is described as deficient by local caregivers and, right now, we have two great workers in the communities, both mental health psychiatric nurses. Good news: we're getting a third. I'm sure they would appreciate that, because they are working in very difficult circumstances. They are on the road. They are expected to drive to communities and back in one day. They're being asked to go for one day, provide what support they can and leave, even if that's not what that community needs at that time or on that day.

The division between Many Rivers and mental health nurses is very fuzzy. I think the Member for Klondike described that very well. I've heard the same. A person in a crisis, suicidal, in a hospital or in a community — it doesn't usually happen between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. — most often not. When they are in crisis is when they need the support. Not tomorrow. And there shouldn't be this debate about whose job it is to provide support. Many Rivers is in many of the communities and that's a good thing. But not every Many Rivers counsellor has that training to do psychiatric counselling or crisis counselling. They do good jobs. I am not criticizing anyone. But it's a hard job.

Having been in a community where you see a mental health worker maybe once or twice a month, if you're a family member trying to care for somebody who might be in crisis and is not doing well, once or twice a month might not be enough support for you. It might not.

There are just a couple things I can't leave out. One of them is children and youth. We have heard from parents — I have heard from parents, school administrators and teachers concerned about children with mental health concerns and not enough supports for them. Sometimes the only coping mechanism for a school is to have to send the child home, leaving parents struggling. How do they cope? How do they manage their work? What if they're a single parent? They are not receiving the support they need.

Let's talk about people medevaced to Whitehorse with a mental health crisis only to be discharged back to their community without a plan for the individual or for the community. Let's look at what the coroner said: “The scope of services for chronic, serious, persistent mental health conditions is inconsistent across Yukon. Management of serious mental health issues in rural Yukon can be dependent on the scope and experience of local service providers. Limitations in scope may exist where staff is not as experienced, familiar and/or comfortable...”

The coroner made recommendations to the department of Health and Social Services: “Implement a policy requiring that rural Yukon service providers working to support clients with serious, chronic mental health issues consult with Mental

Health Service clinicians to collaborate on management and support options...Develop a protocol for follow-up when an individual has been released from hospital to a rural community following a suicide attempt. Steps should be taken to ensure communication regarding short- and long-term treatment planning and crisis intervention strategies... Ensure that all people of Yukon have access to consistent to mental health services.”

Mr. Speaker, we don't have that now and we need it. We need a strategy that brings everyone together. People are waiting. First Nations and organizations want to work collaboratively to come up with a good mental health strategy; a strategy that will see our wait times decrease and that will see our suicide rates come down, because I do think that's critical.

It should be a strategy with clear timelines, clear measurements. Are we doing it right? Are we meeting peoples' needs? What have we got wrong? How can we improve it? What are our numbers? It should be a strategy that invites everyone to be a part of this. We're not asking the government to do this in isolation, because it won't work. There are First Nations out there now trying to provide the best. Everyone would benefit from working together, but we need a strategy and it's long overdue — long overdue.

The reports have been in. This department has had them. It's about mental health, whether it is children, our youth, our coworkers, individuals, our neighbours, our family members. Mental health does strike all of us in one way or another and it's important that we take this information that has been gathered and, rather than just look at it and go off in another direction, we create a strategy that is going to work for the Yukon. We are 36,000 people. We should be able to be creative and implement something that is amazing, that works and that meets the needs of the many individuals in the Yukon — their families, their neighbours, the people who support them — because we all need that.

Thirty-six-thousand people — we should be able to come up with something that's amazing. We should be able to lead this country and show it how it can be done, instead of delaying, with pieces of mental health services here and there.

I support this, Mr. Speaker. It's important for all Yukoners.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It is a privilege for me to stand in the House and speak to this motion. I want to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this motion forward, and for the comments from my fellow colleagues on both sides of the House here.

This is of great importance. This was an issue — a conversation piece — that I had when I was on the campaign trail and something that has been near and dear to my heart, Mr. Speaker, and to my constituents'. This motion calls on us to follow through on a commitment to develop a mental health strategy.

Some things have been said in the House today, and I just want to clarify for my riding — I hope that the constituents of my riding and the hard-working health professionals out there

have this opportunity to hear this and maybe read it in Hansard.

We know that Dawson City and Watson Lake have been identified by previous needs assessments and clinical services plans, and are priority areas for innovation delivery, but we're also — this government's looking to boost the capacity in Haines Junction.

I would be remiss if we didn't talk about Many Rivers, which is contracted by Health and Social Services. Many Rivers is in my community, and they do a great job when it comes to improvements on wait times. They're always challenged with meeting the needs and population of the area when it comes to mental health and addiction.

I know we're looking at innovative and sustainable options to support our communities, as well as innovation across the system, and we'll continue to innovate and adapt our delivery. But when I say I would be remiss if I didn't thank Many Rivers, I also would be very remiss if I didn't thank our community nurses and the doctors who go out there; also our home care workers, the RCMP and all those who work within the First Nations. A key element is our elders and our seniors in our community and in the society we have, and some of the guidance we get from them.

There are many initiatives we are doing all linked together — this work on mental health/addiction. It's supported by the wellness focus as well. We know exercise and activity are important in both prevention and during intervention.

I'm happy to see that we're placing a greater focus on child and youth needs through our policies, our structures, our youth mental health services, and this will continue under the mental health and the addictions strategy. Most will know the Yukon has access to a child psychiatrist.

We're still early in the stages of our strategy, which we'll continue to implement and revise and address, based on the changing needs, the evidence and, of course, best practices. We know that Many Rivers counselling assumed responsibility for the support call line, and this is important. I do mention this to my constituents. The distress and support line provides a phone for crisis — it's distress, and it supports this information about where people can go for additional services for mental health. I think that's important for rural Yukoners.

Our Yukon Party government committed to review current programs for adults and youth with substance abuse and mental health issues to determine how better to address their needs. Of course, through this, they have been collaborating with the key partners and stakeholders, including our First Nation health programs, and that is the stuff that we have in our communities — Mental Health Services, Many Rivers, Community Health and Justice to identify the gaps in services, particularly in the communities.

When I first got elected, one of the things I heard on the doorsteps was the fact that the THAF had ended and this was federal money. I know how busy our mental health worker in Haines Junction was. I had the opportunity to speak with her on more than one occasion about this. The department was

looking — and I worked — and I do want to thank my fellow colleague. He is now the Minister of Education, but he was the Minister of Health and Social Services. I went to him and I want to thank him for the work that he did in being able to increase our rural mental health nurses from two to three — we kept our position out there in Haines Junction — as well as the support that he put toward the workers and the communities on a case-by-case basis.

It was really important for me to have these conversations with my fellow colleague, and I thank the new Minister of Health and Social Services. He and I have already had this conversation when it comes to mental health.

It's a collaborative practice with the rural community addiction — this works and it's working, and I think we're doing a good job. I am happy that the Member for Klondike brought this motion forward. I do believe that mental health — it is important that we address the issues with it and that we support it, and I think we're doing it on this side. Is there more work to be done? There is more work to be done in Education, and there is more work to be done in Health and Social Services, in Highways and Public Works, and Environment and everywhere else, but I am just glad to be able to give a little bit of a rural perspective — and the work that happened collaboratively on this side — but it is nice to also see the interest from the members opposite on that side.

Ms. Moorcroft: I am pleased to rise in support of Motion No. 893, which the Member for Klondike has introduced and we're debating this afternoon, and thank him for bringing it forward. I also want to thank my colleague, the Member for Riverdale South, who is the health critic for the Official Opposition and who has been asking questions about a mental health strategy for many years now.

She spoke about the Mental Health Commission of Canada, which came to Whitehorse in 2012 to launch the national strategy on mental illness and mental health, which is called *Changing direction, changing lives*. The Mental Health Commission of Canada is working to help improve mental health and well-being for all people living in Canada and to make sure that our mental health system takes a broad approach to meet the needs of not only people living with mental health problems and illnesses, but also their families.

The strategic directions of that national mental health strategy, I think, would be important to inform a mental health strategy for the Yukon. First would be to promote mental health across the lifespan, so that is in homes and workplaces and in schools, and, I would include, in correctional facilities — and I will speak more about that later — in order to prevent mental illness and suicide whenever possible.

The second is to uphold the rights of people with mental health problems and illnesses and foster their recovery and well-being, no matter what their age is.

The third strategic direction was to make sure that access is provided in the right combination of treatments and supports when and where people need them.

The fourth was reducing disparities in risk factors and access to mental health services and strengthening the

response to the needs of diverse communities and northerners. Here we are northerners, and we also have many diverse needs in our communities, which are so different — between Old Crow in the far north and Watson Lake in the southeast.

The fifth direction was working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to address their mental health needs and acknowledge their distinct circumstances, rights and cultures.

The sixth they identified as a strategic direction to mobilize the leadership to improve knowledge and to foster collaboration.

It seems to me that those strategic directions could be applied to any number of issues that governments face, but certainly they are important to mental health.

The government has a number of reports that have been done over the years in looking at what services are currently offered. My colleague spoke about the Yukon health care review and how it identified that mental health is one of the top four areas needing improvement in health care. We also have a critical level of substance abuse and addictions in our communities. There is a need for collaboration, as the strategic directions that I just spoke to addressed, and a need for working with First Nations. This is an area where the impacts of colonialism and the need for things like residential school curriculum to educate not only youth but the adult population about what has occurred in the past is critical.

I want to see the government addressing implementation of its *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy* as they turn to developing a mental health strategy.

I want to refer to the clinical services plan, which was released in March of 2014 — so only just over a year ago — because that was a real call to action. In its own review of mental health services, the clinical services plan said that mental health and addictions are major forces in Yukon Territory — being impacts on the social system, the health care system and the criminal justice system. The full spectrum of mental health issues is prevalent and generates a huge burden on available resources and family members. Care for mental health issues and addictions requires, at a minimum, mental health infrastructure, professional services and a patient not only seeking care, but also initiating the care when the time is right for the individual. The foundation of treatment is a team-based care with multidisciplinary providers working together in organized roles. As the clinical services plan and as other members of this House have mentioned, the community-based providers of care are Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services and Blood Ties Four Directions centre. I am not going to reiterate what others have said about the important services that they offer, but I do think that we need to remember the gaps in services.

There are only two mental health nurses presently in the rural communities of the Yukon, based in Dawson City and Haines Junction. We have many more communities than those where the need is high.

There is also an obvious gap in the relative absence of mental health promotion and early intervention. The clinical services plan concluded that, as currently resourced and structured, the available mental health services are not able to

meet the need in the territory. In its summary, the clinical services plan laid out the evidence that, in its view, compels an imperative for change.

Inadequate housing, as a determinant of health, is a major factor in the incidence and prevalence of mental health disorders in Yukon. Addressing this fundamental challenge crosses many departments of government and carries with it substantial financial implications. Unfortunately, failure to resolve the housing inadequacy will perpetuate the failure to resolve the mounting pressures and consequences of mental illness.

Access to care by a psychiatrist is limited by supply and geography. There are currently two psychiatrists for adult referral in the territory. A child psychiatrist provides four clinics annually of approximately three days each. Psychiatric care at the jail, with a high-risk population, is limited to two hours weekly. Wait-list times for mental health services for children and youth are up to one year in the Yukon Territory, although many are triggered on an urgent basis.

I've spoken to many constituents in my riding and to people across the Yukon about how difficult it is to have a child with a need for mental health services and to not be able to get the help for their child that he or she needs. This needs to be addressed.

The referral access to mental health services is impeded by the requirement for a diagnosis. This is a barrier for those in need but without a diagnosis. If it takes months or years before you can get a diagnosis and you can't get treatment and services without a diagnosis, then you're just left to suffer. We have seen far too many suicides in this jurisdiction, and child suicide remains a problem, as does any suicide, whether it's a youth or an adult.

In general, the lower functioning group of patients who would benefit from care continue to be underserved. Some health centres reported to the clinical care study that developed the clinical services plan that an increasing amount of mental health assessment and treatment was being sent out of the territory, generally at a significant cost to government. We should be putting the money into offering the services here in the Yukon.

The final statement in the summary of the evidence from the clinical services plan was that there is a significant absence of employment coaches to assist a return to the workplace for those with mental health disorders. Unemployment and all of the financial consequences tend to perpetuate the illness or lead to exacerbation.

As the Justice critic for the Official Opposition, I would be remiss if I did not also speak about the *Mental Health Strategy for Corrections in Canada*, which was developed as a federal-provincial-territorial partnership and which Yukon participated in, but here too we see that there are many needs not being addressed.

The framework of the *Mental Health Strategy for Corrections in Canada* sets out priority areas for work over the next five years for all jurisdictions to improve their performance in the areas of knowledge generation and sharing, enhanced service delivery, improved human resource

management and building community supports and partnerships.

There are many elements that are crucial for a comprehensive mental health strategy for corrections in Canada. I'm not sure how much time I have left, but I want to outline the preliminary scans of the data and the themes that were highlighted by the *Mental Health Strategy for Corrections in Canada*. The first was on screening and assessment. There's a need for adequate screening and assessment, as illustrated by the number of offenders who are placed with the general population without mental health services. This was a concern for everyone who was consulted. I doubt if the comprehensive mental health assessments needed for the population at Whitehorse Correctional Centre are being done, notwithstanding the current survey at the Correctional Centre, dealing with both fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and other mental health needs.

Treatment services and support are crucial as well. Individualized mental health treatment plans are important for the mental health and well-being of individuals with mental health problems and/or mental health illnesses. The treatment offered in correctional systems should be equivalent to community standards. Substance abuse, psychological, psychiatric and emergency services are all important aspects of mental health treatment.

Again, suicide and self-injury prevention and management is crucial. That can be addressed through intake screening, assessment and treatment of mental health problems and/or mental illnesses, and it should include suicide and self-injury identification and prevention. This is something where front-line staff need and want suicide prevention training, and safe and therapeutic housing is essential for the management of those who are at risk for suicide and self-injury.

I must say that using separate confinement that houses an inmate for 23 hours of a day in a small cell without human interaction is not appropriate housing for the management of people at risk of suicide and self-injury. It is not safe and it is not therapeutic housing.

Transitional services and supports are part of a mental health strategy for corrections. Fostering a seamless continuity of care from the community to the correctional systems and back to the community is essential for mental health and well-being of those requiring mental health services.

In fact, many of the people consulted in this national project thought that this principle of the transition back to the community from the correctional system was one of the most important aspects of the *Mental Health Strategy for Corrections in Canada*. What is being done to improve having a transition plan in place and having a mental health discharge plan as a helpful resource for the offender, for the family members and for the community?

Education, training and support are essential for mental health treatment according to everyone who was consulted. Support for those who work with mental health problems, particularly those who are in correctional facilities, is viewed as a significant gap according to correctional stakeholders.

The correctional systems should provide a full continuum of mental health services consistent with community standards, and those standards include education, training and support.

Finally, the *Mental Health Strategy for Corrections in Canada* identifies community supports and partnerships to be fostered and developed between correctional, government and non-governmental partners. This strategy would help to contribute to a more integrated mental health system for people who have come in contact with the law and who have mental problems and/or mental health illnesses.

We know that in our correctional system there are many people held who should have access to health services and to mental health services. We often see the criminalization of people who struggle with addictions or who have health problems.

I would like to turn to the Yukon's responsibility — in particular, the Justice department's role in the Yukon implementation of the mental health strategy. The Yukon government has said that it is committed to the approach identified in the *Mental Health Strategy for Corrections in Canada* and that it is working to implement the seven elements of the strategy. I'm hopeful that the Minister of Justice will engage in this debate this afternoon and will indicate what progress Yukon corrections has made in the seven elements of the strategy.

The first is mental health promotion and that's about having an effective delivery of mental health services that promote wellness, reduce stigma and prevent illness. This can be accomplished in part by providing information and resources to individuals within the correctional system, including the clients and staff. What training has the Yukon government offered recently and what training is offered regularly for all staff who work at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre to give them information and resources about mental illness as part of their basic training and to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and produce meaningful interaction with the population?

I have spoken already about screening and assessment and the need for ongoing evaluation conducted on a regular basis by qualified practitioners.

The two-hours-weekly service of a psychiatrist at the Correctional Centre with a high-risk population does not meet that need for adequate screening and assessment and for the treatment services and supports. The Yukon's implementation document said that the Corrections branch has access to qualified practitioners for treatment planning and treatment and that clients have access to appropriate medication through a medical doctor and psychiatrist and are housed in an environment that offers the appropriate level of care and support. Again, an appropriate level of care and support is not found in separate confinement.

Suicide and self-injury prevention and management are critical needs and a comprehensive approach to the prevention and management of suicide and self-injurious behaviour is essential for managing the increased risk among people in corrections. Baseline training and engagement with people who are at risk are essential in order to have effective

institutional protocols about suicide and self-injurious behaviour. I have heard that this is a concern among the population at Whitehorse Correctional Centre, and I urge the government to address it as a priority.

Finally, in supporting this motion before us, I would close by saying that we need to see government offering transitional services and supports, staff education, training and support and community supports and partnerships, not only in the correctional system but for the Yukon population as a whole.

Mr. Tredger: I rise in support of Motion No. 893 which the Member for Klondike has brought forward, and I want to thank him for this motion. I also want to thank those who spoke on this and who had a lot to offer on this subject.

Mental illness touches us all. People who suffer from mental illness often fall through the cracks. As a society, we are just learning how devastating that can be, not only to the person involved, but to their families and to their communities. It affects their self-esteem; it affects their ability to work in community, to contribute.

Often people who are suffering from a mental illness are hard to reach. They are not easy clients. They fear being stigmatized. They don't know how to access the services and, quite often, they have been very reluctant to come forward. As a society, we are only now coming to grips with this. We are learning the true cost to our society, to our members, to our children, to our friends and to our community members — whether it's in schools, whether it's on the playground, whether it's in our workplace or in our correctional institutions — but we are learning and we are, as a society, coming to grips with this.

It's not easy; there are no pat answers. I want to give a little bit of a perspective as an educator, from my community and from my experiences as a friend and as a family member. I want to talk about the importance of having an overall strategy, especially for our communities and especially for our citizens who are suffering, or dealing with, or hiding mental illnesses.

In 2012, a committee of the Mental Health Commission of Canada came to Whitehorse to launch a national strategy on mental illness and mental health — *Changing direction, changing lives* — and that was a challenge to each and every one of us. It was up to us to develop a strategy to improve the mental health and well-being of all people. Their focus was Canada; our focus is Yukon and our communities — Whitehorse, outlying communities.

To create a mental health system that can meet the needs of people living with mental health problems and illnesses, and to help their families, there were many recommendations. As a society, I believe that we want to help our neighbours and our friends.

There are many good ideas out there. When I look through what the Yukon Department of Health and Social Services is doing, what Community Services is doing, what we're doing in Education, what we're doing in Justice, we're doing many, many good things. There are people — our public servants — who are working very hard to address the

needs of those in front of them, the people they encounter each day.

What is lacking is an overall strategy, a plan for people to plug into. I've quoted the Auditor General a number of times and his Education report, but what he has to say applies to Education and all our departments. Strategic planning is a management tool that helps us set priorities and goals and develop a plan to meet those goals. It also helps us to assess how resources are to be allocated and it gives it the scope to adjust its direction in response to a changing environment.

A strategic plan allows us to set targets, to evaluate those targets and to change them to work toward continuous progress — that is what we would call it in education. But if there isn't a plan, if it's a series of wonderful ideas that are not connected, we're doing ourselves and our clients a disservice.

In the communities it's especially important, because many of our service providers are not there long term. The turnover rate for our community nurses is astounding. Many of them are in for three months or six months. I know that in the time I was in Pelly Crossing, there were over 23 nurses. There was a lack of continuity. I know the social workers have changed on a regular basis.

What does that mean? It means that we need a strategy, something that they can plug into so when they come, there's a plan in place. What does it mean to the visiting mental health worker from Dawson, who may get there maybe once a month or more likely once every six months? If there's a temporary nurse and a temporary social worker, there isn't the context, there isn't the continuity.

Who does she see? Who does she talk to, especially when we are dealing with clientele with mental illness? I have mentioned that they may be reluctant to seek services. They may not even know how to achieve that service. They may not be able to get on the Internet, fill out a form that goes to the mental health nurse. They may talk to the local nurse if they develop a relationship — or to the visiting doctor or social worker — but given the clientele, many, many people are falling through the cracks. We need the consistency of a mental health strategy so people can know where to plug in. What does it mean without a mental health strategy for the communities or for the First Nations' directors who are working with the individuals and their families? Lacking a strategy, they don't know where their input is. They don't where to plug in.

Many of our programs that are designed to serve mental health needs are funded for three years or funded for two years and, if we are lucky, five years — then the funding goes and the program changes. We are not sure how it fits in, where it fits in or why it fits in. It was doing wonderful work and it's gone. What happens often in the community is that visits are rare enough that we lack that continuity. We don't have the services in the community to be able to bring that together to help break down some of the silos so that when somebody comes back from incarceration, perhaps with a mental illness or an addiction or an inability or difficulty in procuring employment, or maybe all three — when they come to our community, there is no after-care, or very little.

They can go to Jackson Lake if they want to leave the community again, and some of them may be accepted. I know the Northern Tutchone in Carmacks, Pelly and Mayo are working very hard to develop an after-care program. They are developing programs at Ethel Lake, Tatlain Lake and Airplane Lake. The three Northern Tutchone First Nations are working together to do that.

How much easier would it be if we had a mental health strategy, where they can say: "This is where it plugs in. This is where we can work. These are the resources that are available." Lacking a strategy, what happens is they have to do proposals to various funding agencies. When that proposal is done, should they get funding for one, two or three years, then they have to start over again, lacking the continuity.

Our workers in our communities have a hard enough job. Many of them are struggling with burnout, dealing with trauma, lack of time to do their job, lack of time to develop relationships within the community. Not having a strategy, but rather having a series of proposals and projects, makes it that much more difficult. Many Rivers comes to our community on a regular basis and if we're lucky, we get someone who comes to the community often enough to get known and to develop a relationship, but we need a strategy because that is not always the case. We need a place for people to plug into.

We need a strategy that addresses the transitions and changes in supports for children — from what I see, the children in education — but also adults, when people pass through life events. We need a strategy that works in our daycares. We need a strategy that helps children transition from the Child Development Centre to school; from school to adulthood; or from our communities to the city — the big city of Whitehorse.

We need a strategy that addresses moving from school to work. We need a strategy that helps people returning from incarceration. We need a strategy. We need to be able to look, when somebody comes to me, and know where they can fit in and where they can receive service. When a teacher, working with their grade 1 children or grade 3, sees a child coming to school hungry — we used to say a lot of times kids come unavailable for learning because of what they witnessed the night before or because of maybe a lack of food — circumstances beyond their control.

We need counsellors in our schools — not ones who tell you that you should take math 10, 20 and 30, but ones who are social counsellors, who can help our young teenagers transition to adulthood.

I am in favour of this motion. We've talked about it before. There are wonderful programs out there. There are people working in the field — working, working, working — some to the point where they're burning out, whether they are community members or workers from Yukon government or from the First Nations. We need to develop in our strategy a support system for them so they can be available, so they can deal with the trauma and the stress that they see when they're working with those with mental illness, so they can feel good about themselves, so their clients can feel good about themselves, and so that we, as a territory, as friends and

neighbours, can know that we have this strategy that has been evaluated and tested, and we're going to work with each other and achieve successes. It will be hard. There will be struggles, but we can do it.

Thank you to the Member for Klondike for bringing forward this motion. I wholeheartedly support it.

Mr. Barr: I rise to thank the Member for Klondike for bringing forward Motion No. 893. There has been a lot said in regard to mental health and how it affects us in our communities, how it affects our families. I must first of all say that those working in the field — whether it's at ADS or the social workers or the mental health workers or the countless volunteers I know of who are just out there, lending a helping hand, giving someone who doesn't have a place to stay or who are hard to house, doing whatever they can, in their own small way, whether it's leaving your cart at Superstore with a loonie in it so it can be found by somebody, to give them 50 cents, or taking somebody for a meal — it always, over the years, keeps coming back to mind that that's my sister or my mother or my grandmother. It's our family. It's our family who is out there dealing with these sometimes life-and-death situations.

When I think back over the years of my involvement in working with people with mental health issues, with addictions and how the crossovers of that — the sexual abuse, the countless numbers of men with whom I have walked with sexual abuse — women. When I think over the years of my work at CAIRS Society — that's what I did before I came to the Yukon. I worked with emotionally disturbed adolescents in a huge treatment facility — to know that, as I think back, the onus is put on the person with the problem, that there's something wrong with them, which only compounds that sense of low self-esteem, which then in turn doesn't make it easy to come forward and say, "I need help."

I mean, I used to drink, Mr. Speaker, and to ask for help — you just didn't do that — the stigma that is attached — even when you know that it should be okay. Today, at least we pay attention to breaking down the stigma, but we need a lot more. We are so far behind, we think we're first sometimes. That's a true statement. The lack of the strategy to know that the millions of dollars that governments spend — municipal governments, local and territorial governments, the federal government. What we spend on the lack of opportunities for people with mental health issues is astronomical.

We are not giving anybody a fair shake to have two mental health workers in the territory. That's insane. If you have finally come to at a point where you want to even ask for some help — we talked about resiliency moments in this field. The windows of opportunity for that happen very few and far between. The opportunities for people to be face-to-face in the communities with someone — let alone, are we tracking it? It's not happening. It's not happening to where we need it.

People are sleeping in late October at the end of Main Street when it is getting below freezing. You have to call the RCMP to force situations — to lock them up at night. We hear about this woman — 118 days because there is no place —

and how affordable housing fits to people who are struggling with this. When I worked at Northern Cultural Expressions Society, there were so many horror stories out there of people in survival mode. Four youth, sleeping in an abandoned building, night after night at 40 below, huddling together to be able to get through the night so they could get to the Salvation Army in the morning — some of them going to school from that situation, some of them coming to Northern Cultural Expressions Society, and people breaking the rules out there, breaking the law to try to help these kids. That is what is going on out there.

We don't have a strategy and we're allowing that to happen — every one of us in here who has the opportunity to actually do something meaningful as legislators, and sit and stand and talk for a few hours about all this stuff. It's great, those things there — but it's not enough. We need to know if this strategy is working, if we have a strategy. We need to see if wait times are decreasing. We need to talk to the people who are doing the work.

When I was running the White Bison program — think about this. We get these bedroom communities — in Carcross, one with a lot of services there over the years because you are too close to Whitehorse. You are charged and you are on probation. You are released under conditions, whatever your situation is. You hitchhike into Whitehorse from Carcross in the wintertime, 40 below — well, no, we had a cut-off of 35 below. You are expected to hitchhike into Whitehorse for 7:00 to go to a program and then, after it's over at 9:00 at night, to hitchhike back to Carcross. I don't know if you have ever been standing at the Carcross Cut-off for an addictions program for which, if you don't go to it, you go to jail.

Where is the thinking in these kinds of programs? You're setting people up to fail. There would be times I would drive them out to Carcross. You have to do it. That is the kind of thing that the people who are out there delivering these programs — they care. They go so far over and above. What the Member for Klondike was saying — you're not supposed to? You are not supposed to stop and talk on the street because you have to move on. We're talking about building trust with people who are so afraid and have finally decided to come forward. To maintain that trust level — that is what's important. Once you finally get in the door with somebody, you have to be there.

They have to know that you're going to be there so they can continue to divulge and to actually finally feel that somebody cares.

We're afraid, oftentimes, to talk about suicides. I'm just having a lot of flashbacks of horror stories as I talk. I don't have anything written down for this, Mr. Speaker. It is a mind-boggling situation that has not been given the care it deserves since I've been up here for 31 years. It hasn't. It is often said that the money spent on one person overcoming their issues would pay for — how many workers in the communities? When you look at the intergenerational compounding of one family starting to get on their feet — who is going to become socially involved in the community, working — those numbers start to go two times four times 16 times 34.

It's just beyond — it really is beyond. We had Clara Hughes come here, doing her bike ride. We heard from the Yukon Medical Association. To know how hard it is for someone, as Clara Hughes says, to be a celebrity type but to have to say, "Well, I don't really have it all together." We need more and more people to be able to do that and to have the medical community talk about the numbers and the numbers in emergency rooms. If we had a strategy — even to count those and to be able to redirect and have a coordinated effort to look at really what we're dealing with. We have to start.

We have to actually look, and we actually really have to start to define all of this in an organized fashion that's going to give us direction, not band-aid the situation because, really, that is how mental health is being handled in the territory, whether it is through addictions or FASD or supported living. How many people are out there undiagnosed? It is so all-encompassing when I think of foster parents out there trying to give support. The numbers are falling — why? Why aren't we tracking that? Why aren't we asking the real, hard questions and listening to the foster parents about why they no longer want to foster? We start tracking that one number alone, and we are going to hear some things we don't want to talk about — we don't want to deal with. We have raised these issues in here and, no, don't want to deal with that. We have met with foster parents who are willing to take on the responsibility that many of us would like to, wouldn't want to or can't. We should be bending over backward to help foster parents who are dealing with people with mental health issues.

I probably jumped around as I spoke today, but I would like to say that we do support this motion. We ask that the Government of Yukon follow through on its commitment to develop a mental health strategy. We need it. We are doing stuff, but we are not focused on outcomes. We have to know all of this information to be able to do things effectively.

I thank the members of this House for listening, and I would just again thank the Member for Klondike for bringing this forward.

Ms. White: I thank the Member for Klondike who spoke so eloquently earlier. I just wanted to bring a couple of perspectives to the table today. When we are talking about the development of a mental health strategy, I think it is critically important to look at the kind of situational changes in the last number of years. Some of our remote communities have suffered tragedy after tragedy, including suicides of young people. That rocks a community to the core. I was looking, and at one point in time, we were ranked in the top five of the lowest suicide numbers in the country, and that has changed. We know that in some communities, we are talking about multiple people who have taken their own lives in a calendar year.

In the last number of months I was lucky because I got to travel to different parts of the territory and one thing that was kind of resounding was that people felt that they needed more mental health support within the communities.

We heard the Minister of Health and Social Services talk about the services that were offered in Whitehorse and that's fantastic, but look at communities like Beaver Creek. You know those services aren't available. So what I really look forward to when we get to the point where we have a mental health strategy is making sure that instead of having a bunch of different threads — I think this was important; this was what was talked about at the conference on Friday about the Vulnerable People at Risk Forum — is that we have a whole bunch of different things happening in the territory. You kind of put your head down because you're focused on one aspect of the issue — homelessness, mental health, all these things — and in order to make sure that we're taking care of people and we're protecting them, we need to take all those threads and we need to make a blanket. We need to make sure that they cross and that information is being shared and that people aren't falling through those cracks.

I thank the Member for Klondike who spoke so eloquently earlier and I look forward to a point where we do have a plan in place and all those threads are sewn together between the NGO community and what government offers, so that we can go back up to being in the top five of the lowest suicide rates in Canada instead of the opposite end of that spectrum.

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

Mr. Silver: I want to thank my colleagues today for the debate, for the dialogue, and to thank the Minister of Health and Social Services for the comprehensive list of money spent and programming.

It's hard to tell, based upon the comments from the Yukon Party today, whether or not they are going to vote in favour of this actually. I was left really not know which way it's going to go. I guess in the end it doesn't really matter. The bottom line is I believe there were three parties in the last election that committed to a mental health strategy, to a plan, and we're in the later stages here in this mandate and there still isn't any plan.

More importantly than how we're going to vote here today is: When is the plan going to happen? Well, this government that currently sits here in power, in government, has the ability to do that immediately. They definitely have the resources on the ground floor. There are so many dedicated people in the Yukon who have dedicated their lives and their volunteer time as well to this issue. There are so many families that I have spoken to that struggle with mental health issues and have solutions. ADS had a great talk up in Dawson at the hospital and it was packed in there. There were so many people who came to talk about after-treatment for alcoholics, after-care for people in need, and I think that there is a solution. There really is. It's as if we have this overwhelming problem that is going to take a complicated approach to solving — it's a coordination of services. It's a plan that allows us to assess how we're doing in that plan. Like I say, it's not a matter of capacity.

We have some amazing folks who are working in the field right now, whether it is the RCMP, who came out to the vulnerable risk forum last week and said, “We deal a lot with non-criminals every day because there is a lack of services for people with mental health”, or whether it is the EMS. We were volunteering at the soup kitchen and there was a woman in distress outside and, of course, the ambulance comes along and these ambulance attendants know these people by name and there was a — not a great story, but an amazing story. Superintendent Clark with a list of names of folks who have died on the streets — and, having a conversation with him at the vulnerable risk forum, he said, “You know, it’s sad, but we could probably predict who is next.”

The bottom line is that there is so much care in the communities and there is so much variation between communities, as far as what help is out there. Without a strategy we could talk all day long about the money and the buildings we’re going to build and a long list of thanks to everybody who is involved and all the government workers but, without a strategy, there is no way of assessing whether or not we’re doing it correctly. In building that strategy, I think we identify the next needs. It has been identified. My colleagues have talked about it today as well — coordination of services. There are NGOs, government workers, parents, medical, RCMP — and there is no coordination. Fundamental on the list would be that.

I don’t want to speak much further here, but I do want to say to the NGOs who helped me out today and to the parents — thank you. To the many government workers who, under fear of repercussions, quite frankly — thank you for the information you’ve given me and the education that I received from you. I will make this commitment here that, under a Liberal Party government, there will be a mental health strategy.

I believe the minister is laughing over there — it’s interesting.

We would build a strategy that draws down from the reports and the recommendations, and we would also consult the amazing health-care providers that we have in this community, the parents, the teachers, and we would definitely have something that would cross departments and would have input from them all.

Again, like I say, it’s hard to see which way the vote is going. I guess if I sit down, we’ll find out.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

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

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

Motion No. 893 agreed to

Motion No. 792

Clerk: Motion No. 792, standing in the name of Ms. Moorcroft.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to advance equal rights for transsexual, transgender and gender-variant people by:

(1) introducing amendments to explicitly include “gender identity” and “gender expression” under section 7 of the Yukon *Human Rights Act* as a prohibited grounds for discrimination;

(2) supporting full equality and respect for trans people accessing Yukon government jobs, programs, and services; and

(3) using public education to fight intolerance, discrimination, and violence against trans people.

Ms. Moorcroft: I commend this motion to the House that urges the Yukon government to advance equal rights for transsexual and transgender people by introducing amendments to explicitly include: gender identity and gender expression under section 7 of the Yukon *Human Rights Act* as a prohibited grounds for discrimination; supporting full equality and respect for trans people accessing Yukon government jobs, programs, and services; and using public education to fight intolerance, discrimination, and violence against trans people.

A word about the word “trans”: “trans” in our motion is spelled with an asterisk, as in T-R-A-N-S-asterisk. “Trans” with an asterisk is an umbrella term that refers to all of the identities within the gender identity and gender expression spectrum. Trans folks typically have a gender identity or gender expression that is different from those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Conversely, the term “cisgender”, or “cis”, is a term used to describe folks whose gender identity or expression aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

“Trans” with an asterisk is used in an effort to include all transgender, non-binary and gender nonconforming identities,

including, but not limited to: transgender, transsexual, transvestite, genderqueer, genderfluid, non-binary, genderless, agender, non-gendered, third gender, two-spirit, bigender, trans man and trans woman.

For the remainder of the debate on this motion, when my colleagues and I say “trans”, we are referring to the term “trans” with an asterisk.

Recently in this Assembly, I introduced a Yukon teacher and hockey player who is a transgender man, meaning he was assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a male. Transgender people encounter systemic discrimination, which can lead to feelings of isolation.

It is common for transgender people to be denied access to health care, housing and employment because of their gender identity. Many lose friends and family members. Many trans people are not comfortable being out in public because of fear and safety concerns. Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays Canada report that 43 percent of trans-identified persons attempted suicide as a result of the barriers they face.

In fact, the 2012 Ontario amendments to make discrimination and harassment based on gender identity or gender expression illegal is known as Toby’s Law. The amendment was introduced by MPP Cheri DiNovo in remembrance of a trans woman, Toby Dancer, a gifted but impoverished musician who died of a drug overdose in 2004 at age 51. This speaks to the need for tolerance, for acceptance, for education and law reform, and for programs and services that accommodate the realities of trans people’s lives.

This is why I brought forward to debate today this motion that Yukon follow other jurisdictions in Canada by adding gender identity and gender expression as protected grounds in our *Human Rights Act*.

This motion is in accordance with a recommendation made in the document, entitled *Improving the Yukon Human Rights Act*, submitted by the Yukon Human Rights Commission in 2008 to the Yukon Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Human Rights.

A previous Yukon Party government did introduce a few amendments to the Yukon *Human Rights Act* following the select committee’s work and consultation, but those amendments left a number of areas of work for future governments to address. The Yukon Human Rights Commission’s recommendations to lawmakers regarding trans rights is one of those issues that was put on hold. We can begin to remedy that today by supporting this motion.

Northwest Territories led the way by adding gender identity to its *Human Rights Act* in 2004. Ontario, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Saskatchewan have also amended their human rights statutes to recognize trans rights. Many Yukoners have indicated their support for recognizing trans rights in our *Human Rights Act*, as is shown by a petition I presented in the Legislature. I look forward to hearing the government’s response to this petition in the near future.

Perhaps government members will indicate in the debate this afternoon if the Yukon Party is willing to be progressive

in adapting our human rights law to explicitly protect trans rights and remain current with other jurisdictions.

I would like to give a shout-out to a community sports group for its leadership in trans rights. The 100-player league of the Whitehorse Women’s Hockey Association passed the first policy of its kind in Canada, formally welcoming male-to-female and female-to-male transgender players into their league. The Whitehorse Women’s Hockey Association released its precedent-setting trans-inclusive policy in December 2014. The board wanted to make its league safe and inclusive for any player who was either born female or identifies as a woman. Transgender and transsexual players are therefore permitted to play in the league.

Whitehorse Women’s Hockey Association falls under the umbrella of the Canadian Adult Recreational Hockey Association. The board considered potential concerns that might come up, such as dressing room dynamics and the issue of men playing women’s hockey. To deal with those issues, players with concerns about dressing room policy are encouraged to speak with a board member. This leadership is not only in policy, but in education. Today, my argument is that it is time for Yukon legislators to follow the lead of others, of other groups and of other jurisdictions, and make Yukon a safe place for transgender and gender non-conforming people.

The issue of adding protection for gender identity to the *Human Rights Act* in the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination — why? Why should we do that? Well, as understanding of the full range of human sexuality and gender identity increases, it has become clear that discrimination can occur in ways that were not well-understood at the time the act was first passed. There have been further developments in the area of human rights cases dealing with the rights of transgendered people. Gender identity and gender expression are linked to a person’s sense of self, and particularly one’s sense of being male or female. Gender identity is different from and does not determine a person’s sexual orientation and may not confirm to a person’s birth-assigned sex. Gender identity would include people who are transgender, intersex or cross-dressers.

The 17th national triannual convention of the PSAC being held this week in Quebec City, Quebec, today passed a motion unanimously to lobby for inclusion of gender identity and gender expression in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Yukon Employees Union, Public Service Alliance of Canada, supports this motion to change the Yukon *Human Rights Act*. It’s great to see our public sector union continues to play a leadership role in support of human rights, something that PSAC, Canadian Labour Congress and the labour movement generally has done for decades now.

I trust that the Yukon government is willing to accept this motion to include gender identity and gender expression in the Yukon *Human Rights Act*. Thus, that amendment would protect trans people from discrimination.

I would also like to add that it would be helpful to address the issue of violence against people who are transgender. That protection would extend to those who have experienced

violence because of prohibited grounds of discrimination. Yukon people have reported to the Human Rights Commission that they've experienced violence because of their sexual orientation. Trans people have reported violence because of their gender identity and gender expression.

I would like to turn now to the second part of the motion supporting full equality and respect for trans people accessing Yukon government jobs, programs and services.

Once Yukon has amended its human rights law to be trans-inclusive, government will be obligated to offer full equality and respect for trans people accessing Yukon government jobs, programs and services. This means that trans people would have equal rights to apply and be hired for Yukon government public sector jobs.

Speaker: Order please. The hour being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

Debate on Motion No. 792 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.