



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

---

Number 223

1st Session

33rd Legislature

---

## HANSARD

Tuesday, October 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**

## CABINET MINISTERS

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

## GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

### Yukon Party

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

## OPPOSITION MEMBERS

### New Democratic Party

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

### Liberal Party

<b>Sandy Silver</b>	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
---------------------	---------------------------------------

## LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Clerk of the Assembly	Floyd McCormick
Deputy Clerk	Linda Kolody
Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Rudy Couture
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Doris McLean
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon**  
**Tuesday, October 27, 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 Breast Cancer Awareness Month

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I rise in the House today to recognize October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, breast cancer is the most common cancer among Canadian women and the second leading cause of deaths from cancer in Canadian women. Breast cancer can also occur in men but it is not that common.

It is estimated that in 2015, 25,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. This represents 26 percent of all new cancer cases in women in 2015; 20 to 25 of these women will be Yukoners. This year, 5,000 women will die from breast cancer. Every day, on average, 68 Canadian women are diagnosed with breast cancer and 14 Canadian women will die.

Over the year, 220 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer and 60 will die from it. The breast cancer incidence rate in women in Canada rose through the early 1990s because mammography was used more often and breast cancer screening programs were introduced, which meant that more cases of breast cancer were indeed found. The breast cancer death rate has been declining since then, reflecting the impact of screening and improvements in treatment for breast cancer. While much work has been done to increase the rates of detection and the treatment of breast cancer, there is still much more work to do, which is why organizations such as the Canadian Cancer Society encourage donations to help fund research to outsmart this disease.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of local organizations such as Run for Mom and Mardi Bras. Run for Mom is a family-friendly run and walk held every Mother's Day along the Millennium Trail. The funds raised from this event stay entirely in the Yukon and have been put toward purchasing diagnostic equipment such as the digital mammography machine currently in use at Whitehorse General Hospital.

Mardi Bras is another local fundraiser for Karen's Fund. Karen Wiederkehr was a young Yukon mother and wife who died of breast cancer in 2000. She wanted her legacy to be a quiet, comfortable place for cancer patients to undergo chemo treatments. Her husband Jack made that wish come true with Karen's Room, a comfortable room in the Whitehorse General Hospital for patients to receive their chemo treatments.

Karen's other wish was to find a way to help those women who were experiencing financial stress while undergoing treatment for breast cancer. Mardi Bras is an evening of music, dancing and entertainment that raises money and awareness to go toward this fund.

To date, Karen's Fund has supported 121 Yukon women. These initiatives show how community involvement can help support women and their families as they battle breast cancer.

While it is encouraging to see that the incidences of breast cancer rates are decreasing, I'm sure that every member in this House here today has known a woman diagnosed with breast cancer, which is why we must continue to support organizations to help fight this disease.

Thank you to our local organizations for raising funds and for raising awareness and a special thanks to so many Yukoners who very generously give their time, money and expertise when it comes to supporting cancer initiatives here in our incredible territory.

**Ms. White:** I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition and the Third Party to acknowledge October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

We're lucky in the Yukon to be surrounded by go-getters — people who see a problem or a difficulty and instead of sitting back, they pull up their socks and figure out the best way to help. Breast cancer has been one of those rallying cries here in the territory.

I'm sad that I never knew Karen Wiederkehr. From her friends, I know that she was a ball of fire; a woman who embraced life and its challenges head-on. She wasn't a spectator. She lived every day to its fullest.

Karen was 36 years old when she was first diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer. The stress of the diagnosis and the treatment was compounded by the need and the want to care for her 16-month-old infant son. After 20 months of medical appointments, hospitalizations, surgeries, radiation and chemotherapy, Karen lost her battle to breast cancer at the age of 37.

From her legacy, I know that she thought about more than herself and, based on her lived experiences, there were two things she wanted to leave behind to make the journey and the battle easier for those who came after her.

In 1999 there was no dedicated space to deliver chemotherapy at the Whitehorse General Hospital. Her five-hour treatments were often given in the pre-op area and even in the emergency ward of the hospital. What should have been a calm environment was interspersed with the noises associated with trauma, urgency and pain. She wanted to change that by leaving behind a space that would provide chemo patients and their families a quiet, comfortable, dedicated place to receive treatments. Karen's husband Jack, with the help of the construction community, made that dream come true with the creation of Karen's Room at the Whitehorse General Hospital.

Karen was also concerned about the additional costs of the illness. While financially secure herself, she feared that others less fortunate could not afford some of the extra costs

not covered by the public health care system. She wanted a way to help ease the financial stress that many breast cancer patients face while undergoing treatment.

The Karen J. Wiederkehr Memorial Fund, or Karen's Fund, was created in October 2000. In 2014, the fund helped 10 women, and since its inception 15 years ago, the fund has helped 121 women in the territory and northern BC.

We all know that men can also be affected with breast cancer, and they too are able to access Karen's Fund.

Thanks to the visionaries behind Mardi Bras, Karen's Fund is a living, breathing entity. The fundraising efforts by the Mardi Bras team reflect the woman herself. Every year for the past seven years or so, a dynamic group of women throws a party every October to raise awareness and money for the fund. These events can't happen without the generous support of the community, volunteers and, of course, those who attend. Val Pike and Pat Living have been organizers since the beginning, and this year they were joined by Lyndsey Hamilton, Alex Hill, Alison Perrin, Brianna Bremner, Hillary Simpson, Ciara Stick and yours truly.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and I thank all those who have donated their time and those who donate money to support women and men from the Yukon with breast cancer.

**Speaker:** Are there any visitors to be introduced?  
Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

### TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I have for tabling three columns submitted to local media. The first is entitled "We're listening, responding to seniors, their families". The second is entitled "Investing in home care for seniors and dependants". The third is entitled "Caring for seniors is a Yukon government priority".

I also have for tabling the final report, *New Whitehorse Continuing Care Facility*.

**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?

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill No. 94: *Act to Amend the Education Act* — Introduction and First Reading

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I move that Bill No. 94, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 94, entitled *Act to Amend the Education Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 94 agreed to*

**Speaker:** Are there any further 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 plan a \$2-million annual increase, or 30-percent expansion, for the information technology capital envelope to advance e-services and e-government initiatives and create economic opportunities for the local IT industry to take effect in the 2016-17 budget, subject to legislative approval.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support the building of a new fibre optic link along the Dempster Highway in conjunction with Northwestel to connect the Yukon and NWT fibre networks, completing a fibre loop in northern Canada that will provide for data flow in another direction in the event of damage to the fibre at any point, as well as protecting Internet, telephone, cellular and credit card services in addition to government and emergency 911 services, where available.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to promote the development of community-based energy projects through the adoption of its independent power production policy that allows private producers to generate electricity, connect to the grid and sell power to local utilities.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to follow the example of the Ontario government by making it easier for Canadian military personnel and veterans to exchange the Department of National Defence 404 military driver's licence for an equivalent Yukon driver's licence.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explain the details of the newly announced Dempster Highway fibre optic line by providing:

- (1) the project cost;
- (2) a breakdown of the financial contributions from all funding partners;
- (3) details on any ongoing financial commitments the Government of Yukon has made;
- (4) a copy of the diverse fibre project phase II report;
- (5) a copy of the Ernst & Young *Value for Money Assessment*;
- (6) an explanation of why the Dempster Highway was chosen over the Skagway-Juneau fibre optic line; and
- (7) an explanation of why the contract was not awarded by a competitive bidding process.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to release cost estimates, drawings and all background information for the new francophone school.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to release an up-to-date cost of the Peel land use plan legal case.

**Speaker:** Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Communication infrastructure

**Ms. Hanson:** Mr. Speaker, I want to start today by congratulating the government for finally making the announcement this morning of a new fibre optic link along the Dempster Highway. The need for strengthening Yukon's telecommunication infrastructure is well known. The potential economic benefits of more reliable connectivity are significant. In the past, the Yukon NDP has highlighted the advantages of the Dempster route for Yukon communities, along with privacy concerns with the other option that was considered — the Juneau route.

My question is simple: Will the Premier tell this House the projected cost of this new fibre optic link for the Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** This government committed to fast, affordable and reliable Internet service here in the Yukon and that is what we are doing today. You know, I'm happy to say that we are moving forward on the Dempster link. Obviously we will have to have Northwestel as a partner on this and we look forward to working with the other governments — the Northwest Territories government as well as the Government of Canada — in figuring out how we can best do the financing on this project. We look forward to moving forward as we go along.

**Ms. Hanson:** The financing on a project — we announce a project and we don't know much it's going to cost? This announcement is good news for the Yukon, but it doesn't exempt this government from being transparent with the public about how the decision was made.

The Yukon government committed to posting a total cost-of-service analysis and value-for-money assessment comparing the two routes last summer. These documents have yet to be made public. This morning's release also remains silent on the investment model that will be used for this project. So will the minister commit to making the assessments for the fibre link public and tell Yukoners which of the investment models recommended by the report by Stantec in February 2015 will be used to finance the Dempster fibre optic link?

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** I am happy to hear that everyone is happy and thinks that this is a good thing to do.

It's important, Mr. Speaker, to understand that the Northwest Territories is obviously in election mode and the federal government has just recently come out of election mode, so it's kind of impossible to have the kinds of

discussions that we would need to have with other governments to determine just exactly how the financing would take place. As time goes on and as the Northwest Territories gets their government in place, we will have those conversations that we need to have, with the people we need to have them. That goes the same with the federal government. As time goes on, we will get the details out as we can and move forward as we best see fit.

**Ms. Hanson:** As the Yukon Party — “as we best see fit”. You know, you take a good announcement and you make it not so good. The announcement of a second fibre link is good news, but Yukoners have the right to know what it will cost them and how it will be financed.

Another question that arises from today's announcement is Northwestel's participation. This major government investment will strengthen Northwestel's network, and this morning's press release indicates the company will also invest in the project. Surely, when we make these announcements, we have something behind just the words. When committing public funds for major projects like the fibre optic link, the public has a right to know the split between public and private sector investment.

Will the minister tell Yukoners what financial commitment Northwestel has made to this project?

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** This has been two years in the making, so this isn't something that we jumped into this morning and said, “Hey, this is great — let's do that.”

The members opposite need to understand that until we can have the final discussions with other governments that are involved in this project, I can't commit to what the Northwest Territories or what the federal government might put into this project because, quite frankly, I don't know that answer yet.

As we move forward on this project, and as other governments get into the positions that they need to be in so we can have these conversations, I will commit to providing those numbers as we move forward.

### Question re: Nurse shortages

**Ms. Stick:** Yesterday I asked the minister about the vacancies in community health centres across the Yukon. According to numbers from the YEU, there are 11 vacancies out of 22.5 positions in community nursing. The Minister of Health and Social Services is AWOL on the community nursing file. When I asked the minister yesterday about his plan to fill the positions, he let his colleague, the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission wax on that the issue would be addressed in bargaining.

Really, Mr. Speaker, this is more than a bargaining issue. This is a community safety issue; this is a safety issue for community nurses. The Minister of Health and Social Services needs to show leadership.

What are the plans to fill the community nursing vacancies?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** The member opposite can downplay the fact that nursing shortages are a reality throughout Canada and the fact that this is a challenge for every jurisdiction in this country, but that's the reality. The reality is that

community nurses are difficult to find throughout the country and that problem is particularly prevalent here in the Yukon.

I should note that we cannot be moving forward with the types of changes that the member opposite is contemplating without first discussing those kinds of things with the union, with our stakeholders, nurses associations and others.

As I said yesterday, we value the role that community nurses play in our health care system. We recognize that there are challenges in particular communities and in particular scenarios with certain situations, and we look forward to addressing those in hand with the YEU, with nurses and with other stakeholders.

**Ms. Stick:** Bargaining can go on for months. This is now. We heard the minister point out that recruitment and retention of nursing is challenging across the territory and across Canada. We don't disagree. What I will point out, though, is that retention is the problem here in the Yukon. That's the challenge.

When nurses are required to run a health centre five days a week, be on call 24 hours a day, attend to emergencies throughout the night, perhaps accompany a patient by medevac or ambulance to Whitehorse, return to their community and only receive four hours off, why would they stay? Why would they stay when they have no backup or relief?

The minister said that word of mouth is one of the most successful recruitment methods. Does the minister really think that this word of mouth is going to help? Why is it okay to ask our valued community nurses to work under these conditions?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I certainly thank the member opposite for her question. We are always concerned about the challenges that community nurses face in our territory, especially our health care staff throughout Yukon who are so very important to all Yukoners. I'm always open to meeting with reps from the nurses association and their organizations in the territory. I do have dialogue with them on a fairly regular basis and I do hear of issues from time to time. Those issues are addressed through the department, as most of them would either fall under HR or under PSC. Those issues are addressed and the staff are met with.

In fact, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services has travelled to most of the communities — as I'm led to believe, to all but two health centres in the territory — visiting the nurses and finding out more about the issues that we do hear about.

This is an important issue to government. This is an issue that we take very seriously and we will let the officials do the work, meet with the nurses and see how we move forward with negotiations with the union.

**Ms. Stick:** The nurses are not feeling valued. The president of the Yukon Employees Union, which represents community nurses, wrote in an open letter to the minister — and I quote: "I'm amazed at your lack of understanding of the realities healthcare professionals face in our rural communities and I shake my head at your blasé attitude toward the health & welfare of rural Yukoners... Community Nursing is in crisis. In my opinion, morale is the lowest it's

been since the service was devolved from the Federal Government ... Travel to each health center — I'll even drive you myself."

Will the minister accept this offer and go with the YEU president, see the situation first-hand and talk directly to community nurses?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I thank the member opposite for her question. As I had indicated in my previous response, we do recognize that there are challenges. There are challenges in both the recruitment and the retention of health care professionals in most Yukon communities and, as the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission alluded to, this is not an issue that is uncommon across Canada.

However, I will say that we should remember that the floor of this House is not the place to be debating collective agreement issues, so we shouldn't be commenting on staff policies related to that. Elected officials shouldn't be involved in the particulars of staffing issues, and I have asked the department to look into this matter.

#### Question re: YESAA process

**Mr. Silver:** I have more questions for the Premier on Bill S-6.

When the Legislature began sitting last week the Premier was asked about the fate of the four amendments to the bill that he has spent two years championing. Last Thursday he continued to back them here on the floor of the House, and he said that he wanted to meet with the First Nation chiefs to discuss implementing them. Over the weekend, the Premier changed his mind on the four amendments and said here yesterday that his government would not be a barrier to the federal government repealing the amendments.

After two years of backing the federal government against the wishes of Yukon First Nations, the Premier finally went back and admitted that the best thing to do for his government at this point was to simply stay out of the way.

Does the Premier accept any responsibility for the negative impacts that this entire episode has had on our economy and with relationships with Yukon's First Nations?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I certainly will admit to this House that Bill S-6 and the *Yukon Environmental Socio-economic Assessment Act* is federal legislation.

As I mentioned yesterday, because it is federal legislation, it is their prerogative as to whether to amend the legislation or leave it as it is. What I have stated is that, as it is federal legislation, this government will not be a barrier to decisions that the federal government makes regarding federal legislation.

**Mr. Silver:** Yesterday the Premier admitted and says again that the best thing that his government can do at this point for Bill S-6 is to not be a barrier and to stay out of the way, and after the mess that this government has made of the entire process, perhaps that is best.

When I spoke to the Prime Minister-elect yesterday, he reconfirmed the incoming government's commitment to consult with First Nations and to appeal the four clauses that were pushed by this Premier. In the meantime, the bill passed

by the Conservatives in Ottawa is now law. It's now enforced and this is important. There is a window where the new rules will apply before the bill can be fixed by the incoming government.

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has already written to the Yukon government asking how it intends to proceed with the projects that will come through this very narrow window.

How does the government intend to consult with First Nations when the Conservatives' new law says that they do not have to?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I did write to the Yukon First Nations prior to Bill S-6 being completed. I spoke during the House of Commons hearings here in Yukon regarding Bill S-6 — that there is another path — that, as leaders in this territory and as we have done so in the past, there is also an opportunity to be able to talk about these amendments.

The First Nations have agreed to have that discussion and they would like to see a discussion held — a trilateral discussion — and I'm more than willing to sign a joint letter. I too in my conversation with the Prime Minister assured him — or, the Prime Minister-elect — that this is federal legislation and this government will not be a barrier if the federal government decides to make changes to it.

I will also state that, Mr. Speaker, I believe that any time that we can have a process that's consistent with other jurisdictions, it allows Yukon to remain competitive for those investment dollars and for creating good jobs here in Yukon for Yukoners.

**Mr. Silver:** I think it's time for the Premier to get off of his briefing notes and listen to the question. There is a very specific window here that we need to address.

There has been a lot of uncertainty caused by the government working hand-in-hand with the Conservative government in Ottawa to make changes to our environmental assessment process with Bill S-6. The bill is now law, but sections of it will be repealed by the new government in Ottawa. The changes in place now authorize Yukon — Yukon — to decide unilaterally to exempt a project from reassessment if Yukon was the decision body on an earlier assessment. In their letter, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in wants to know how the Government of Yukon plans to address this gap in consultation that it has created by its last-minute amendments.

How does the government plan to address this uncertainty — uncertainty that was created by his four backroom amendments?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** It certainly is disappointing that the Leader of the Liberal Party to this point, after four years, still doesn't understand the legislative process. This government had no last-minute amendments because we didn't table any legislation; this was federal legislation. We've been clear about that from the beginning. It's a disappointment that the Leader of the Liberal Party still doesn't understand the process.

Mr. Speaker, we have assured the Prime Minister directly — the Prime Minister-elect — that this government will not be a barrier to changes to the legislation if it is the will of the

federal government to do so. We also discussed the opportunity and the agreement and willingness of First Nations to sit down and discuss this. That is my commitment to Yukoners. As I've said, when it comes to creating investment opportunities, allowing work to happen here at any time that we can have any process that allows us to be consistent with other jurisdictions — that is a benefit to Yukon.

#### **Question re: Waste management strategy**

**Mr. Barr:** When asked on the local CBC morning talk show about what the Yukon Party government has to do before their mandate runs out, their Premier responded: "Not a lot".

Mr. Speaker, waste diversion in the territory is around 20 to 25 percent. Efforts will need to be doubled to reach the target the Yukon Party set in 2011.

Will the Premier admit that his government has a lot to do when it comes to meeting the waste diversion target it set in 2011?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** The simple answer is yes, of course, there's a lot more work to do and there's a lot more work to do because we've done a lot of work to date already.

We've built some significant improvements into our recycling and waste management systems throughout the territory. We've made investments in community landfills and waste diversion throughout the territory and we're making regulatory changes as well.

It is important to recognize that we have done a significant amount of work alongside our partners in the municipalities, along with our partners in the First Nations, as well as other community organizations, in increasing the amount of waste we are seeing diverted from our landfills. But, there is more work to be done. That is why this government is moving forward with changes to our infrastructure, to our regulations and to our policies with regard to solid waste. Yes, there is a lot more work to do and the Yukon Party has the vision to do it.

**Mr. Barr:** I hear a contradiction. There is a lot for this government to do. Setting targets is only valuable if there is meaningful action to achieve them. Setting targets in an election campaign and then not doing the work to achieve them is cynical and erodes public trust. If the Yukon Party was serious about its targets, there is a lot of work to do in this last year before the next election.

Does the minister have a real plan to hit the 50-percent waste diversion target, or was the Yukon Party's 2011 election promise just empty words?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** I think that target — that goal — was a reasonable aspirational target to shoot for. We have been going for that. We have been trying our best to do it, but we haven't got there yet. That is why we have to do more work. What we have done to date is make changes to our landfills throughout the territory to increase the amount of waste we are seeing diverted. We have improved the infrastructure in communities throughout the territory to improve that

diversion, and we are undertaking policy changes and regulatory changes to support that increased diversion as well.

It is very easy for the NDP to sit over there and criticize government for not meeting a particular target, but never, ever offering an alternative or any other solutions. We have made investments. We have taken actions, and we have made great improvements in the way we handle solid waste in this territory and we will continue to do so. What we won't do is listen to the cynical approach taken by the NDP, which is to throw stones and criticize, but never offer anything by way of alternatives. The investments we have made have been considerable. The actions we have taken have been considerable. There is more work to be done and this is the team over here that will do it.

**Question re: Mine closure security**

**Mr. Tredger:** Last January, Yukon Zinc shut down the Wolverine mine. It came as a surprise to some that the Wolverine mine had been allowed to operate for months without paying its environmental securities. Yukon Zinc then went into creditor protection, putting a stop-payment to businesses to whom they owed money. Fast forward to this fall, and many Yukon businesses that are owed money are getting cents on the dollar while the Government of Yukon was paid in full. The Yukon government had ample warning that the Wolverine mine would be closing.

What attempts did the Government of Yukon make to ensure that Yukon businesses would be compensated for the work they did at Wolverine?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Of course the Yukon government is disappointed in the unfortunate circumstances that led to the closing of the Wolverine mine as well as the Yukon businesses that were affected by that closure. We worked hard to protect the interest of Yukon taxpayers and employees to ensure the financial capacity was in place to deal with any environmental liabilities. We now have the full amount of security in hand, which I think will assist us when the mine will move into full closure. Our government and our party believe in a strong and independent private sector, and part of that independence involves the freedom to make their own business decisions.

No one is happy with the way this unfolded, and it is unfortunate that Yukon businesses were affected, but we need to allow Yukon businesses to function and be free to make their own business decisions when it comes to accounts receivables and providing credit to other businesses or operations such as mining operations. We hear the NDP attack mining time and time over, and this is something that, while these circumstances were unfortunate, we still believe that businesses need to have the ability to operate independently.

**Mr. Tredger:** Yukon businesses will be glad to know that you have their back.

This is about learning from mistakes, being accountable to Yukon businesses and showing leadership moving into the future. This government talks a lot about supporting Yukon businesses, but when it came to the Wolverine mine closure, they did not walk the talk. They allowed the mine to remain

open, while many Yukon businesses essentially worked for free. It wasn't Yukon businesses who allowed the mine to operate when it obviously could not afford its payments; it was the minister.

Has the Government of Yukon considered taking any measures to protect Yukon businesses in situations like the one that we just observed at Wolverine mine?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Again, I'll repeat that no one is happy with the way this unfolded and the unfortunate impact that it had on Yukon businesses. When the Wolverine mine was having difficulty making their security payments, what our government did was think of the families that were affected, the people who were working at the mine. We tried to come up with a solution so that they could meet those payments. Unfortunately, earlier this year they did succumb to global economic factors and were forced to close.

I think one of the things that the NDP does time and time again is single out mining. Whether it's their anti-mining policies with respect to royalty increases or the end of free-entry staking, they always seem to come back to mining and single that out as something that they want to pick on.

Where does their interference in the private sector stop? Would that extend beyond the mining industry to other businesses? Would it extend into tourism or IT or some of the service businesses that are active here in the territory? The NDP always clamours for a place at the table with Yukon businesses, whereas our government understands that it is our job to set the table and create an environment for Yukon businesses to be able to succeed.

Again, we just have to cast our minds back to remarks by the Leader of the Official Opposition — the infamous lettuce and toilet paper debacle of 2015 — to understand what they know about mining.

**Question re: Affordable housing**

**Ms. White:** In 2011, when the current Yukon Party government took over from the last Yukon Party government, there was a thriving tent city on the lawn, right next to where Yukon politicians have their reserved parking spots. For people in desperate need of housing, the tent city was a safe, if temporary, place to live and it also kept the issue of access to housing very visible. Among the first legislative actions taken by this Yukon Party government was to use the *Financial Administration Act* to disappear the tent city.

Far from being responsible management of homelessness, the BC Supreme Court just ruled that similar laws preventing the homeless from sleeping in public parks to be a violation of Charter rights. Improved access to housing is what Yukoners need, but the government's response only pushed the problem off the lawn and out of sight, but it remains in the minds of many.

Mr. Speaker, when will access to housing for all Yukoners improve?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** This government has made significant investments across the housing continuum since we took office, as well as previous Yukon governments. I believe the

figure is well over \$100 million and counting in the amount of investments that we have made in housing across the territory.

A lot of that housing investment has been geared toward seniors and rent geared to income — nothing is more affordable than that. Of course there is the single-parent housing development that exists in Riverdale today and is supported by the Yukon Housing Corporation and the Women's Directorate through the provision of an individual — a staff person — to oversee that operation.

When it comes to the amendments that were made in 2012 to the *Financial Administration Act*, what we did at the time was put in place regulations for the management, maintenance, proper use and protection of public property. The intention of that piece of legislation was to ensure health and human safety.

Mr. Speaker, I will remind members that those legislative amendments were not only supported by the Yukon Party and the government, but also by members of the Third Party at the time. Again, we were acting to ensure public safety and protect public property, and that was the intent of those amendments that we made.

**Ms. White:** So I wonder when access for housing for all Yukoners will improve. It would be great if the Yukon Party set the table of housing and invited everyone to the feast. Too many Yukoners are struggling with inadequate access to housing and this is an impediment to our economic development. Close to half of all Yukon renters are paying more than 30 percent of their revenue on housing, the maximum recommended by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for affordable housing.

According to the most recent numbers available in the Canadian rental housing index, in Yukon, roughly 450 renter households are paying over 50 percent of their total income on rent.

Mr. Speaker, when can low-income and working families paying 30 to 40 to 50 percent of their income on rent expect a break from this government?

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** I think it's important to realize just how much this government has spent on housing over the last few years. Housing is very important to this government. I think that has been shown in many ways. We have the housing action plan; we have the implementation committee working on that. There are many programs that are delivered through Yukon Housing Corporation and the new programs that were put in place this summer were very well-subscribed to — home ownership preparedness, or the HOPE program — this list goes on and on.

I can appreciate the member opposite thinking that the government can always do more, Mr. Speaker, but you really need to have a look at what we have done and just appreciate the work that has gone into housing here in the Yukon, and the work that has been done by the department to ensure that people do have housing here in the Yukon.

I'm proud of the work that has been done and I'm quite confident that, as time goes on, we will continue to do that good work and do the best that we can for Yukoners.

**Ms. White:** It's too bad that the best isn't good enough. Spending public money and striking multiple committees is not delivering housing where and when it's most needed. Access to housing is still top-of-mind for Yukon's communities. We will cheer with the government if and when there is improved access to affordable, appropriate housing for everyone.

In rural Yukon, the lack of housing for staff impacts employee retention for both the public and the private sectors. High turnover of staff means services risk being discontinued and employers are constantly recruiting and retraining at great cost.

Mr. Speaker, when will lack of housing stop being a reason for employees to leave their jobs in rural Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** As I said in my previous response, this government continues to make investments in housing, whether it be staff housing, social housing or seniors housing. You know, the list goes on and on and it's millions of dollars.

Unfortunately the member opposite doesn't think that we're doing enough, but I guess that's the way it goes. I have confidence in the department to continue to do the hard work that they're doing. I have confidence in this government to continue to invest the money that it invests to try to make the Yukon the best place that it can possibly be.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has elapsed.

### Speaker's statement

**Speaker:** Before we move on, I ask members' indulgence. During Question Period, members have a question and then two supplementary questions to ask. I note that not all of the time do you use the third one, and occasionally, not even the second one. But if the same individual is going to go to the next question, could they please at least say "new question", because I'm keeping track. I say "final supplementary" and then you go into another subject matter. I'm talking to all of you. I don't know if you believe it's the same question or not. I have to determine whether it is, in fact, related to the same topic or not.

If you could at least say "new question" and allow me to reintroduce you, that will make it easier for me, the Clerks and the members to determine who may be ready to respond. That's just an observation. Thank you for your help with it.

### 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, October 28, 2015. They are Motion No. 1014, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, and Motion No. 1023, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BILLS

#### **Bill No. 20: *Second Appropriation Act, 2015-16 — Second Reading — adjourned debate***

**Clerk:** Second reading, Bill No. 20, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski; adjourned debate, Mr. Tredger.

**Speaker:** Member for Mayo-Tatchun, you have five minutes and 12 seconds left.

**Mr. Tredger:** As I said yesterday, I am pleased to stand on behalf of the people of Mayo-Tatchun, and I would like to thank them for hosting me, for talking to me, for sharing their ideas and concerns. They epitomize what it means to be Yukoners. The NDP knows that the strength of the Yukon lies in our people. We know their voice counts. We know that we need the expertise and involvement of all Yukoners, of all Yukon citizens, to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, now is the time for us to come forward together for long-term planning. Now is the time to consult, to listen. Now is the time to engage all Yukon.

The Yukon Premier talks of diversifying the economy yet, under this government's watch, we have increased our dependence on federal transfer payments. We now receive almost \$1 billion of \$1.24-billion revenue directly from the federal government. As I said, we are now more dependent than ever on federal taxpayer dollars, yet the Premier talks of balancing the budget. This is at best disingenuous. Now is the time that we should be talking and doing careful planning, sound management and preparing for the future. Now is the time we should be entering into conversations with our public service and with our citizens to strategically plan, to set priorities.

We have a dedicated, informed and knowledgeable civil service. It is time to trust them, to use their expertise and allow them to do what we hired them to do: work for all Yukoners and advocate for Yukoners.

Now is the time to build relationships based on trust and cooperation, to share resources and knowledge together in the spirit of land claims and self-government agreements, to bring municipal governments, First Nation governments, advisory councils and all boards and committees to the table together for all Yukoners.

This government has spent more time in costly legal wrangling than any other Yukon government before it. Our focus needs to be on partnerships and relationships, building a robust future for our children. There is much to do. We need to be involved. Let us deal with the aging infrastructure so important to community life — health facilities throughout the territory that are often aging and often understaffed. In Pelly Crossing we have an airport that is still, after all these years, unable to land medical flights. Now is the time to consider the safety and well-being of Yukon citizens. Recreational facilities — such as the lack of a skating rink in Carmacks — and our swimming pools, which are a boon to many of our communities — are patched together and aging quickly. Last

season many of them had short seasons due to repairs. Our EMS buildings are in need of upgrades — ambulances and central storage and meeting places and training for government workers. Now is the time. Let us follow through and implement signed memorandums and agreements. There is much to do.

Unlike the Premier, I and the NDP believe that now is the time. We owe it to the taxpayers of Canada. You and I are investing over \$900 million in Yukon and Yukon people to meet major needs, to build a better, more prosperous and diverse Yukon and, most of all, we owe it to our children.

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** It is with great pleasure that I get up in the House today to speak.

First of all, I do want to thank the great constituents of the Kluane riding, one of the larger ridings with Canada's largest mountain in it, the world's largest non-polar icefield and a diverse group of folks from Takhini River bridge up to Beaver Creek.

I also want to thank my family for the support that they give me. I spend a lot of time in town here, and I don't get a chance to be home as much as I would like, so I'm sure blessed that I have them and their support.

I do want to congratulate the new MP for the Yukon, Larry Bagnell, and I do want to thank Ryan for all his work. I look forward to working with Larry as I did with Ryan so we move forward on issues within my constituency and within the Department of Environment.

I also do want to thank the previous mayor and council in Haines Junction for their hard work, and I look forward to moving forward working with the mayor and council in Haines Junction.

I just want to highlight a few things in my riding. I listened to the Leader of the Third Party go on about the Premier's comments on the engine and the leader saying that the engine wasn't running — time to put it in gear. I just want to talk a little bit about how in-gear my riding is with work.

In Beaver Creek alone, they were so happy to see a new playground put in at the school there. We managed to find an area to move the library after we built them a new fire hall. I had heard comments from the critic for Tourism about — I believe it was Westmark and Holland America leaving. The Westmark was bought by a local there and they are thriving; they are happy. They had one of the busiest seasons they ever had up there. It's great to see the initiative out of these small communities.

I'm also happy to see that the White River First Nation is coming closer to working on the reconciliation agreement with this government. I think that's a wonderful thing also.

In Burwash Landing, I see — on the phone this morning with the private contractor working on the lagoon — the work he's doing on the lagoon out there. That's important work. That's infrastructure money to the communities.

Also we have a wind project that we're working out with Kluane First Nation. We have done some geophysical data work with Kluane First Nation so we can assess some minerals in the area.

Destruction Bay and all the constituents I talk to there are happy with the Shakwak work on the whole highway that you see going on up there. If you're going to look for permafrost in the Yukon, the main areas are up in my riding. One of them is from Takhini to Whitehorse and the other one is north of Destruction Bay, so they're happy the dollars and the money are still flowing.

In Haines Junction, one of the most interesting things and the hardest things that I fought for were crosswalks. We actually have the crosswalks in place. The school kids are happy in the wintertime, and I know I heard from the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes about crosswalks as soon as we were elected, and to see those to fruition is very important for our communities but especially in my communities.

The other thing that I wanted to highlight is the work that we've done on our dumps. That was in Question Period today, and the residents are happy to see us moving forward. The dumps are in great shape and they're what the residents want to see and there are more opportunities to recycle and reuse.

In Haines Junction, another highlight was our government commitment to a cultural weekend out there when it came to "Our House is Waking up the Land". Da Ku is a Southern Tutchone word for "our house", and this government committed \$20,000 to this and I was there for the event. It was a wonderful event. There were First Nation people from just about all over Canada, but in western Canada for sure and from Alaska. It was great to see so many of them I know through my travels.

In Mendenhall and Takhini, they are a little closer to the community. They are happy that the school bus issue is dealt with because they have kids who travel the longest on the school bus.

You know, we are working on the water in Takhini. Again, they are happy with the roadwork that happens out there.

There are a lot of good things that are going on. The engine is definitely in gear and givin'er out in the Kluane riding.

Now I just want to talk a little bit about my department when it comes to the Department of Environment and highlight some of the stuff that is going on this year. One of the key new initiatives is the Alsek moose management pilot project. We have seen declines significantly in the Alsek area between 1998 and 2008. This isn't anything new and being a local resident and a member of the local resource council — as the chair for years — this is something we addressed.

We are doing a multi-year pilot project that is underway and focuses on the recovery of the moose population in the Alsek area. It is in partnership and the great work of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — I'm so proud to partner with them on this. They are doing a great job — the community of Haines Junction of course and the Alsek Renewable Resources Council. As part of the program, the government and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations have agreed to develop a collaborative harvest management plan with the goal of recovering the Alsek moose. This project will include some more moose monitoring and census work in

2015 and subsequent recruitment surveys and monitoring the effectiveness of directed wolf trapping. We have been monitoring wolf activity, using late winter wolf surveys. That is one thing.

I want to talk a little bit about something that came to my attention shortly after I became the minister and this was the spay and neuter voucher program. This is something that I heard from the Mae Bachur Animal Shelter and from Kona's Coalition and I heard from communities that partner with their First Nations when it comes to spaying and neutering. This funding was provided, for the last few years, to run a spay and neuter voucher pilot project aimed at reducing the cost of sterilizing dogs and cats. The evaluation of the pilot project was planned for when the animal protection program was transferred to the Department of Environment earlier this year. The vouchers are to offset the costs of spay and neuter surgeries and will continue to be available during the evaluation. We are still providing the service, but we are evaluating it. The issue of unwanted dogs and, in particular, the presence of packs or uncontrolled dogs in some communities is a major concern. We are committed to evaluating the program to ensure we meet the needs of Yukoners in this effective manner.

Another one we spoke to a little earlier — I was just talking about dumps. I want to talk about our recycling regulations. In the fall of 2014, of course the government asked for public feedback on the proposed changes to the beverage container and designated materials regulations. We are committed to changing these regulations in order to ensure that the recycling program is sustainable. The purpose of the changes is aimed at improving the recycling system and ensuring proper disposal of potentially harmful materials. Since the public review, the departments of Environment and Community Services have reviewed the *What We Heard* document and engaged further with the affected stakeholders. Some of these changes are very good because they will expand the types and sizes of materials to be collected and processed for recycling and they will revise the beverage container deposit and refund system and will also establish and revise surcharges and fees to better reflect the actual costs of recycling materials. The government is proposing to increase surcharges and fees, as they have not changed since the recycling program began in 1990 for beverage containers and in 2003 for small tires. That is moving forward and I am happy to see that going on.

Another one I think that I am most proud of — I will talk about the Conrad campground and the investments that we've had in campgrounds. Our campgrounds are very popular. When we built the Tombstone Territorial Park and moved forward with our First Nation partners on that, it was incredible to see how people like to go and see our campgrounds, and with the inception of our Kusawa park, we'll see more use there.

Through the good management that we do at the Department of Environment of our campgrounds, we're starting to see a lot more use in the campgrounds. This year we're investing over half a million dollars in campground

improvements, including new campsites and facility maintenance. Approximately 22 additional campsites have been developed and the equivalent of basically a new campground. We also invested over \$700,000 in the Conrad campground, and I'll speak to that a little bit. Combined in this investment of more than \$1.2 million, this delivers on the government's mandate to expand camping opportunities. There's more to follow; there's more work being done. We look at some of the issues that come with the increased use of our campgrounds, so we're looking at what other jurisdictions do and how we can make it better for Yukoners.

These improvements help the department deliver a better, safer camping experience for Yukoners and visitors, and also provide economic benefits and job opportunities for local businesses — let's keep people in the Yukon spending their money.

When it comes to the Conrad campground, I just had the opportunity to tour it this year. I had thought about this when I was canoeing — maybe the MLA for the area and I could go camping one weekend next year and check it out. When I did a tour of it, the thing that most amazed me — and I've been to just about every campground; if I haven't been to every campground, I apologize and will make a point of it next summer — when I went there and I went on a tour of it, we had an opportunity to — it's a loop, so when I went to the first part of it, and it overlooks Windy Arm, I looked at the lake and I couldn't believe how beautiful the lake was. I come from a riding with lots of mountains and, as we moved around the loop and I came over the top side, I neglected, when I was looking at the beautiful lake view, to see the beautiful mountains. When you get up to the top, it's like there's a different view in each campsite. It's pretty incredible.

It's another collaboration with First Nations — the Carcross/Tagish First Nation — during the planning phase. The contract for construction was awarded to Carcross/Tagish First Nation. Their citizens played a significant role and I got to meet and talk to those guys. There were some young fellows who were learning to run equipment in there, and I think that's a great thing.

So I look forward to the opening of it next year, and it should alleviate — it's close to a lot of the population in the Yukon, so we'll see a lot of locals from around the Whitehorse area access it, which should ease the pressure on some of our other campgrounds.

I spoke a little bit earlier about the Kluane First Nation wind-diesel project. That's another thing I'm proud of. We've heard it in the House before; we've had conversations about wind and renewable energies. I do want to highlight something when it comes to previous Yukon Party governments going to Ottawa and asking for things, like Mayo B. It increased our renewable energy when it comes to hydro power. It also increased the opportunity for us to expand the grid and take some of these people on the grid off of burning fossil fuels with generators. It also reduced carbon emissions in the air. I think it is a good thing, as we move forward with our long-term hydro power projects, but I want to speak just a

little bit about the wind project. This is increasing demands for electrical energy in Yukon's isolated electrical system.

The Yukon government is actively working with the communities and First Nation leaders to explore some of these opportunities and this is one of them. For remote diesel-dependent communities, we would like to see if we could find other ways to reduce the energy cost and the greenhouse gas emissions.

This is an economic development opportunity. It is an opportunity to support the development of renewable energy sources and to help our diesel-dependent communities reduce their energy costs. If anybody has been to the Burwash area or Destruction Bay, it is called "Destruction Bay" for a reason. The wind blew it away one time, so there is no shortage of wind out there. This will also fulfill key commitments found in the government's *Energy Strategy for Yukon* and in our *Climate Change Action Plan*. I have lots I can say, but I am trying to keep it within my time here.

I want to move over to our *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan*. I have had the opportunity now as the Environment minister to attend a few conferences and stuff when it comes to dealing with our water strategy and our action plan. We hired a short-term project manager to ensure that all the actions in our water strategy are being implemented. To date this includes: adding 15 more hydrometric and four water quality monitoring stations; upgrading 23 of our hydro metric stations with real-time satellite telemetry — that is pretty interesting stuff; hiring a hydrologist; expanding the groundwater network by adding 14 new wells with more in the future.

The other thing that is kind of interesting when I spoke of it earlier is the hosting of the first Yukon water forum in February. I think that was a good thing. I committed to it and tasked the department to work on this and make it an annual thing. What happens is when you get so many different and diverse groups — we had First Nations, municipalities, government officials, different departments and some other key stakeholders — when it comes to water sometimes what came out of that was that they realized that there is a lot of information and knowledge out there and sometimes we work in silos, so when we get together once a year, it's great to share knowledge, share information, swap stories and find out what they are doing. Sometimes you can piggyback with them and it doesn't cost as much. Over the next two years we will be adding 10 new hydrometric and two new water quality monitoring stations to our existing networks and adding new wells to the groundwater network and collecting more baseline data.

The other thing is we will be working with our First Nation partners and the communities to strengthen the community water monitoring capacity. With the new standards set out across Canada, it means new levels and requirements for monitoring water. That works into training, and I know in my riding we have done some stuff with the water level — I know Yukon College is doing a good job of that, too. We are investing over \$3.35 million over the next three years to deliver on actions identified in the strategy. I

know that Yukoners are happy with that. I would encourage those who do not understand that to visit [www.yukonwater.ca](http://www.yukonwater.ca) for some detailed information and the progress on the water strategy and action plan.

One more thing I wanted to highlight is that I believe I was the second person to get my online camping permit. I know most of us are campers, and you can do it online now. You can get your fishing licence and you can actually take the H.E.E.D. course — hunter education and ethics development — online now. The H.E.E.D course is now offered online, but I do want to let members know that you do not get your FAC — firearms acquisition certificate — with it now like you used to. That is a separate course — or your PAL — possession and acquisition licence. It is encouraging because it is a course that you can take online and in the communities you can do it. I know we are going to do it this winter with our Junior Ranger program. The youth who do not have the course are going to sit down and take it for a couple of hours a week. It will give youth something to do and teach them proper hunting ethics.

With the online licensing services — and just to let members opposite know, this isn't an easy task. We always have to be cautious of security, online security with people's information, so there's a lot of work that has to be done in the background and there was a lot of good work done by the department. It's just kind of a partnership with Highways and Public Works and their IT sector, and we had a good announcement from the minister earlier today — putting more money into that.

The work that we're doing on these licences and annual campground permits — it does provide a good foundation for future expansion to other electronic licences, such as hunting licences. If anybody has gone to get their hunting licence — most of us are hunter-gatherers in the Yukon here — there's a lot of paperwork to fill out. It would be nice to have it a little bit simplified.

We're also going to be expanding, like I said, electronic access for fishing licences, campground permits. Someone brought to my attention mid-summer that when you go in there and go online and get your fishing licence, why doesn't it come in a wallet form? I threw a bit of a monkey wrench into the department and said, "Why doesn't it come in a wallet form?" They're working on that to see if we can make it so that when you open up your driver's licence or your fishing licence, everything's on there — sort of like what happens at the DMV.

There are a lot of good things going on in the Department of Environment. I could talk all day. I would probably lose my voice.

I always like to end my opportunity to get up here and speak with a statistic. I found this amazing: over 500 resident annual campground permits — that's 500 Yukoners who have an annual permit — and there are over 1,600 fishing licences that were issued using the online system last year. I think that online system is a great thing. It's something that we committed to in the platform. When the Premier spoke to "not much", I think what he meant with "not much" is that if you

look at our platform in 2011, we've accomplished just about everything in our platform. Yukoners know that if we commit to do something, we will do it. Is there more work to do in the future? Absolutely — listening to Yukoners. I heard a very interesting tidbit from a constituent this morning that I'll be bringing to caucus.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak here. I look forward to listening to other members.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Thank you for this opportunity to address the House during second reading. I've been absolutely honoured and privileged to represent the hard-working people in my riding of Porter Creek South for the last four years now. I appreciate hearing the feedback from my constituents on a regular basis, whether it be at the doorstep, the grocery store, the gym, the sidewalk. I appreciate seeing home construction, both new and renovations being completed, in Porter Creek South and across this amazing territory for that matter. Because of the sound economy that the Yukon Party government has established, my constituents and other Yukoners alike have that opportunity to build new homes, to do renovations on existing homes, to build cottages on new cottage lots, to construct new businesses or renovate old ones, and to extend their driveways for their new campers, their motorhomes and their sport-utility vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, another pattern that we've seen over the last decade has been the exceptional quality of health care we receive in our territory. As I compare ours with other jurisdictions across Canada, it demonstrates how incredibly fortunate we are to call Yukon our home.

Over this past year I have learned a great deal about the services that the Department of Health and Social Services provides since being appointed minister in January, and how those services truly touch the lives of all Yukoners.

In fact, since being appointed Minister of Health and Social Services, I have met regularly with staff and stakeholders. I have toured program offices and facilities across the territory where I've met with staff in our social services office and health clinics, hospitals, seniors facilities, and I continue to be impressed with the collaboration among all staff in our department to help better serve Yukon.

I've had the opportunity to tour our capital projects that are currently underway, and I am impressed by the vision that our team had when developing those projects.

I will speak more about the projects in a moment, but I have to emphasize that the staff of the Department of Health and Social Services and the services they provide truly do address issues that people have from birth to death and at every single point in between. I'm honoured to recognize the hard work of the departmental staff and tell them, on behalf of this Yukon Party government, that they have our appreciation and they have our confidence.

We can't ignore initiatives taken to support our seniors, and much has been said in the House and media in recent months about continuing care. We have been able to open additional beds at the Thomson Centre for residents requiring that high level of care. We are working toward the opening of

an additional 10 beds at the Sixth Avenue facility, formerly known as the Oblate Centre, for those needing an intermediate level of care. This is certainly an interim solution to help us through until the new continuing care facility opens.

The Whistle Bend continuing care facility will be by far Yukon government's biggest capital project. In fact, it will be the largest capital project in Yukon history. The decision to proceed with this community-oriented facility was evidence-based and it was supported by two needs assessments and a business case conducted for government, which concluded the need for a significant number of new care facility beds in our territory.

This is about providing support to our loved ones, whether they are our parents, our spouses or our children. It's about providing support to our neighbours and to our friends.

In the next 10 years, the Yukon seniors population is expected to almost double. We know that 19 percent of the current population is in the 55-to-69-year age group. There is a critical need for the Whistle Bend care facility as it will help us meet the current and future needs of seniors and other Yukoners needing continuing care services.

Construction of Whistle Bend is expected to begin in early 2016, following the design phase.

It's also important to note that the new Whistle Bend continuing care facility is virtually the same distance from Whitehorse General Hospital as the current Copper Ridge facility. That closeness in proximity is important to Yukoners.

In Dawson City we have McDonald Lodge, which currently provides 11 beds. With the new facility that is nearing completion, there will be 15 beds serving that specific community.

Our home care program continues to support residents to remain in their homes as long as possible before moving into that higher level of care. In fact over the last number of years, we've increased funding by some 400 percent for home care. The staff both here in Whitehorse and in rural Yukon do an incredible job supporting those seniors who are able to stay in their homes.

The new Salvation Army Centre of Hope will increase support to some of our more vulnerable citizens by increasing the number of shelter beds from 14 to 25. It will also add 22 transitional living units that will assist those individuals on the path to self-sufficiency. It will have increased programming and provide a day space; also more kitchen space and a larger eating room.

The St. Elias home for people with intellectual disabilities will expand services and support for those requiring that level of assistance. The new Sarah Steele Alcohol and Drug Services treatment facility is another way to support our staff in their addictions and prevention work, as well as support those struggling with alcohol and drug misuse or addictions. Again, this will increase the ability of our staff to provide increased services to Yukon citizens. It will enable a continuous intake for our residential treatment programs, provide additional space for outpatient treatment and counselling and add many support services for youth and for their families.

Yukon citizens are benefitting from the new MRI machine at the Whitehorse General Hospital, thanks to huge community and individual donations. Government matched the funds raised and, in addition, provided funding for the construction of the MRI suite. Previously a person requiring an MRI was sent out of the territory, and some still are, but having this available locally has certainly cut down on the wait times to the tune of sometimes seven months to a year, as I understand in some cases.

Also through some thoughtful and careful planning and knowing years in advance that our federal funding under THSSI would cease, we have been able to transition some very important programs into our base and increase staffing in our chronic disease programs and create permanent positions in rural mental health services — again, two very important areas in supporting our citizens to a healthier life.

Mental Health Services has two rural offices, one in Dawson and one in Haines Junction. Mental health nurses in these communities also travel to other communities to provide assessment and treatment services to individuals with serious mental illnesses, as well as provide services to professionals and to the public. We also hire support workers to provide one-on-one practical assistance to clients between visits from the nurse or from the itinerant services provided by Mental Health Services.

Mental health is a growing issue and pressure in our territory, as well as across the country. We recognize the importance and benefits of enhanced integrated service delivery approaches to meeting the needs of clients across their lifespan. While we know that services will evolve moving forward, we are very fortunate that we are well-served by not only our Mental Health Services staff, but by two resident psychiatrists and a youth and child psychiatrist who visits Yukon regularly.

We also have identified the important role that collaborative care practices and integration can play in mental health and addictions service delivery. Technology is also helping us out in this area, as we can use our telehealth capacity in every Yukon community to provide access to a psychiatrist or a mental health counsellor when needed.

We are also providing mental health services specifically designed for continuing care clients under the direction of a clinical psychologist. This has been found to have been extremely beneficial at all levels.

The transitional living facility for persons with mental health disorders was also announced earlier this year and will improve and increase supports to citizens struggling due to mental health issues. In this project, government will partner with a non-government organization to provide 24-7 supported living assistance. This is something that both the community and our own staff have been asking for.

We continue to fund non-governmental organizations that are better situated to provide direct services to clients: the Child Development Centre, the Salvation Army, Challenge, Yukon Food for Learning, the Food Bank Society, Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, Autism Yukon, the women's shelter — just to name a few. We have a shared responsibility to provide

support and care, and that is a responsibility that the department and this government take very seriously.

I certainly appreciate the work done by the now Minister of Education, the former Minister of Health and Social Services. He certainly created a solid path for me to follow and we continue to have good dialogue about where we have come from, the work that is currently occurring and the needs of our health care in the future.

We have also made changes to the pioneer utility grant this year to better support our seniors. Yukon is one of only three jurisdictions that provide heating subsidies to our seniors. In 2014-2015, the value of the grant was \$1,030 and we processed more than 2,075 applications. Prior to making changes, we undertook consultations with seniors' organizations. Now PUG, or the public utility grant, has become an income-tested program, rather than a universal one. We have increased the base rate for seniors living in rural Yukon and changed the application date to earlier in the year. I have received feedback on the PUG changes and found it interesting that by meeting with our staff, a number of the seniors found that they were in fact eligible for additional funds through a variety of different avenues.

Constituents of Porter Creek South often, through conversations, tell me what is truly important to them and a number of things strike me as very interesting and consistent in speaking with other Yukoners. Access to health care is certainly something that is very important to them and we continue to make that a priority for this government. Access to health care is about more than seeing the doctor; it's about receiving quality care when needed, by the appropriate provider and in a manner that is sustainable.

Now the department continues to work with the Yukon Medical Association, or YMA, to ensure an adequate supply of health care professionals for Yukon. Health and Social Services has a physician recruiter working closely with the YMA. The department continues to explore options for additional collaborative care practices and innovative team-based delivery models that will serve to meet the health care needs of Yukon residents. The department has successfully recruited two nurse practitioners into Yukon's health care delivery system and is actively looking for more opportunities to increase nurse practitioners into current medical practices. We have increased the use of telehealth as a way of interacting with patients and this service is used by psychiatrists and specialists.

Mr. Speaker, constituents of Porter Creek South also tell me that a healthy economy and jobs for Yukoners is certainly important to them, and we see the work being conducted by this government to do just that. We have a healthy economy in the territory and people are working, and I commend the work of a number of ministers who play a role in that, from the Tourism and Culture minister to the Economic Development minister to the Premier. There's good collaboration happening within this government.

Something else that I worked on that is important to constituents of Porter Creek South is protecting our children. We've seen initiatives through the Department of Justice, the

Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services, partnering with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, in promoting the safe use of the Internet and what to do in situations where there have been issues on the Internet, whether people or youth have shown inappropriate images and the steps that they can take to mitigate those issues. We look forward to a continued working relationship with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, and I'm very thankful that the ministers of Education and Justice are working with me on that file.

We've been working on supporting foster families over the last number of years. I've had the opportunity to meet with a number of foster families — actually most foster families in the territory — to find out how we can better support them and how we can move forward. We saw last week that there was a kickoff to do just that: the recruitment and retention of foster families and looking for ways to support them better.

Ultimately our goal is to work with families to ensure that children can remain in their own homes; however, in those instances where it's just not possible, we explore other options where the caregivers are known to the child, and those are extended family agreements. We have a number of those in the territory.

Foster parents play an important role in promoting the health and well-being of Yukon children and families by opening their homes and using their skills to provide for the physical and emotional needs of children in their care. We are currently developing a foster care action plan based on the discussions and input from foster families to enhance the program and address some areas of challenge. Through that work, we've seen six overarching goals that were identified in the discussions with the foster parents: improved communication; collaboration and partnership; policy to support consistent practice; effective kinship services; recruitment of foster caregivers; and their recognition and support. I look forward, as minister, to continuing working with the foster families in the territory. This government is very appreciative of the work that they do.

In conclusion, I would like to take the opportunity to thank my constituents of Porter Creek South for their continued support over the number of years. I would like to thank my friends and my family for their continued support. I want to thank the staff of Health and Social Services for their dedication within the department. It's something that is valued by this government. I would like to thank my Yukon Party caucus colleagues for their wisdom, their leadership and their camaraderie. I will commend the supplementary budget to this House.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I'm really pleased to rise in the House today and speak about the Department of Education's first supplementary budget for 2015-16. However, before I start that, I should also make mention of my own riding — that of Porter Creek North.

Porter Creek North is probably one of the quickest or the fastest growing ridings in the territory — outside of your own, which now encompasses, as I understand it, Whistle Bend. In

Porter Creek North, we have huge construction taking place in a number of areas. On the Wann Road locations, we have condominiums being developed or having been developed over the last few years, but we also have single-family units in the Crocus Glen development and a number of others. We also have, in the Crestview area, many new mobile home units — “affordable housing” I guess you would call them — multi-family units — there are triplexes and duplexes there — all built by private industry, all designed to be occupied by young families or people who are just starting out in terms of their housing needs. I’m very happy that these developments have managed to take root in my community, if you will, and I’m happy to say that it is all being done without any government support whatsoever.

The Department of Education’s focus continues to be on supporting success for every learner in the territory. It’s done so that every Yukoner has the knowledge and skills to live a meaningful, productive and rewarding life, and our supplementary budget request will support this government’s continuing commitment to deliver accessible and quality programs to all Yukon learners.

I’ll start with the Public Schools branch. The Public Schools branch requires a supplement to their budget. Some of this funding is needed because the government was able to sign a new collective agreement with the Yukon Teachers’ Association in the spring of this year. To fulfill commitments made under the new agreement, a total of \$1.422 million is requested for items such as wage increases, positive behaviour intervention support, parental leave benefits, principal and vice-principal allowances, and professional development. Another \$15,000 has been requested to meet increased demand for staff accommodation in the territory. That is offset by a decrease in demand for student boarding and accommodations in the 2015-16 school year, which resulted in a lapse to the department in the neighbourhood of \$100,000.

The French language education branch is looking for some additional funding as well. I should tell you a little bit, perhaps, about the French second language programs that are available in the territory. An amazing number to me is that French language programs have enrolled about 48 percent of the total student population. These students are involved in core French, intensive French or French immersion. For the 2015-16 school year, the total budget for the French second language education program in the territory is \$5.3 million, and \$977,000 of this amount is provided through a Heritage Canada bilateral funding agreement.

Enrollment in French second language programs overall decreased slightly between September 2011 and September 2013, but enrollment for the 2014-15 school year indicates an increase has occurred again. We’ll continue with the detailed program study to inform reasons behind enrollment trends in French second language programs.

In 2015-16, as most members are probably aware, due to increasing enrollment demands in the younger grades, French immersion Kindergarten was started in the Selkirk school in Riverdale and, from all accounts, it has been a tremendous success to date.

The Department of Education is also working with Canadian Parents for French and French second language partners to explore opportunities for French second language program expansion and long-term program planning. In fact, last night the first public meeting was held. My colleague to my left was at the meeting as an interested parent having a child in a French immersion program in the territory, and it was very interesting to hear some of the concerns of parents at that meeting.

Some of the things that we will do through this consultation — and this will be an ongoing word that you’ll hear during my introduction to this budget — is the consultation process that we’re undertaking on a number of different issues. The first is French language programming. The consultation that we will be undertaking will recommend a long-term process for establishing expectations, guidelines, policies, and locations for French second language programming in light of the existing French second language action plan.

We’ll clarify the goals and expectations of the program models in place, including intensive French, immersion French and core French, to suggest ways of enhancing the current program offerings. The local coordinator agreement for French for the Future is requesting an additional \$11,000 and our additional funding through this supplementary is a very minor amount.

The CYFN First Nations Education Commission is also requesting additional funding in the amount of about \$30,000, because one of the first actions under the 2014-24 long-term joint education action plan with the Council of Yukon First Nations was to establish the First Nations Education Commission. Thirteen of 14 First Nations are represented by the commission, and my department takes advantage of the excellent advice and counsel that we receive from the First Nations Education Commission and we hope to enhance their operation by transferring \$30,000 additional funding to the initiative.

In other areas, Mr. Speaker, the student financial assistance review has recently begun. We are requesting a revote of \$24,000 for this review. I should run through perhaps a little bit about the *Students Financial Assistance Act* review. The Department of Education is committed, as you know, to providing access to funding that makes it affordable for all Yukon students to attend post-secondary studies. I know a number of us on this side of the House have taken advantage of funding. As difficult as it may be to believe, it was available to me back in the 1960s when I attended university. I was thankful for the funding then, and I know several of my colleagues who attended university at a much later date than me have also taken advantage of the funding.

We provide approximately \$4.3 million in funding to almost 1,000 Yukon students, and this gives them a significant advantage as they pursue their higher education, but we found that the *Students Financial Assistance Act* was not really reaching all Yukon students, nor was it doing everything that we hoped that it would do. We asked for public input — again, consultation — on how best to update the *Students*

*Financial Assistance Act* to ensure that it's fair, that it's equitable and that it's available to all Yukon students. We want it to be fiscally responsible, as is our normal wont, but we also wanted to make sure that the money went to Yukon students. With the input of not only students, but their families, other key stakeholders, First Nation governments from across the territory, we hope to ensure that our student financial assistance program continues to be accessible and to be effectively administered in the department.

We have just recently compiled a *What We Heard* document. That document will be available hopefully next week on the department's website. I know it comprises over 100 pages, so it has been quite a document. I have almost waded my way through the whole 100-plus pages and it has some excellent background material in it.

We will continue discussions, I am sure, on the *Students Financial Assistance Act*. I have made a commitment that we will bring forward legislative changes in the spring of 2016. We are on target to reach that date, so hopefully we will have additional information that we will be able to provide all members, as well as the information that will be on the website in the very near future.

One of the other items that we have requested additional funding for is the Yukon literacy strategy — \$48,000 has been requested from the community development fund for the Yukon literacy strategy. The Yukon literacy strategy working group and the First Nations Education Commission have reached consensus on the proposed 2015 to 2025 Yukon literacy strategy and the sign-off process is expected to run into February 2016.

I don't want you to think that absolutely every person in the territory is thrilled with the Yukon literacy strategy that has been developed because I have heard already from one particular group that feels additional work has to be done. The literacy strategy that has been developed from 2015 to 2025 will guide the development and evaluation — which we consider very important — of literacy programs and initiatives. It will set strategic direction for early childhood, kindergarten through grade 12 and adults, addressing the lifelong learning continuum over a 10-year period. The new strategy will reflect the many changes in the field of literacy since the creation of the 2001 Yukon literacy strategy. The new strategy will form an integral part of the new vision for education.

Labour Market Programs and Services in Advanced Education continues to provide a range of programs for Yukon workers, which are targeted to meet the demands of the job market in this region. Partnering with the federal government through various agreements means that Advanced Education can offer an extended range of education, training and skill development opportunities for all Yukoners. For example, the labour market development agreement supports programs that help EI-eligible unemployed workers in Yukon find and maintain employment. There is a request of \$37,000 for the labour market development agreement, which is recoverable from Canada.

Another suite of programs is under the *Canada-Yukon Job Fund Agreement*, which supports training for Yukon workers with greater involvement of Yukon employers in making training decisions. It includes the Canada-Yukon job grant, an employer sponsored training and employment services and supports program. For this fund, a one-time increase of \$51,000 to carry funding over to the new year and a one-time cash-flow adjustment of \$14,000 are requested, both of which will be refundable from Canada over the long term.

The francophone secondary high school planning — I was interested to hear one member of the opposition request plans and a budget and various other items from the working group that is continuing to look at francophone secondary high school planning. I have to tell you that in this year's budget we have requested a \$75,000-funding increase to begin the planning process for the new francophone secondary school.

I have to tell you that the joint settlement committee, which was a committee established by the Department of Education and the francophone school board, met for the first time on September 10. This committee's goal is to settle outstanding issues raised during the court case between the two parties about French first language in the territory. The settlement committee is composed of a number of people, both from the francophone school board and the Government of Yukon. They have made substantial progress since meeting for the first time on September 10. One of the areas where they made progress is to request \$75,000 to begin the planning process for the new French secondary school, and I'm only too happy and my caucus was only too happy to provide this funding for them.

There have been no decisions made at this point with respect to the francophone secondary high school. We have received information from the francophone school board about some of the things that they would like to see, and I sincerely hope that we're able to accommodate all those wishes, but we'll wait until we hear the results of the committee that has been established to work through the issues. The joint settlement committee will continue their good work and I look forward to hearing more from them over the next little while.

Mr. Speaker, I realize I'm quickly running out of time here and I have a number of other issues I wish to address, but I should just point out some of the additional funding that we'll be requesting in this supplementary. For site improvement upgrades, \$215,000 is requested, and that will include playground equipment and to complete fuel tank upgrades in a number of communities and a number of schools across the territory. We're also asking for \$162,000 as a revote for a number of schools to complete their school-initiated renovation projects. We're also asking for a number of new dollars as part of the new collective agreement with the Teachers' Association and \$123,000 for school-based information technology is requested to support Yukon teaching staff in leasing tablets and laptops through a cost-sharing agreement with the department.

We are doing a number of new and innovative things in the Department of Education. We're consulting with parents, school councils, First Nations and other interested parties across the territory on a number of different issues, and I'll be happy to highlight those when we get into Committee of the Whole.

**Mr. Barr:** It's my pleasure and honour to rise in the House today and speak to this bill. I also would like to speak to the riding that I represent and say how grateful I am for the opportunity to be here for the folks in the riding of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. I was just going to a funeral service on Sunday, coming back out from Carcross, for example. We live in a community there throughout the Southern Lakes where it's safe — kids can play — and this one young lad was riding around on his bicycle on the Caribou Commons. I had seen him earlier this summer doing a pirate show — him and his little sister. They had plastic swords and treasure and he had a patch over his eye, and they were putting on skits this summer for some of the tourists who came through. It was such a — to be the MLA there.

I was leaving a service that was so full of compassion and respect for one of our elders — Scotty we call her affectionately. Pete's wife and the family were there and there were people from Whitehorse and just to see how everyone comes together — to leave there and see this young lad just riding around his bike and he had his helmet on and he had little stickers in his front wheel. I remember, this takes me back to when I was a little kid and we used to put cards with clothes pins to make that clicking sound. Well, he had new little ones I guess. New ones these days are balls that go on the spokes and as you go around they flick on the outside of the rim and stuff.

He was a pirate early this spring, so I was talking about how his summer had been going. His mom spends a lot of time with her children — she has two of them — and he's inviting me to his school play this Thursday. His name is Laurick and he's such a unique little being who just kind of fills people with joy. I know he was excited about it — he's going to be an actor, I'm sure because he's in this play — “And I got two parts,” he said. He said, “Would you like to come?” He said, “I would really like you to come.” So his mom just sent me an e-mail there an I'm going to try to make it so if you know later on this week that I'm not in here near the end of the day I'm going to really try to go to his school play.

It's those kinds of things that when you walk around in our community or when I walk around there — it extends right to Mount Lorne. There is so much that goes on that community club, there is music and there is a huge fundraiser for Nicole that people —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Barr:** Yes, Nicole Edwards. I thank the Member for Copperbelt South. She needs a machine for a condition that she lives with on a daily basis and it surpassed the amount. We all got together and surpassed the amount she

needed to take care of it, so she could do treatments in her home.

It extends to Tagish where the whole community — just looking the funds — and they hired a second recreation director. Patrick Brown is doing some great work there with Reanna Mohamed at the community and recreation part. They're all sitting around campfires and learning about things. At the harvest fair this year, parents were commenting about how great it is to see kids all learning stuff together on off days that they are not in school.

In Marsh Lake when you go to the Jackalope — I played there. Some of the young musicians, their musical skills — there was a young fellow who just stood on stage and played his fiddle was like a seasoned professional. I think he's 13 and he was able to just ad-lib with songs that we played to the degree and competency of someone you would watch in concert. I was just like, when do I get to play with you again? He had two other younger brothers. The name escapes me — but it's just a pleasure to be able to represent Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes and to know that, despite the bad that happens in everyday life, people rise to the occasion — people of all ages — and people support each other and continue to do so.

I'm proud to live in the Yukon, and I'm very honoured, as I say again, to be able to represent such a diverse community. We have First Nations, we have two schools, and we have local hamlet councils that work very hard. We just had our municipal elections and our federal election, and we also had the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council election just recently. I would also really — I would be remiss if I didn't — thank all the outgoing chairs and people who are on the LACs. I won't mention their names — I don't want to forget anyone — but I do know that we have also acclaimed mayors in the Yukon. We've had people who really dedicate their lives. We have a new elected Prime Minister — Prime Minister Trudeau. Larry Bagnell has been re-elected as our MP.

We have to take the good with the bad, the bad with the good. I'll get into the actual budget itself and speak to some of that, but first, in thinking of us in this House and the work that we do — for myself, it can be very frustrating. It also can be rewarding when I hear the Member for Kluane suggesting that we go camping in the new campground, and I'll definitely take him up on that. We'll go camping and I would, in a good way, remind — and I'll bring my guitar. Yes, he's playing his guitar with his hands there — his air guitar. The member can bring his boat and I'll get the gas. I have fished most of those holes in all of the Southern Lakes. I spent years going around the perimeter when I had time in my life when I wasn't an MLA. We can actually cut a lot of guesswork out and go directly to some of those holes where, if there are three of us in the boat, we'll have three fish on at a time. I'll make sure that the member can catch a big one because I know where those are too.

What's great to acknowledge is that — what I remembered earlier in Question Period — they are suggestions. We'd like to hear that from this side of the House — that was a suggestion that kept being suggested and suggested — that we honour the final agreement and have that

campground at Conrad rather than Atlin. What great feelings of that listening are generated by going camping together with a member of the Yukon Party — it's great.

Living in Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, I know that everybody — wherever you come from — says they come from God's country. Wherever they come from, they say that God's country is where they live. I would just like to let you know that I believe that; you all believe that. Just so that you might really know the truth of things because there are always three sides to the truth of things — yours, mine and the truth. The truth really is that the heart of God's country is Crag Lake, Yukon. Our Leader of the Official Opposition will attest to that. When the Member for Kluane comes to go camping at Conrad, he can spend some time there and then he will truly — because when you become teachable, you are able to hear other things. Even though I know you believe that you are from God's country and all of those who live in God's country — where you're from — come from God's country — I know the Member for Whitehorse West is nodding her head in agreement with me, and that's nice. She's smiling. He'll also be able to entertain new things and realize that really, Crag Lake is God's country — the true God's country.

It's nice to be here today, back in the Legislature. It's nice to be smiling. It's nice to be kibitzing a bit. I am going to carry on — how much time do I have, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Barr:** I have lots? I see the smiling faces across the room — even some from my colleagues.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Barr:** Seven minutes — seven is a good number. As the Member from Old Crow knows, seven is a powerful number in our culture — yes, sir.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Barr:** Seven generations, yes. Six directions and the seventh one we take.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Barr:** All the direction from those directions. I will move on.

I do know that it was stated by the Premier that there is not a lot to do, and there has been some talk in the first few days that we on this side of the House think there is still a lot to do. That doesn't say that a lot has not been done. It does acknowledge that lots has been done and I would like to, at this point, thank all of the public servants, the people in all the departments, all the ministers, all the First Nation governments — the people who go to work every day, raising a family, the people who volunteer. There is a lot that continually gets done on a daily basis. It's those unsung heroes who we really need to acknowledge — people just who are behind the scenes. When I think of all these elections — all the people behind those scenes who just do it because they believe. They really deserve the utmost credit as we stand here and do our best to make decisions on the people's behalf.

I would like to state that, with this bill, there has been work done in Tourism and Culture. We do believe that these commercials — that we time and time again encourage the opposite side of the House to strengthen the numbers of the

budget. In Tourism and Culture, for example, we would like to encourage the minister who is responsible for Tourism and Culture to become an even stronger advocate for this department, especially of untapped potential. I know that the rubber-tire traffic was down. That doesn't mean that people didn't work. It means that we have to do more because, in an economy in a world that is fighting for these tourism dollars, there are many more things that we can be doing. What we have been saying is that the budget increases for this — \$3.5 million over the next couple of years — we really want to see that extended. We want to be able to see where this money has been working so that we can know better where to put it to use the next time we put forward this money toward Tourism and Culture.

I would like to make sure that everyone notes that, in November, the Yukon First Nation Culture and Tourism Association conference — and I would strongly encourage the government to support this conference and listen to the participants so that the opportunities for partnerships can be identified and implemented.

I know that my time is running out and I have so much to say, but I really wanted to mention this conference because I know that is one area that hasn't seen an increase, yet there have been so many First Nations — dance groups, artists. When we go to celebrations, we see it every day. That is what tourists want to see — an authentic performance. If we can actually hold them up higher — when we attend this conference. I would like to read from the website what they say about this upcoming conference — and I encourage us all to go — and I quote: "The Yukon First Nations community has experienced a tremendous resurgence in arts and culture, artists, artistic products, events and experiences over the past few decades, with many notable highlights in the past five years. The positive consequence of this resurgence has been increased self-confidence and pride among Yukon First Nations people of all ages and a willingness to share their culture with visitors. Concurrently, national and international market demand for authentic aboriginal tourism experiences is strong and continuing to grow.

"Many Yukon First Nations are keen to explore the growing opportunities in cultural tourism, recognizing that the industry can be a steward for sharing and preserving culture, and an economic driver for their communities. There is also a strong awareness that tourism has the potential to come at a cost. Without adequate planning and monitoring, aboriginal tourism can result in cultural erosion, loss of authenticity, commodification and commercialization of culture. Furthermore, the YFN cultural tourism industry faces significant development challenges, including limited capacity to develop tourism within FN communities and the reality that the national and international market place knows very little about Aboriginal cultural products."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm nearly finished.

"First Nations stakeholders recognize the need for careful planning to ensure authenticity, as well as meaningful and sustainable development of tourism experiences and products that align with their community's strengths, cultural values

and traditions. The Sharing Our Stories: Developing Cultural Tourism in First Nations Communities Conference aims to address these issues and opportunities for the benefit of all Yukon First Nations. The conference will be held November 18-20, 2015 at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre and will feature a range of dynamic keynote speakers with expertise in various facets of the Aboriginal cultural tourism sector”.

Mr. Speaker, thanks for allowing the time today in this House and to everyone for listening and having some laughs. I know that, with this budget, there is still a lot to do in Community Services. I know that we have lots to do around solid waste. We have lots to do with LACs. We have lots to do — lots of work to do — and we on this side of the House will continue to work with all of our counterparts, and I'm honoured to be able to do so. Thank you for engaging in my time.

**Ms. McLeod:** It gives me great pleasure to rise today to speak in response to Bill No. 20.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the people of southeast Yukon for their continued support and their faith in me to represent them in this Legislature. It's such an honour. I want to just say that the resiliency of the people of Watson Lake is a continuing inspiration. As you all very well know, we've just come through a round of municipal elections. The Government of Yukon is looking forward to working with the newly elected mayor and council of Watson Lake, and I know that they're looking forward to working with us — my congratulations to those elected and also my sincere thanks to all those who put their names forward.

This summer, Watson Lake hosted the NHL Players' Association Mike Smith hockey camp. I don't think that words are adequate to describe the infusion of energy into the town and the great effect that this hockey camp had on all of the youth who participated. There were kids from across the Yukon. The amount of organization, of course, that an event like this requires is astounding, and I'm sure we can all appreciate that. I want to thank Constable J.M. Sauvé and his team for their hard work in bringing this event to Watson Lake and making such a success of it. The continued support from the community development fund, of course, is always appreciated in pulling an event of this size together — so my thanks to the minister.

I also want to thank the Minister of Community Services for the work and negotiations that took place with the Town of Watson Lake to enable us to move forward with the demolition of the old elementary school wing and the old Environment building. It is truly a fine example of how this Yukon government is working with municipalities to achieve common goals — of course, my thanks to the Hospital Corporation for removing the old hospital structure.

All of these activities together keep our town moving in a positive direction. I'm pleased to note the continuing support by this government for rural Yukon. In the fiscal year 2015-16, we will have benefited from the investment of in excess of \$12.5 million — and those are capital dollars, of course — to the Watson Lake region alone.

We need to keep in mind that there are many millions of dollars spent in other ways — in salaries and O&M.

In this year there has been more work completed on the Robert Campbell Highway, and Watson Lake is the recipient of a new water treatment plant for the municipality. I'm really thrilled to see the installation of additional lighting on the Alaska Highway through Upper Liard. I know that the residents are very happy with this work and the improved safety it affords — my sincere thanks to the Minister of Highways and Public Works for his support of this project.

I want to give my thanks to the Minister of Finance and his Cabinet for their excellent stewardship of Yukon's finances and this bill, and I will fully support it.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** I'm pleased to rise to speak to the supplementary budget estimates for 2015-16. Before I speak about my riding, I want to note that there have been a number of elections across the Yukon at the municipal level, as well as the federal election. I would like to congratulate the new mayor and council of the City of Whitehorse, some of whom live in my riding of Copperbelt South, and I would also like to extend congratulations to Larry Bagnell, the Member of Parliament.

I also want to express my thanks to all the candidates who ran and to all their helpers and supporters. I think we had a lot of people participating in those elections, and it's an important democratic exercise.

It's an honour to serve as the elected member for the riding of Copperbelt South. I am grateful to my constituents for their support. Most of the riding is country residential neighbourhoods at the south end of Whitehorse, and the Golden Horn area outside of city limits is also included. There are industrial and commercial areas as well as residential neighbourhoods in Copperbelt South. There's a wide variety of occupations — artists, public servants, small business owners, large contractors, teachers, emergency workers — and you can purchase many services in Copperbelt South, from building supplies and art to fuel, and there's a new microbrewery that has been operating for a few months in the Mount Sima area, which is popular when it's open.

Many families choose to buy homes in Copperbelt South so they can send their students to Golden Horn Elementary School, which deserves the great reputation that it has. This year there are a number of new teachers, as some teachers are taking leave this year and to fill vacancies, and because there are more than 200 students. I want to welcome all of those. Golden Horn school has more students than in previous years. They've bumped up bit, and they also feature an experiential school model so grade 7 students get to climb the Chilkoot Trail. Students also do canoe trips on the Yukon River, snowshoeing, skiing and running. It makes them healthy and is a good way for them to start.

Copperbelt South residents use the Alaska Highway for a daily commute to workplaces in Whitehorse and the Alaska Highway connects the Yukon to southern Canada, to the continental US and to Alaska.

In the last Sitting we had a long discussion about the Alaska Highway draft functional plan, which was distributed for comment. I know I saw many of my constituents at the open houses at the Transportation Museum last fall. This is a long-term project with potentially huge expenditures anticipated over the long term. Initially the government suggested 20 years; now they've suggested it could be 35 years. It's important to get it right, to improve safety and access and to meet the real needs of businesses and residences.

The Alaska Highway corridor from the Mayo Road intersection of the north Klondike Highway and the Carcross Road at the south Klondike Highway is one where there have been accidents in the past. There have been people coming forward with recommendations that I encourage the government to listen to. The Yukon government has committed to make the results of the public review on the draft plan available, and I will be looking for the minister to do that soon.

I want to make a note that we appreciate all of the hard work that all of the public servants of the Yukon do, not just in Highways and Public Works, which is one area for which I am the critic, but across all departments.

In Highways and Public Works, the major responsibility is the transportation — the roads and airports — but there is also the Information and Communications Technology Division and the Property Management Division, which oversees the buildings that Yukon government owns, the maintenance of buildings and leases as well as project development.

In our small territory, we are by and large served very well with good road access — certainly the community of Old Crow has air access and occasional road access — but I do have to mention, as I frequently do in this House, that I hear from residents of Ross River that they are puzzled as to why the government doesn't seem to understand how the section of road to their community beyond Faro is not up to standard. I was speaking to some people who were at the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues Women and Justice Forum just a few weeks ago, and they made sure that I knew that and that I would be bringing it forward to the government.

I have also been hearing from contractors about the government managing large capital projects. It's important to design before you build. We have seen some unfortunate examples — the arrest processing unit, for instance, where the floor was built including heating and electrical work, and then — too big. They had to make it smaller. That was an unnecessary expense.

We have heard almost the opposite in comments about the new F.H. Collins Secondary School, where the original design was one that the community wanted. The new, smaller design may not be large enough for as long as five years. I guess we'll see. I have had an increasing number of small contractors talking to me about their concerns that small contracts are going to Outside businesses and that's bread and butter for the Yukon business community. It's how they can employ Yukon workers and apprentices. So I wonder if the

government is making a move to invite more Outside contractors to bid on their work, or if they do want to support local employment for the small business and the big business sector.

We all like to speak about how the Yukon is unique and different and the government is no exception to that. One of the really unique aspects of the Yukon is our beautiful environment — the water, the land, the fish and wildlife, and the game. We are so fortunate to live here and we are so fortunate to live in such a special place. Another unique and different aspect of governance in the Yukon is the fact that we have 11 First Nation final agreements and self-government agreements. Those establish a legal model of governments communicating, cooperating and working with each other.

So when I think about the issue of work that is left to be done by this government, the Peel River watershed land use plan comes to mind. The Yukon government didn't like the plan — the plan that was six years in the making, the plan that was a compromise when all of the interests sat down at the table together. The Yukon government thought that they could just write their own plan, and that is still before the courts.

I think about Bill S-6. The Premier has shown in his support for, and perhaps his authorship of, four unilateral amendments to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

#### Point of order

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

**Mr. Elias:** When the member from the NDP suggests that the Premier himself was the author of a piece of federal legislation, it is personalizing debate and I am going to cite 19(g): "imputes false or unavowed motives to another member", because that is a serious accusation, suggesting that the Premier himself actually authored a piece of federal legislation. I don't believe that to be very factual.

**Speaker:** Member for Copperbelt-South, on the point of order.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** On the point of order, the Prime Minister of Canada has made a statement that the Premier of the Yukon was responsible for the amendments. I don't believe that this is a point of order. I think it is a dispute between members on some facts that have been argued in the public arena and in this Legislature.

#### Speaker's ruling

**Speaker:** Interesting. We haven't had one in this particular context. The Premier is seen as the head of the government, and as such, he represents all of the people underneath him within the government.

In this case, I would have to rule that it is not a point of order in that I believe the member and the Prime Minister were indicating that it was the Premier's government at large that had brought forward anything on behalf of the government.

Member for Copperbelt South, please continue.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** The amendments that have forced First Nations to go to court are seen to be in violation of our final agreements. Those amendments established binding policy direction for a federal minister and the ability to delegate that policy direction from the federal to the Yukon minister. They would allow increases and changes to activity without further assessment and would allow for the imposition of fixed timelines. All of those are contrary to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* principles and elements of the statute. I would encourage the Premier to simply recognize that they should no longer be supported — that he is standing alone on that one.

Another important area that is of deep concern in my riding and across the Yukon is the prospect of hydraulic fracturing in the Yukon. It was truly an honour to serve as the vice-chair of the all-party Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing and to hear from the public and from scientists throughout the period of that committee's work. There is a critical need for the Yukon government to continue to research and consider new evidence being published monthly — if not weekly — on harms associated with hydraulic fracturing. Studies on contamination of drinking water, on earthquakes, on the impact of extracting large volumes of water for hydraulic fracturing and on creeks being dried up are only a few of the reports that I have seen recently.

The government needs to adopt that report of the committee and ensure that it consults with First Nations in accordance with the recommendations. It needs to do a fair assessment of hazards and the potential irreversible destruction of watersheds and ecosystems and habitats for animals and for people. We have a responsibility to future generations to say no to hydraulic fracturing. We have a responsibility to heed the words of the public, of the scientists, of the First Nation elders and leaders. We in the Official Opposition will not be swayed by any misinformation from this government.

The mandate of the Department of Justice is to ensure we have a fair and impartial system in our courts, whether they are criminal, civil or administrative law; that we have good governance; that we respect, protect and fulfill human rights, including the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*; and that we foster safe communities with opportunities for healing.

Again, I would like to draw the Premier's and the government's attention to some work left to do in the justice arena. The response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's recommendations and the fundamental injustice of colonialism is one that all departments need to incorporate into the work that we do. That means that we need to address education needs, we need to improve the education outcomes for First Nation students, we need to have not just education on the Indian residential school system, but on positive aspects of the First Nation language and culture, which continues to thrive. In fact, when I saw all of the dance troops at Moosehide from First Nation

communities right across this territory, and so many youth engaged, it was truly inspiring to see that strength. We need to support regional economic development and partnerships with First Nations.

In speaking to protecting everyone's dignity and rights, an issue that is past due is some legislative improvements to our statutes. I appreciate that some amendments were made to allow a same-sex couple to be recognized as parents on a birth certificate — that's one amendment that was made. Other amendments that need attention are to recognize transgender rights. We have discriminatory sections in the *Vital Statistics Act* that need legislative amendments. We also need attention to the definition of "spouse" and amendments to a number of statutes to ensure justice for all common-law spouses, as compared with married spouses.

The *Sharing Common Ground* report is one that addressed a number of concerns across the Yukon that are still alive today. I want to express my appreciation of the government's support for the women's advocate position and the three-year term, which is being housed at the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre. I certainly wish the successful candidate the best and there's going to be a lot of work to do.

I also want to urge this government to support the women's justice coalition to continue to operate so they can participate in the important and ongoing work that's left to do to implement *Sharing Common Ground* and to sustain open dialogue and good relationships between police, the community and women's groups. We know how important that is when we consider the sobering crime picture in the Yukon, that we have missing and murdered indigenous women, and that there are very high levels of sexual assault and spousal violence. So those areas continue to need attention and governments need to support that.

Good governance is respectful governance. The Yukon government should not take decisions that force Yukon First Nations to challenge in court the actions of a government that fail to respect the land claims agreements that took decades to negotiate. Those agreements are for everyone in the Yukon. The First Nation final and self-government agreements are protected in the Constitution of Canada.

I've mentioned some of the areas that are going to court because of the government overlooking some of the responsibilities it has under the final agreements. There's a need to think about the costs alone for all parties involved in legal fees when you force legal action. But also they need to think about the damage that can be done to relationships when you force legal action, instead of negotiating a solution.

A significant area of concern in the Justice portfolio is also the operation of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. This summer, the Yukon FASD diagnosis and case management in adult corrections population final report was issued. We know that, in our correctional system, there's an overrepresentation of people with FASD. We know there is an overrepresentation of First Nation citizens. We know there is an overrepresentation of people with mental health problems. All of those need to be addressed. We officially have a mental health strategy in corrections, but I don't hear too much about

how it's being implemented into the practices and programs. The final report on the FASD study indicated that there is a lot of work left to do to actually complete what it set out to accomplish. I continue to hear family members and inmates describe what they term "supermax" conditions and an overuse of segregation and separate confinement at the Correctional Centre. We've had the Attorney General's report presented, which speaks to the need for improving the programming. We have a healing room that can be used. So there's still work to be done. There's still work to be done to support probation officers to deliver programming at the community level for people who have been sentenced. There's still work to be done to support after-care.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to address the budget. There are a lot of priorities that we'll be paying attention to when we respond to specific line items.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** It's with pleasure that I rise to end second reading debate.

I would like to begin by having the opportunity to thank the residents, the constituents, of my riding of Mountainview for the honour and the privilege of serving them these past four years. It truly has been a wonderful experience. I continue to reach out to those residents — those constituents — as much as possible. I'm talking about the communities of Hillcrest, Granger, McIntyre and Valleyview. There were some things of interest that do impact the lives of some people that have occurred recently. One was the completion of extending the paved trail from the northwest corner of the airport land right up to the airport. This is a trail that really allows many, many people who live not only Hillcrest, but up the hill in the community of Granger and in the ridings of Copperbelt North and Whitehorse West, and love to walk or to ride their bike to downtown. I certainly was always fearful in the wintertime of watching people walk along the shoulder of the highway when it's dark and it's icy and I was fearful for that situation. I'm very pleased of the work that has been done.

I recognize the Hillcrest Community Association for the work that they did and, of course, thank the community development fund for their support and the support of the Department of Highways and Public Works and the minister for their support in this project as well.

I would also like to recognize some great work that has been done up in Granger and the community park. There is a bunch of work that has been done — not only the skating rink, but creating some new activities in that park. What we have seen in Granger, to a degree, is a rejuvenation of that community as people have moved out and more young families have moved in. My family has lived in Granger for 20 years now. I watched my kids grow up in that community and they now are young adults pursuing their own dreams — but I notice that there are a number of new, young families there.

I would again like to acknowledge the support of the community development fund and the partnership with the City of Whitehorse as well and recognize the work of Shari

McIntosh and Colin Mackenzie, who put a lot of their personal time to filling out applications and making sure that this work is done.

The community of Valleyview is a small, beautiful and unique community situated in a beautiful spot in Whitehorse. Sometimes it's small things that can make a difference. While walking through and knocking on doors in Valleyview with my wife Tammie this year, we had a few comments from people who recognized the fact that there is only one entrance/exit into that community. They commented that a number of people go in there thinking they might be able to get back to the intersection — the Hamilton Boulevard/Two-Mile Hill/Alaska Highway intersection — only to find out when they get in there that there is no way out other than the way that they just came in. I had members of that community tell me that they see a number of large motorhomes that end up getting trapped in that community, having to turn around. Again, that is another community with a number of small children.

Based on that feedback, I wrote a letter to mayor and council and told them what I had heard from members of the community in Valleyview. They deferred my request of some signage to their signage committee, and it was great to report back to the citizens of Valleyview that the city in fact did take the opportunity to acknowledge the situation and post at the entrance to Valleyview a sign that does articulate that there is no through road, which then helps to eliminate some of the unnecessary traffic that exists. In a community, a lot of times the kids use the road as part of their playground as well, Mr. Speaker.

I am certainly very proud of the work when it comes to the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the community of McIntyre and the many different things that this government continues to work on in partnership with Kwanlin Dun First Nation. I'm just thinking of things like health care and what we do with child welfare, of course.

The leadership that the chief has provided when it comes to the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls along with the leadership of the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate — truly she has stood out. The chief has had to endure many tragedies within her community in the year and a half — I guess it's almost coming up to two years now — that she has been the leader of her community. I certainly would like to acknowledge the citizens and the leadership that exists within that community as well.

I'm very proud of the accomplishments of this Yukon Party government. As we reflect, we come to realize that we put forward to Yukoners a platform in 2011 and were given a mandate to govern from the people of Yukon. That platform was our commitment of what we would deliver to Yukoners, and I'm very proud to say that, at this point in the mandate, we've delivered on practically all of the platform commitments that we made to Yukoners at that time.

Something that we do know — and people will say in the community — is that when the Yukon Party government says

it's going to do something, the Yukon Party government gets it done. I'm very proud of that, Mr. Speaker.

Not only do we focus on delivering on the issues that we heard at the doorstep and we incorporated into our platform, we make sure that we do that in a financially responsible way. We continue to manage Yukon's finances responsibly both in good times economically and bad times economically.

What we have been able to do is post modest surpluses, and while we've done this, we also have continued to invest in record capital budgets, record investments in infrastructure where we are building for the future. When we invest in a road or invest in a hospital expansion, that not only will benefit us in the short term but for many years to come. Also in the short term, Mr. Speaker, it creates good paying jobs and it creates apprenticeship opportunities for Yukoners to learn their trade.

I'm very proud of the fact that we continue to manage this economy to be able to show modest surpluses, to have tremendous investment at times of economic uncertainty, and we haven't raised taxes. In fact, as you're aware, we last year reduced the taxes — the small business tax — for Yukoners by 25 percent and reduced the taxes for all Yukon taxpayers that they will see when they file their 2015 taxes early next year.

What have we also done while we have done this? We have been able to do this without accumulating debt. We are truly a jurisdiction that is an envy in this country where provinces and territories like to talk about surplus or deficit simply because they want to avoid the topic of the massive amount of billions of dollars of debt that they carry, and what is the result of that debt? They have to put a percentage of the revenue that they make into servicing the interest on that debt and that can be anywhere from five to over 10 or 11 percent of their revenues, depending on the jurisdiction, that they have to use to service debt. This government invests all of that money into programs and into services for Yukoners — very much the envy of the world and very much the envy of this country to be able to say that we don't have any net debt and that we have money in the bank. We have not mortgaged the future. We haven't told our kids and their kids that they are going to have to pay debt for programs and services that we want to deliver today. That is a responsible way to run the government.

While we are here speaking, I know that the Province of Alberta is tabling the NDP's first budget. It took them a few months to get it out, but we are just starting to hear a record deficit of \$6.1 billion and huge tax increases. I guess for the opposition I will be questioning and asking for their response on how they see the difference with commodity prices and the effect it is having in Alberta versus the effect it is having here. We have no control over world commodity prices, but what this government is doing is staying focused on those levers and opportunities that we have to ensure that as our economy turns we are very confident that we are in the very best position to be able to capitalize to the greatest extent on an upturn in the economy. We are doing that by investing in infrastructure. We are investing in telecommunications

infrastructure. We had an incredible announcement today with the commitment to redundant a second fibre optic line that will essentially provide almost all of the communities in this territory with a broadband redundant line, including going up to the community of Dawson City.

We continue to invest in transportation infrastructure and we continue to invest in energy infrastructure. We continue to work on improving our regulatory and our permitting processes as well. We work with First Nations; we work with industry to map our way forward to ensure that we can eliminate duplication and find a path forward that essentially straightens the road through those processes and provides the ability to see these processes go smoother, quicker and for less money while we continue to guarantee all of the assessment processes. We assure that there are no compromises when it comes to environmental and economic assessment. I guess that is one of the things that we need to continue to talk about on this side of the House, which has fallen on deaf ears on the other side — what is the economic potential? What are the abilities that we have and what do we lose when we say no to projects going forward?

This government will continue to make investments as we have in the creation of the first MRI north of 60, with the expansion of the hospital and the building of seniors centres. We just opened not long ago a new seniors residence in Mayo. We recently opened the one on Alexander Street and the 48-unit seniors centre that we are building right now.

The Salvation Army building is in full construction and looking better every day. We have the Salvation Army, we have fire halls in Beaver Creek and soon in Carcross and a new RCMP barracks in Faro. We continue to focus on providing investments across the board in all our communities. We're working on improving our roads, bridges and airports. We're investing in a legacy.

It's interesting to look back at the vision that occurred here and with the federal government over 50 years ago. At that time, Yukon had a population of about 12,000. The decision was made to create a Whitehorse hydro dam. That was a project that, in retrospect, was much larger than the needs that they had. It was an example of a federal government and of officials here in this territory that had eyes for the future. They knew that the Yukon was going to grow and was planning for that.

Much of the last 50 years, what we've seen are investments in infrastructure in reaction to growth. This government is focused on making investments in infrastructure in anticipation of growth, and that's why we are committed and focused on a new legacy hydro project.

There was a wonderful announcement today. I mentioned the fibre optic and the increasing envelope to the IT technology. It's something that we've heard some great responses and feedback already on that. I know that during my community conversations those sorts of ideas have been talked about. When we continue to invest in private sector growth and development — heard lots of stories of companies where the government has helped them get on their feet through different initiatives but, in the end, being able to run

forward and really the government work that they do is perhaps just a small part of what their entire business is.

We're very excited about investments in IT — whether it's increasing the IT envelope or fibre optic — because, right now, we are committed to seeing that sector grow. We're very confident that it will. It continues to provide diversification for this territory. Most people don't realize that the knowledge economy rivals tourism when it comes to its contribution to the GDP.

We continue to invest in tourism. I haven't heard a single person yet who hasn't loved the new ads that we have just come out with. Not only did we invest in more ads that will bring more people here, but most of that money stayed right here in the territory. Many different companies were involved — many different Yukoners — to produce those ads. Not only were they rewarded and paid for their great work, but what we helped do is build capacity in that industry. As I've just mentioned, with that experience — with that additional capacity and the confidence they have — they can now go out as well and bid for work that's outside of the government in the private sector. I think when those things happen we have certainly done our job.

We are also very proud of the IPP policy that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources announced earlier today. Again, it's another commitment that we made to this province — to this territory — bit of a Freudian slip at some point in time, Mr. Speaker. I do believe that Yukon is on the right path. We continue to work hard at a time when we do see a downturn in the economy to use the levers that we have to ensure that this territory is primed and ready to go to meet the opportunities that will exist as we come out of this economic downturn that we're experiencing here, but they're also experiencing around the world — they're very much experiencing it in Alberta at this time.

With that, I look forward to the discussion that will occur in general debate and I know that the ministers are looking forward to providing specific answers to details as they relate to the supplementary during their debate by department. 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.

**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.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 11 yea, 6 nay.

**Speaker:** The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.  
*Motion for second reading of Bill No. 20 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):** Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 20, *Second 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. 20: *Second Appropriation Act, 2015-16*

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 20, *Second Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

**Ms. Hanson:** Madam Chair, I just ask for a point of clarification if the Chair could explain what the proceeding is here this afternoon.

We have as the opposition not received any briefings by any officials on the supplementary estimates and I thought the normal course of action was that we would receive briefings before we — at least one cumulative briefing for all of the supplementary estimates contained in this bill prior to getting to this stage.

Could you clarify please, Madam Chair?

**Chair:** We are in general debate on Bill No. 20 and perhaps Mr. Pasloski will address your question when he speaks.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I believe that there is a briefing on the supplementary tomorrow morning. Our apologies if that was a scheduling mistake. We certainly agree that we should

have the briefing prior to the beginning of general debate, but I can say that it is scheduled for tomorrow morning. I am confident that the Leader of the Official Opposition might have one or two questions, because experience tells me most of them aren't really about what we have tabled anyway.

### Chair's statement

**Chair:** Thank you very much.

Just as note for everyone here today, briefings are not a procedural matter that the Chair can rule on. We are in general debate.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I am honoured to stand today and begin general debate on *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* for 2015-16. This government continues to invest strategically and manage Yukoners' money wisely to ensure that we continue to deliver on programs and services that are important to Yukoners, such as health care and education, and invest in capital projects — infrastructure projects — to ensure that we set the stage and the table for continued growth and expansion of our private sector economy while we continue to provide employment opportunities today creating jobs and apprenticeship options for workers today as they build those infrastructure projects that I just spent some time during second reading debate today talking about — many of the projects that are ongoing and many of those projects that we have already completed. As we have said, we certainly are proud of the work.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the officials. The first one — and I am almost apologizing now — I would like to formally acknowledge to the Legislative Assembly our Deputy Minister of Finance, Ms. Kate White. We are very excited to have her experience and her leadership and the wealth of knowledge that she brings into her portfolio and her leadership of the Department of Finance, of which, of course, I am very biased and proud of. Not only for her experience and leadership within that department, but some of the outstanding work that she has done in this country, talking and advocating for women's role in business and leadership. We are very privileged to have her here.

I would also like to just acknowledge the hard work of all of not only the finance officials in each department, but the officials in general as we continue move ahead and we deal with times of economic uncertainty. There is an understanding and a willingness to ensure that we move in a positive direction. We create the opportunities, set the stage for further growth in the future. I cannot tell you, Madam Chair, how excited we are at the opportunities that will come and will exist in the near future. We know this cyclical change in commodity prices will again begin to rebound and we will be truly in a very good position in many respects — whether it's training, whether it's improving our regulatory and permitting processes, whether it's ensuring that we have the infrastructure in place to meet those needs of a primary economy that we have had in this territory since the creation of the territory, and that is a resource-extraction industry, the mining industry.

As you're aware, Madam Chair, we continue to focus on how we can diversify with our great investments that we have at Yukon College and the Yukon Research Centre, the cold climate innovation, the announcements that we had today regarding enhanced investment in our IT envelope and the commitment to building a second fibre optic line into this territory. I mentioned that these investments in the knowledge economy are truly a springboard to seeing a tremendous growth opportunity in the knowledge network, and we're very much committed to that. We've seen some outstanding leadership in this community through YITIS and the many, many businesses who have chosen the lifestyle to live in this territory but understand the huge potential that they have in that industry — like many other industries, Madam Chair.

We are focused on setting that stage and doing what we can. If I can talk about the north for a second — I mean, the north comprises 40 percent of Canada's land mass, but we only are less than half of one percent of the population. We can have all the innovation and all the drive we want, but we also need to continue to focus on partnerships — partnerships with First Nations, partnerships with the private sector, and partnerships with the federal government. I'm happy to hear that the new federal government has the same vision when it comes to infrastructure and, in fact, it has, through their platform, committed to even a larger expansion of infrastructure investment.

In my conversations with the Prime Minister-elect, we have talked specifically about those opportunities to continue to invest in infrastructure in this territory, to partner with Yukon government, to ultimately reach us toward that vision that we have for this territory's future, and that is to make this territory a net contributor to this great country to the benefit of all Canadians.

**Ms. Hanson:** I don't take lightly the responsibilities that I have as a member of the Legislative Assembly and, as the Official Opposition, we take seriously the obligation and responsibility to hold government to account, and primarily to hold government to account for the decisions made and the expenditures of the resources and the stewardship of the resources of this great territory.

Twice today we have seen an expression of disdain for the legislative process and, in turn, the members of this Legislative Assembly, which really reflects this Yukon Party government's disrespect for citizens and, I would say, disrespect for the public servants who work so hard to support the good work that they do — and the professional good work of public servants.

To expect the members of the Legislative Assembly to debate the details of supplementary estimates without allowing officials to brief them, again, is disrespectful to the whole of the legislative process and to the members of the Legislative Assembly and, in turn, to the citizens. To send officials to table the *Municipal Act* yesterday, a document — the *Municipal Act* in itself is 181 pages long, the amendments to which are 60 pages long and do not provide any details that were requested and which we were told do exist.

When we requested them side-by-side so that we could see the explanatory notes, the officials said they would have to request them from the minister and the minister has not been forthcoming. Normal practice is that if you want informed debate, you provide the information. I thought that was the role of the Legislative Assembly, which was to ensure that all members of the Legislative Assembly — it's not a cloak of secrecy. We should not have to guess at the intent of government.

### Motion to report progress

**Ms. Hanson:** Madam Chair, I move that debate be now adjourned.

**Chair:** For the member's information, there is no provision to adjourn debate in Committee of the Whole. In order to adjourn debate, the member may move for Chair to report progress.

There is a motion before Committee for the Chair to report progress.

Are you agreed?

*Motion negatived*

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** If we can depart with a bit of the dramatics, for the record, the opposition was told this morning at House Leaders that we intended to go to general debate on *Supplementary Estimates No. 1*, which they were fully aware of since 10 a.m. today. We are talking about general debate on Supplementary No. 1. The members opposite have in fact been provided with copies of Supplementary No. 1 on the day that it was tabled, and I believe that was last Thursday.

Also, Madam Chair, for the record, in many jurisdictions the tradition is that they don't get briefings on supplementaries. It's been the pleasure of this Yukon Party government with their disclosure that in fact we have provided such. I would believe Madam Chair, especially at this point within a mandate — and I am confident that the members opposite would be able to come forward within some questions in general debate. As I have already mentioned, the reality is that most questions that we have, whether it's in debate of budget mains or in or in the supplementary, usually have very little to do with the content within that document.

**Ms. White:** Could the minister tell me currently how many seniors are on the seniors wait-list waiting for suitable housing?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** The minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation will be willing to address that issue with the member opposite when we get into debate by department.

**Ms. White:** With the recent Supreme Court ruling in BC, ruling on the City of Abbotsford and their laws not allowing homeless people to camp in parks and public places, is the government considering amending the changes and amendments they made to the *Financial Administration Act* in 2012?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** As was articulated by the Minister of Highways and Public Works earlier today, those amendments that were tabled to the *Financial Administration*

*Act* back in 2012, I believe, were regarding public safety in public places. At this time, there is no thought or intention of making any changes to that legislation with regard to that issue.

**Ms. White:** The finding of the Supreme Court of British Columbia said that it was unsafe to force homeless people to be away from centres where they were more visible and safer because of that visibility. Does the minister believe that the changes he made to the *Financial Administration Act* actually keep the homeless population safer by keeping them out of sight?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** What I believe in is the incredible job that this government has done on the housing continuum, not only since we have been entrusted by the people of Yukon to lead, but all the way back to the 2002 election of the Yukon Party government — it's through that time; as we have heard, literally well over \$100 million in investments in the housing continuum. The support that we have with the Salvation Army, working with them now in the creation of a new emergency shelter — but more than that of course is we are also working with them for the creation of some transitional housing — transitional housing being the second level on the housing continuum. It is something that we haven't seen here and we are very excited to see the opportunity to offer to people who have been living in shelters and perhaps other places, to have that opportunity, if they're willing, to begin that process of reintegrating, of having the responsibility of having their own accommodations to look after — with the support of professionals as to how to help them acquire the traits and the knowledge and understanding that they need to continue to move up.

We continue to invest in supportive housing. We continue to invest in social housing across this territory. We continue to invest in the rental market with some of the announcements with the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation with the northern housing trust money as well.

We've also continued to support those people who are buying their first homes. This government has made investments across the entire housing continuum, not only in this community but in communities right across this territory.

It's very easy to remember back in 2011 when we had a situation where there was essentially almost a zero vacancy rate and you were not able to buy a lot at the counter. We're very proud of the changes that have occurred since then, and we will continue to work on these files.

There is a lot of work that has been done, but I think we'll all agree that there is still work to be done and we will continue to do so.

**Ms. White:** Can the minister tell me how lots available over the counter help Yukon's homeless population as they wait for the Centre of Hope from the Salvation Army to open?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I will try not to elicit an emotional response to such a question from the member opposite because, of course, we all know that lots at the counter do not affect the homeless people, but we are talking about people across the spectrum. I have just spent a few minutes articulating how we have in fact addressed issues throughout

the spectrum from people who are relying on the Salvation Army for emergency shelter right up to people who own homes.

We'll continue to work with NGOs and continue to work through our departments, because, of course, it's not just the department of housing that deals with these sorts of issues, because in the end it sometimes involves work done by the Department of Health and Social Services and the work done in the Department of Justice.

**Ms. White:** My original question that started this line was about the *Financial Administration Act* and the amendments to it that affected homeless Yukoners. When the minister said that he went through his list including lots available over the counter, my question was: How does this affect Yukon's homeless population?

The minister has just listed out all the great things that the Salvation Army's Centre of Hope will be offering. Does he have an opening day for that facility?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** We don't have an opening date at this time. We continue to work with the Salvation Army and ensure that what we have when we open that facility is a facility that will be very functional and will be something that we will be proud of — the accomplishment. I've always said that these are complex issues, and I know that sometimes the opposition would like to dummy it down to something less complicated than it is, but we are respectful of the fact that it is a complicated issue.

As I have mentioned many times, some of the situations we deal with involve many different departments, and our ministers in those departments are committed to continuing to work to ensure that we can address those problems. As I have said, our record speaks for itself. We've made tremendous investments across the housing continuum.

**Ms. White:** Understanding that the Centre of Hope — we don't know when it's going to be open. Does the minister have suggestions on what people facing housing insecurity in the territory can do in the meantime as they wait for the transitional housing, the supportive housing, and are on current wait-lists for Yukon Housing Corporation and are paying more than 50 percent of their wages for rent? Does the minister have any helpful suggestions for those folks?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I'm sure the minister responsible for the Housing Corporation will be excited to enter into debate and answer the member opposite's questions when we get to department debate.

**Ms. White:** I really tried to leave it open there for a second.

On opening day in the Legislative Assembly, the minister responsible of Energy, Mines and Resources in his answer used this one refrain — and I'm wondering if the Minister of Finance can explain it. He has given us the opportunity right now to ask anything because he said that we weren't going to ask particular things about the budget, so I'm going to ask about direction.

When the minister said that zero tolerance over misinformation around hydraulic fracturing was going to be a

new thing for the department, can he explain what was meant by that?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I'm sure the minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources will be able to talk and will answer questions specific to his department when we get to that debate on the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources in departmental debate.

**Chair:** Does any other person wish to speak in general debate?

**Mr. Tredger:** Could the Premier explain how, in this time of what he calls "good times", our tax revenue has gone from — last year it was \$127 million to \$110 million?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I do believe that the minister is misquoting me when I said that it was good times. I do believe that what I had — Madam Chair, let me start that again. I do believe that the member opposite has misquoted me. I had not articulated that we are in good times. I had acknowledged that certainly we are at a time of economic downturn in this territory that has, as you can see from the numbers — what you do see is a number of things.

You do see how important commodities and the mining industry are to this territory — at 20 percent of our GDP. So goes mining, so goes Yukon — I have said that both in this House and outside of this House.

It is because of a strong resource industry in the past dozen years that we have seen a growth of over 6,000 people after the mass exodus that existed during the last Liberal and NDP governments at the time I was trying to run a business in this territory. It was very difficult — very, very lean times. All of those who were here at that time can attest to that — that is right. This is a testament to the significance of the impact. Mining affects a large portion of our economy. It is not just the people who work in the mines or in the mill, but it is a trickle-down effect. I have heard different numbers articulated — for every one mining job, I have heard six to eight jobs in the economy —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Chair:** Order, please. Mr. Pasloski has the floor.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Perhaps it is the strategy of the NDP leader to try to speak overtop. It certainly has been her action now for four years.

We are continuing to make strategic investments at a time when the economy has gone through a cyclical downturn. We have been able to do that, but in a responsible way, unlike what we are seeing right now in Alberta. Looking at the forecasting now, by 2017, based on the numbers by the New Democratic Party, we will be the only jurisdiction left in Canada with no net debt. There are massive tax increases today across the board in Alberta because the NDP will never figure out the facts. They make their assumption based on revenues based on current volumes, but when you start taking money out of people's pockets and out of businesses' pockets, they don't have the same money to spend.

I know she can't wait to stand up and to say something.

They have a \$6.1-billion deficit in the Alberta budget.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I am going to sit down because I truly cannot continue to articulate —

### Chair's statement

**Chair:** Order, please. When a member is speaking, I would expect you to sit and listen rather than trying to overtake the floor. It makes it hard for anybody to hear what the discussion is.

Does any other person wish to speak in general debate?

Thank you. We're going to move on then. The first department —

**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. 20, entitled *Second 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.  
Government bills.

## GOVERNMENT BILLS

### Bill No. 89: *Act to Amend the Municipal Act* — Second Reading

**Clerk:** Second reading, Bill No. 89, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Dixon.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** I move that Bill No. 89, entitled *Act to Amend the Municipal Act*, be now read a second time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 89, entitled *Act to Amend the Municipal Act*, be now read a second time.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** It is a pleasure to rise today at second reading on this bill, *Act to Amend the Municipal Act*. This is the result of a significant amount of work over a number of years by not only officials in the Department of Community Services, but officials from a variety of municipalities, as well as the Association of Yukon Communities. It's also the result

of a significant amount of public and municipal consultation that has occurred over the last number of years, which began in earnest with the "Our Towns, Our Future" initiative that occurred a number of years ago.

The *Municipal Act* of course is a very important one in our territory, and the changes in the bill before us modernize the *Municipal Act* in a number of ways. The bill modernizes substantive aspects of the act. It also provides clarity in respect of a number of issues and, in general, it improves the coherence, readability and usability of the act in a number of ways that I'll discuss through the course of my second reading speech today and once we have a chance to get into debate in Committee of the Whole on this bill.

To begin, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to do a quick mention of the fact that this is a timely bill because of the fact that we have tabled the bill this month and it just so happens that we happened to have municipal elections earlier this month as well. As all members have, I think, noted already in their discussions and deliberations earlier, I think I speak for probably all members when I say we genuinely appreciate the role of municipal governments and those who are willing to put their names forward and participate in those governments. I wanted to thank all of those members of municipal governments who have moved on, who have not chosen to stay in municipal politics or stay in municipal government and those who have chosen to run again, and those who have been re-elected, as well as those who were not successful in the election.

I also wanted to note that, while we often discuss mayors and councils as sort of the focal point for municipal governments, I think it is important to recognize the important role that municipal officials play in these processes as well. CAOs, municipal staff and others make a tremendous contribution to their respective communities. I think that too often their important roles go under-appreciated, so I wanted to make a quick note of the important contribution of municipal staff to the operations of their municipalities and their contribution to our territory.

This has been an interesting year for CAOs. At one point we had four of our municipalities without CAOs, or in the process of transitioning to new CAOs. That can be a complex thing, especially for small communities — having a new CAO come to town. It's a very important role and it's one that can really make a difference in the lives of citizens in those communities.

Just last night at a reception I had the chance to meet the new CAO for the Town of Faro. I know that he is one of the newest CAOs in the territory; he started last month. I look forward to meeting a number of new CAOs who have joined us here in the territory over the past year.

The bill that we have before us today is one that is the result, as I said earlier, of a significant amount of consultation. I would like to, if I could, with the indulgence of my colleagues, provide a bit of the background as to what precipitated this bill and the numerous consultations, reports and other initiatives that have led us to the bill that we have before us today.

The Yukon *Municipal Act* was developed by the Yukon government in 1998, in partnership with the Association of Yukon Communities. Minor amendments were subsequently made in 2003 and 2008. The “Our Towns, Our Future” findings report, commonly known as OTOF, was released in the spring of 2011. In response to the OTOF findings, the Government of Yukon committed to establishing an interval for reviewing the act and initiated the review in 2011-2012.

The “Our Towns, Our Future” report was one that I have heard, both as Minister of Community Services and previously as an MLA and minister in other departments, was a very successful initiative. I know they enjoyed the support of many of those who participated in its proceedings and has become a real model for successful engagement between Yukon government and Yukon municipalities.

The “Our Towns, Our Future” report covered a range of things — a range of important issues that were discussed by those involved. They included: Yukon government and municipal relations; First Nation and municipal relations; regionalization in governance; the *Municipal Act* review process, which is what the subject of our bill today is; and it included the development of community development teams. OTOF also included the development of municipal sustainability indicators. It included climate change adaptation, Yukon municipal resources website, and the discussion on provision of local services. It also included the discussion on the municipal infrastructure deficit and asset management.

I know that since the OTOF report, asset management has become an issue of great importance to a number of municipalities and communities, not just here in Yukon but around the country. We’ll be hosting a conference later this year on asset management where we’ll hear from a number of different communities throughout the territory with regard to their respective asset management plans and programs.

The OTOF findings report also discussed revenue generation, which is something that we touch on in this bill. It also discussed lot development and land availability, the comprehensive municipal grant, which has been subsequently increased and considerable changes have been made to it under the leadership of my predecessor.

Another important issue that OTOF covered was the increasing cost and burden of regulations. This is an issue that I certainly heard about when I was Minister of Environment, for municipalities. There was a general sense that municipalities wanted there to be greater recognition of the fact that when we here in Whitehorse make or create new regulations, it’s often municipalities that have to deal with those regulations at the practical level, and the regulations that sometimes get created in Whitehorse don’t always work in rural Yukon. That was something that I think was important to take away from OTOF as well. I know it guided some of the changes we made to not only the *Environment Act* but to the regulations pursuant to the *Environment Act*, including the creation of certain timelines for certain permitting processes, which have benefited all proponents but especially municipalities.

OTOF also covered the impacts of peripheral residents, businesses and industries on municipal services. This is an issue that I know is very important to those especially here in Whitehorse. I know that when our current Minister of Education was a city councillor, this was an issue of great importance to him. At the Cabinet table he is often an advocate of considering this issue, but the OTOF process did. It certainly identified that issue and it’s something that we’re always considering still today.

OTOF also covered issues related to energy costs for municipalities, employee recruitment and retention, and training that’s offered for the community to build local capacity.

The OTOF initiative in general, as I’ve said, was a very successful initiative and one that enjoyed the support, from what I can tell, of just about all who were involved. Since the OTOF report came out in 2011, we’ve completed, I believe, just about everything that was recommended. This initiative, the *Municipal Act* review and the subsequent bill that we have before us today represent one of the final pieces in completing the work that began with OTOF in 2011.

Following the 2011 findings report, Cabinet approved the establishment of a *Municipal Act* Review Committee, known as MARC, in April 2012. This committee included representatives from AYC and Yukon government. Through that process, consultation was undertaken with municipalities, local advisory councils, First Nations and the public — during that consultation that took place from summer to the fall of 2012.

Following that consultation, MARC released its *Municipal Act* review findings report in early 2014, which compiled responses from the public consultation. The report includes an extensive list of proposed amendments to the act. That initiative — the MARC initiative — was again a very successful initiative and one that represented an excellent example of community consultation.

The *Municipal Act* Review Committee — MARC — was comprised of three representatives selected by the AYC. They were Cory Bellmore, the CAO of the Village of Carmacks, Jeff Renault, the former CAO of Dawson City, John Streicker, the former city councillor of the City of Whitehorse, and three Yukon government representatives selected by the then minister — those were Christine Smith, the then Community Services director, who was also the chair of MARC. Christine Smith is now the CAO, or city manager, with the City of Whitehorse. Michael Draper from Energy, Mines and Resources, and Catherine Poole from Economic Development rounded out the government representation on the *Municipal Act* Review Committee.

With the intent of reviewing the *Municipal Act*, the MARC was established and completed its work and provided its findings, as I said, in 2014. Its mandate was to conduct a broad review of the *Municipal Act*, including seeking input from municipalities, First Nations and the general public, and to review, analyze and research issues raised and provide findings for potential amendments for the then minister’s consideration.

The guiding principles that were to guide the MARC's work included the following — the first guiding principle was inclusive, meaning that the review process will strive in its design and implementation to engage all governments, stakeholders and individuals who have interest in the review. Another guiding principle was that the MARC was to be engaging. The review was to provide multiple, flexible and creative avenues for two-way communications and meaningful dialogue. MARC was to be practical. The review was to strive to develop findings that could be realistically accomplished. The committee was to be accountable.

The MARC was to regularly report on its activities to its partners, other interested stakeholders and individuals. It was also to be fiscally responsible for its work. The committee was to be evidence-based. The review was to draw from best available research and analyses and was to involve subject-area experts to inform decision-making throughout the review. The committee was to be partnership-led, meaning that the Government of Yukon and the Association of Yukon Communities were to work collaboratively toward a common purpose while respecting the autonomy and mandates of each party. The committee was to be innovative. It was to encourage and apply innovative thinking and actions in the review. It was also meant to be inspirational. The review was to strive to inspire people to think long term about local governments.

Finally, the final guiding principle that was to guide MARC was open communication. The review was to ensure consistent communications to all stakeholders to facilitate engagement and to help generate shared understanding.

The findings that the MARC arrived at were intended to be just that — findings. They were not intended to be necessarily recommendations outright. In that sense, they were observations. These observations are based on what MARC had seen and heard during community visits, other public meetings, the opinions and experiences of the community members, and the research conducted by experts in the policy and legislative fields. As they noted in their report, it is important to note that these findings are in no way binding on the Yukon government or the Association of Yukon Communities and that MARC did not have the mandate to make decisions. They were tasked with informing and reporting to the Minister of Community Services of the day.

There were 51 findings that fell into 12 themed areas of the current *Municipal Act*: (1) General Observations; (2) Elections; (3) Petitions, Referendums and Plebiscites; (4) Conflict of Interest; (5) Revenue Generation and Financial Matters; (6) Non-Resident User Fees; (7) Utilities; (8) Corporate Status and Municipal Powers; (9) Local Governance; (10) Bylaw Enforcement; (11) Official Community Plan; and (12) Yukon Municipal Board. I believe we have addressed all 12 of those with this bill.

As a general observation, MARC found that during the community consultation and line-by-line analysis of the current act, it had become apparent that there was a need for a general update of the act, which includes modern language to

reflect the current era and legislative environment and to provide clarity on some more generally worded sections of the act.

Throughout this issues-based review, municipalities raised the question about what happens when a particular section of the *Municipal Act* is in conflict with or contradicts another act. Clarification in some sections of the *Municipal Act* might help remove these conflicts or inconsistencies. *Municipal Act* practitioners observed in that report that common subject matter is scattered throughout the act. For example, if someone read the Yukon Municipal Board section of the act, they may not be aware of the fact that the YMB is mentioned in other parts of the act as well.

The issue of social housing arose during this review. Municipalities govern zoning and official community plans that can assist in developing the framework that would support social housing while the authority and mandate to provide programming remains with Yukon government.

The three findings under that "General Observations" heading were as follows: The first finding was that in certain sections the language and content of the act is perceived as out-of-date and some sections may contradict or be perceived to be unclear about how they are interpreted in conjunction with other YG legislation. Secondly, it would enhance the ability of the person who uses the act if common and related subject matter located in various parts of the act were identified, either in the act itself or within a type of user manual. The third finding in that section was that municipal governments have a role to play with respect to zoning and official community planning, as it relates to social housing. The mandate for housing programs resides with Yukon government.

Under the next section, there were a number of observations about municipal elections. The report noted that Yukon is a large jurisdiction with a small population. As such, residents in communities may run for municipal office while also volunteering for key community organizations or societies.

Section 50 of the *Municipal Act* outlines the qualifications for candidates, including the requirement that employees of a municipality must take a leave of absence to be eligible to run for office as per 50(2). However, the act is not clear in cases where a community volunteer, such as a volunteer firefighter, decides to run for an election. Is that firefighter considered a municipal employee and if not, should they be required to take a leave of absence in order to be an eligible candidate? That is a question that was asked by the committee.

The act is also unclear about what happens once an elected official is in office and to what extent that person can or cannot continue with volunteer work outside of their official duties.

Another issue that arose is whether a council member or person running for council may also stand for office in a territorial election or campaign during a territorial election period. In other jurisdictions, there are no legal constraints around municipal council members standing for provincial or

territorial elections or campaigning in those elections. As well, there is no prohibition on sitting as both a council member and an elected territorial or provincial member.

Generally, these issues are left to the political arena and are not constrained by legislation. It was suggested that an information session or workshop could be made available to potential candidates wishing to run for office. The Yukon government continues to work with partners to educate candidates and elected officials.

On the subject of nomination papers, it was noted that current requirements in the *Municipal Act* for the contents of candidates' nomination papers are minimal. These sections could be made more prescriptive and could include the need for candidates to understand what is involved in the role of an elected official.

Some municipalities have suggested a requirement for a criminal records check. Under the issue of campaign financing, the committee noted that the current *Municipal Act* addresses neither campaign financing nor public disclosure of campaign contributions. It has been suggested that it may be timely to include language around this issue, as other Canadian jurisdictions have done. In Manitoba, for example, campaign expense limits are required under provincial legislation, but the specific amount is determined by each municipality through bylaws.

Municipalities are interested in passing bylaws on campaign financing, including campaign expense limits, disclosure, financial agents, filing periods and election advertising.

Under the section of election offences, the committee noted that in the rare case of an election offence, the act allowed authorities two months after the election to commence a proceeding against the potential offender. As many election offences are not typically discovered until well after an election has occurred, it may be prudent to look at lengthening the time within which such a proceeding can take place.

Also there was concern raised regarding whether there may be a need for returning officers to have an increased level of authority to allow for a more efficient and effective enforcement of election rules. There was significant discussion in the committee's report on non-resident voters. The issue of granting voting rights to non-resident property owners was raised during the community consultation. Opinion was divided, with some LACs in favour of granting rights to non-full-time residents of unincorporated areas, including non-Canadian citizens who own property in that area. Allowing non-residents to vote provides property owners a say in decisions about the community in which they have invested and may own a business. However, such voting privileges may grant property owners, but not renters, the right to vote in two places — their place of permanent residence and the place where they own property.

In Canada, voters must be a Canadian citizen over 18 years of age. At the provincial or territorial level, jurisdictions have differing regulations regarding the length of residency required to qualify as an elector. In Yukon, a person is eligible

to vote in a territorial election if they have been a resident for the previous 12 months.

At the municipal level for provinces, BC, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec permit non-resident property owners to vote while Alberta and Saskatchewan allow limited non-resident voting to property owners and their spouses in summer or resort villages. Four provinces and the three territories do not allow non-resident property owners to vote in municipal elections. The laws in these latter jurisdictions generally state that for the purposes of voting, a person may be a resident of only one place at a time and must designate one place of residence for the purposes of the act governing municipal elections. The length of residence required varies from one day in Alberta, to 30 days in Newfoundland and Labrador, to one year here in Yukon and the other territories. The most common length of residence is six months.

Voter eligibility in municipal elections continues to be a debate in Yukon. Although some areas in Yukon would not welcome non-resident voting, the case can be made that if someone owns property, whether it is a business or a vacation home, they are invested in and affected by decisions made by local officials.

The committee also considered a number of issues related to eligible voter lists, the length of term of office, when the term begins and ends, as well as the dates of election.

The findings that the committee arrived at were as follows: the first finding was that some municipalities want to clarify whether a municipal volunteer, such as a firefighter, must take a leave of absence to be eligible to run for office; the second finding was that some municipalities have requested guidelines as to whether a council member or a person running for council may also stand for office in a territorial election or campaign in a territorial election period; third, municipalities have suggested that nomination papers could include information for candidates about these requirements and that a criminal records check could be required; fourth, municipalities are interested in being able to pass by-laws on campaign financing; fifth, the time period in which election offence proceedings can be commenced against any person for committing a municipal election offence could be lengthened; sixth, Yukon would benefit from clarifying when terms of office begin and end; seventh, the principle that only residents are permitted to vote in municipal elections is supported by many Yukon citizens; eighth, updating the section of the posting of eligible voters lists to ensure increased privacy of voters would modernize the municipal government elections process; ninth, the opinions from Yukon communities on lengthening the term of office was divided; and, the tenth and final finding for that section was that moving municipal elections to spring would alleviate the potential overlap with territorial elections — however, this had little support.

The next section related to petitions, referendums and plebiscites. There was significant discussion about these three issues and there were four findings as a result: the committee found, first of all, that municipalities are interested in establishing a consistent method for determining the number

of voters needed to start a petition; second, municipalities are concerned that referendums can be binding, yet may create a situation where council is in conflict with other public processes and existing bylaws, so the public is concerned that referendums do not yield their desired results; third, that municipalities were interested in providing voters with the right to petition council to hold a public hearing and/or the opportunity to counter-petition a motion put forward by council; fourth, the committee found that clarity on the referendum process, when it applies, and under which parts of the act, could reassure both citizens and municipality governments.

In the next section, there was significant discussion about conflict of interest for municipal councillors. There was obviously a lack of clarity around what a pecuniary interest was and there was significant discussion about how it should be defined. Ultimately, the committee arrived at five observations, and those were as follow: first, municipalities are interested in clear guidance as to when a conflict exists and what procedures are to be undertaken in the event of a conflict or perceived conflict; second, municipalities would like comprehensive provisions regarding all circumstances under which disqualification from office will occur; third, municipalities would like clarity around which circumstances warrant a bylaw or resolution to be declared invalid and which circumstances don't, including where a council member is disqualified from voting; fourth, municipalities are interested in clear guidelines when it comes to the acceptance of gifts by local government officials; and, finally, under the conflict of interest section, the fifth observation was that a declaration of conflict of interest may present quorum issues, which could be effectively addressed by establishing a public hearing and disclosure of the conflict in a public forum, allowing those councillors who have had a conflict of interest to vote.

The next section related to revenue generation and financial matters. Under this section, the committee arrived at eight findings. The first of those was that Yukon municipalities wish to have an increased number of options for revenue generation. The Yukon *Municipal Act* is limited in this area when compared with other jurisdictions. Options for revenue generation could include franchise fees, hotel taxes, sales tax, parking tax, motor vehicle levy, tolls, entertainment tax and property transfer tax.

Secondly, it was noted that other jurisdictions in Canada have legislation that provides an increased level of flexibility for fees that can be imposed by a municipality. For example, municipalities would like to be able to charge fees for the extraction of resources they own, provided such fees do not exceed the municipality's costs for such work, facility service or activity. The third observation was to harmonize with some other jurisdictions. Yukon municipalities would like to have consideration given to having utility fees for services provided by municipalities not subject to approval by any entity other than a municipal council and the Yukon Utilities Board.

Fourth is that some Canadian municipalities have the authority to establish levies to enhance the economic viability of an area — for example, a business redevelopment fee.

Next, municipalities are interested in options to help offset increased municipal service costs when a development project increases population density. One option that was identified was the establishment of off-site levies, which other jurisdictions have been using.

Sixth is that legislation that explicitly permits municipal councils to negotiate amenity contributions from developers, which helps a municipal government to offset development costs. This arrangement promotes the development of amenities for citizens. Next, the committee found that increased municipal borrowing limits for particular circumstances could enhance economic development opportunity efforts. Finally, Mr. Speaker, it was noted that municipalities would like to be able to grant exclusive franchises in return for franchise fees.

Under the subject area of non-resident users, the committee arrived at a single observation, and that was that specific language on non-resident fee authority can provide clarity and enhance municipal authority to balance inequities between funds received from and services provided to resident users, and funds received from and services provided to non-resident users of municipal facilities.

Under the subject of utilities, the committee made three observations. First, it noted that municipalities are interested in using the term "service", which can be defined to include any work, facility, activity or other provision provided by or on behalf of a municipality. This could replace the definition of "utilities".

Next, the municipalities would like to be able to provide any work, facility, activity or service under its natural person powers by agreement with any other affected government. Finally, municipalities are interested in being able to create and operate utilities with reasonable risk.

Under the corporate status and municipal powers section, there was considerable discussion and debate about municipally controlled corporations, and the committee arrived at six observations.

First, Yukon municipalities are interested in having the capacity, rights, powers and privileges of an actual person at full capacity. Second, municipalities are enticed by the idea of being able to deliver any work, facility, activity or other service that the council considers necessary or desirable. In addition, municipalities are interested in being able to do this directly or through another public authority or another person or organization. Third, municipalities would like to clarify their authority to impose requirements such as the requirement for persons to do things with their property, to do things at their own expense, and to provide security for fulfilling the requirements. Fourth, municipalities would like the spheres of jurisdiction in which a council may enact a regulatory bylaw to be expanded, subject to express exceptions where the territorial government wishes to reserve jurisdiction or have concurrent jurisdiction. Next, municipalities would like to be able to acquire shares in a corporation, subject to the approval of a minister. Finally, some municipalities have requested the authority to create their own development corporations using specific and prescriptive language to explain how this could

be done. The act would need to consider whether to place any limitation on this type of activity, what the purpose of the corporation would be — for example, for profit or not for profit — and the impact on competition.

Under the subject of local governance, the committee made three recommendations.

First, in Canada there are a variety of options for local governance over a large geographical area. Progressively responsible governance models, such as local improvement districts in Alberta, obtain control over staff and district management of services but do not yet process tax levy or collection authority. This type of governance acts as a proving ground en route to municipal status. Second, Yukon LACs are interested in increasing their ability to have influence over their areas, in particular when it comes to local area planning. Third and finally, the current *Municipal Act* has only two local government categories, which may not allow for a broad spectrum of local government options to respond to the needs of the citizens in each Yukon community.

Under the subject matter of bylaw enforcement, the committee made a single observation, and that was that municipalities are interested in exploring options that would decrease costs and time spent administering bylaw enforcement.

Under the subject of the official community plan, the committee made six observations. First, when municipalities update their zoning bylaws in tandem or immediately following an OCP amendment, public engagement and transparency are improved. However, it can take time to update zoning bylaws. Second, municipalities would like to clarify that referendums and/or plebiscites do not apply to part 7 of the act. Third, the provision requiring councils to provide the Yukon Municipal Board with proposed OCPs may represent an outdated obligation.

Fourth, in the interest of keeping the public engaged, municipalities are interested in shortening the time frame between posting a notice for a public meeting on a proposed OCP and the actual hosting of that meeting. Next, municipalities are open to regulating time frames for viewing and/or renewing of their OCPs and finally, municipalities would like subdivision planning to remain consistent with their OCPs and that all processes remain transparent and publicly acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the Yukon Municipal Board specifically, the committee made a single observation that municipalities are interested in investigating options to support the transparent, orderly, fair and financially efficient operations of the Yukon Municipal Board or to remove the requirement of the Yukon Municipal Board completely.

That is the extent of the observations made by the *Municipal Act* Review Committee in their report published in the spring of 2014. Those recommendations set the groundwork for the changes that we see before us today. Following the work done by MARC, there was a further review done by Yukon government.

Cabinet authorized Community Services in September 2014 to undertake targeted consultation with AYC,

municipalities, First Nations and the public on 12 proposed act amendments. Cabinet also authorized Community Services to commence drafting amendments to the legislation as well as clarifying language, revising definitions and reorganizing the act for clarity.

During consultation, the AYC supported delaying the tabling of the act until this Sitting — the fall of 2015 — to enable act amendments that would be clear and more accessible to municipalities. AYC provided a letter opposing the amendment to include a counter-petition process as an alternative to a referendum. The minister of the day supported that recommendation and supported that request.

The act that we have before us represents the culmination of that work — and a significant amount of work it was. I wanted to take the opportunity now to thank the *Municipal Act* Review Committee — MARC — for their work. It was a significant amount of work that was indispensable for those officials in Community Services and in Justice who drafted this bill.

In response to those observations made by the *Municipal Act* Review Committee, there were a number of specific changes that were made and those are as follows.

The bill specifically addresses those recommendations by modernizing substantive aspects of the act, including: providing a clear process for making a request for the establishment of a local advisory area; removing the requirement that municipalities post preliminary or revised list of electors; providing for a consistent formula to determine the number of signatures that are required on a petition in respect to a referendum by petition; modernizing the rules on conflicts of interest and disqualification of members of council; providing for rules that address the case where, due to disclosure of a pecuniary interest, a quorum may still be maintained by a council; shortening the time frame for notice in respect of a hearing for an official community plan and ensuring zoning bylaws can be adopted at the same time; and removing the obligation on a council to provide a copy of a proposed official community plan to the Yukon Municipal Board.

The bill also addresses the recommendations that were provided for clarity with respect to: a municipality's status as a corporate person; eligibility rules for electors and candidates; the commencement and termination of a member of council's term; the process for the initiation and conduct of plebiscites and referenda by council and by petition; the provision and scope of municipal services, including council's authority to authorize a municipal service and a municipality's authority to provide it; and revenue generation, specifically in relation to a council's authority to impose property taxes, local improvement taxes and municipal service charges.

The bill generally improves the coherence, readability and usability of the act by replacing inconsistent or vague definitions with more precise definitions to support the application of substantive provisions, application of new definitions to support the application of substantive provisions, addressing inconsistencies in the use of certain terms and expressions, correcting the use of terms and

expressions where an error was identified, improving coherence in respect of provisions that reference other statutes; and improving legislative layout and structure through topical reorganization; and updating legislative text where necessary.

You can see that this is a considerable body of work that has been the result of considerable consultation and work by a number of officials, including those in my department, but let me now, if I may, discuss some of the details of the act in better detail.

First of all I think it's important to recognize some of the key terms that are being discussed in this act — first of all, a petition. The petition is a formal written request initiated by the general public and signed by many people appealing to a municipal council with respect to a single cause. An elector may petition a council for a binding referendum on a specific matter.

A plebiscite is a polling of electors by a council in order to gauge the public's opinion or view on a particular issue. The outcome of the public's response is not binding on a council. A referendum, however, is a polling of electors on a specific matter initiated by a council and the results of a referendum are binding on the council.

There is some discussion about a binding counter-petition as an alternative to a referendum. In that process, a council identifies a matter, makes a tentative decision and then gives the public the opportunity to petition against the decision. A successful petition —

**Speaker:** Order, please. The hour being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

*Debate on second reading of Bill No. 89 accordingly adjourned*

*The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.*

**Written notice was given of the following motion  
October 27, 2015:**

Motion No. 1036

Re: changes to House's schedule for the 2015 Fall Sitting  
(Cathers)