



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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## HANSARD

Wednesday, May 25, 2016 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Patti McLeod

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**SPEAKER — Hon. Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake**  
**DEPUTY SPEAKER — Darius Elias, MLA, Vuntut Gwitchin**

## CABINET MINISTERS

<b>NAME</b>	<b>CONSTITUENCY</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO</b>
<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	Government House Leader 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>Hon. Patti McLeod</b>	Watson Lake
<b>Darius Elias</b>	Vuntut Gwitchin

## 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
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### Independent

<b>David Laxton</b>	Porter Creek Centre
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## LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Wednesday, May 25, 2016 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

## DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of National Missing Children's Day

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Madam Speaker, I rise in this House on behalf of all members to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing today as National Missing Children's Day. Early one morning, a little boy by the name of Etan Patz grabbed his school books. He donned his future flight captain's cap and gave his mother Julia a goodbye kiss before leaving to catch the school bus. The sight of her blonde-haired, blue-eyed son making his way up Prince Street in New York City was to be Julia's last. He was six years old.

Etan's disappearance is just one of many horrifying stories of children who seemingly vanish without a trace. For the families of these children, years can go by without any answers and hope begins to fade. That's why the anniversary of Etan's disappearance May 25 has been named National Missing Children's Day in recognition of all missing children. Throughout Canada and the US, it's a special date — symbolic of renewed hope and remembrance of those still missing.

April 7 this year marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the disappearance of Michael Dunahoe from Victoria Park. His abduction brought home for many Canadians the fact that we are not safe from this type of tragedy. Yukon has worked in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection for the past three years and, earlier today, I announced that we are again partnering for an additional three years.

For more than 30 years, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection has supported families of missing and sexually exploited children, while working to increase the personal safety of children across Canada. It launched its services in April 1985, as Child Find Manitoba, following the disappearance and subsequent murder of 13-year-old Candace Derksen.

Since then, the agency has grown to provide national intervention, education and prevention programs. These include cybertip.ca — Canada's tip line to report the online sexual exploitation of children — and missingkids.ca — a national missing children's resource and response centre. The organization was scheduled to be in Yukon earlier this year, but the disappearance of a young boy in Manitoba and the discovery of a body of a missing young woman kept them close to home to support those families.

Madam Speaker, our work with this group aids us in educating families about steps they can take to protect their children. It provides us with the tools we can use with children themselves to help them be safe. It also shows those parents whose children are missing that we still share their hope and that they will find the answers.

A missing child is a parent's worst nightmare, and I'm sure we all ask ourselves, "What if...?" The Canadian Centre for Child Protection and other organizations like it give us a little bit of hope.

### In recognition of Destination Imagination

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today in recognition of the Yukon's fourth year of participating in Destination Imagination. If you have not heard of Destination Imagination, perhaps you will have recognized the pink flamingos that have been popping up on lawns all over the city as part of that wonderful fundraiser for Destination Imagination.

Madam Speaker, I have to tell you that it is a great fundraiser unless, like me, you have grandsons who want the flamingos to come back to the house a number of times. It makes it very expensive.

Destination Imagination challenges blend science, technology, engineering and mathematics education with the arts and social entrepreneurship. The challenges are designed to teach kids how to think and work together. This year, 150,000 students from 30 countries participate in Destination Imagination tournaments. Here at home, on April 2, students from seven schools competed in Yukon's regional tournament: Golden Horn Elementary, Hidden Valley elementary, Vanier Catholic Secondary, Christ the King Elementary, Del Van Gorder, Holy Family elementary and Jack Hulland Elementary schools all competed. All of the competitors and team managers are to be commended for their creativity, hard work and enthusiasm.

Special congratulations should be given to the special award winners: Team "Japyz" from Holy Family elementary for the instant challenge high score; Team "The Fuzz" from Holy Family elementary for the Da Vinci award for courage and follow-through; Team "Below Zero Bumblebees" from Hidden Valley elementary for the renaissance award for technical ingenuity; Team "Purple Rain" from Vanier Catholic Secondary for the spirit of Destination Imagination award for being exceptional role models for other teams and working through the creative process with DI spirit. The second DI spirit award went to Team "DVG Kids" from Del Van Gorder School in Faro for being the first rural school to travel to the tournament and show super enthusiasm.

I commend the Destination Imagination Yukon Society board members and the team managers, teachers, staff, volunteers, sponsors and partners behind the scenes who made this event possible. They worked very hard with the students throughout the year as the teams prepared for this competition.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I would like to invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating the two teams representing Yukon in the Global Finals competition in

Knoxville, Tennessee: “Purple Rain” from Vanier Catholic Secondary School and “Fiddlesticks” from Hidden Valley School. The “Purple Rain” team members are Marika Kitchen, Natasha Eliot, Lauren Gibbs, Noah Curtis, Harrison Coyne, Jack Royle, and Ariel Durant. The “Fiddlesticks” team members are Maximilian Warner, Alexander Gray, Tia Zakus, Donald Halliday, Nia Teramura and Phoebe Petkovich.

The teams worked very hard to prepare for their competitions and also in the fundraising for their travel. On behalf of the Government of Yukon, I want to wish them all the best at the Global Finals. Thank you to all of the winners. All of the teams that participated were winners.

*Applause*

### In recognition of World MS Day

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of all members to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing today, May 25, as World MS Day.

Multiple sclerosis is a chronic, often disabling disease of the brain and spinal cord. It is the most common neurological disease among young adults in Canada. The theme this year for the world recognition day is “Independence” and “MS does not stop me.” It is intended to be a celebration of all the ways that individuals affected by MS maintain their independence.

There are 2.3 million people with MS worldwide. It is likely that hundreds of thousands more remain undiagnosed, and many lives are affected indirectly through caring for someone with MS. There are an estimated 55,000 to 75,000 Canadians living with MS. In Yukon, Madam Speaker, we estimate about 150 individuals are living with MS. Most people with MS are diagnosed when they are between the ages of 25 and 31, with around twice as many women diagnosed as men. The cause of MS is not yet known and, as yet, there is no cure.

There are treatments available that can help some forms of MS and many things can be done to improve the symptoms. The severity of the course of MS, as well as the symptoms, can vary widely among individuals. These symptoms can include blurred vision, weak limbs, tingling sensations, unsteadiness and fatigue. The unpredictable effects of MS last a lifetime.

While the majority of people living with MS are diagnosed with relapsing remitting MS, more than half will develop secondary progressive MS within 10 years of their diagnosis, and 90 percent will develop progressive MS within 25 years of their diagnosis.

Fortunately, at the national level, the MS Society of Canada offers services to people affected by MS that can help them maintain their quality of life and deal with the challenges related to the disease. These services and programs include information and referral, supportive counselling, self-help and support groups, financial assistance and recreational and social programs.

Many of us will know someone with MS. Think about how their lives are, the challenges they face and how they fight to maintain their independence. Locally, the MS walk

was held earlier this month. The individuals who came out are to be thanked for their commitment to their friends, to their families and to their neighbours who will benefit from these funds raised.

### In recognition of Stephen Kozmeniuk

**Mr. Silver:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on behalf of all of my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to local born-and-raised Yukoner, Stephen Kozmeniuk. As many of you have heard, Stephen is credited as the songwriter and producer on Kendrick Lamar’s *To Pimp a Butterfly*, which won the best rap album at this year’s Grammy Awards. This is one of the highest accomplishments anyone in the music business can receive, and I congratulate him on that. During the highly publicized Grammy Awards, Kendrick Lamar performed the song that Stephen wrote and produced, *The Blacker the Berry*, which became one of the most impassioned and widely discussed songs after its release.

Madam Speaker, I’ve known Stephen since his high school days when he was really starting to develop his music skills, learning new and different instruments, jamming with more experienced local musicians and writing his first songs. It’s important to note at this time the relationship that he had with a local musician, Bruce Bergman, who at that time saw huge potential in Stephen and who still keeps in touch with Stephen. As a young man at that time with lots of potential, we all saw that this guy was going places.

Madam Speaker, after he graduated from Porter Creek Secondary School, he took on his music full force, starting his solo act, Boy, and released his first album in 2002. He toured with this album, opening for many great artists. He also at that time performed at the Dawson City Music Festival. The year that he came to Dawson City Music Festival as one of our performers, I was on the board of directors. I thoroughly enjoyed his charismatic nature and the complexity of his music. Everyone I talked to and who saw him perform was blown away, including me. At that point, I knew he was already a professional musician at such a young age.

Madam Speaker, he soon moved to Toronto, incorporating new musicians into his band. In 2008, the band, Boy, was disbanded. Stephen had realized that his love for music lay behind the scenes as a composer and as a producer, so he packed up his bags and moved to Sweden to work with Jonas Quant. After he returned to Toronto, Stephen’s career took off. His first big project was a collaboration with sound engineer Demacio Castellon on Madonna’s *MDNA* album. Since then, he has worked with many famous and upcoming artists, including Jennifer Hudson, Nelly Furtado, Shawn Hook, Kendrick Lamar, Dua Lipa, and Benny Benassi.

Madam Speaker, Stephen has and will continue to make huge contributions to the music world and we have nothing but to benefit from that. His work as a producer amplifies what artists are saying — taking the listener on a journey through the song. I look forward to watching his music grow and to seeing what he produces in the future.

Thank you to Stephen for embracing your dreams. You have become a role model for many young musicians in the Yukon and I wish you the best. Madam Speaker, I would like to ask all of my colleagues in the Legislature today to help me in welcoming to the gallery Stephen's mother Chris Bedford, Stephen's father Dale Kozmen, his wife Jennifer Kozmen, and also friends of the family, Ranj Pillai, Lauren Muir and Don Inverarity.

*Applause*

### In recognition of Yukon FireFit Competition

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of all members of the Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to nine of the Yukon's firefighters. This weekend, these firefighters, representing Whitehorse, Tagish, Mount Lorne and the Fire Marshal's Office, will be competing in the Pacific Regional Scott FireFit Competition in Vernon with the aim of going to Spruce Meadows, Alberta, in September for the nationals.

This competition is known as the toughest two minutes in sport and tests the men and women involved to their limit. To say it is tough is an understatement. It is gruelling. They run a six-station course that mimics a fire ground. They do this in full gear and on air while carrying 45-pound packs of hose up a four-storey tower, hoisting another 45-pound hose pack, hammering a 250-pound block back a foot to represent forcible entry, pulling a fully-charged hose, and then they finish by dragging a 175-pound Rescue Randy dummy 100 feet.

Firefighting is a strenuous job. The constant adrenalin bursts over the duration of a fire, the extreme heat, the weight of their gear and the physical demands of their work are unimaginable to most of us. Unfortunately, all of this strain can take a toll. The number one cause of line-of-duty deaths for firefighters is heart attacks.

These firefighters do this competition because they believe that their fitness is paramount. They believe that they owe it to us, the public, to be in the best shape possible when we call on them, and they believe in setting an example.

When I asked Tagish fire chief Boyd Pyper why they do this, he replied: "This is who we are. This is what we do."

Madam Speaker, I wish every success to deputy fire marshal and team coach James Paterson; Tagish fire chief and Yukon fire service team captain Boyd Pyper; Whitehorse firefighter and Whitehorse team captain Jeremy Beebe; Whitehorse firefighter Alex Cusson; Mount Lorne firefighter Shaun Cooke; Whitehorse firefighter Boris Hoefs; Tagish firefighter Myron Penner; Whitehorse firefighter Coty Fraser; and Whitehorse firefighter Luke Parker — as I am sure, do all members of this House. Thank you for the work you do. You make us proud.

I would like to welcome today to the public gallery James Paterson, Boyd Pyper and Jeremy Beebe.

*Applause*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Speaker:** Before we move on to introduction of visitors, I would invite the House to join me in welcoming some good friends and constituents of mine to the gallery today: Tim and Cheryl O'Brien and Kyle Stewart. Welcome.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there any other visitors to be introduced?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to introduce a number of individuals who are here today, joining us for the tabling of the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board annual report. First of all, two of our board members have joined us: Keith Byram from Pelly Construction and Sue Craig from Tintina Consultants. Jennifer Byram from Pelly Construction is also here with us today, as are Samson Hartland, the executive director of the Yukon Chamber of Mines, and, Jonas Smith, the executive director of the Klondike Placer Miners' Association.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to just quickly thank those board members who have not been able to join us here today for their role in developing this report: the chair, Mark Ayranto, from Victoria Gold Corp; Marc Blythe, from the Yukon Chamber of Mines; Heather Burrell, from Archer, Cathro & Associates; Ron Light, from Capstone Mining Corp.; Mike McDougall, from the Klondike Placer Miners' Association; Clynton Nauman, from Alexco Resource Corp.; Eira Thomas, from Kaminak Gold Corp.; Paul West-Sells, from Western Copper and Gold; and, the communications contractor who works for the Minerals Advisory Board, Amanda Leslie, from Mosaic Communications. Thank you.

*Applause*

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

### TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. As mentioned, I have for tabling the *2015 Yukon Minerals Advisory Board Annual Report*.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have for tabling the *Government of Yukon Evaluation of the Yukon's Apprenticeship and Tradespersons Qualification Program Final Report*.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Madam Speaker, I have for tabling here today the *Yukon Law Foundation Annual Report — November 1, 2014 to October 31, 2015*.

**Speaker:** Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS

**Mr. Silver:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to publicly state the amount of money being spent to host the Council of the Federation meeting in Whitehorse this summer and to confirm the salary of a staff person in the Cabinet offices is being paid out of that amount of money.

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

This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Government ethical standards

**Ms. Hanson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Since this version of the Yukon Party government took office in 2011, the bar has been lowered when it comes to ethics in government. Here are a few examples: they have used public dollars to sell fracking to a territory that simply does not want it; in 2014, three-quarters-of-a-million-dollar Mountainview Golf Course buyback showed this government is always willing to go the extra mile for its closest friends; last year, internal documents exposed the Yukon Party government's decision to build a massive continuing care complex in Whitehorse, without consultation, without final capital or O&M costs and contrary to the warning of experts and their own officials. These are not isolated lapses in judgment; together they represent just a few examples of the Yukon Party's poor ethical track record.

Given all of this, Madam Speaker, does the Premier really think he can spend his way back into people's good books, ahead of this year's election?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and this government is proud of its actions and what we have accomplished in the last five years. Madam Speaker, something that we are proud of is that since tabling our platform commitments during the 2011 election, we have indeed delivered. I would say that is unheard of in politics these days — that we have either completed or we are actively pursuing everything that we put in our platform.

We are focused on what Yukoners have told us. We are focused on jobs. We are focused on growing our economy. We are focused on our seniors. We are focused on health care. We are focused on education. The future of this territory indeed looks very bright under a renewed Yukon Party government.

**Ms. Hanson:** Madam Speaker, after 14 years, the Yukon Party's ethical lapses are no surprise to Yukoners. Their complete refusal to acknowledge government lobbying has been especially disappointing. Lobbying acts are common practice in most Canadian jurisdictions, including the federal government, many provinces and even some large cities. The Yukon NDP tabled legislation to establish a paid lobbyist registry because we think it is the public's right to know who is attempting to influence government decisions. While paid lobbyists get special access to the Yukon Party government without public knowledge, the Premier dismissively tells Yukoners who want to talk to him to top up their shopping carts with political asks and look for ministers in the grocery store.

If this government has nothing to hide, why has it fought so hard to stop the creation of a Yukon paid lobbyist act?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. As we have discussed and answered in this House many times, Yukon is in fact a small jurisdiction. We applaud all those people who wear many, many hats every day, not only in their job but in supporting strong charitable organizations or recreational organizations.

This is a government that has been very transparent and very open. As we have discussed, we have people in our offices meeting on a daily basis. We are very proud of the 60-plus meetings at which we engaged Yukoners prior to the creation of the latest budget. This is a government that is focused on the priorities of Yukoners, and this is a territory that is very proud to stand alone in this country to be the only jurisdiction that doesn't have to budget interest in their budgets to service debt; the only jurisdiction in this country that is living within its means and not paying for services at a later date to provide services today. In fact, what I am talking about is that we have no debt.

**Ms. Hanson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Premier might want to check Public Accounts for those interest rates. When your top donor is an Outside gas company, the next biggest one is an Outside resource company, and the third is a numbered corporation, you lose a lot of credibility when you tell people that you have nothing to hide. We know where we stand. Yukon politics should be funded by Yukon citizens. The Yukon government rejected our bill to make Yukon's political donations fair, and last year's donor report shows why. The Yukon NDP was the only party not to take a corporate or union donation. When it comes to ethics, this Yukon Party government has put more power in fewer people's hands than any Yukon government in history.

How can the Premier deny that, despite the Yukon Party's clear and repeated ethical lapses, his government puts its friends before ordinary Yukon citizens?

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Certainly, the fog is getting thick in here, and the memory very short for the Leader of the NDP who did a fundraiser in Alberta and less than two weeks later tabled her legislation banning donations from outside this territory. Of course, we can talk about the thousands and thousands of dollars that the NDP has collected from unions in the past for their elections.

We are very proud of all of those hard-working men and women who donate to this party. Let's face it: all parties need money to be able to run their campaigns, because we don't think that the taxpayers should be paying that money.

When companies donate money — Yukon companies or people who work for Yukon companies — we think those are families in this territory. We're very proud of our record.

Again, I would just like to close the answer by talking about how proud this latest budget is, and our successive budgets have put us on the path.

Madam Speaker, what we do know is that we had a contraction in our economy last year, primarily because of the mining industry, because we know that all other major sectors of our economy are growing — construction, retail trade,

professional, scientific, technical services, real estate, transportation, health care, education, finance, insurance — and the list goes on.

We are very proud of the work that has been done. I have to say that we are very optimistic for the future of this territory.

**Question re: Community nursing**

**Ms. Stick:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Community nurses are the primary health providers in many Yukon communities, but Yukon continues to face a critical shortage of these community nurses. Nurses often work alone with no relief and are overworked and fatigued because of their dedication and good work.

In April, I asked again how this government would address the problem, and all the minister could say was — and I quote: "... we will continue to work with our partners in the area of recruitment." This is not leadership.

This has been on the government's radar for a number of years, and we still have no concrete action or results. When will the minister show leadership and take action to fix these gaps in community nursing and ensure safety for our community members?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I certainly appreciate the member's interest in this file. As I've said on the floor of this Legislature before, this government takes community nursing and nursing in general very seriously. We're very actively engaged with the Yukon Medical Association and with the Yukon Hospital Corporation, within the Department of Health and Social Services, on those recruitment issues.

We also recognize that those recruitment issues remain a constant factor and challenge right across Canada. We will continue with the good work, we will continue to forge those partnerships in moving forward, and we will continue to support the nurses within our Yukon communities.

**Ms. Stick:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The nurses are telling us about vacant community positions. There is also the problem of understaffing, in that one nurse is sometimes dependent upon to run a nursing station when it would be safer to have two.

In April, the minister indicated to this House that — and I quote: "three out of 24 community-based positions" are vacant. Madam Speaker, a basic online search today shows that this government currently has five active searches for community nursing positions and one for the manager of community nurses. It seems we've taken steps back from just weeks ago.

Madam Speaker, will the minister acknowledge that the status quo is not an option and develop a long-term solution to recruit and retain community nurses?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. That's exactly what we're doing within the department and with our partners. We continue to make those investments. In fact, over the past decade, some of these include: introducing the nursing program at Yukon College; licensing LPNs; introducing Yukon medical and nursing bursaries for Yukon

students; and building the nurses' residence here in Whitehorse.

The Yukon Party has a plan that will provide the sustainable, high-quality health care that Yukoners need and deserve now and into the future. We will continue with the relationships that we have built with the YRNA, with Yukon Medical Association and the Yukon Hospital Corporation. We certainly recognize the fact that we've forged good relationships with our community nurses, but recognize that the nursing shortage and the challenges we face for recruitment and retention are not specific just to Yukon. They happen right across the country in every single province and territory. We'll continue building those relationships and we'll continue making the investments in health care.

**Ms. Stick:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. In fact, we've lost community nurses. Some have gone to work in the Northwest Territories where they are better supported and better paid.

Community nurses have also spoken to us regarding the ability to provide additional services. They have identified that more mental health services are needed in the communities, not just Whitehorse. There are people in communities with mental health distresses who should be receiving ongoing support. The nurses are trying, but support is more than dollars; it is supporting nurses in the communities and it is providing them training that they ask for and require. Madam Speaker, mental health nursing needs the support of this government. We heard that there were two psych nurses, one working in Dawson City and one in Haines Junction and that there was a recruitment going on for Watson Lake.

Madam Speaker, does this government have a plan to increase mental health nursing services in more Yukon communities or is it satisfied with the current situation?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Thank you, Madam Speaker and again I thank the member for her interest in this area. Certainly the Department of Health and Social Services is continually being creative with their recruitment and retention strategies for staffing our Yukon health centres. Recruitment is pursued in a variety of ways, including targeted local and national advertising, collaboration with other local recruitment efforts and attendance at national job fairs. Community Nursing, along with Health and Social Services human resource staff, have done a commendable job in meeting the needs of the department and I would like to thank them for their work each and every day.

This Yukon Party government will continue to make investments in health care. We'll continue to support our nurses and we'll continue to support our communities across the territory.

**Question re: Tourism statistics**

**Mr. Silver:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Earlier this year, the government released its annual tourism visitor statistical report after spending \$600,000 on a new visitor tracking program. The government released the report without these new numbers saying that they were simply unavailable;

\$600,000 and no new numbers is not a great return on this investment. Yukon tourism operators are forced once again to rely on border crossing numbers as they have for many years. The contractor from the 2012 study has asked repeatedly for access to the data that was collected at that cost of \$600,000 and has repeatedly been denied that information from this government. They have even filed an access to information request to get that data so that it can be distributed to the industry.

Why is the government fighting the release of this information?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to point out for the member opposite that, in fact, we know how very important it is to have an improved reporting system of the number of visitors to the territory and it's in fact why we have launched a review of visitation to the territory.

That is fully supported by the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon. They support our government's planned move forward with a review of its data collection process. This is very important and useful information for business decisions and maximizing the return on investment by businesses. We know that this is also very important to the Yukon Chamber of Commerce. In fact, moving forward with the review will help inform those reliable data decisions to help inform those decisions.

According to the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, we know that they will be encouraging all of their members, all the businesses throughout the territory, to contribute to the improved reporting on the metrics of this very important part of the visitation economy.

**Mr. Silver:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I agree, this information is extremely important, but an access to information request was filed in March and this government has been fighting it every step of the way. The government shouldn't block the release of this information — I agree. When you spend \$600,000 to collect information and then then won't release it, it demonstrates the fiscal mismanagement of this government. Part of the contract was to write numerous industry-based reports on issues such as transportation and accommodations, et cetera. The department cancelled those reports. A spokesperson from the department said that a decision was made not to extend the contract around March 2014.

Why has the contract been terminated and why were the promised reports never delivered to the industry?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Madam Speaker, I am not entirely sure what the member opposite is referring to because it is my understanding that any and all reports that came out of the visitor exit survey, as well as the visitor tracking program that was developed as a priority of the Tourism Industry Association and that was identified back in 2011, has in fact been posted on the Tourism website for all to see. Certainly, this government is not hiding information. Certainly, I as the Minister of Tourism and Culture — surely the member opposite isn't inferring that I should be intervening in ATIPP decisions. That is why we have an independent office to oversee those decisions that are separate from political

interference. Surely the member opposite isn't asking me to politically intervene in this particular question.

We very much value the importance of having invaluable information readily available to Yukon businesses to maximize those opportunities for business decisions and investments. We certainly look forward to the outcome of that review that is underway.

**Mr. Silver:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. With all due respect to the minister, we and the creator of this program are looking for this information — absolutely. The Yukon Party government spent \$600,000 on a new way of tracking numbers for visitors who come here. The contract was cut short by the government, and the new method was not used when the tourism numbers were released in the spring. Those are the facts.

The government has been asked to release the data collected from the original survey and they refuse to do so. Shortly after this story broke, the government put out a press release that said that after 14 years of not doing so, it was prepared to talk to the industry about improving tourism data collection. This would be absolutely useful information for small businesses and is something the government has failed miserably at providing in the past. A spokesperson said, however, that there would be nothing in place until at least 2018.

Why has it proven so difficult for the government to count tourists?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Again, thank you, Madam Speaker. For the member opposite, we recognize the importance of visitor statistics for Yukon businesses and our economy. We also recognize that the best people to tell us what works and what can be improved are the tourism operators.

In the coming months, we will be engaging with tourism operators and we will be engaging with Yukon businesses and organizations in support of the tourism industry to determine what is the best mechanism; to see what are the best indicators and to see how we can fill out a more robust tracking system.

We will continue to collect and publish all those tourism indicators online throughout this process, but again, we recognize the importance of having that relevant, accurate and up-to-date information to measure the health of industry and to help inform those business decisions — something, I should add, that is fully endorsed by the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon by way of a recent news release on May 9, 2016, as well as the Yukon Chamber of Commerce.

The only member taking issue with this review is the member opposite.

### **Question re: Emergency preparedness**

**Mr. Laxton:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. In 2013, we saw a very successful joint Operation Nanook — with DND, the Government of Yukon and the City of Whitehorse — take place here in Whitehorse, with a wildland fire scenario. I understand that the former deputy minister of Community Services was extremely reluctant to participate in the upcoming Operation Nanook 16 to be held this August in Haines Junction.



My question for the minister is: To what extent will the Yukon government be involved, if at all?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The Government of Yukon continues to enhance emergency preparedness in the territory. In 2016, the Canadian Armed Forces will be staging Operation Nanook, an annual emergency and sovereignty exercise, primarily in Whitehorse and Haines Junction.

The operation will consist of a simulated disaster and uses specialized training to develop emergency preparedness for community services and local emergency responders. There will be a number of community projects left behind by the Canadian Armed Forces for the benefit of Yukoners. These projects, in both Whitehorse and Haines Junction, will be similar in scope to the building of the Whitehorse-Copper Ridge trail, built during the 2013 Operation Nanook.

To date, my department has been actively involved in the preparations going into Operation Nanook and will be participating in the activities that will occur in Whitehorse and Haines Junction later this year. Of course, the Village of Haines Junction has also been very much engaged in the planning process for this, and we will continue to support them through the EMO and through other branches of Community Services to prepare for Operation Nanook later this year.

**Mr. Laxton:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could the minister tell us what actual branches will be involved and in what capacity, but also what kind of funds have been allocated for this operation?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Canadian Armed Forces hold this exercise annually in northern Canada, and every third year it's held in Yukon.

The first-ever Operation Nanook was held in 2013, and the local benefit is estimated to have been between \$3 million to \$5 million, so we anticipate that it will be similar this year. It will take place over a two-week period in late August. It will involve a simulated earthquake in Haines Junction, using Whitehorse as an operational staging centre. It may also include other associated simulated disaster events that are still yet to be determined. All of the training offered by the Canadian Armed Forces is within the operational scope of Yukon Emergency Services. Other than staff costs for the Yukon government, Operation Nanook will be conducted at the Government of Canada's expense.

The benefits of training will offset costs that the Fire Marshal's Office would otherwise have to bear in the course of normal operations. The Canadian Armed Forces may provide training to Yukon personnel in urban search and rescue sites set up in Whitehorse and Haines Junction and possibly create at least two community enhancement projects in each of those communities. The First Marshal's Office and the EMO will be involved, and other departments as necessary including the possibility of perhaps Highways and Public Works, with regard to the Haines Junction project. So the costs are borne by Canada and the Yukon is happy to participate.

### Question re: Child Development Centre

**Ms. White:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Child Development Centre has been a great asset to our community, providing therapeutic services and support for the developmental needs of Yukon children up to the age of five. The centre provides a wide variety of services and programs; however, these services completely cease during the summer months. From June to August, the Child Development Centre is closed, leaving the children who rely on their services without anywhere to go. Many of the children who rely on these programs have intensive needs that are not met during their summer break. There are no other programs that provide the same support as the Child Development Centre.

Madam Speaker, with the Child Development Centre closed for two months, how does this government plan to provide support for these children and their families?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for her question. The area of child support is certainly one that I am very familiar with.

A number of years ago, we created a division within the Department of Health and Social Services — namely, family supports for children with disabilities. Through that program, there are a whole host of supports and services that are available, including applied behavioural analysis, respite, and inclusion workers who participate with young people in summer camp. Those are some of the programs that are available for those children who are not attending the Child Development Centre in the summer.

**Ms. White:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Many of the children who attend programs and services at the Child Development Centre have intensive needs, and the gap in services over the summer months can cause a setback in a child's development at a critical age. Many parents struggle on their own to find new programs or assistance for their children over the summer months. Even if they are able to find alternative programming, establishing a new relationship with a therapist or a program worker is often a challenge of its own. This is a significant issue, especially for a child with intensive needs or requirements who requires daily assistance.

Madam Speaker, has this government considered conducting a review of the funding allocated to the Child Development Centre to allow for expanded services for Yukon families?

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for her question. If she has a particular constituent who has issues or concerns around this area, I would urge them to reach out to me. I would certainly be more than happy to be of assistance.

As I indicated in my first response, there are services available through Family Services for children with disabilities, including, inclusion workers, respite, ABA and a host of other programming.

I know from personal experience that often the individuals who work at the Child Development Centre do take leave from their duties there — some of them; maybe not all of them — but in the past — I know for my son, Jack — that we have certainly been able to hire them on for the

summer to provide that programming and the consistency throughout the summer months. The same applies to the Department of Education. I would like to extend my thanks to their staff — the ones who have been available to carry on those IEPs throughout the summer when Jack and other students need those opportunities. In light of the member opposite's question, I would suggest that if she has constituents who have this as an issue, they are more than welcome to reach out to my department.

**Question re: Human rights investigations at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre**

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Madam Speaker, there are currently eight Yukon human rights investigated complaints that have been referred to the human rights panel of adjudicators. All eight of them deal with alleged human rights violations occurring at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. The right to have private conversations about legal matters is well-established and should not be controversial, yet the Human Rights Commission does not have privileged communication access.

Will the Minister of Justice take action to make sure that the Yukon Human Rights Commission is put on Whitehorse Correctional Centre's privileged call list?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the member for the question and would note that there are ongoing discussions right now between the Department of Justice and the Human Rights Commission regarding issues including jurisdiction and when matters should be referred through the ISO internal process and when they should be dealt with by the Human Rights Commission. Those discussions are currently underway, and I look forward to hearing back about the results from that work being done by staff at the Department of Justice and staff at the Human Rights Commission.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Well, I will take the minister's refusal to answer as a "no".

Madam Speaker, in the past we have seen this government suspend the Human Rights Commission's access to inmates, saying that they did not have jurisdiction at Whitehorse Correctional Centre, before quietly backing down.

While the minister doesn't seem to think that inmates at WCC deserve help, people know that rehabilitation makes everyone safer. The Human Rights Commission is investigating issues relating to the overuse of segregation, access to methadone treatment, denial of mental health services, and aboriginal rights. The commission relies on the Department of Justice for its funding, yet in the eight WCC cases, the same department is the respondent. This raises obvious ethical concerns about the independence of an outside investigative body.

Will this government support the commission's independence and ensure that the Human Rights Commission's funding no longer comes from the Department of Justice?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do think that the member is not being fair to staff at the

Department of Justice in the implications that she is making regarding their ethical conduct in matters of this nature. I would note that we do respect the work of the Human Rights Commission. I would also note that not only the staff at the Department of Justice but also the Investigations and Standards Office take great pains to review matters including inmate complaints.

I would remind the member that among the issues that she mentioned — while I will carefully avoid talking about specific complaints — in fact, we reinstated the methadone program at Whitehorse Correctional Centre under the direction of a physician on contract who makes those determinations about when that treatment is required for inmates within Whitehorse Correctional Centre.

Again, significant steps have been taken through the creation of the independent standards office, which I remind the member did not exist during her time as Minister of Justice. We have taken steps to improve the system, respect the jurisdiction of the Human Rights Commission and the member should not conclude my original answer as a "no". In fact, the answer is discussions are underway right now between the department and Human Rights Commission staff and I'm not going to predict the outcome of those until that work is done.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** The minister says that the government supports the commission, but they won't allow privileged call access or consider an independent funding process. We've come a long way when it comes to corrections and I might point out this minister has more than twice the budget that was available years ago.

We now have an indication of how many people at the jail have FASD, mental health distresses and substance abuse problems. We also know that focusing on rehabilitation makes everyone safer — correctional officers, the public and yes, inmates, but this government has stood in the way of independent investigations into correctional programming. They've dragged their feet on implementing the Auditor General's recommendations and they've failed to follow the 2009 *Corrections Act* that they themselves set out.

Howard Sapers, the federal correctional investigator, will be in Yukon this September. Madam Speaker, again I ask, will this minister support an independent inquiry in the Whitehorse Correctional Centre by the Office of the Correctional Investigator?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Madam Speaker, once again it's very unfortunate the aspersions that the member is casting on department staff — the good work that they do. I would remind the member that when she refers to the corrections report, that was in fact the subject of the Auditor General's report and the conclusion was that the new standard, the new bar, that government had set for itself in the *Corrections Act* for several locations during that specific period in 2012 had not been meeting the standards set out in the *Corrections Act* and we immediately set out to address those issues. Contrary to the member's assertion, we are making good progress on implementing all of the recommendations made by the

Auditor General in the Auditor General's report on corrections.

I would remind the member that the Auditor General in fact commended government in some areas, including effectively giving government a gold star for the construction and management of the construction of the new facility. I would remind the member of a number of the areas we've done: we've increased and strengthened correctional programming; we increased legal aid funding last year; and I would remind the member that once again this year there is another increase to the Human Rights Commission's budget that is contained within the 2016-17 mains, which the member I'm sure will vote against.

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

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

#### MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

##### Motion No. 1196

**Clerk:** Motion No. 1196, standing in the name of Mr. Elias.

**Speaker:** It is moved by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to work with Northwestel, the RCMP, municipalities and other stakeholders to expand 911 service to all Yukon communities by the end of July 2016.

**Mr. Elias:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 1196.

The expansion of 911 service to all Yukon communities has been a very important goal of this government and I am pleased to say, Madam Speaker, that we are on track to achieve this goal. We are working closely with our partners, Northwestel, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, as well as consulting with municipalities, the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs and the Association of Yukon Communities to make basic 911 a reality by the end of the summer of 2016.

Once in place, Yukoners and visitors across the territory will be able to dial the same easy-to-remember emergency number used across North America. The current seven-digit emergency number service in each community will remain in place once basic 911 becomes available. This transition will give Yukoners time to get used to the new service in the months ahead.

Madam Speaker, there have been a number of significant milestones throughout the course of our efforts to expand 911 service across the territory. Just this month, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, approved the territory-wide 911. This means that we now have the necessary approvals to make 911 service a reality across our territory.

Another important milestone and significant undertaking was the successful move and expansion of the 911 call-taking centre. The 911 call-taking centre and police dispatch service moved from the RCMP headquarters in Whitehorse to the emergency response centre communications suite, which was specifically designed for the Yukon-wide expansion of service. The Yukon government committed more than \$1 million in 2015-16 to support the move, which included the hiring and training of additional 911 call centre staff. The RCMP has managed the 911 call-taking centre since basic 911 first came to the Whitehorse area in 1995. This arrangement will continue as basic 911 extends into rural Yukon. The RCMP call-taking centre has been operating out of the emergency response centre since February 2016 and is providing an exceptional level of service.

In addition to the move of the 911 call centre, there have been many other significant steps taken to date as we prepare for the rollout of 911. Some examples include updated rural emergency service response maps, which have been delivered to response agencies and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police dispatch to support 911. Community Services has developed a communications plan, which will be rolled out progressively over the summer and technical and operational testing of the upcoming 911 service is currently underway. Community Services is engaged in active communications with the management of all stakeholder groups and I thank members of the department for their efforts to date.

As the great work continues among all partners of this initiative, Madam Speaker, I would like to take some time to provide some context. Across Yukon, there are approximately 140 active Yukon emergency services volunteers in 15 communities; 225 volunteer firefighters under 16 distinct fire chiefs in unincorporated communities; and more than 100 search and rescue volunteers in seven communities. This is in addition to the RCMP officers operating in communities across the territory, community nurses and the many members of the various municipal fire departments.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that Yukon's emergency service personnel are highly trained professionals operating within a complex system. The move to 911 service across the territory will be an important step in coordinating all of these professionals and ensuring that all Yukoners and visitors will have direct and easy access to an emergency response when required.

To provide more background, in 2015, Yukon Emergency Medical Services received 6,631 ground calls and 809 medevac calls. The Fire Marshal's Office received 692 calls and Wildland Fire Management had one of the most active spring fire seasons on record in May 2015 with 94 fires. This is in addition to the calls received by the RCMP and the municipal fire departments across the territory.

These numbers speak to the complexity of our emergency response system and to the importance of ensuring a streamlined approach to receiving calls and providing the necessary response in a coordinated and managed approach. As more and more visitors come to the territory in the years ahead, as our communities grow, and as we continue to

develop economically, having access to emergency services by simply dialing three digits becomes increasingly important.

I am pleased to speak to this motion as it underscores the importance of expanding 911 service across our great territory. This motion also serves a great example of multiple organizations working together to achieve a common goal that will ultimately better serve the public. I look forward to the Government of Yukon continuing to work with Northwestel, the RCMP and other stakeholders to expand 911 service to all Yukon communities. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Stick:** Thank you, Madam Speaker and I thank the colleague for this motion. I am going to speak on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition and we will be supporting this motion.

For a long time most Yukon communities did not have access to 911 coverage, but would have to use designated phone numbers for emergency services and those would vary from community to community. It's a much-needed safety service in Yukon communities. The 911 service will provide residents with an easier, more centralized number, but it also provides huge benefits to those Yukoners who travel to work in different communities and especially for our tourists who travel throughout the Yukon. Having a simple three digit 911 that most come to expect throughout Canada and North America — I would suggest this is a good move.

Another aspect of 911 is that it's simple and for many people a natural instinct in a time of emergency. Even a person living in a community where it has not been available knows what 911 means — even children. They see it on TV; it's a part of our culture so it shouldn't be a hard shift to know that once it is available, it is what they can use.

The Yukon is scheduled to complete the expansion of the basic 911 to rural Yukon by this summer. We're pleased to see that getting the CRTC approval has gone ahead, but we're really happy to see this program rolled out.

This, along with comprehensive civic addressing, will help give rural Yukoners better access to emergency services. I would just mention that we need to see civic addressing continue to roll out throughout the whole Yukon. It's important that emergency responders know exactly where they are heading.

The Yukon NDP has been advocating for this service for a number of years. While it has taken some time, we are happy that it has rolled out — in particular, in the Mount Lorne and Southern Lakes areas, where my colleague from Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes has been advocating for that civic addressing.

Madam Speaker, basic 911 service for all of Yukon is something that everyone can get behind, and the Yukon NDP Official Opposition will be supporting this motion.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I first off want to thank my colleague for bringing forth this important motion for debate this afternoon. It's great to hear that the members of the Official Opposition will be also supporting this important motion. The motion speaks to a number of different efforts over the years

that have occurred in support of strengthening emergency response. This is but one initiative that has been at play over the last number of years — since 2011.

One only has to take a look at investments over the past four and a half years through the Department of Community Services and other departments — Justice and so forth — in terms of new investments that speak to improved emergency response, whether that's in the structural fire or Wildland Fire Management, or whether that's Search and Rescue, Emergency Medical Services or emergency services overall. We have made great strides over the years, and expanding 911 is another important initiative that supports having readily available access to that three-digit number — 911 — that has become universally acknowledged by locals and by the territorial residents, but also our visiting population coming here from all over the world, travelling our networks and so forth.

For the last several years, as the MLA for Whitehorse West, I have worked on a number of different fronts to advance the vision that is now the new emergency response centre. The emergency response centre is designed to better serve our growing community by ensuring that emergency medical service response times are among the best in Canada.

Following a number of years of extensive planning and construction, I was pleased to be able to help officially open that facility — with the Minister of Community Services as well as our own Premier — a couple of years ago. Within that centre are housed Whitehorse's main ambulance station and the Yukon Emergency Medical Services corporate offices.

It has the capacity to accommodate six emergency vehicles. As well, it offers invaluable training and conference space for our EMS staff and volunteers alike. The centre was also designed to facilitate 911 call-taking and dispatch. In fact, it has been something that we have been working on alongside the RCMP over the last number of years. In fact, I was really pleased to be able to join the Minister of Justice along with other representatives from the Government of Yukon in unveiling the new 911 call centre situated on the top level of the new emergency response centre.

It is a purpose-built communications suite, and we were really pleased to identify just about \$1 million in the territorial budget of last year — 2015-16 — to support the move, including the hiring and training of additional 911 operators to handle the planned expansion of the 911 service to rural Yukon.

I know that since the centre opened, our service personnel have been very busy in terms of responding to well over 3,500 calls from the new station. We know that the call volume is expected to continue to increase, especially as we see our population continue to increase in the territory. Of course, where it is situated — right next to our protective services complex and just northwest of the Alaska Highway at the Hamilton Boulevard intersection — serves to be kind of the new centre of the city itself, especially with the growth in new subdivisions like Whistle Bend and other subdivisions on the periphery of the community itself.

It's great to see that the partnership with the RCMP was born and that we now have active operators in the centre. It is great further integration of emergency response in our territory and, later on this summer, we will see the full expansion of 911 into our communities. It is something that we feel will certainly add to the complement of services.

I have always said that it is one thing to be able to push a button and to be able to readily locate someone on the other end, but it's also important to continue to invest in the services for those who are actually receiving those calls so that there are readily available responses, whether it is through the municipalities themselves or through our communities that we work with on a daily basis.

I can't say enough about our Yukon fire services and all of our municipal structural fire teams on the ground. We have been investing over the years — as one example — in structural fire, one of which was a new agreement that we were able to strike in addition to the new comprehensive municipal grant with each of our communities — each of our municipalities.

We identified an additional amount of money that would ensure that every municipality received an allotment per year in support of structural fire — their municipal fire services. It's something that is new and something that was very much raised as a priority among our municipal governments and something that we're very happy to work with — those municipal fire teams.

Likewise, the new investment — the historic, record-level investment — in Yukon's Fire Marshal's Office, for example, has really enabled us to increase or enhance our emergency response at the community level. As well, with new investments in not only equipment but also investment in new fire stations — compiled or being able to also convene alongside with Search and Rescue and EMS stations as well — we're really pleased to see that continue to roll out in our communities and likewise in training. We've been able to see additional efforts being invested through the Fire Marshal's Office through the hiring of additional deputy fire marshals as well. The very important, invaluable service that each of these individuals provides and the outreach that these positions provide in support of our communities are very important as well. We're very blessed to have the degree of expertise that we have here in the territory — working alongside our municipalities and our unincorporated communities as well.

Likewise, investments in EMS — I just referenced the new emergency response centre. Of course, that's in addition to the new ambulance station that we just opened up at the Whitehorse General Hospital, replacing the one that has come down as a result of the expansion of the Whitehorse General Hospital itself. All of these new investments are very important to be able to help respond to those calls placed to 911. Certainly dispatch and the call centre itself are key to all of this.

Madam Speaker, I could go on at great length but I would like to again thank my colleague, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, for speaking to this important motion. I think it is very timely. We are certainly reminded of the importance of

being ready and able to assist when emergencies do come our way.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank each of our emergency responders on the ground — whether they're working in EMS or through Search and Rescue or through structural fire, Wildland Fire Management, EMO — and all of our communities — the volunteer fire service, our Yukon municipal fire departments as well — for all of the work that they do on a daily basis, 365 days a year, and how our government has been very proud and very open to working alongside each of those various teams throughout the territory.

It is those efforts that are really strengthening our ability to respond in those various emergencies — whether it be fire, flooding or medical emergency. I think that's why exercises like Operation Nanook are so critical to be able to test our emergency response capabilities and capacities, as well as be able to respond to whatever may come our way.

The exercise that transpired in 2013 did give us that ability to work alongside municipalities, organizations, the Rangers and many different entities and all levels and orders of government throughout the territory to test our emergency capabilities. By all accounts, it was a significant exercise. We look forward to Operation Nanook coming up later on this summer, in August, and working with the Canadian Armed Forces once again and being able to further integrate and strengthen those emergency services on behalf of our citizens — by building capacity within our government, by being able to strengthen those relationships and partnerships between those different agencies, being able to recognize who to call and when to call, and how to actually trigger all of those different responses when need be.

We're constantly reminded of emergencies, such as what just transpired with the tragic fires that transcended upon Fort McMurray, and how we can never be too ready — we can never be ready enough.

Again, Madam Speaker, I do commend this motion to the Assembly. I would like to thank my colleague again for bringing attention to this and how we, as Yukoners, can do our part as individuals — but also working within the government to further strengthen our role in meeting emergency needs.

**Mr. Silver:** I am happy to speak today to Motion No. 1196 regarding the expansion of 911 services to all Yukon communities. As you know, Madam Speaker, this has been on the government's table for years now. I'm happy to see a tentative date of July 2016. I will be very pleased when all Yukon communities have access to this important service.

911 provides locals and tourists with a consistency all across North America. Schoolchildren are taught at a very young age about 911 — in the home and also in the school. It's now a time for Yukon to join the rest of North America and implement the widely known emergency service of 911.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would like to give a shout-out and I would like to thank Jim Regimbal, Dawson City fire chief, for bringing this issue to the government's attention. It was his lead in his role as president of the Association of

Yukon Fire Chiefs that has actually allowed this effort to be put forth in motion.

I will be voting in favour of this motion.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** I would like to begin by thanking the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this motion forward. It is a pleasure for me to speak to it and to provide some information, context and discussion to this motion. I know that some members have already provided some excellent comments with regard to this issue, and I will try my best to avoid repetition.

I thought it would be helpful to provide some context from my perspective as Minister of Community Services to this debate.

Decisions like this can sometimes seem abstract to us in the Legislature, and sometimes these types of issues can be considered on paper but the real-world implications of these types of issues are sometimes forgotten. I thought it was worth sharing a very brief story.

In April 2016, next door to us in Yellowknife, Fitzgerald Carpeting caught fire. Fitzgerald Carpeting has been a staple of the business community in Yellowknife for just about 35 years now. The person who discovered the fire was an employee there. That person immediately grabbed a fire extinguisher and tried to extinguish the fire manually. That failed, and so the individual picked up the phone and called 911. As members are probably aware, the other two territories do not have 911 service — even in Yellowknife, the capital city — and so the person responding to that fire, or finding that fire, received no response or dial tone. Nothing happened on the other end of that phone when he dialed 911.

Not knowing what to do next, the individual hopped in his car and drove down to the fire station to try to verbally alert the fire responders at the fire hall. He was successful in that endeavour, and he and the fire truck returned to Fitzgerald Carpeting to find it thoroughly engulfed and impossible to extinguish. Fitzgerald Carpeting — for lack of a more nuanced term — burned essentially to the ground.

Madam Speaker, what is certainly evident in that particular case, in that particular story, is something that could happen in Yukon today, and that reality was what prompted the Yukon government to take this action — to expand 911 to the entire territory, or to all Yukon communities.

It has been something that we have done, in collaboration with a number of other organizations — and I will get to those in a few minutes — but I think the point is simply that these types of things can happen. It is an unfortunate reality that they do happen in some places, and we need to do our best to ensure that Yukoners have access to adequate and responsive emergency services.

This work began a number of years ago, but one of the more important steps was taken last year with the tabling of the 2015-16 budget. The 2015-16 budget included approximately \$1 million for laying the groundwork for the expansion of the 911 service here in the Yukon. That \$1 million was broken down into two constituent components, each of which is very important.

First of all, there was \$334,000 budgeted to move the current 911 call centre from its previous location, at RCMP headquarters on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue here in Whitehorse, up the hill to the new emergency response centre on Two Mile Hill. That emergency response centre, of course, is a modern facility designed for this specific purpose, and the investment provided in last year's budget also included some necessary communications and support equipment, which outfitted the new emergency response centre. The additional \$733,000 budgeted in the 2015-16 budget was to support the hiring and training of additional 911 call centre staff.

It may come as a surprise to some, but in expanding 911 to the entire territory — that is a significant amount of extra work for those answering those calls at the 911 call centre. The RCMP, which runs the call centre on behalf of Yukon government, was in a position where they needed to hire additional individuals to answer those calls at the call centre at the new ERC. That \$733,000 identified in the 2015-16 budget was specifically for that — to hire new operators for the 911 call centre and to get them trained to the adequate level to work here in Whitehorse.

I'm given to understand, through conversations with citizens throughout the territory who are either involved in the RCMP or who are members of the RCMP, that it is actually a fairly difficult thing in Canada to hire these individuals and there is a bit of a strong demand for them. I understand that it did take a little bit of effort from the RCMP to hire the necessary operators to fill these positions, but I'm sure that is well underway or completed by the RCMP.

The investments made last year in the move of the ERC, the outfitting of the ERC with new modern communications equipment and support equipment, and the commensurate increase to hire and train staff for the RCMP to operate the 911 call centre, occurred last year. Significant work has occurred since then.

I did want to take a moment though, Madam Speaker, to reflect on some of the words put forward by former Chief Superintendent Peter Clark, who was the commanding officer for the RCMP here in the Yukon. Last year, in announcing that move, he said — and I quote: “The current integration of RCMP dispatch and the 9-1-1 Public Service Answering Point improves community safety through dissemination of real-time information and the coordination of medical, fire and police responders.” He added that: “The RCMP continues to collaborate with Government of Yukon and stakeholders and looks forward to expanding the 9-1-1 service to all Yukon communities. Relocating our current call centre to the emergency response centre and growing the number of dispatchers allows us to keep in step with the planned expansion of the 9-1-1 service.”

As I noted, the RCMP is responsible for that hiring process and training process, and we look forward to them completing it before the launch date of the expanded 911 service in Yukon.

I've had some questions from individuals throughout the communities about this in the past number of months, both from municipal mayors and council, as well as individuals

who stop me in the street or ask at a public meeting — say, in communities — about this, and I wanted to provide a little bit of information for folks.

The important thing to note is that the downstream dispatching of emergency services won't change with this expansion of 911. The way that fire, EMS and other emergency services are dispatched in the community won't actually change, but what will change is the availability of accessing those services by calling 911.

It was put to me that some community members were quite happy with their current numbers and that they don't see a reason to change them, but I think it's worth noting essentially the target group that we seek to provide the service to.

First of all, it's very clear that this will be a beneficial service to tourists who are visiting the territory, who won't be familiar with local emergency numbers and who may be simply travelling through town on a brief or lengthy visit to Yukon — so tourists who are unaware of our current emergency numbers will benefit from this. As well, there are of course visitors to communities, even from the Yukon. For instance, if somebody from Whitehorse travels to Faro, it's possible — indeed likely — that they may not know the emergency numbers in Faro, and having the ability to simply call 911 in the event of an emergency is something that will benefit even Yukoners who are travelling around the communities. Since each community — or most communities — have different emergency numbers, it's possible that we can be confused or forget which emergency numbers are relevant in any given community.

Then, of course, there is always the possibility that even an individual who was born and raised in a particular community and knows the numbers very well may find themselves in a traumatic situation or in a panic situation and blank on those numbers. It is in that situation that the significant amount of public awareness and the amount of effort that goes into ingraining into children, students and even adults that 911 is the number to call in the event of an emergency kicks in — so ensuring that individuals understand that, even in a panic, they may forget their own individual emergency numbers if they are faced with a traumatic situation, like their house burning down or a loved one facing a medical emergency — all of those things are possible — so that is where we believe the 911 option will certainly be of benefit.

It's worth noting, as well, that those individual community emergency lines will remain live, so anybody in a Yukon community who has, over the course of their lives, learned or memorized their own emergency contact numbers, will still be able to use those numbers. Those numbers will remain live and Yukoners will continue to have the opportunity to call those numbers when they are in those respective communities to access services. The 911 is simply an additional catch-all option that will improve the availability of emergency services to Yukoners and visitors alike.

Another aspect to that is to do with civic addressing. I know that all Yukon municipalities have endeavoured to get

civic addressing underway and, in some cases, completed. I know that in many unincorporated communities that are covered by LACs we have work underway and that, in the course of the next few years, we will continue to expand civic addressing beyond even those areas that are covered by LACs. That will all take some time and some more effort, but all of this is linked, and that work will continue.

If I can turn now to the work that has been done since last year since we made this initial announcement early last year that we would move to this full-on 911 throughout the territory, a number of milestones have been achieved on this front. The first that has occurred was the formal and complete move of the 911 call centre to the new ERC. That has been completed now, and when individuals in Whitehorse call 911 today, those calls go to the new dispatch call centre on Two Mile Hill at the emergency response centre.

My understanding is that that move happened seamlessly and that there was no interruption in 911 service as a result of that move occurring between the RCMP headquarters here on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the new ERC up on Two Mile Hill. I would like to commend those who did that work for providing uninterrupted 911 service during that move.

As well, Madam Speaker, a significant milestone was also achieved very recently — a matter of weeks ago — in that the CRTC has approved the application by Northwestel for this expansion. As members and others may be aware, Northwestel and the Yukon government have a service agreement in place. As a result of the work underway to expand this 911 service, we agreed to update our service agreement. The previous service agreement between Northwestel and the Yukon government had been in place since 1995 and, in some senses, was a bit dated. This proved an excellent opportunity for us to update that service agreement and incorporate the changes necessary to allow for the expansion of the 911 service. Following that negotiation and completion of the new service agreement, Northwestel filed a tariff application to the CRTC and, as I noted earlier, it was approved just a few weeks ago.

With the move of the dispatch centre from downtown to the new ERC and the approval of the CRTC of Northwestel's application, two major milestones have been achieved and we are now at the stage where we are simply testing the system and ensuring that it's working adequately for the midsummer launch that we've planned. As we committed last year, we had hoped to have this service in place by the end of July of this summer and, by all accounts, barring any sort of unforeseen circumstances, we will be able to achieve that.

Madam Speaker, the work by Northwestel, the work by the RCMP and, I should note, Shared Services Canada, as well as the folks in the various Yukon government departments that have done this work, certainly deserve thanks and appreciation.

I should also note that throughout the entire process, the Association of Yukon Communities and the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs have been involved and active in this endeavour. I would like to take a moment to thank them for their participation and support as well. The president of the

Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs, Jim Regimbal, last year was included in the announcement and has been involved in the working group committee that has done this work over the last year, and I would like to add my thanks to those that have been provided to him already by other members. As well, I wanted to thank the former president of the Association of Yukon Communities, Wayne Potoroka, who was certainly involved in this process through his role as president of the AYC. I would note that the AYC was involved in the entire process as well.

Madam Speaker, I realize my time is concluding, but I will conclude by again thanking all of those involved for the work done to date to expand this service to all Yukon communities. I think it's a positive step forward for the emergency services here in the territory. We saw only a few months ago next door in Yellowknife the possible implications of this type of decision. It's my hope, Madam Speaker, that this expansion of 911 service will prevent those types of accidents from occurring and prevent those types of tragedies from occurring here in the territory. Like I said, it's my hope that we remain on track and are able to deliver this expansion of 911 to all Yukon communities by the summer.

Madam Speaker, with that, I'll conclude my remarks. I thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this motion forward and for the comments by my colleagues in the Legislature so far. I look forward to hearing from other members of the House as we continue debate on this motion. Hopefully we'll indeed see this motion passed later today unanimously.

**Mr. Laxton:** I too will be lending my support to this motion. I thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing it forward. I will not be repeating the words of my colleagues, as they have very well expressed the importance of the 911 service and I don't see the need for me to restate all of their comments.

I did have one concern. The member mentioned in his opening statement that it would be by the end of July 2016, but in his opening comments, he said by the end of summer. My almanac still says that the end of July is the middle of summer. So I was a bit concerned, but that concern has been alleviated by the Minister of Community Services' comments that he was very confident that the service will be in place by the end of July.

I was pleased to hear that the minister says that the civic addressing is progressing well, but I would also like to, if it's possible, hear about some updated mapping as well as real-time tracking of emergency vehicles. I know that when the concept of the expanded 911 service was being looked at many years ago, there were some concerns about the existing mapping deficiencies and the capability of doing real-time vehicle monitoring. That is something to look forward to down the line, as well as the future expansion of the 911 service to actually include 911 service along our highways. The whole concept of 911 service and the expansion is a huge project, and bringing it into the communities is certainly a massive step forward for the Yukon, and I commend the

government for their efforts, as well as everybody who has worked on this project over the many years.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** It's a pleasure to rise here in support of this motion. I would like to first of all thank the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin for bringing this motion forward here for debate today. I would also next like to thank the many people who have worked on the 911 project for their work on this initiative, and that includes the staff of Community Services, as well as the Department of Justice and other departments at certain times. It also includes some staff who have retired from those departments, and I would like to thank current and former staff of both departments for their many hours of work on this project. I echo the comments of my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, in thanking the support of partners, including the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs and the Association of Yukon Communities, as well as individual municipalities that have participated in discussions about the expansion of 911.

I would first of all like to take the opportunity to remind members that this is building on a record of investments in initiatives that this government has undertaken. That includes the significant investments that we have made in fire trucks and ambulances. One of the things that struck me a number of years ago — when I was, at the time, the Minister of Health and Social Services — in travelling to communities, was the condition of some of the ambulances that we had in rural communities. There were mechanical problems at times — the age of vehicles — because of the lack of investment of previous governments that had not kept pace with even ensuring that the equipment was capable of responding, let alone purchasing newer and more modern equipment that was more capable of performing the service.

That is something that we have addressed, not only in previous mandates, but during this mandate there has been an unprecedented investment in the purchase of new ambulances and new fire trucks. As the Minister of Community Services and I announced earlier this month, the investments contained in this year's budget alone are over half a million dollars — \$555,000 in the 2016-17 budget — to support public safety by investing in more new emergency response vehicles. The investment in modernizing the Yukon's emergency services through new vehicles and equipment improves our capacity and, by purchasing more modern, state-of-the-art vehicles, it allows both the Emergency Medical Services staff and volunteers and the firefighters to be able to more effectively and efficiently perform the work that is necessary in emergency situations.

With the investment contained in this year's budget, the Yukon government will have invested \$4.8 million in purchasing eight new ambulances and 12 new fire vehicles since 2011 alone. Those eight new ambulances are part of the current fleet of 23 vehicles and, as members who have seen the new vehicles will be aware, the new style of ambulance that has been purchased is more capable than the ones they replace, including things such as scene lighting and the iPads that are set up in each of the ambulances, which allow the



paramedics and volunteer first responders to be able to access information quickly, right at their fingertips, while travelling to and while at the scene. Through these and a number of other elements on those vehicles, they are more capable vehicles than the ones that they are replacing.

As well, in the area of fire trucks, some of the vehicles include the brand-new pumper tanker models, which replace what previously — in Yukon rural fire halls — would be simply a water tanker that had no capability other than transporting water. With the pumper tankers that have been provided to rural fire halls — including the two in my riding, Hootalinqua and Ibex Valley — along with other fire departments, including Tagish, Golden Horn and, another — I am forgetting which one it went to at the moment — these investments in these pumper tankers do allow the firefighters in responding to a fire, to get on to scene quickly and, in comparison to previously, where they had to arrive at a scene, hook up hoses, possibly hook up pumps and then get into action, the new pumper tankers are actually the quickest vehicles in the fleet in getting into action on a fire. They allow them to pump and roll with the pumper turret, and they can immediately — upon reaching the location of a fire — begin spraying, even before the vehicle has stopped and, if necessary — for example, if there were a wildfire next to a highway — it would allow them to pump and roll along a section of road as well.

I think I missed mentioning the scene lighting that is on the ambulances, as well as the improved scene lighting that is on all of the pumper tankers and the new pumper trucks that have been purchased for several Yukon fire departments.

In addition to these unprecedented investments in equipment, we have increased the operational budget for both Yukon Emergency Medical Services and the Fire Marshal's Office, and this is allowing those offices — as well as the paid staff and volunteers across the territory — to be able to do more in keeping communities safe, whether it be a medical emergency or a fire-related emergency.

This move toward 911 is supported, in part — as a couple of my colleagues I mentioned — with the new 911 call centre and public safety answering point, which was completed and began taking 911 calls earlier this year. This new and larger facility continues to be operated by the RCMP and is an important step in moving to Yukon-wide basic 911 service.

The call centre is equipped with the necessary communications and support equipment for the expansion of basic 911 service Yukon-wide, which is planned for summer 2016. The Yukon government invested \$334,000 to move and equip the new call centre and is providing funding to support hiring and training of additional RCMP officers to meet the increased volume of 911 calls when service is expanded to all Yukon communities later this year.

I would also like to note that, as members may be aware, this year's budget includes, in addition to the five operator positions funded at the 911 call centre, additional funding for the RCMP that is for four constable positions and one clerk position out of the Whitehorse detachment, so we are also strengthening the response capacity in acknowledgement of

pressures on the RCMP and in partnership with them in continuing to strengthen all areas of our response system, whether police, fire or ambulance.

Additional investments that I'm proud that we have made in enhancing our emergency response capacity, in addition to the investments in fire trucks that I mentioned, include investments in equipment replacement as well as enhancing the ability for fire departments to refill fire trucks, which is something that I heard from constituents as a priority in the last election. In response to that, I'm pleased that the Yukon government has supported the expansion of the Ibex Valley fire hall to add two water storage tanks that have increased the water capacity at the fire hall from roughly 1,000 gallons to over 6,000 gallons.

As well, the Deep Creek/Grizzly Valley community well project was changed to add more water refill capacity at the site as well as to add the linkage for fire trucks to hook up and refill with water at that facility. That is because, prior to that point, during summer months, they could easily get water in streams and creeks as well as lakes, but in winter months, there were situations — including one fire where a house was fully consumed in my riding a few years ago — when, to refill fire trucks, they were having to travel into town across the bridge and to the City of Whitehorse's refill station at the top of Two Mile Hill.

By making investments of this type as well as, I believe — investments have improved the ability for the Tagish Fire Department to refill their trucks. Those types of investments are another part of how we're supporting our fellow Yukon citizens who provide emergency response services and give of their time either as full-time staff or as volunteer firefighters and volunteer emergency medical services attendants.

In addition to the 911 call centre that was equipped with more modern equipment and opened this year, we opened as well this year the new ambulance station on-site at the Whitehorse General Hospital campus. That new facility includes a new emergency response coordination centre, which is currently the Emergency Medical Services dispatch centre. In addition to the new ambulance station there, which houses the two ambulance crews, the Yukon emergency response centre is equipped with upgraded communications equipment to dispatch ambulances within the Whitehorse service area and coordinate medevac and patient transfers for the territory.

It was also deliberately and specifically designed by staff to have the capacity to take on additional duties, if required, to provide support for dispatch in rural areas where dispatch is currently handled locally. Although at this time there is no plan to change that structure, they deliberately provided the ability to provide coordination if required at a future date to support either a larger scale operation, such as an emergency event, or to provide support for emergency medical services, fire departments and so on in rural parts of the territory, if it became required at some point in the future.

The new ambulance station has two ambulance bays, improved storage and locker facility, flexible office space, a staff lounge and kitchen. I would like to once again thank

everyone involved in the design and construction of this facility for their work and the fact that the new ambulance station was completed on time and on budget. Additionally, some of the new equipment, which has been purchased, includes a device referred to as an epoc<sup>R</sup>, which allows paramedics to do blood tests on-scene or in the air, instead of at the hospital as was previously the case. This is a device that I believe costs roughly \$5,000 per unit, but helps provide faster and more frequent information to aid with on-scene health care decisions by paramedics as well as in-the-air decisions by critical-care paramedics as well as flight nurses.

Again, through investments of this type, we are continuing to strengthen the Yukon's emergency response capacity and continue to purchase better equipment that helps our front-line first responders do more and be able to better care for patients, better respond to fires and, in the case of police, better respond to all of the many types of calls that police receive.

I should note that 911 is not the first investment that has been made by government in improving access to health care information and access to services for the Yukon, we also — several years ago, during my time as Minister of Health and Social Services — brought in the 811 Yukon HealthLine — which I know that I have heard from many Yukoners in my riding and across the territory that has helped them make health care decisions for their family and, in the case of one constituent, had they not called 811, they probably would not have gone to the hospital for what turned out to be a life-threatening situation that he was facing.

It is through investments of this type that we help to improve our health care system and emergency response centre. I would like to as well note that other investments that have been made include the bariatric lift — the Minister of Community Services announced its purchase — which helps transport patients of higher weight on medevac flights.

The other point I meant to mention is that, in addition to the new ambulance centre on the Whitehorse General Hospital campus, we had also in the last few years opened the new emergency response centre at the top of Two Mile Hill, which is Whitehorse's second ambulance station. It is also the site of the new 911 call centre. Through that, it helps provide a second and more central location for ambulance response. In referring to both the 911 call centre and the new EMS dispatch centre, I should note that communications may sound like a bit of an intangible thing but, as you may be aware, Madam Speaker, in an emergency event, minutes can count. It can be a very critical factor, particularly for events such as a heart attack or stroke or for events where somebody's life is threatened due to an accident. That is why we, in this House, will probably never know when it has made the critical difference in improving the response to a life-threatening situation for Yukon citizens or Yukon families. There is no doubt in my mind that through these investments, at some point in time, the improved response times and strengthened response capacity that has provided for things, including the expansion of 911 that helps Yukoners avoid delay in looking up or trying to figure out a number when dealing with an

emergency health situation in Yukon communities — the provision of 911 service territory-wide, just like the other investments of which I spoke, will probably at some point in time save someone's life, save someone's house or allow police response in an emergency situation to be quicker than would have otherwise been possible — and avoid a situation escalating to a more problematic state.

Once again, in wrapping up my remarks on this, I would like to again sincerely thank all of the staff of the Department of Community Services, the Department of Justice as well as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for their good work. I would like to thank, in all of those cases, both current members and members who have moved on from positions where they were at one point working on the 911 call centre project for their many hours of work and for moving this project along to the point where we look forward to being able to announce, later this year, the expansion of territory-wide 911 service to all Yukon communities.

In concluding my remarks, the one thing I would just remind people is that, even with the expansion of 911, there is a possibility, if you have an out-of-territory cellphone or a satellite phone, that dialing 911 may go somewhere other than the Yukon call centre. That's something to be aware of — especially for those who may have a cellphone from Alberta or another jurisdiction — before you get into an emergency situation.

With that, Madam Speaker, I will commend this motion to the House.

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** I do want to thank Mr. Elias for bringing this motion forward. I think it is very important and I do want to speak a little bit to this with more of a rural perspective than some of the other perspectives — in that I'm from out of town.

We know that the 911 service to all communities has been very important to this government. I know it has been important to the RCMP and our municipalities, and that's why we work closely with Northwestel and the RCMP and work with our municipalities, the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs and, of course, the Association of Yukon Communities. Doing the good due diligence that the government does — consulting and working with them. The members opposite sometimes bring up the fact that — “Just go out and do it.” We believe that true consultation and meaningful consultation is what governments should do, and this is another good example of it and making sure that we hear from everyone and we get it right.

I think the thing for rural Yukon is that — we have a few numbers in our municipalities. We have our fire number, we have our nursing station number, and we have our police number. They are different numbers, and there are seven digits or maybe an area code, depending on what you're using. So having three easy digits — especially for those Yukoners from out of town and visitors. I would probably gather that there are quite a few long-time Yukoners who live in Whitehorse, have always lived in Whitehorse and maybe don't even know what their numbers are, so I think having

that 911 available is going to make it easy for some of the locals to transition. For those tourists and those people who are out in rural Yukon — out at a campground who may come across an issue or find a forest fire and don't know the fire line or maybe don't know the CO services tips line — there's a simple number for them.

The other thing that's important to remember is that, before a guy can do something like that, the CRTC is an important body that needs to approve these things. I'm glad that went well and that it's done. Now the approvals are done and we can make this a reality in Yukon.

The 911 call centre and the police dispatch service are going to be moving from the RCMP headquarters in Whitehorse to the emergency response centre, which is designed for this. I think that's going to alleviate a bit of the pressure at the RCMP headquarters and it's a good expansion of this service.

I'll just speak to the fact about the rural emergency service response maps and how important they are to the communities and municipalities, and having some of the work done at Community Services — moving forward with civic addressing. I think that's going to be important because municipalities are going to take part in this and we'll actually have some numbers on some houses on some streets. When I was talking to constituents at the Takhini subdivision, they informed me that there are three Takhini subdivisions, so when you get that call — I think there is probably a Dry Creek on just about every stretch of highway. Having these maps and civic addressing is going to be really important as we see this roll out into the future.

I just wanted to highlight a little bit about our volunteers in our community. There are approximately 140 active Yukon emergency services volunteers in our 15 different communities. We have over 225 volunteer firefighters, we have 16 district fire chiefs, and we have many search and rescue — I think around 100 search and rescue volunteers in seven different communities. They volunteer their time. A lot of them have other jobs. I was a volunteer in my community for years and I still am. I just know how important it is to have that volunteerism that we have in our communities. I'm pretty proud of that in our communities. I think that's the way for our communities to be successful and for our communities to stick together and be able to help each other. I think that when you volunteer in your community, as time goes on, you gain knowledge of some of the issues in your community and you gain knowledge of some of the people in your community and some of the stuff going on so that when you do get that call, you're a little bit more up to date.

This also just goes into helping our RCMP in rural Yukon. As a Canadian Ranger, every time we get a new corporal in our community I go down with my list of my Rangers who live in seven different communities — little communities from Champagne to Klukshu — some of them live in Whitehorse, some of them live at Canyon Creek. I take the list down to them and I say, "Hey, here is where everybody lives." If you happen to be looking for a blue van with somebody and if you give one of these guys a call at

Champagne or whatever, they will probably tell you if they saw it. That's the great thing about having volunteers in the community. The RCMP can utilize them in rural Yukon. It bodes well with everybody assisting everybody. You just have to look at the calls that we get to the Emergency Medical Services, the calls to the Fire Marshal's Office and Wildland Fire Management.

It's good to see some rain here. When I left Haines Junction this morning, it was raining. I was just glad to see that, because we just have to look to our neighbours to the south in Alberta to see what happened when it came to forest fires, and I think it's important that we have this.

Our emergency response system is important. I like it because it's more of a streamlined approach to receiving calls. It's providing that necessary response in coordinating and managing an approach toward that.

In conclusion, I think that this is going to be good for rural Yukon. I know I'll be updating Yukoners this summer when I'm out in the different communities — whether it is Beaver Creek or Destruction Bay — and I can probably be quite confident that not many of my constituents are listening right now so they will probably need to be updated. I know there is going to be a great PR moving forward with this from the applicable departments, but I will be letting my constituents know — as I imagine you will, Madam Speaker, in your riding — of this good thing that this Yukon Party government has come forward with.

I just want to thank my fellow colleague for bringing this motion forward, and I do want to thank the individual departments for putting the time and effort into working on this — and the individual communities, the RCMP. I think this is bringing the Yukon into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Speaker:** If the member now speaks, he will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Mr. Elias:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to thank all of the members who spoke in favour of this motion, and I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of those Yukoners who had a hand in this effort in ensuring access to 911 services across our territory.

Madam Speaker, thinking about my community of Old Crow, when I was growing up as a youngster, running around the trails and the streets of Old Crow, our community emergency notification was a large community bell. Whether there was a fire, or if a baby was being born or people had to gather at the community hall, the chief or one of the councillors — or someone who had access to the bell — would ring the bell, and everybody would stop what they were doing and gather and find out what the situation was. Then, after that, our community of Old Crow had an old World War II air raid siren, with pole stations across the community. So if there was an emergency or if something were to happen, someone would pull the pole station. Then we graduated to the phone systems, where we would phone either the nursing station or 966-2677, which was 966-COPS — and now we

have the emergency call line. For us to go, within basically 20 or 25 years, from a community air raid siren to being able to dial 911 is an incredible feat, especially in my rural community. Watching all of this progress — and I think this is just a wonderful initiative — is another significant and important milestone that has been achieved. It is just another success that has been added to the litany of wonderful things that have been completed over the course of this government's mandate.

I just want to thank, again, all of those Yukoners who had a hand in this and I look forward to seeing the full implementation of this program throughout our territory. I commend this motion to House and I thank all of the members who spoke in support of it. Thank you.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

### Bells

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** 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.

**Mr. Elias:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Agree.

**Ms. Hanson:** Agree.

**Ms. Stick:** Agree.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Mr. Laxton:** Agree.

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

**Speaker:** The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.  
*Motion No. 1196 agreed to*

## GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

### Motion No. 1209

**Clerk:** Motion No. 1209, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Cathers.

**Speaker:** It is moved by the Minister of Justice:

THAT this House urges the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to review the recent changes made to the auxiliary police program, including consulting with provinces and territories to ensure that any steps taken in the interest of volunteer safety also ensure that auxiliary members are able to continue their valuable work in supporting crime prevention, community safety and policing.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. In introducing this motion here today, first of all, I would like to briefly explain — for members who may not be familiar — that auxiliary constables are members of the public who volunteer their time to work with the RCMP and whose primary purpose is to participate in community policing services in aid of public safety and crime prevention. In the Yukon, the program falls under the *Auxiliary Police Act*, which was established in 1998. Those Yukoners who volunteer as auxiliary constables, when they are performing those duties, are also covered by the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board if an accident were to occur.

Under the supervision of an RCMP member, auxiliary constables participate in RCMP-supported community events and programs, which can range from crime prevention initiatives within schools, traffic control such as checkstops, foot and bicycle patrols, festivals, search and rescue, parades and other ceremonial events.

What this issue was prompted by is, in October, a series of events related to concerns about the safety of auxiliary police officers. In noting that, I would recognize that while the Yukon government has concerns with decisions made at the national level by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, we do appreciate the concern that prompted it. We understand that part of the rationale for change to the scope of duties to auxiliary constables was the potential for terrorist attacks focused on uniformed personnel. I do not wish to diminish the possibility of terrorist acts in Canada or the issue of uniformed personnel potentially being targeted by extremists; however, as I noted in my letter to Commissioner Paulson, the connection to the auxiliary program and the risks auxiliaries may face in attack during ride-along duties, in our view, is minimal and we also believe that the risk of an attack almost certainly diminishes in small or rural communities in the north as opposed to urban centres.

After the October 22 shooting of an unarmed uniformed member of the Canadian Forces, the RCMP Commissioner issued a reminder to all regular members and staff to be vigilant when in public, especially those in uniform, and that included auxiliary police officers.

Last year, the RCMP made the decision at a national level that, in order to ensure safety of volunteers, auxiliary constables working in uniform must be under the direct supervision of a regular member equipped with all the intervention tools and that armed regular member should be close enough in proximity to respond, should a threat arise. The shooting of an auxiliary RCMP constable, while on routine investigation in Alberta on January 17, 2015, raised questions about whether more should be done to protect the safety of such officers who are unarmed, but have the potential to be in high-risk situations. Following an internal review of the auxiliary program in 2015, recommendations were presented to the RCMP national Senior Executive Committee in January 2016. A number of recommendations were accepted by the RCMP national Senior Executive Committee, including the discontinuation of ride-alongs, firearms familiarization training, the creation of a national

activity matrix outlining the duties of auxiliary constables, the formation of a national training standard, update of the national policy and review of uniform options and the establishment of a comprehensive communications strategy in consultation with divisions and stakeholders. The recommendations that ride-alongs and firearms familiarization training be discontinued came into effect in late January 2016.

I want to emphasize the fact that the decision was made by the RCMP nationally and, prior to it, there was no direct consultation with provinces and territories. In follow-up to this, as I noted, I did write to RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson, expressing the government's concern with the changes and our opinion with the potential effect of the narrowed scope of duties. Our hope in bringing this motion forward here in the House today is that we will have the unanimous support of the Legislative Assembly to encourage the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to review the recent changes made to the auxiliary police program, specifically encouraging them to consult with provinces and territories and ensure that any steps taken in the interests of volunteer safety also ensure that auxiliary members are able to continue their valuable work in supporting crime prevention, community safety and policing.

While very specifically emphasizing that we do very much appreciate the sincere concern that prompted changes made by the RCMP to the policies around policing, we have — through a letter I wrote to Commissioner Paulson, as well as again here today — asked them to reconsider the changes and to consult with the provinces and the territories. We believe the net effect of those changes will have a negative impact on important programs, including the value that is provided by the RCMP in encouraging citizen involvement in policing and community safety. It does things in the territory, including improving safety at events such as the bike race between Haines, Alaska and Haines Junction and is also an important part of the RCMP's capacity to operate checkstop programs here in the territory.

I will quote a few excerpts from my letter to Commissioner Bob Paulson on March 30, 2016, and I would also note that letter was copied to the ministers of Justice for Nunavut and Northwest Territories as well as Yukon's Member of Parliament, Larry Bagnell, and Hon. Daniel Lang, senator for the Yukon, as well to then-Chief Superintendent Peter Clark, commanding officer of RCMP's M Division. I would like to acknowledge and thank Senator Lang for his work on the Justice committee in bringing these issues to Minister Goodale's attention and for following up and understanding the importance of this topic to the territory. I acknowledge his efforts on behalf of Yukon citizens in raising this issue.

To quote from my letter to Commissioner Paulson of March 30, 2016, re: revision to RCMP national policy in relation to the auxiliary policing program, I wrote: "I am writing to formally express the Government of Yukon's concern with respect to the Auxiliary Policing Program and recent revisions to RCMP national policies, specifically the

exclusion of ride-alongs with police members from the list of accepted duties.

"The Auxiliary Policing Program is governed by the *Auxiliary Police Act* in Yukon and is seen as an effective way of encouraging citizen involvement in policing and community safety.

"While the Auxiliary Policing Program was never intended to supplement core police resources, it has certainly served as a valuable bridge between the police and the community. I am compelled to state our strong concern that the changes made to the Auxiliary Policing Program could undermine this bridge between the police and the community.

"I understand that part of the rationale for changes to the scope of duties was the potential for terrorist attacks focused on uniformed personnel. I do not wish to diminish the possibility of terrorist acts in Canada, or the issue of uniformed personnel potentially being targeted by extremists. However, the connection to the auxiliary program and the risk that auxiliaries may face during ride-along duties is minimal. Further, the risk of such an attack almost certainly diminishes in smaller, rural and remote communities and in the North, as opposed to urban centres.

"There is a strong sense of volunteerism in the North and our communities rely on the contributions of neighbours to survive; many of the first responders in fire and emergency services in small communities are also volunteers. Indeed, the very same call for service to the RCMP may be the same situation those volunteers respond to as members of the Fire Department or Emergency Medical Services. In discontinuing ride-alongs, it does not appear as though any consideration was given to other auxiliary type policing programs in Canada or elsewhere. Our understanding is that, during the RCMP's review, no analysis of risks and liability of similar volunteer first responder positions was done. We view that as a major oversight and a significant mistake.

"It is not clear whether support to roadside check-stops will also be excluded from the list of approved duties for auxiliary police members. In the Yukon, auxiliary police members have provided strong support during RCMP check-stops in close cooperation with Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

"I would ask that you consider very carefully the implications of removing this function from their duties. Simply put, there is a far greater risk of an impaired driver destroying lives if such check-stops are not supported, than of harm coming to auxiliaries while they carry out these duties.

"Our concern is that the recent policy changes may have the *de facto* result of cancelling the Auxiliary Policing Program. Changes already made to the duties of auxiliary police members may lead to the program's irrelevance. Some of the longer serving auxiliaries will likely cease to volunteer if their duties are confined to no-risk roles, which, while important, are peripheral to the contributions to policing they made in the past. Further more, any significant changes made to their uniforms will also lead to diminished interest from volunteers who take pride in the fact that their contribution to policing is recognized at least in this small way.

“Therefore, I am formally requesting these policy changes be reconsidered, and that consideration be given to the unique needs of Canada’s North. Further, we strongly encourage you to discuss the effect of these policy changes with Yukon and our sister territories.

“Sincerely...” — and signed by me and sent on March 30.

I’m not 100-percent sure that I provided a copy of that letter to members, but I will send another copy over to make sure that they have that for their files.

I would like to note, for members who are understanding, that in the response to feedback — including my letter on behalf of the government and the work done by Yukon’s senator on the justice committee of the Senate in raising this issue — we understand that the RCMP is committed to carrying out additional consultations with provinces and territories and divisions on the key aspects of the auxiliary program, including those related to participation and operational patrols. We understand that this is being done to hear from key stakeholders as to how to make the program the most effective in their respective jurisdictions, while at the same time ensuring the safety and well-being of those who are willing to volunteer in the communities. To date, we have not been directly included in the consultations but we are looking forward to that involvement. I understand that is likely to occur, based on commitments made at the federal level.

I want to once again emphasize the appreciation of the government for the work done by Yukon RCMP members and auxiliary constables here in the territory, and acknowledge the challenging situation that is being faced by the RCMP at the national level in trying to determine how best to respond to the possibility of terrorist attacks targeting uniformed members and uniformed volunteers. We do not wish to diminish that concern and, while we believe the decision reached earlier this year was not the right one, we do appreciate their indication of a willingness to talk to us about it and to reconsider it, and we do wish to emphasize the fact that we know it is a very challenging, difficult time for RCMP leadership at the national level. We know that their commitment to Canada and to its citizens, as well as to protecting their members, is the paramount element that led them to the decision that was made earlier this year.

I want to again express the Government of Yukon’s commitment to working with them in reviewing and considering any changes. We do very sincerely appreciate the challenging times that they face and the difficulty of trying to determine the appropriate steps at a national level that respond to the changing risk profile that we’re facing across this country today.

I understand that, once consultations occur, there will be a report summarizing the consultations and a map for options of the program going forward. I would again, in concluding my remarks, commend this motion to the House. I hope that members will support us in this motion.

I understand not everyone has seen a copy of the letter, but I will get a copy of that over to them directly and would also note that I read the entire text of that letter in there, so

there are not any parts that are missing from that for those who are listening to it.

With that, Madam Speaker, I will again just conclude by acknowledging the work that is done by all RCMP members across the country, particularly those in the Yukon, acknowledge the important role that is played by auxiliary RCMP members — not only within the territory but in other provinces and territories that have contract policing done by the RCMP — and again note and emphasize the fact that we do appreciate that these are difficult times for all decision-makers in these areas, but we do hope that all members of the House will join us in voting in favour of this motion urging the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to review the recent changes made to the auxiliary police program, including specifically consulting with provinces and territories to ensure that any steps taken in the interest of volunteer safety also ensure that auxiliary members are able to continue their valuable work in supporting crime prevention, community safety, and policing.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Yukon NDP Official Opposition will be supporting the motion, which asks the RCMP to review the recent changes to the auxiliary police program and consult the territory on the changes.

I would like to acknowledge the role that is played by auxiliary police officers in Yukon and thank them for their work — and indeed auxiliary police throughout Canada who provide that additional level of service to improve community safety. Yukon relies on volunteers in all of our emergency services branches to fill much-needed roles.

After reviewing high-profile incidents involving auxiliary officers, the RCMP has placed new restrictions on the range of duties of auxiliaries. They will no longer be allowed to go on ride-alongs and participate in traffic stops, and they will be required to wear street clothes rather than uniforms. These changes were done in the interest of auxiliary RCMP officer safety.

There is merit to some of the changes that have been made by the RCMP. Auxiliary police should not be put in situations that they do not have the training, capacity or tools to deal with. Yukon is not isolated from risk by virtue of living in the north.

We also agree that some of the changes have the potential to affect certain Yukon RCMP programs that have been shown to be beneficial. Madam Speaker, we want to see auxiliary police in Yukon continue to play a role in community justice and the police work of crime prevention and community safety. Some of the duties of auxiliary police laid out in the *Auxiliary Police Act* are not only to promote community safety and crime prevention programs, but to help with youth-oriented crime prevention programs, promote business and public safety programs and help in maintaining a police presence at special events in communities.

Madam Speaker, we will vote in support of this motion.

**Mr. Silver:** I'm happy to stand and speak on Motion No. 1209. As you know, Madam Speaker, the auxiliary police program has proven very beneficial to Yukon communities. In Dawson alone, I have seen community involvement positively impact the citizens. Giving locals the opportunity to be involved in their community's justice program benefits both the volunteers and the community as a whole.

Being a remote post, many of the RCMP officers who work in the communities are on a two- to five-year post. Many of them don't necessarily know the community very well, or even have a chance to get to know the community. Auxiliary police are generally men and women who have either grown up in the communities or lived there for many years and have made positive relationships with the residents and have respect for the community.

With these volunteers at the side of the RCMP officers, they can integrate themselves more easily into the community. RCMP officers and auxiliary police become friends and colleagues and, in turn, officers develop relationships with other community members. With the development of these relationships, managing justice inside the communities becomes more natural for those outside officers. They get to know the people of the community and their culture, and they learn to operate in a respectful manner.

Madam Speaker, when speaking of this motion, I am reminded of Dawson resident Gina Nagano. Gina began her policing career as an auxiliary officer in Dawson and had a great amount of respect in this community, her home community. Having grown up there, she put in the time to develop strong relationships with community members and the RCMP officers who had been stationed there over the many years. She chose to continue her career in justice and is now the regional coordinator of Justice Canada in Yukon.

Madam Speaker, I have great respect for the men and women who volunteer their time in the auxiliary police program, and I would like to see this program strive and benefit many of our Yukon communities. I will be voting in favour of this motion.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I would like to start off by thanking the Minister of Justice and the MLA for Lake Laberge for bringing this motion forward.

In 1963, the auxiliary constable program was created. The program was created to assist with policing, particularly with respect to crime prevention. RCMP seek individuals who are over 19 years of age, those who are responsible and mature, are Canadian citizens, have successfully completed high school or have attained equivalent work-related experience. They must also have a valid driver's licence and have no employment or business that may cause a conflict of interest and they must possess up-to-date CPR and first aid certificates.

An auxiliary RCMP is unarmed. They are unpaid, uniformed and their activities are governed under legislation. They participate in community events such as the Dawson City Music Festival. They play a huge role in traffic stops with the RCMP's traffic division and they help highlight the

important work done by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, or MADD. They work with citizens on patrol, or COPS, pertaining to issues of community safety and they are a huge asset to the regular members of the RCMP.

Under the supervision of an RCMP regular member, auxiliary members of the RCMP also participate in RCMP programs, crime prevention initiatives within schools, ground patrols, search and rescue parades and ceremonial events such as Remembrance Day.

In the wake of the October 22, 2014, shooting of an unarmed uniformed member of the Canadian Forces, the RCMP Commissioner issued a reminder to all regular members and staff to be vigilant when in public, especially those in uniform. In response to this risk, a directive was issued by RCMP Contract and Aboriginal Policing to divisions on October 27, 2014 concerning the supervision of auxiliary constables. Their directive required that auxiliary constables working in uniform be under the direct supervision of a regular member equipped with all of their intervention tools. An armed regular member was to be close enough in proximity to respond should a threat arise. The directive also indicated that auxiliary constables could still perform crime prevention functions without direct supervision, provided they were not in uniform.

From my time serving as Minister of Justice from November 2011 to January 2015, I became very familiar with many of Yukon's auxiliary RCMP members. I spent hours with them during roadside checks during the Christmas season each year and saw them at many community events. I have always been impressed by their knowledge of policing and their professional conduct, but more importantly, I'm impressed with how proud they are to serve the RCMP and to serve their community. Now we see the RCMP's decision that volunteer auxiliary members will no longer be allowed to ride with RCMP members in police cars because they are unarmed and don't have the same level of training as RCMP regular members. While auxiliary members will still exist because of the value to the force, some believe they are at a disadvantage currently.

I agree with the recent remarks from Yukon's Senator in the sense that RCMP auxiliary officers are too valuable to see the program waste away, yet our auxiliary officers in Whitehorse will assume new duties. Don't get me wrong — I'm pleased the auxiliary members will still be involved in search and rescue activities, Crime Stoppers and education of businesses and homeowners on how to better protect their property from criminals, but their contributions and skills assisting regular members of the RCMP are too invaluable to leave it at that.

Under the supervision of an RCMP member, auxiliary constables participate in RCMP-supported community events and programs, which can range from crime prevention initiatives within schools, traffic control, foot and bicycle patrols, festivals, search and rescue to parades and other ceremonial events.

Auxiliary constables are covered by YG's Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. Auxiliary constables

are often seen as bridge-builders between police and the community and they are seen as an incredible asset by both the RCMP and the community. They bring a wealth of information, local knowledge and assistance to police operations.

The head auxiliary constable for Yukon is Rick Smith. Mr. Smith has advised Yukon government and RCMP that the ride-along portion of their duties is seen as an essential duty and that the elimination of this function may result in a number of volunteers, particularly the long-serving volunteers, leaving the program or cause an erosion of the program in the future.

Now I suspect a reduction in the scope of the auxiliary constables' duties will have an impact on how M Division will manage the duties typically taken on by auxiliaries and the potential increased pressure this will place on the RCMP members, including overtime costs.

I also believe the RCMP auxiliary program won't last long with the new guidelines to limit the risk to volunteer officers. Now to quote Senator Lang, he said: "We can find five different reasons why not to do something. We can always use safety as reason why we can't do something, and, at the end of the day, we wind up with a program that isn't of much value." He also said — and I quote: "My hope would be that common sense would prevail and the program will be reinstated back into the terms that were there previously".

Madam Speaker, I recall in the summer of 2012 when concerns were raised by the public, including the business community of Whitehorse, about criminal activity in the downtown area. We at that time in our regular meetings with the RCMP discussed a need for a proactive policing presence in the downtown area. The RCMP responded to the concerns by initiating foot patrols during period of peak activity and targeting crime hotspots in the downtown area, including the use of auxiliary RCMP members, which resulted in a number of arrests of persons alleged to be trafficking in drugs and other criminal activity.

This Yukon Party government has invested significantly in front-line police services in the past five years — most recently the announcement of April 8, 2016 where we funded an additional five positions at a cost-share of about \$385,000 per year.

The Minister of Justice said this funding will provide the RCMP with the ability to enhance crime reduction operations, community response and policing. In addition, the increased resources are intended to allow the RCMP to increase its efforts in targeting property crime and drug trafficking. I thank the minister for his work on this file specifically.

Just a few years ago, we provided funding to bring the Whitehorse duty watch strength up to an optimal level of seven members per watch. As well, funding was provided to support a crime reduction coordinator position to ensure proactive crime reduction operations were permanently embedded in the work of the division.

We're fortunate that Yukon, along with the other territories, has one of the highest police-per-capita ratios in

Canada, with police officer strength being double that of the Canadian average at just over 400 officers per 100,000.

I'm pleased that we can continue to work closely with the RCMP to explore models of service delivery in Whitehorse and the community to ensure an effective and proactive policing response.

I also recall that, during my time as Minister of Justice, we spent an evening recognizing 19 RCMP auxiliary members during the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the RCMP auxiliary constable program for their roles in supporting policing and community safety here in our territory. It is through this auxiliary program that specifically trained volunteers from our communities assist and support regular members with delivering the territorial police service.

These men and women are friends, family members, neighbours and constituents. They dedicate countless hours to their communities and the detachment they support. During the recognition evening and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the auxiliary program, our Chief Superintendent, Peter Clark, indicated that these dedicated volunteers are bridge-builders between police and the community, and they are an incredible asset. He said they bring a wealth of information, local knowledge and assistance to police operations. He also indicated that the RCMP appreciates our government support to grow this important program and recognize the volunteers who give so much of their time.

Madam Speaker, I recall the Monday following the day we were appointed as a Cabinet, where I gave my very first speech as a Cabinet minister at the MADD Red Ribbon campaign kickoff at the Canada Games Centre, standing side by side with our auxiliary RCMP members and our traffic division.

Today I thank the Minister of Justice, the Member for Lake Laberge, for bringing this motion forward to the Legislature. The motion reads that this House urges the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to review the recent changes made to the auxiliary program, including consulting with provinces and territories, to ensure that any steps taken in the interest of volunteer safety also ensures the auxiliary members are able to continue their valuable work in supporting crime prevention, community safety and policing.

The question remains: Why would we change the program? We need to find ways to support our auxiliary RCMP members to ensure their safety and enable them to continue their valuable role in Yukon communities to support crime prevention, community safety and policing.

I would argue that anyone who volunteers — whether at a security gig at a concert, for EMS, for the fire department, Red Cross volunteers or auxiliary RCMP members — puts themselves knowingly in harm's way. Our auxiliary RCMP members are courageous, dedicated, well-trained and professional, so let's find a way to support them and enable them to continue on with their duties.

**Mr. Laxton:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in support of Motion No. 1209 and thank the Minister of Justice for bringing it forward.



RCMP auxiliary constables have been a fixture in this territory for almost 20 years. It is therefore a matter of practicality and pride that we in this Chamber support the continuance of this proven program.

First, let me say that volunteers count in Yukon. We depend on them. The per capita volunteer rates in Yukon are some of the highest in the country. According to Statistics Canada, in 2010, 49 percent of Yukoners volunteered in the service of others, with an average of 131 hours devoted annually to volunteer activities.

This is no surprise. In the RCMP's M Division, auxiliary constables are dedicated volunteers, some of whom give in excess of 400 hours per year to improve the lives of their neighbours and fellow citizens. Without their contribution, the complexion of policing in Yukon, as exemplified by RCMP staff and volunteers alike, would be different and, some would argue, less sensitive. Our volunteers deliver a positive face to those aspects of community service that regular members try to provide but are limited in doing because of the high demands placed on them by daily police work.

In short, we need our auxiliary constables. They wear the RCMP crest when they are fully uniformed in operational gear or wearing their ceremonial blues on parade. The public knows about them and appreciates their outstanding dedication on our behalf as evidenced by the countless examples of unsolicited gratitude. Until the tragic shooting of army reservist Corporal Nathan Cirillo while he was standing guard at Canada's National War Memorial in November 2014, RCMP auxiliary constables gave freely of their time in many community policing activities. Those duties ended that day in Ottawa. The shooting was soon followed by another. In January 2015, RCMP Constable David Wynn and Auxiliary Constable Derek Bond were shot by an assailant in St. Albert, Alberta. Constable Wynn died of his wounds and Auxiliary Constable Bond, although badly injured, survived. Until that time, RCMP auxiliary constables gave freely of their time, riding with regular members in the course of general duty. Those duties also ended as a result.

The auxiliary program has been in flux since then. In fact, it is accurate to say that the program is very close to shutting down after some 50 years of service to Canadians. We must not let that happen. As some of us know, the RCMP auxiliary constable program was initially established in 1963 to address the demands of civil defence during the Cold War. The Cuban missile crisis had just occurred, and the threat of national calamity was very real. Over the years, the Cold War diminished and the program evolved into a combination of general and community policing to augment, but not supplement, regular policing duties. It took a very special volunteer to take on this role.

Then, as now, there were real and present dangers. Police officers and peace officers face them on a daily basis as they work to keep our communities safe. In fact, British Columbia armed its auxiliary contingent for a decade before deciding to move away from lethal force.

When Yukon created its program in the late 1990s by passing the *Auxiliary Police Act*, it provided its volunteers

with everything except handguns, confident that training and adherence to procedure was a reasonable way of managing risk. Since the program's inception in Yukon, there has never been a serious incident to reverse that thinking. Auxiliary constables have told me that they know the mortal danger — and like their regular member colleagues, they accept it every time they put on their operational uniform and stand ready.

Risk management, not risk avoidance, is the key. For example, Yukoners rely on emergency volunteers. There are over 450 volunteer EMS and structural firefighters in our rural communities. Like auxiliary constables, their safety is paramount. That is why the government worked closely with Yukon Occupational Health and Safety officials over the years to ensure that well-meaning but potentially onerous safety considerations did not threaten the very viability of those volunteer programs.

The safety of auxiliary constables falls under the responsibility of the RCMP, which, in turn, is governed by the *Canada Labour Code*, part II. Presumably, the RCMP can work closely with those folks to find a way to meet reasonable safety standards without shutting down the auxiliary constable program as it stood before the shootings. For many years, the RCMP has proposed a comprehensive auxiliary national training program to replace the various training standards present in each jurisdiction across the country. There is no reason to believe that it cannot adopt Yukon's successful approach and work closely with the *Canada Labour Code* officials within Employment and Social Development Canada.

We in the Yukon have a long and valued relationship with the RCMP — since the days of Constantine and Steele. Our auxiliary constables are an important part of that history. They are citizens who take great pride in serving our community and our country. Notwithstanding their day jobs and family commitments, some of them are first-time curious volunteers, and some have taken this on as an extension of previous coaching or mentoring, or lending a hand in the usual ways. Some are drawn to the unique challenges, and some want the comradery with its tangible sense of purpose and belonging. They all stand, with regular members, whose singular duty — no matter their particular task, specialty, responsibility or rank — is to defend the law.

Since justice is the cornerstone of our society, this is no small thing. That is why "Maintiens le Droit", in my view, is so prominent on the RCMP regimental badge. It defines, identifies and sets in motion who they are, what they must uphold and what they must carry inside. No matter how difficult, adversarial, or disheartening it can get — and it does get very tough, even for auxiliaries, waving a much-needed flag in the context of community policing or standing ready with a regular member going from call to call.

I know many auxiliary constables, and they tell me they can think of no better way to give of their time, their help or their loyalty. They provide much-needed eyes and ears on general duty, including a welcome physical presence. They provide support at community events in numerous ways. How many of us have seen them on bikes patrolling the waterfront, the Millennium Trail in Whitehorse, or at the Haines bike

relay or the Dawson City Music Festival? How many of us have spoken to them while being questioned about drinking and driving during traffic checkpoints? How many of us have applauded while seeing them march side by side with the regular members at Canada Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies?

There are some 15 auxiliaries currently in Yukon, most of whom have eight to 20-plus years of service. To let that experience go without going to extraordinary efforts would be a tragedy in its own right. That's why I'm very proud to stand with my colleagues in this Legislature and champion the cause of our auxiliary constables, especially at this perilous time in our history.

Other motions concerning the RCMP are also before us. They too speak to the value that our police force brings to Yukon and the need to continue the work. Therefore, in debating the motion before us, it would be wise to remember the part that enduring work has been carried out and will be carried out by a viable auxiliary constable program in Yukon. As such, I urge the RCMP to call on *Canada Labour Code* officials and find a way to restore both the general and community policing duties of auxiliaries, including ride-along patrols.

In closing, some auxiliaries have specifically told me that they know they live in a modern Yukon with the realities of policing constantly at issue between expectation and result. "What did I learn during my shift? Did I conduct myself well? Did I have their backs?" These are the questions they ask themselves — questions that echo from the long legacy of the force in Yukon, with those going before, saying, "Did you do your duty? Did you keep the faith?" The answer, Madam Speaker, is yes.

Our auxiliaries have always shown up. Today it is our turn, so it bears repeating: I call upon the RCMP to work closely with *Canada Labour Code* officials in ESDC to create a national training program to one purpose — to fully restore the auxiliary constable program.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Madam Speaker, again I would like to thank my colleague for bringing this very invaluable motion forward.

I don't want to be repetitive, but I do want to take the opportunity again to extend my wholehearted support in favour of this important motion. It speaks to a program that has been around for some 50 years and is a program that perhaps comes at a very interesting time within our democracy. This motion speaks to the importance of this program and the evolution of the program over the last 50 years and certainly the very importance that this program continues to play in our territory in support of our RCMP but in support of — really, at the end of the day, the health and well-being of our citizens for whom we were elected to serve.

Over the years, in my previous role as Minister of Justice and in my role as MLA and as a citizen of this territory over a lifetime, I have really come to know a number of individuals who have served as auxiliary police members in our territory.

I have nothing but admiration and respect for these individuals who step up to this program and serve willingly and serve with passion and conviction for the very purpose to serve their community — to put service above self, bar none.

As members today have talked about, these individuals are our neighbours. These individuals are professionals within the Yukon government. They are members of our private sector. They are members of families. These are individuals who are very much aware of the risks associated with serving as an auxiliary constable. They are very familiar with our community. As the member opposite just referred to, many of these individuals who have served over the years have served from some eight to 24 years of service at any given time. That speaks volumes to the commitment of these individuals and their commitment to serving our communities. I want to thank them for that service; whether working to serve at checkpoints or on ride-alongs with other RCMP members, these individuals play a very important role playing the ears and eyes of our community — not every RCMP member can be present at all times — working alongside those members of the M Division here in the territory.

Today's motion is really about how we can work to enhance the program that we've come to know over the years, whether that's through comprehensive training — as the member opposite just alluded to — or working with the *Canada Labour Code* in coming up with a national training program, but it's not of value to work toward diminishing the role of these individuals. At every turn, we should be taking the opportunity to raise awareness of the role these individuals serve on a daily basis, and we should be providing them with tools, including training and supports, to ensure they do their job in a safe environment and have an effective role.

What has transpired over the last number of months — and I want to thank our senator for the territory for highlighting this issue on the national level, as well as our Minister of Justice for his work over the past number of months for working with RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson, highlighting the importance of the role of auxiliary police members and what these recent revisions to the national policy could result in for our program, as we have known it over the past 50-some years.

We appreciate that there has always been a strong pioneer spirit in our territory and a strong sense of volunteerism in the north and in our communities, just because of their sheer geography and the layout of our communities. There is a reliance on each other to look out for each other and to do our part, whether it is through neighbourhood watch programs or through the Citizens on Patrol program or through Crime Stoppers. There is a litany of different crime prevention programs that have been started and have lasted — some have not.

I again commend individuals who volunteer their time, who do not receive any payment. They are unarmed individuals, as has already been pointed out, but they are individuals who have been able to work alongside RCMP members to keep our communities safe, first and foremost. I want to recognize the 15 constables we have in place here

today, and how those positions have grown over the years — to have the longevity of years of tenure of these individuals speaks volumes.

The motion speaks to what we can do to ensure that the program is reinstated back to the terms that were there previously. This has already been stated on the floor of the Assembly here today by my colleagues and members opposite — which is that we need to do what we can to enhance these programs and not to diminish the role. In fact, there has already been a bit of foreshadowing that, if in fact these changes do continue to take effect, we will probably see some very negative consequences to this program.

We already know that not just here in the territory, but clear across the country, we have seen stories and anecdotes from the RCMP auxiliary officers and their discontent with the proposed changes that have been occurring and we know that individuals feel very strongly about some of the changes that have been proposed and the consequences of those changes taking effect. This motion speaks to what it is that we can do to ensure that our volunteer constables continue to do an effective job; that they continue to work simultaneously with many of our many organizations, including M Division here in the territory, and that they do so in a very safe environment and a very supportive environment.

I want to thank the auxiliaries who have prevented violence toward our police numerous times. I want to thank our auxiliary members who have served to protect our communities by reporting incidents of drinking and driving — impaired driving — by being able to be present at some of our festivals over the years and again by being on patrols, whether on ride-alongs or on a bicycle. There are many different roles that they have served over the years. I just want to thank all of the members who have spoken to this motion before us and I want to thank those constituents also in my own riding who have served as auxiliary constables over the years as well — hearing their passion and their conviction in support of this program and what it means to them to serve in this volunteer capacity.

It certainly isn't about the uniform; it's not about the prestige. It's about helping out their neighbours, it's about giving back to the community that they are a part of and it's about making our territory a much better place. That is really our job in our Assembly; it is to support those individuals who are working hard each and every day to do their continued service.

I look forward to receiving the vote on this motion and being able to take a concerted, collective voice to the nation's capital to be able to share our support for this program as we have come to know it since 1963.

**Speaker:** If the member now speaks, he will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank all of the members on both sides of the floor who spoke in support of this motion today. I am pleased

to see the shared recognition — the importance of the role that the auxiliary police members play within the territory.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to briefly reference the remarks that Senator Dan Lang made in the House of Commons on behalf of RCMP auxiliary members and on behalf of the Yukon — just quoting from that, which I believe would be found online on the Parliament website under Senate committee business, committee witnesses — the chair, Senator Dan Lang said: “I want to raise an issue that was raised in the Subcommittee on Veteran’s Affairs with Minister Goodale and Mr. Dubois, and that has to do with the Auxiliary Constable Program, and there was an undertaking to review it. Since then, as the senator for Yukon and also my representation on this committee, I’ve had numerous representations not just from Yukon but across the country in respect to the diminishing of the authority and the recognition of the Auxiliary Constable Program as it exists in those provinces that have contracts with the RCMP.

“I want to make sure the record is correct. I believe there are 1,600 people who are part of that organization across the country.”

Moving on further to Senator Lang’s remarks, he notes that: “I’ve heard today how short-staffed the RCMP is, and I believe they are way understaffed in terms of what we’re asking you to do. At the same time, we’re taking the question of the ride-alongs away, the checkstops, the uniform is coming into question, and the question of whether they will keep their peace officer status.

“When you look at other municipal police forces, they’re looking at implementing or expanding their programs.” He’s referring to auxiliary programs. “If you look at the United States, it is similar; they’re looking at community policing, encouraging people to be part and parcel of their forces so that they can deal with the day-to-day issues of crime in their communities.

“I would like an undertaking that, in view of those facts, the RCMP and the department sit down with the provinces and territories to review the future of this program and confront the question of liability, instead of running away from it, so we can continue with the program and maybe strengthen it.”

I would just like to thank Senator Lang for his remarks and for taking up this issue that we’ve raised on behalf of Yukon’s auxiliary members and out of our own concern, as Government of Yukon, with the effect of the announcements made in January by the RCMP at the national level. I would like to thank all RCMP members across the country, including the RCMP senior staff, for their excellent work, recognize the challenge that they are facing and recognize that the decision that was made with regard to the auxiliary police program was made with the best of intentions.

We were very pleased by the fact that there has been an undertaking to consult with the provinces and territories on this and pleased that there appears to be indications that this motion will have the unanimous support of the House in urging the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to review the recent changes made to the auxiliary police program,

including consulting with the provinces and the territories to ensure that any steps taken in the interest of volunteer safety also ensure that volunteers are able to continue their valuable work in crime prevention, community safety and policing.

With that, Madam Speaker, I commend this motion to the House.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

#### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

#### Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Mr. Elias:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Agree.

**Ms. Hanson:** Agree.

**Ms. Stick:** Agree.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Mr. Laxton:** Agree.

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

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

*Motion No. 1209 agreed to*

#### GOVERNMENT BILLS

##### **Bill No. 203: *Child and Youth Advocate Staff Benefits Amendments Act***

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the House to move that Bill No. 203, entitled *Child and Youth Advocate Staff Benefits Amendments Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

##### **Unanimous consent re third reading of Bill No. 203, *Child and Youth Advocate Staff Benefits Amendments Act***

**Speaker:** The minister responsible for the Public Service Commission has requested the unanimous consent of the House, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, to move that Bill No. 203, entitled *Child and Youth Advocate Staff Benefits Amendments Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Is there unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** Unanimous consent has been granted.

##### **Bill No. 203: *Child and Youth Advocate Staff Benefits Amendments Act* — Third Reading**

**Clerk:** Third reading, Bill No. 203, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Dixon.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** I move that Bill No. 203, entitled *Child and Youth Advocate Staff Benefits Amendments Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission that Bill No. 203, entitled *Child and Youth Advocate Staff Benefits Amendments Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Madam Speaker, I provided comments in second reading on this bill, which explained its nature and history and how it ended up on the floor. I would like to begin by thanking the Members' Services Board and my colleagues on that board for agreeing unanimously to bring this bill forward and table it in the House after the normal period of time for the government to table bills. I thank members of the House for unanimously granting us the ability to debate the bill.

I should also thank officials in the Department of Justice and the Yukon Legislative Assembly Office for their work on this bill. With that, I will commend this bill to the House at third reading.

**Speaker:** Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

#### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

#### Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Agree.

**Ms. Hanson:** Agree.

**Ms. Stick:** Agree.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Mr. Laxton:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Madam Speaker, the results are 15 yea, nil nay.

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

*Motion for third reading of Bill No. 203 agreed to*

**Speaker:** I declare that Bill No. 203 has passed this House.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Madam 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 (Mr. Elias):** Order, please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 8, Department of Justice, in Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

Do members wish a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

*Recess*

**Chair:** Order, please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

### **Bill No. 23: *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17* — continued**

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is resuming general debate on Vote 8, Department of Justice, in Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Cathers, Member for Lake Laberge. Sir, you have one minute and 56 seconds remaining.

#### **Department of Justice — *continued***

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** It's a pleasure to rise here again to speak to the Department of Justice 2016-17 operation and maintenance mains and capital budget. I will just briefly recap for members, since it has been a few days since we debated this. Some of the highlights: the operation and maintenance budget is approximately \$68 million and the capital budget is approximately \$1.85 million.

I will not go through the details at this point. Members will undoubtedly recall some of the highlights, which include infrastructure projects we are working on and some of the new investments contained in this year's budget, such as the \$385,000 to increase the resources for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police by creating five new positions for four constables and one clerk, as mentioned earlier today in motion debate — and which are in addition to the recent investments we made to expand the number of RCMP positions at the 911 public safety answering point, which, all in all, adds to a total of 10 new RCMP positions that are being funded by the Yukon government, both on the communications side and on the front-line service side.

The capital budget also includes \$513,000 for electronic system procurement needs for the land titles modernization

project and the operation and maintenance budget includes \$632,000 for Land Titles Office personnel and additional legislative drafting and policy support. As has been mentioned previously in the House, we are continuing to work on drafting the regulations —

**Chair:** Order please, the member's time has elapsed.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** On Thursday, May 12, when we were last in Justice debate, I misread and misspoke the capital amount for the SCAN office surveillance equipment, which is \$8,000. The minister concluded debate before I had a chance to correct that, so I'm doing that now.

I am going to put a number of my questions on the record for the minister and then give him the time to respond. The Victim Services and Family Violence Prevention unit — victim services and family violence prevention services are important to offer in Yukon and in all of our communities with the very high rates of violence against women and children that we find here. What violence prevention-related activities are taking place? Can the minister report on how regularly services are offered in rural communities? Has the staff complement changed? Have there been any increases or reductions? Are there any changes in the nature of services offered?

On innovative budgeting, I would like the minister to indicate who is leading this initiative in the department and what direction has the minister provided on finding savings within the Department of Justice for the innovative budgeting initiative.

On the *Coroners Act*, the statistics for the coroner's office are on page 15-15 of the budget book. We have a high rate of accidental deaths in the Yukon. I would like to ask the minister about what criteria are used to determine when to conduct a coroner's inquiry and/or an inquest and how that difference is determined, and what criteria are used to determine when an autopsy is done. There were 10 judgments of inquiry issued in 2015-16 and I would like to ask the minister to speak to outstanding recommendations that haven't been completed. The coroner does not have any ability to follow up on implementation of coroner's recommendations. Perhaps the minister could tell us what government departments' responsibilities are to respond to coroner's recommendations and the timelines for that.

For example, there are outstanding coroner recommendations related to the Department of Health and Social Services consulting with Mental Health Services clinicians to collaborate on management and support options to develop a protocol for follow-up when an individual has been released from hospital to a rural community following a suicide attempt. There is a recommendation to ensure that all people of Yukon have access to consistent mental health services and to look into the feasibility of telehealth for providing a complete scope of services to mental health clients throughout the Yukon. That was issued in February 2014. I don't think the Department of Health and Social Services has implemented all of those four recommendations.

There are recommendations that the Liquor Corporation develop and implement a social responsibility initiative about

the dangers of consuming alcohol in a cold-weather environment and a social responsibility work that supports responsible consumption during the cold winter months, due to deaths of people who were intoxicated and died outside after consuming alcohol in a cold-weather environment.

There is a recommendation again to Health and Social Services about developing a Yukon prescription information system — that's on June 2015. While there may have been some progress, I don't think that has been completed — if the minister could comment on how they might speed up and ensure that there are appropriate responses to coroners' recommendations.

In his budget speech, the Premier talked a lot about local procurement and what he planned to do to increase it. He said — and I quote: "We're going to build more benefits into tenders to being local. We're going to eliminate tender provisions that block locals from bidding and we're going to replace the bid challenge committee with something that actually works."

Well, for some Yukon residents, the commitment to take local procurement seriously came too little, too late. One of my constituents has been experiencing this lack of action firsthand. She bid on a court reporting contract with the Department of Justice and lost the bid, even though it was much lower than the bid that was accepted. She was told that this was because the contract was value-driven, rather than price-driven. This was first raised two years ago and the saga continues.

These problems cannot be solved solely by amending some of the tendering processes. It requires a significant overhaul of the process.

There was a serious lack of clarity throughout all parts of the tender process and, as a result, the local contractor lost out on a contract due to technical errors and Government of Yukon ended up paying more. So what efforts has this minister undertaken to streamline his department's tender process?

An Outside company — Voicecapture — was direct awarded a contract for software used for court reporting. My constituent is disillusioned with the department's process and her perception that it favours larger Outside companies has left her wondering whether it's even worthwhile preparing to bid on the next version of the contract. Again, this was a direct award contract that was far above the \$75,000 contract limit for direct awards, I believe.

Another question is whether the waiver clause irrevocably waives any claim, action or proceeding against the Government of Yukon, including, without limitation, any judicial review or injunction application or against any Government of Yukon employees, advisors or representatives for damages, expenses or costs, including any actual or alleged unfairness on the part of the Government of Yukon at any stage of the request for proposal process, if the government does not award or execute a contract.

Is that waiver an escape clause to allow the Yukon government to cancel any contract at any time without justification and without penalty? Is that standard contract

language and is that waiver clause enforceable? And how can it be justified without a working Bid Challenge Committee? The Premier and the Highways and Public Works minister have acknowledged that we need to improve bid challenge, so if it is not working, how can the waiver clause be justified in departments?

There were only three bid challenges in 2014-15, and concerns have been expressed about companies feeling that they may be blacklisted if they put forward a bid challenge, so there has been consultation on changes and what might the department be doing to address those?

I also want to put a question on the record related to the Yukon Human Rights Commission. We had some discussion of that in Question Period today. The minister made false and scandalous accusations that I was questioning the ethics of the departmental staff. That is not what I was doing. I was asking this minister to be accountable.

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

#### Point of order

**Chair:** Mr. Cathers, on a point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Standing Order 19(h) prevents a member from accusing another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood, which I believe is what the Member for Copperbelt South just did.

**Chair:** Ms. Moorcroft, on the point of order.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On the point of order, I did not accuse the member opposite of uttering a lie. I made the case that when the minister said — and I quote: "... it's very unfortunate the aspersions that the member is casting on department staff..." and that the member is making implications about their "ethical conduct" — that was a remark that is false that the minister should not have made.

#### Chair's statement

**Chair:** Order, please. I am going to have a look at the Blues and possibly rule at that time. I want to remind all members that MLAs in this Assembly are all considered to be honourable, and that if the political rhetoric is going to be rising here with a few minutes left on the second-last day of the Assembly, I would caution members to avoid using inflammatory language.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The question that I have asked the minister related to the Yukon Human Rights Commission is that there are eight cases that have been referred to the Yukon human rights panel of adjudicators because of alleged human rights violations at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. Is the Minister of Justice concerned about that? Has the Minister of Justice provided direction to his department that they engage in efforts to resolve those complaints without hearings?

Can the minister tell us what funds have been committed to the Yukon Human Rights Commission to retain outside counsel for hearings where the Department of Justice is the respondent? Some of these cases may deal with allegations of systemic, as well as individual, discrimination and that brings

me back to a question I asked the minister earlier this afternoon about the independence of the commission. It is a concern when the operational costs are coming from a department that is a respondent in many of the matters that go forward. In 2008, an all-party committee recommended that the commission and the board of adjudication be funded through the Legislative Assembly in a manner similar to the Yukon Ombudsman, and that is an outstanding recommendation that I wanted to draw to the minister's attention.

I would also like to speak about the Kwanlin Dün First Nation restorative justice approach to community safety. Kwanlin Dün First Nation recently completed a community security assessment and adopted a plan for community justice through a community development protocol. I would like to thank them for sharing a presentation they put together with opposition members. They're looking at crime prevention through environmental design. They're looking for partnerships to respond to crises. They want to implement a three-pronged approach to adapt to the needs of intergenerational residential school survivors and to meet the unique needs of people affected with FASD and restore wellness in the community.

The minister spoke about a new community safety committee, chaired by the director of public safety and investigations, and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation director of justice being the first co-chair for the next 18 months. I would like to ask the minister to speak about how that committee is responding to the needs identified by Kwanlin Dün.

Kwanlin Dün First Nation had also indicated an interest in getting Jackson Lake designated a correctional facility so that inmates could go there for programs on the land, such as addictions treatment. What is the process for this? How is the Yukon government demonstrating its support?

I have been told that Kwanlin Dün First Nation justice workers are no longer able to go into the actual living units at Whitehorse Correctional Centre. Why is this not occurring? What is Yukon government doing to engage with Kwanlin Dün First Nation to get them as an active participant in the First Nation programming that should be occurring at Whitehorse Correctional Centre? Legislation says it shall have this.

The Yukon *Corrections Act*, section 48(1), sets out that the director of Corrections must establish a strategic plan for community involvement in the corrections system. Why hasn't this been done? If it has been done, could the minister provide a copy of this plan?

This mandate's consultations with community advisory boards regarding appointments and composition — the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action addressed a number of recommendations to do with justice, calling on governments to eliminate the overrepresentation of aboriginal people in custody, to provide sufficient and stable funding to implement and evaluate community sanctions, to improve FASD preventive programs and reform the criminal justice system to better address the needs of offenders with FASD,

and to work with aboriginal communities to provide culturally relevant services.

What actions has the department identified in conjunction with Yukon First Nations? The government has indicated that they have provided the action plan that they developed to First Nations and worked with them to develop it. I would think they would be proud to share that work. They shared it with First Nations months ago. What actions has the department identified? What internal plans has the department worked on to offer land-based treatment for aboriginal inmates? Has that been part of the Department of Justice response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action?

We recently heard about a presentation on the FASD prevalence study. The minister has not shared a lot of information related to that. It suggests that there are significant rates of cognitive impairment, addiction and mental health difficulties. Can the minister share those numbers? How many people showed all the signs of FASD but there was no ability to determine and confirm maternal alcohol consumption? How long will it be until we do know those numbers?

Incarcerated people with mental illnesses allege that case management practices do not coordinate necessary services. Inmates call and say they are not receiving counselling or learning and work opportunities. What policy is followed to meet complex needs and mental health management? What new work project activities will be done this summer so that people in jail are able to get some time outdoors and be productive, developing new skills in a journey to reconciliation?

The statistics on incarceration on page 15-20 break down how many sentenced and remand-status offenders are on the register. What is the average length of stay in remand? How many of the remand admissions were found not guilty? Of the total admissions of 256 sentenced admissions, how many of those were repeat admissions?

Have any training sessions been held for staff to improve administrative law practices and disciplinary hearings?

Whitehorse Correctional Centre's designation as a hospital — Yukon's current system criminalizes people with mental ill health and does not provide adequate services for them within either the justice or the mental health systems. Repeatedly, individuals with mental ill health who have become involved in the justice system because of their poor mental health are being housed at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. That is not appropriate, and it is certainly not doing anything to ensure the safety of others around them or to promote rehabilitation. People are also released without any supports or a plan on how they will be safe and to keep others safe.

Mr. Chair, I will leave those outstanding questions for the minister.

I would like to ask the minister to make a commitment that he will provide written responses to any of the questions that he is not able to answer in the time remaining for his response.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I will answer a number of the member's questions. She did group a bunch of them together, so we may have missed some of them, but I will endeavour to respond to them in the time I have available this afternoon and return later to others, where time does not permit, later.

To begin with, I should note that, when it comes to the Human Rights Commission, the significant increases that have been made during our time in government to the Human Rights Commission's budget include an increase this year of 6.35 percent, which, I should point out, is more than triple the rate of increased growth of the Department of Justice's own budget. We have given them a more substantial percentage increase than the Department of Justice itself has received.

The funding for the Human Rights Commission has dramatically increased from the 2003-04 fiscal year, when it stood at \$371,000, to this year, when it is \$630,000. We do continue to resource the Human Rights Commission and the increases have been from \$371,000 to — I won't go through all of the individual-year increases. But even compared with just earlier in this term, the budget of the Human Rights Commission has increased by roughly 25 percent when it went from \$532,000 in the 2011-12 fiscal year to \$630,000 in the current fiscal year, so we are certainly resourcing the Human Rights Commission.

I will not be too inflammatory in my debate with the member about her comments. I will take her assertion that she was not intending to impugn or slight the ethics of the staff of the Department of Justice, but I hope the member will understand how I interpreted that when I point out that, because the Department of Justice and Whitehorse Correctional Centre does have a complaint process for inmates, including its own independent standards office. For someone to suggest that the Department of Justice is violating someone's human rights — it is something that I do take as an attack directed at the employees who are making those management decisions.

I will reiterate very clearly for the record that I have confidence in the work that is done by staff of the Department of Justice and believe that they try very diligently to ensure that the needs of offenders and those under remand are there and are adequately addressed and, in fact, that we go beyond their human rights requirements to provide programming that is in the best interest of rehabilitation, but not something that they are entitled to as a human right.

I should note, as well, in the area of the use of Whitehorse Correctional Centre as a hospital — I should just point out to those who may not understand it that the only time this gets used — when someone is there and it's designated as a hospital — first of all, it is only for the purposes of *Criminal Code* placements that it is designated in that manner. The only people who go there — the only people who end up in Whitehorse Correctional Centre — are people who are being held there because they've been arrested. People don't get placed there because of non-criminal actions. They are there because they have committed a crime and they would be there under court order. Again, a judge can decide where to order that person to be placed.

People to whom the member refers are people who would typically be under review by the Yukon Review Board about whether they are mentally fit to stand trial. The question of whether they have been arrested for a crime that they are awaiting trial on is not a matter that is debatable in that situation. While their guilt has not been proven until they've gone through due process, those individuals are only people who have been arrested and are under review regarding their suitability to stand trial.

I would note that it is the courts, not the minister or the department, that decide where that individual should be placed. For some of these individuals — especially those who have committed a violent crime for which they have not yet been convicted — to place them within Whitehorse General Hospital could create a risk for other people in that facility. We take patient safety very seriously. It is, in fact, the reason we enhanced the facilities at Whitehorse General Hospital by creating the secure ward, but I would note again, even for people who also might be within that ward, someone who has been arrested for, though not yet convicted of, a criminal activity — if that is a violent act, may pose a risk to other people if they were to be placed in Whitehorse General Hospital, as the Member for Copperbelt South and the Member for Riverdale South have advocated that we should do. So we believe that the current process, in this case, is the appropriate one and leaves suitable discretion for the courts.

As far as the member's question about the court reporting contract, that was done several years ago. I don't recall the exact fiscal year; I don't have that information at my fingertips, as it predates my time as Minister of Justice. I would point out to the member that, when value-driven contracts are done, if that is the structure, the contractors who submit a bid are reviewed on the value evaluation of their respective tenders. The court reporting now is done in-house, using digital recording equipment, which saves substantial money compared to when it was previously done manually and transcribed under a court reporting contract. This addresses specific concerns received from the judiciary about the quality control regarding the contract. Also, the new digital equipment allows them the option of going back more easily and listening to something that was said rather than just relying on the transcript. The system has in fact changed.

It is unfortunate that the member's constituent feels that they did not think that they received a fair opportunity to bid or were somehow confused about the contract. As far as when a waiver is a waiver and what legal rights may exist for people who bid on contracts who felt they did not receive appropriate treatment in that, I would note that in addition to the Law Line — they may wish to call the Law Line or contact a lawyer themselves if they feel that they have not received fair treatment through talking to any department. I would also note that procurement is primarily the responsibility of Highways and Public Works.

Last but not least on this topic, the digital recording through the new equipment in place is used by the media and the public now to listen to court proceedings, so it has actually opened up and improved the public access to hearing court



proceedings after the fact as a result of changing the system that is there.

With regard to the coroner and the mandate of the coroner and what criteria that applies in conducting reviews, I would refer the member first of all to the *Coroners Act*, which is available online.

In looking at it, the member will see that the act covers matters including: appointment and removal; the oaths that coroners must take; the jurisdiction; disqualification; duty to notify coroner of death; warrants and investigations; coroner's powers, procedure without inquest; requirements for inquest; direction of the chief coroner or a judge to hold an inquest; matters relating to the death of a prisoner; inquest without exhumation; an inquest without viewing the body; preservation at the scene of death; post-mortem examination; inquests involving mining accidents; coroner's jury; use of jury; report if no jury, et cetera; arrest of a juror for failing to appear; witnesses; procedure at inquests; record of evidence; verdict and inquisition; disagreement of jury; adjournment; procedure after inquest reports; failure to notify coroner; action by disqualified coroner; disturbance at scene of death; general offence and penalty; annual report; murder or manslaughter; powers of chief coroner; fees and allowances; and regulations.

The Yukon Coroners Service serves the living through high quality death investigations and inquests to ensure that no death will be overlooked, concealed or ignored. The findings are used to make recommendations to help improve public safety and prevent deaths in similar circumstances. The guiding principle of the Coroners Service is that they are a fact-finding service, not a fault-finding service. They provide independent service to the people in the community and serve: firstly, deceased and deceased's family and relatives; secondly, society as a whole; and thirdly, government agencies and other organizations. Yukon coroners are quasi-judicial investigators, independent from government, law enforcement agencies and health authorities. They review the circumstances of each death and plan for the required investigation. They determine the identity of the deceased and cause of death; classify the death as natural, accident, suicide, homicide or undetermined; conduct fact-finding investigations into deaths occurring in Yukon that are natural, unexpected, unexplained or unattended. They are, again, not there to assign fault or blame so much as they are there to identify risk factors to prevent future deaths.

In the area of jurisdiction, the act speaks to the coroner residing nearest to the place where the death occurred or the place in which the body is found, or nearest the route of travel by which that place can most readily be reached, having jurisdiction to act as a coroner respecting the deceased person. Despite subsection 1, a coroner has jurisdiction throughout the Yukon and the chief coroner or a judge may at any time direct a coroner to make an investigation or to hold an inquest at any place in the Yukon, in which case the jurisdiction of other coroners — whether they are within subsection 1 or not — is suspended respecting that investigation or inquest.

Again, as noted with respect to the member's specific question about a coroner's inquest, the chief coroner or judge may at any time direct a coroner to make an investigation or to hold an inquest. It also speaks to when a coroner may be disqualified from acting. It sets out, under section 5, the duty to notify the coroner of death, noting that a medical practitioner, undertaker, embalmer, peace officer or any other person residing in the house in which the deceased resided immediately before death, or any other person who has reason to believe that a deceased person died as a result of violence, misadventure or unfair means, from any other cause other than disease or sickness, as a result of negligence, misconduct or malpractice on the part of others, or under any other circumstances that require investigation, shall immediately notify the coroner, who ordinarily has jurisdiction in the locality in which the body of the deceased person is found, of the circumstances relating to the death.

In the area under section 7, the coroner's powers sets out the ability for the coroner to view any dead body and take possession of any dead body, and a coroner may, in exercising duties for investigations, inquiries and inquests with respect to the death of a person, enter and inspect any place that the coroner believes, on reasonable grounds, the deceased person's body to be or have been and to arrange for the disinterment of the deceased person's body. There are other segments relating to procedure without inquest.

I hear the Member for Copperbelt South asking questions off-mic. I would note to the member that, as it relates to the recommendations of other departments, the member should be aware — and would have herself given the answer during her time as Justice minister, I'm sure — that the response of other departments to coroner recommendations are questions best directed to those specific departments. But at any time we receive a recommendation from the coroner, work is done by the respective departments to carefully consider those recommendations and to determine appropriate follow-up actions in response to the recommendations of a coroner.

The member will also find that there are provisions related to coroner's juries. In an inquest held pursuant to this act or any other act, a coroner shall, if of an opinion that is practicable to secure a jury, sit with a jury but may, if of the opinion that it is not practicable to secure a jury, proceed without a jury and, in the latter case, has full authority to find any verdict a jury may have found.

I can go on, if the member would like, in speaking to some of the other sections of the legislation that provide for the procedures at inquests that provide for the record of evidence in those cases and relating to the verdict, as well as what occurs in the event of a disagreement of a jury. I also might refer the member to the powers of the chief coroner, as they are referred to under the *Coroners Act*.

Mr. Chair, seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that the Chair report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

**Chair:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader 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**

**Mr. Elias:** Madam Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*, and directed me to report progress.

**Speaker:** You have heard the report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole. Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** I declare the report carried.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Madam, Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

*Motion agreed to*

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

*The House adjourned at 5:27 p.m.*

### **The following sessional paper was tabled May 25, 2016:**

33-1-207

*Yukon Law Foundation Annual Report — November 1, 2014 to October 31, 2015* (Cathers)

### **The following documents were filed May 25, 2016:**

33-1-138

*2015 Yukon Minerals Advisory Board Annual Report* (Kent)

33-1-139

*Government of Yukon Evaluation of the Yukon's Apprenticeship and Tradespersons Qualification Program Final Report — May 2016* (Graham)