



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

---

Number 128

2nd Session

34th Legislature

---

## HANSARD

Wednesday, March 20, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2019 Spring Sitting

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

### CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
<b>Hon. Sandy Silver</b>	Klondike	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance
<b>Hon. Ranj Pillai</b>	Porter Creek South	Deputy Premier Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation
<b>Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee</b>	Riverdale South	Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice
<b>Hon. John Streicker</b>	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission
<b>Hon. Pauline Frost</b>	Vuntut Gwitchin	Minister of Health and Social Services; Environment; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation
<b>Hon. Richard Mostyn</b>	Whitehorse West	Minister of Highways and Public Works; the Public Service Commission
<b>Hon. Jeanie Dendys</b>	Mountainview	Minister of Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board; Women's Directorate

### GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

#### Yukon Liberal Party

<b>Ted Adel</b>	Copperbelt North
<b>Paolo Gallina</b>	Porter Creek Centre
<b>Don Hutton</b>	Mayo-Tatchun

### OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

#### Yukon Party

<b>Stacey Hassard</b>	Leader of the Official Opposition Pelly-Nisutlin	<b>Scott Kent</b>	Official Opposition House Leader Copperbelt South
<b>Brad Cathers</b>	Lake Laberge	<b>Patti McLeod</b>	Watson Lake
<b>Wade Istchenko</b>	Kluane	<b>Geraldine Van Bibber</b>	Porter Creek North

### THIRD PARTY

#### New Democratic Party

<b>Liz Hanson</b>	Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre
<b>Kate White</b>	Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King

### LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Clerk of the Assembly	Floyd McCormick
Deputy Clerk	Linda Kolody
Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Karina Watson
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Harris Cox
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Wednesday, March 20, 2019 — 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.

Introduction of visitors.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I would like my colleagues to join me in welcoming the numerous Yukon government staff members in the gallery today. They are hydrologists, scientists, inspection officers and community water operators who are responsible for ensuring Yukoners have clean water.

From the Department of Environment: Amelie Janin, Trevor Hanna, Norbert Botca, Nicole Novodvorsky, John Minder, John Ryder, Carola Scheu, Collin Remillard, Philip Thibert-Leduc — I apologize if I am mispronouncing; I'm trying my best — David Albisser, Monti Patterson, Chris Evans, Elise Bingeman, Benton Foster, Craig Van Lankveld and Franklin Fru. Welcome.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** In honour of International Francophonie Day, could we please say welcome — bonjour et bienvenue à: Marie-Hélène Comeau, Pierre-Marc et Hélène Lapensée, de la Communauté franco-catholique; Louise-Hélène Villeneuve, directrice de la garderie du Petit cheval blanc; Marc Champagne, directeur général de la Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon; Stéphanie Moreau et l'équipe de l'AFY; Roch Nadon, directeur général adjoint; Josée Bélisle, qui est membre du conseil d'administration de l'AFY, je pense; Édith Bélanger, directrice par interim du développement économique; Francis Lefebvre, directeur des communications et relations communautaires; and also from Direction des services en français, chef Patrice Tremblay, Catherine Huot, André Bourcier, Nancy Power, Laurianne Grenier-Deschênes and Deputy Minister Pam Muir — if we could say welcome, please.

**Ms. White:** Ce n'est pas souvent qu'on peut introduire un journaliste, mais Claudiane Samson, elle travaille très fort pour avoir la représentation des francophones au territoire. Elle travaille pour CBC. Elle peut pas enregistrer ça parce que ce n'est pas quelque chose qu'on fait souvent, mais elle travaille très fort pour avoir la représentation francophone — et un grand merci pour ça.

**Mr. Gallina:** I will take this opportunity to recognize a constituent, Emily Farrell, who has joined us in the gallery

here today. Emily works in our Cabinet offices, and she has joined us for the tributes this afternoon. Welcome.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I would be remiss in not mentioning that my deputy minister John Bailey is also here with us today. We have Dianna Hayden, Pat Brooks and Tracey Kinsella here as well. Welcome.

**Speaker:** Are there any tributes?

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of International Francophonie Day

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Aujourd'hui, je rends hommage à Marie-Hélène Comeau à l'occasion de la Journée internationale de la Francophonie. Marie-Hélène Comeau est une artiste franco-yukonnaise de longue date. Elle a importé au Yukon la Caravane des dix mots, un projet international porteur qui permet aux francophones et francophiles du monde entier de célébrer la langue française. Dans le cadre de ce projet, elle fait rayonner le Yukon à l'international et anime des ateliers dans nos écoles pour inviter nos élèves à explorer la franco-yukonnie à travers les arts.

Monsieur le Président, je crois que le vernissage de l'exposition de la Caravane des dix mots aura lieu ce soir au Centre des arts du Yukon, de cinq à sept. Marie-Hélène catalyse des échanges entre les gens et les arts dans notre communauté. C'est pourquoi beaucoup de ses œuvres sont interactives et mettent à contribution des publics de tous les âges. Par exemple, dans le cadre de ses études doctorales, elle a mis en valeur des œuvres de femmes franco-yukonaises à l'occasion d'une exposition intime et touchante.

Marie-Hélène est aussi une artiste multidisciplinaire accomplie qui exprime ses talents avec la peinture, la danse, l'art éphémère, les vidéos, et plus encore. Elle laisse une empreinte durable sur la scène artistique du Yukon. Vous pouvez notamment admirer ses peintures à Arts Underground et sur la murale du Centre de la Francophonie — et même au Centre des arts du Yukon, ce soir. Marie-Hélène inculque des valeurs de curiosité, de découverte et de respect chez tous les Yukonnais et Yukonaises.

Merci donc à Marie-Hélène Comeau, aux personnes et aux organismes qui contribuent à la vitalité culturelle de notre territoire. Le Yukon peut être fier de sa communauté francophone en pleine croissance.

Monsieur le Président, je vous souhaite à toutes et à tous une bonne Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

*Applause*

**Mr. Hassard:** I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition in recognition of March 20 as International Francophonie Day. I would be remiss if I did not mention that here in Yukon — in addition to celebrating with the world on March 20 — we have our very own Yukon Francophonie Day, which takes place on May 15.

As we will not be sitting on that day, it's worth recognizing the importance of that day as well, here in our territory. As our total population grows here in the Yukon, so

does that of our vibrant francophonie community. It's truly remarkable that the draw of the Yukon has become so immense that we are able to say we are home to entire communities of any cultural group.

I'm proud to see the continuous growth of French programming and bilingual government services that serve francophone Yukoners and visitors alike. It's amazing to see how much progress is being made over the years toward bilingualism in the territory. The enthusiasm of English-speaking parents who have enrolled their children in French immersion programming is immense.

Moving French immersion programming into a second elementary school helps to meet demands for French as a second language education and helps to accommodate more families than ever before. I hear that this year, for the first time, Selkirk Elementary will be offering two kindergarten classes in French immersion. That will bring the total here in Whitehorse to five.

We also look forward to the construction of the new French first language high school and what that will mean to the francophone community here in the territory. As we celebrate our Francophonie people and the culture here in the Yukon, it's important to note that the French language has a long history here in the Yukon. In fact, École Émilie Tremblay in Whitehorse is named after one of the first francophone women to cross the Chilkoot Pass and settle in the Yukon back in 1894.

According to the Canada 2016 census, 1,575 residents of Yukon identified as francophone, which represented 4.4 percent of the territory's population. We know this number continues to grow as we continue to welcome new Yukoners year after year.

Mr. Speaker, I know I promised Patrice that I wouldn't try to speak French in this Legislature again, but I'll take one more kick at it. With that, Mr. Speaker, bonne Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** Merci monsieur le Président. Je suis fière de prendre la parole au nom du NPD du Yukon pour célébrer la Journée internationale de la francophonie et en avance de la célébration de la Journée de la francophonie Yukonnaise, le 15 mai.

En tant qu'anglophone bilingue, je suis fière de refléter un Yukon et un Canada qui valorisent les contributions culturelles et sociales de la communauté francophone. Mes parents, comme beaucoup d'autres, ont reconnu que la langue française est une des deux langues officielles du Canada et qu'elle est une partie important du tissu culturel, historique et linguistique de notre pays. En 1982, ils ont décidé de m'inscrire à la maternelle en immersion française. Cette décision a changé la direction de ma vie. Un merci tout spécial à mes professeurs dans le programme d'immersion, grâce à qui je peux m'adresser en français dans l'Assemblée législative du Yukon. La communauté francophone vibre. Elle continue à croître. Nous reconnaissons les contributions faites par des francophones au Yukon dès les années 1800. Les

francophones ont joué d'abord un rôle important dans la création et le développement de nouvelles collectivités yukonnaises, incluant Dawson et Mayo. Nous trouvons aux quatre coins de notre territoire des endroits qui célèbrent leurs contributions. Le lac Laberge, le mont Coudert, le ruisseau Lépine et la colline Girouard. Aujourd'hui, la communauté franco-yukonnaise est reconnue et visible. Elle est une partie intégrante de nos collectivités. C'est avec fierté, qu'on peut dire que le Yukon a le plus fort pourcentage, après le Nouveau-Brunswick, de francophones et de francophiles dans l'ensemble de la francophonie minoritaire canadienne. De plus, le bilinguisme français-anglais est de plus en plus présent au Yukon. Cette croissance constante, tant en nombre qu'en pourcentage, démontre l'attrait de la langue française dans le territoire.

C'est un plaisir d'offrir nos félicitations à madame Comeau et un plaisir encore une fois de souhaiter à tous et à toutes une excellente Journée internationale de la francophonie, et vous remercier pour votre contribution au Yukon. Merci beaucoup.

*Applause*

### **In recognition of World Water Day and Canada Water Week**

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal Party to pay tribute to World Water Day, which is recognized globally on March 22. This is a time to focus our attention on the importance of fresh water and the sustainable management of freshwater resources. It is also a day to pay tribute to how we manage water in the future. Each year, World Water Day highlights a specific aspect of fresh water. For 2019, the theme is "Leaving no one behind". This explores how we can ensure that everyone has access to clean water. After all, water is central to all that we are and all that we do.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the scientists, the technicians, the water operators, compliance officers and everyone else who works to provide clean water in Yukon and ensure that our freshwater resources are managed sustainably. They do this in a number of ways: by keeping the water flowing at treatment plants; inspecting and monitoring drinking water systems to make sure they meet the national standards; by monitoring long-term networks of study trends allowing us to predict floods and much more; and by conducting targeted research projects to show us what is in the water around us and what that means to our communities. These are just a few examples. Our hard-working water managers dedicate themselves to ensuring that Yukon has clean, abundant water now and into the future.

Clean water is essential for a healthy environment and healthy people. Without clean water, our communities and environments are not sustainable and people will not thrive. It is important that we work together to make sure this precious resource is protected and managed responsibly and sustainably.

World Water Day also coincides with Canada Water Week. Our celebrations for Canada Water Week focus on

educating Yukon youth on the importance of protecting and conserving our natural water systems. Throughout March and April, scientists and other water professionals from the Government of Yukon are travelling to schools around the territory, giving interactive water presentations to students. Teaching youth about the importance of water helps to instill principles of environmental conservation that they will carry throughout their lives. In honour of Canada Water Week and World Water Day, please join me in thanking all of our water managers for safeguarding Yukon's natural water resources and for fostering tomorrow's water stewards, one school presentation at a time.

*Applause*

**Mr. Istchenko:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize World Water Day taking place on Friday, March 22. This year, like the minister said, the importance of global access to safe water is highlighted through their theme, "Leaving no one behind".

Today, there are an estimated 7.7 billion people in the world. Many of us are fortunate to have access to sources of safe, reliable and clean drinking water. We have never known anything different and generally take it for granted. However, there are billions of people still living without what is referred to by the United Nations as "water that is accessible on the premises, available when needed, and free from contamination". So we are especially fortunate here in the Yukon to live in a beautiful place with an abundant supply of fresh water and clean water.

As I mentioned previously, we have faced our share of boil-water advisories and other water pressures in our territory. I've been proud to be part of some of the initiatives here in the Yukon that contributed to understanding and enhancing Yukon's water resources.

The *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan* of 2014 is an example of our tremendous work done over the years aiming to enhance innovative research, improve data collection and management and to design effective baseline study programs to target critical needs.

Another example of work done was the updated *Mackenzie River Basin Bilateral Water Management Agreement* between Yukon and British Columbia. I was happy to be involved in the legwork of this agreement and to see it come into effect in 2017. This agreement involved extensive work with affected First Nations in advance of the signing, and it enables the governments of Yukon and British Columbia to collaborate and manage waters that flow across the borders.

Mr. Speaker, much work goes into water management in the territory. I would like to thank those who contribute to doing an outstanding job — some of them are in the House here today — with respect to water management, monitoring and research — and the Water Resources branch of the Department of Environment. Consider the importance of our water systems throughout the territory and treat them as the valuable resource that they are.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** It is my pleasure to rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to honour World Water Day and Canada Water Week.

Whoever you are, wherever you are, water is your human right. Water, fire, earth and air have been honoured as key elements of life since the beginning of time. Understandings of the world, of human philosophy, of religion and of nature are based on water as a fundamental element. Water has always played, and continues to play, a critical role in our existence on this planet. Water is vital to feed the world and to guarantee the health of its people.

Water is the bloodstream of the biosphere. It is dynamic and knows no borders. It cycles continuously from earth to ocean to atmosphere. Water's movement above and below Earth's surface shapes our geology, influences our climate and maintains all life. Water is not separate from the ecosystem, from land or from people. It is the very interconnectedness of all life that calls for our integrated approach to water management.

In the Yukon, even before the first World Water Day, water was top of priority for many. Water and its management formed an important part of First Nation final agreements that were being negotiated. That chapter, that journey, began more than 45 years ago. The men and women who championed land claims in the Yukon had the foresight and the vision to acknowledge the important linkage between water, life and development. They articulated a vision of how we can protect our water, our health and our lives while permitting responsible and sustainable development.

Mr. Speaker, some of us here in this House today were present last year when a powerful delegation of Māori spoke at the Kwanlin Dūn Cultural Centre, reinforcing the integral importance of water to the indigenous world view. One of the most exciting elements of their presentation was describing how in March 2017, after 170 years of persistence, in a world first, a New Zealand river was granted the same legal rights in law as a human being. As the Māori spokesperson put it — and I'm quoting: "We have fought to find an approximation in law so that all others can understand that from our perspective treating the river as a living entity is the correct way to approach it, as an indivisible whole, instead of the traditional model for the last 100 years of treating it from a perspective of ownership and management."

In the Yukon, we are blessed with an apparent abundance of water, but like all resources, it is finite, and we must act with the interest of not only the here and now in mind, but also in the interests of our children, of their children and their children's children and for all others who follow. We can choose to go forward and plan to respect this precious resource for our future, or we can continue to squander it. The choice is ours.

In the words of Chief Seattle, words that echo the Māori view from the other side of the world: "Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect."

*Applause*

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

## PETITIONS

### Petition No. 6 — response

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I rise in response to Petition No. 6, presented in the Legislature on November 22, 2018. The petition concerns 11 unreleased lots planned in the Grizzly Valley subdivision north of Whitehorse. The Member for Lake Laberge has also raised this topic in the Legislature during the last Sitting, and I thank him for those questions.

The Government of Yukon has completed significant work in Grizzly Valley in the past several years. This work included the release of 20 lots last November and upgrades to the road in the subdivision, which were also completed last fall. It is also worthy of mention that further road upgrades along Ursa Way are planned for the 2019 building season.

The petition tabled last fall concerns 11 more lots that are planned for the area. These 11 unreleased lots are zoned under the classification of rural residential dog mushing. In part due to public interest in the Department of Community Services Land Development branch and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources Land Planning branch, we will consult with the public in the summer of 2019 on the 11 unreleased lots in Grizzly Valley subdivision. The aim is to review the configuration and permitted uses of these lots.

During this process, community members and the public will have an opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions, and in the interim, we appreciate the perspectives of the residents who have signed the petition regarding the potential incompatibility of the rural residential dog mushing lots with other properties in the subdivision. I wish to assure you that these perspectives will be taken into consideration in the future consultation and decision-making process.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that it's not lost on anyone — the irony here — with me, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Highways and Public Works and this petition being brought forward by probably one of the architects of the Grizzly Valley subdivision. We will continue to take on the challenges that have been left, whether it's the road and trying to ensure we have access for students or whether we go back and take the original zoning and try to correct it now.

We appreciate and respect the views of the citizens. They have also reached out directly to us, we have responded to them and will continue to look at fixes for some challenges that were left for us to fix.

**Speaker:** Is there any further business regarding petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House congratulates Yukon First Nations on the forgiveness of all outstanding comprehensive land claim negotiation loans and the reimbursement to those governments that have already repaid these loans and recognizes:

(1) the significant economic impact loan forgiveness will have on Yukon's economy; and

(2) the decision to forgive loans as real progress toward economic reconciliation.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Health and Social Services to inform this House which non-governmental organizations funded by her department she is considering providing a small cost-of-living increase to and which ones she has decided to freeze the funding for during the upcoming fiscal year.

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

THAT this House recognizes Yukon College receiving up to \$26 million for the construction of a new campus science building in support of their efforts to become Canada's first university in the north and urges the Government of Yukon to continue its efforts to support the transition of Yukon College to become Yukon University.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to direct the Yukon Housing Corporation to address critical safety and security issues at the following downtown Whitehorse senior citizen Yukon Housing apartment buildings: Greenwood Manor; 2017 Alexander Street; 1190 Front Street; Closeleigh Manor; and 22 Waterfront Place by:

(1) consulting with the residents of the above buildings; and

(2) conducting security risk assessments in conjunction with the RCMP regarding safety and security issues associated with access to the above buildings and internal security matters.

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

THAT this House urges the Premier to live up to his commitments about being open and transparent by providing a list of the non-governmental organizations funded by the Department of Health and Social Services which have requested a funding increase to maintain their services in 2019-20, including information showing how much of an increase has been requested and the reasons for that request.

**Speaker:** Are there any further notices of motions?  
Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Mining sector development

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday when speaking about mining, the Premier told this Legislature — and I'll quote: "We did see record exploration numbers in 2018."

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure where the Premier gets his briefing notes, but that does not appear to be factual to me. According to NRCan and the Yukon Geological Survey, the record year for exploration in Yukon was actually in 2011. So for a Premier who claims that accuracy is of the utmost importance, I'll remind him that all MLAs, especially the Premier, are expected to come to this House with accurate information.

We've seen a steady stream of misinformation come from this Premier and this government over the last several years, Mr. Speaker, and this is just the latest example. So would the Premier like to explain why he told this House that 2018 was a record year for exploration here in the Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, it was because it was — it definitely was a record year. It wasn't necessarily the top year, but it was a record year — absolutely. The only difference here is that we hope that this government, by working with First Nation governments, by working with the federal government as well and by having a whole-of-government approach when it comes to the resource industry, we may actually get past exploration and actually see a mine open.

**Mr. Hassard:** I am not sure if the Premier understands what a record is, but it is quite apparent that there were no records broken.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, here is what the Premier said yesterday — and I quote: "We did see record exploration numbers in 2018." As I have said, the Premier is wrong, but don't just take our word for it. Others think the Premier is wrong as well.

Let me quote someone else on this — and I quote: "2018 marks the second highest exploration expenditures in Yukon's history." Who said that? Well, it just so happens that it was the Deputy Premier in a news release from November.

Who do Yukoners believe — the Premier, who says that 2018 was a record year, or the Deputy Premier, who says it wasn't?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I appreciate the comments from the Premier. I am glad that we are debating this comment, actually, because what we are talking about now is: Was it number two, number one, or number three? The reality is this: We had a phenomenal year this last year.

We have debated here about the information that had been provided by NRCan. We came into the last quarter and we discussed those numbers. It was one of the best years that we have ever seen, and that is what the Premier alluded to in his comments.

We can have a long discussion about it, but the reality is that it was very strong. There was a tremendous amount of money spent in that time period — 2010, 2011 and 2012.

What we're hoping is that we actually then see the next stage, which is what every investor has told us and what our companies have told us — that you have to actually take that deposit and turn it into a mine and a project that has some sustainability and some economic impact. That is really what we are focusing on now — that we can do that.

We have brought a bit of certainty to the investment climate. That is really the story at this point. Our communities are doing well, and we are trying to ensure that we build mines.

**Mr. Hassard:** Actually, Mr. Speaker, what we are focusing on here is accuracy. We have heard the Premier say that MLAs are expected to come to this House with accurate information, so we are asking this Premier for accurate information. Now we hear him say one thing; we hear the Deputy Premier say something else.

Let's go through the history on this. On November 15, the Deputy Premier tells Yukoners that exploration numbers in the Yukon for 2018 will be \$142.6 million. On November 19, YGS tells Yukoners that exploration numbers are actually \$114.6 million. I will quote the *Whitehorse Star* from that time, when talking about those exploration numbers — and I quote: "Of that, \$114.6 million has been spent on exploration, down slightly from a year earlier." Then yesterday, the Premier said that we had a record year in 2018.

So Mr. Speaker, who is right here?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Each year, the federal government, NRCan, provides numbers, and it is usually done on a quarterly basis.

There is a projection of what will happen in a season. Sometimes, like last year — there was increased investment from what we saw forecasted to actually what happened. In the fall of the year, NRCan came back — this is all done with the work of Energy, Mines and Resources — and they tabled numbers that they felt were what we would see at the end of the season. Upon the federal government and NRCan recalibrating, they came back and said they were off by about \$24 million. To be fair here — and in all of the times that I have spoken on this, I have always said that these are the projected numbers based on what NRCan has said.

We can continue to focus on this. I don't know what the goal is. At the end of the day, it's also about — does the opposition want bad news for our business community?

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

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Well, you're absolutely getting the truth, and that's really what we're focusing on. We will get numbers, and we will always provide those numbers in the same way that the previous ministers did over the last 10 or 15 years, but then let's celebrate the good news here and the good season that we had versus trying to put the black cloud over something that really was a positive year.

### Question re: Mining sector development

**Mr. Kent:** Last week, we asked the minister about a press release he put out on November 15 saying that exploration expenditures in Yukon for 2018 were going to be \$142.6 million. Four days later, his own department

contradicted him and said that the numbers were actually going to be \$28 million less. In response, the minister said in this House that \$28 million was a small discrepancy. Clearly the minister may not be a numbers guy, but I would hate to see what he thinks a big discrepancy is.

Speaking of which, according to Natural Resources Canada's data from February of this year, the updated exploration numbers for 2018 are now \$98.7 million, or \$44 million less than what the minister said they would be in November.

Can the minister tell us if he is concerned that the numbers for 2018 are now coming in \$44 million less than he said they would?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I would say that I am not surprised by the dialogue we're having. I think that what we're going to see for the next 25 days are consistent attacks by the Member for Copperbelt South as well as the Leader of the Official Opposition, trying to chip away and build a strategic narrative that things are bad in the economy.

At the end of the day, what we saw were people having the opportunity to go out and get a job in this industry. I think maybe even the Member for Copperbelt South was employed in the industry this summer, which is great to know. I'm glad we had the opportunity to provide him a job as well. That's what happened this summer.

Based on our numbers, we will always provide feedback from NRCan. I'm not concerned about the information that I get from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources because the department vets it and brings it through, and that's the number they had at the time.

As for the Yukon Geological Survey, in some cases, they provided numbers that have to do with exploration but maybe not deposit appraisal. The opposition is playing with the information and twisting it to try to build a narrative. I'm sure it will continue to happen. That's okay. At the end of the day, are people buying more equipment, hiring more people, doing better and seeing revenues? They are. That's really what this is about.

**Mr. Kent:** We in the Official Opposition are cheering for the mining industry, and we honestly hope that the Liberals can actually get something done and address industry concerns, but they also need to provide accurate information to those in the industry, particularly those in the service and supply industry here in the territory.

As we mentioned, more and more mining companies and individuals doing business in Yukon are coming to the Official Opposition to express their frustrations with this government. The minister has developed a reputation of being all talk and no action.

Just last Friday, we had another prominent member of this industry come into our office here in Whitehorse to highlight issues he has with this government around timelines and permitting.

Can the minister tell us what analysis he has done on exploration numbers for 2018 and why they are now coming in \$44 million less than he said they would be?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** There were a couple of points there — one was about timelines and one was about the new information that the Member for Copperbelt South has received from NRCan.

At the end of the day, once again, we will provide the number that NRCan has given us. When we look at timelines, the last data that I saw from the Fraser report talked about the three-month and six-month process — it was strong. Do we have work to do around the regulatory process? Yes.

Is this anything new than what was left in the fall of 2016? No, not at all. What we had in 2016 was an absolute vacuum of trust. We had First Nation governments in court and legal proceedings around our regulatory process. We had investors running the other way. That is what we had. Those are the facts. Do you want the truth? That is the truth — to the Leader of the Official Opposition.

What we have now is — we are going to continue to focus on promoting our industry. I spent the morning, if not in meetings with my colleagues, then with one mining company after another, talking about how we can support their projects.

So for anybody who is out there, if they feel they need to speak with me, my door is always open. They can come and talk to us about the regulatory process. But once again, what we are hearing is: "Some guy told me — and you have to answer to that." That is not how it works.

**Mr. Kent:** The truth is that many Yukoners, especially those in the industry, see a trail of broken promises, big talk and no action from this minister.

So as we have highlighted, the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, put out a press release stating that exploration numbers for 2018 in Yukon would be \$142.6 million. Four days later, his department contradicted him, saying they would be \$28 million less. He said that was a small discrepancy, and now in the latest NRCan numbers, we found that the 2018 numbers are actually \$44 million less.

Can the Deputy Premier tell us what initiatives he has introduced to address what looks like a softening exploration industry here in the Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** What I would say is let's take a look at the exploration numbers under, actually, the Member for Copperbelt South. What were the exploration numbers in his last year in this job? Then let's take a look at what the numbers were this past year. That would be a good start to understand, if this is the dialogue we are having.

We will continue to support the industry. Like we said, I appreciate the fact that 400 people — the majority were Yukoners and many people from our communities — were employed this summer building a mine. They were getting their families to move back home.

I appreciate the work of Victoria Gold. I like seeing posters and signs that say, "Yukoners, it's time to come home." You know why it's time to come home? It is because there is opportunity at home now. It's not a failing GDP like we have seen in the past. We see strong numbers; we see opportunities and that's the difference. That's really what Yukoners will hear.

I will come in here for the rest of the session and defend the work of Energy, Mines and Resources. I will defend the work of Economic Development — IPP, ensuring that we're building transmission lines, building the Eagle Gold mine. We do not stop. We continue to work so there is no trail of broken promises.

I think we have pushed some buttons. We have the whole opposition now responding to this because, you know what? What's not factual is we are getting —

**Speaker:** Order.

### **Question re: Energy supply and demand**

**Ms. Hanson:** Mr. Speaker, in late December, the Yukon Utilities Board directed the Yukon Energy Corporation to end their demand-side management programs. Demand-side management is intended to reduce energy consumption, especially during peak hours, by changing how and when electricity is used. The Yukon Utilities Board argued that it's better to leave demand-side management to the Yukon government. The directive ignores the fact that utilities in British Columbia, Quebec and Saskatchewan all successfully run their own demand-side management programs.

At a time when we should be working to reduce our energy consumption and, by extension, our fossil fuel use, the Yukon Utilities Board has removed one of Yukon's most effective tools. Does this government agree with the Yukon Utilities Board and their position that Yukon Energy Corporation should not carry out programs to reduce energy use?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** The Yukon Utilities Board has issued a board order regarding Yukon Energy Corporation's 2017-18 general rate application. The Yukon Energy Corporation is working through the complex ruling to determine what it means for YEC's 2019 business plan and for ratepayers. The government recognizes that even a small rate increase can be a hardship for some people.

As for the demand-side management, I actually agree with many of the comments from the Leader of the Third Party. This is really something we need to focus on when we take into consideration the total conversation about our energy use. I know I can endeavour to bring back some information for her, but I know Yukon Energy — there are aspects of the GRA ruling — I think in at least one case — that may be being challenged right now, because we feel that demand-side management is a great way to ensure that we deal with our energy future.

I have also instructed the team at the Yukon Development Corporation to take a look at all options that are available to me that I can bring back to my colleagues to ensure that we look at demand-side management as a pathway forward.

I appreciate the points. They're very valid, and we continue to speak with members of the community about this important subject.

**Ms. Hanson:** I thank the minister for his answer, because not only is leaving demand-side management to government inconsistent with other jurisdictions in Canada, it also permanently removes the potential for setting time-of-use

prices to sell electricity at a lower price during off-peak hours. Selling electricity during off-peak hours at a lower rate encourages customers to use electricity when it's at its lowest demand, which in turn would reduce our reliance on LNG generation.

Time-of-use programs have a well-established track record; however, this demand-side management tool is one that only the utility can implement, as it requires action from the utility itself.

Just prior to the Yukon Utilities Board decision, Yukon Energy Corporation stated in this House that they were looking at doing demand-side management pilot projects, and the minister himself indicated his support.

Will this government give Cabinet direction to the Yukon Utilities Board to revoke their directive and allow Yukon Energy to continue their efforts to reduce energy consumption through demand-side management?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I will not at this particular moment state that we will give direction. What I have requested is to have all of the information so I understand what that entails. I am waiting to see the finality of some of the challenges coming from Yukon Energy on this subject.

Some colleagues here — the Member for Lake Laberge as well as the Member for Takhini-Kopper King — and I are working on trying to support the agricultural industry. We have looked at ensuring that we have a really good understanding of what is happening on rate rebalancing. What is the cost of energy? It's something that is important work. One of the things that we have looked at is if there is the opportunity to even have a different price of electricity for the agricultural industry and things like that.

There are two separate subjects: there is demand-side management but also the rate balancing. Their rate policy directive of 1995 was recently amended to provide longer term certainty there will not be any rebalancing of electrical rates between the customer classes in the short term. But we are now undertaking the work that needs to be done. You need to have that data in order to make your decisions about what you charge — whether it's at the residential or the industrial level — and that is important work. I agree with the Leader of the Third Party. We need to look into it, and that's what we're going to do.

**Ms. Hanson:** The issue at hand here is demand-side management. The fact that the Yukon Utilities Board denied Yukon Energy's request to continue their demand-side management program is unfortunate, but it's not inconsistent with their current mandate. The Yukon Utilities Board was created in a time when the environmental impact of their decision-making was not considered a priority. Times have changed and the Yukon Utilities Board mandate needs to change with them.

Yukon would not be the first jurisdiction to make this change. Among others, Alberta has directed their utility regulator to — and I quote: "... protect social, economic and environmental interests of Alberta..."

Does this government support changing the Yukon Utilities Board mandate to ensure it considers environmental and social impacts in its decision-making, in addition to cost?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** As I stated, the principles and values that are being stated by the Leader of the Third Party, I agree with. What has been undertaken is there was a decision by the Yukon Utilities Board, as I understand it, and I said I would come back — Yukon Energy has challenged some of those decisions. They feel — they agree with the Leader of the Third Party, they agree with me and probably the Official Opposition — that demand-side management based on what has previously been done in this government and what we're all trying to do is important.

Will I take steps to put in an order-in-council? I have to talk to my colleagues. I need the right information to bring back to them. I have asked the Yukon Development Corporation in their work to gather that information. I had a bilateral meeting just last week with the president and requested that we pull that information together so we can make an informed decision. I think that's what the Leader of the Third Party would want us to do, and that's the work we are going to undertake because it's important work.

#### **Question re: Porter Creek group home replacement**

**Ms. McLeod:** On January 30, 2018, a local realtor confirmed to the CBC that the Liberal government had entered into a conditional sale agreement for the purchase of 22 Wann Road. That was almost 14 months ago, yet the government has still been unable to get the facility open despite claims of urgency. If 14 months of delays is what the Liberals consider acting urgently, I would really hate to see how long it takes them to act on something that's a real priority.

I didn't get any answers yesterday, but I hope I will today. Can the minister explain why this allegedly urgent project is still not open?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I'm happy to address this issue again on the floor of the Legislature. This is twice this session; we dealt with it in the last session as well and we'll continue, I guess, to deal with it.

I'm a little bit perplexed — the opposition members seem to have been against the Wann Road project and against youth, and then they were for youth, and now they're coming back and questioning the whole thing again. I'm not sure where they stand on the youth-in-care issue, but that's for others I guess to figure out.

I will say to the Member for Watson Lake that in April 2018, the Yukon government purchased property at 22 Wann Road for a new group home. That's less than a year ago, Mr. Speaker. A tender for building renovations closed on December 6, 2018, and a contract has been awarded in the amount of \$989,000. The renovations will convert the building from a bed and breakfast to a group home and bring it up to current building code and safety standards. The work is on schedule for substantial completion by April 30, 2019, scarcely a year after we purchased the property. It is a priority

for this government, and I'm sure the Minister of Health will be able to answer more questions on this issue.

#### **Question re: Mining collaborative framework**

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, on March 17, 2017 — over two years ago — the Liberals issued a press release saying that they would address the mining industry's concerns around timelines and reassessments through a collaborative framework.

The press release states — and I quote: "The three parties have also committed to address industry concerns around timelines and re-assessments through a collaborative framework."

Since that time, the Premier has delivered zero results. We continue to hear from companies that are concerned that the Liberal government has been unable to deliver on this promise. So can the Premier tell us when he last met with First Nations and industry to discuss the collaborative framework and what was accomplished at that meeting?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, we have two processes that are underway that really bring all individuals to the table. What I'll speak to is the mining MOU. Of course, there's also a reset MOU around the YESAA piece, which I'll leave to the Premier.

We are continuing to have very successful dialogue around dealing with a series of issues, which are: duplication of the regulatory process; some of the legacy pieces around class 1; and how we work together to define the future, which is really around our mineral development strategy. You will remember that there was a mineral development strategy that went up in flames a number of years ago.

We have now had First Nations come back to the government and say: "Hey, we would like to work collaboratively with you on the mineral development future, and we also want industry at the table." That is work that we will be discussing as we go through. There is an internal process with a number of First Nations that is underway, but that will really continue to focus on having all of the parties together at the table — something that we are very excited about.

We will also, with the support of First Nations, continue to look internally at things like duplication, under the spirit of some of the work that has been done previously — I look forward to questions 2 and 3.

**Mr. Kent:** While I appreciate that answer from the minister, what I was focused on was the collaborative framework that was announced to deal with timelines and reassessments over two years ago. I had asked when the last meeting was — no answer to that question.

As I stated, over two years ago, the Liberals and this Premier made a promise to the mining industry — that was that they would develop a collaborative framework to address their concerns around timelines and reassessments. Unless we have missed a press release, we haven't been able to see any action on this collaborative framework.

Can the Premier name one tangible thing that he has done in the last two years that has addressed industry concerns around timelines and reassessments?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I can start with the oversight group presenting the priorities and the work plan to the CYFN lands and resource management meeting on February 19, if he wants something specific. The group is seeking input and further developments as options and solutions to identify the priorities.

Mr. Speaker, we had to untangle a mess in this particular file. We can go over again what happened with Bill S-6, and we can go over the fact that with the previous government there was a lack of trust with the First Nations whose traditional territories we are talking about, and this is taking some time and effort.

This reset oversight group is a joint effort between the Government of Canada, the Government of Yukon and the First Nation governments to collectively seek efficiencies and to improve on the YESAA process. It has been a herculean effort to get here after the mess that we were left with through Bill S-6 — the amendments to the five-year YESAA process — that left this industry and the Yukon behind by a decade as far as progress toward actually having First Nations where they should be, with a better equity stake in the industry that we are speaking of. That oversight group and others result from that YESAA reset memorandum of understanding, and it demonstrates a genuine commitment, Mr. Speaker, by all parties to improve the relationship and turn those long-standing issues into solutions.

I understand the frustrations, but we are working on building that trust.

**Mr. Kent:** The Premier and his government promised industry that they would address their concerns around timelines and reassessments through the development of a collaborative framework. That promise was made over two years ago. The Premier continues to talk a good game, but unfortunately we in the Yukon — especially the industry players here in the Yukon — aren't seeing any results. It is unfortunate because the mining industry had hoped he would have taken action to address their concerns. Instead, all they have gotten from him over two years is finger-pointing and passing the buck.

Will the Premier tell us when the collaborative framework will be completed?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, we answer the question and we still get the rhetoric.

The oversight group — we spoke about the meeting that happened on February 19. Again, the members opposite are asking for progress. We give them progress, but yet they can't get off their speaking notes.

Mr. Speaker, we are moving forward on this extremely important reset, but we do have to bring up the fact of why we're here, why we're at this reset. It was because of the actions of the previous government, and we are building that trust. It's great to see great conversations about the industry at the Yukon Forum, great conversations about the resource industry, adding an equity stake into this, and it will take time.

From all of the companies that we do speak to, they understand. They do understand the situation that we're in, and they are very thankful for the work. The members opposite can either try listening to the answers or try shouting over them as much as they want. I understand their frustrations. They were in government for a long time and they had an awful lot of stuff in front of them that they just couldn't accomplish. We're working forward with this oversight group. We have had meetings with CYFN. The oversight group met with YESAB on August 9, 2018, starting those initial conversations, and we have been meeting ever since then.

There are conversations going on with the Yukon Forum; there's a huge effort happening right now with the Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources, bringing in his colleagues from other departments and having a real conversation to bring that trust up to where it needs to be so that solutions can be put forward. We're very excited about what's happening.

**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. 326

**Clerk:** Motion No. 326, standing in the name of Mr. Hutton.

**Speaker:** It is moved by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun:

THAT this House supports economic reconciliation with Yukon First Nations as a means of achieving a more prosperous and economically vibrant territory for all.

**Mr. Hutton:** I'm very pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 326, which states that this House supports economic reconciliation with Yukon First Nations as a means of achieving a more prosperous and economically vibrant territory for all.

I'm very proud to be part of a party that campaigned on the commitment of respectful government-to-government relations with First Nation governments. In the Yukon, we have 14 First Nations, each with its own governance structure established long before settlers arrived on this land. Eleven of those 14 First Nations are self-governing, making Yukon home to roughly half of the modern comprehensive treaties and self-government agreements in Canada.

As the MLA for Mayo-Tatchun, I'm in the unique and privileged position of having three self-governing Northern Tutchone First Nation governments in my riding: Selkirk First Nation, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation and Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation.

I'm a passionate advocate for the importance of respectful and collaborative relationships with our First Nation governments. I believe strongly in achieving reconciliation with our Yukon First Nation governments and citizens. For many First Nation governments, the first step toward tangible reconciliation is self-governance. One of the key priorities of our government is to work in collaboration with all First Nations, both those with and those without signed agreements. We are making progress toward this goal, and Yukoners in all communities are beginning to feel the benefits of that collaboration.

Our government has approached collaboration in a number of ways, all centred around the concept that when we meet together and speak face to face, we can move forward in the same direction. I'm very pleased that we were able to fulfill our commitment to re-establish the Yukon Forum. We have participated in nine Yukon Forums since coming into office.

These forums are so valuable to our territory, as they bring together many levels of government to help facilitate discussions which allow us to work together in the advancement of shared priorities and goals for our territory.

Another key collaboration that took place fairly early on when we came into office was a luncheon at the AME Roundup conference where we hosted chiefs and mining executives. This allowed for the first time a frank and honest discussion about relationships, priorities and goals while all of these individuals were together in one room. This kind of deep collaboration between our governments is new, and again I must say that I'm very proud of the work that we're doing as a government in this regard. Getting to this point where our government has a respectful and trusting relationship with First Nation governments has taken significant time and effort. In response to meetings such as the one I just mentioned, our government has taken action to ensure that we're working together, fulfilling our commitments and continuing to promote the important process of reconciliation.

Last spring, we signed a new resource royalty sharing agreement with First Nations. This agreement settled a long-standing dispute about the interpretation of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and will give self-governing First Nations a larger portion of shared royalties. This is a tangible example of a government that's willing to work with First Nation governments and respect that benefits from resource extractions must be properly shared. What's important to recognize is that our goals as governments are ultimately the same. We want a better life for our people and positive improvements to the well-being of our communities. Reconciliation is about coming together and uniting around these common goals. It's a wonderful and powerful thing to have all First Nation governments and the Yukon government advocating for Yukon issues in unison.

I'll shift now to focus more on economics. It wasn't so long ago that the rest of Canada was enjoying GDP growth and Yukon was in a recession. No quartz mining was happening, and the government of the day — the Yukon Party — was fighting with First Nation governments over their

federally legislated rights to lands and resources. Now — and I'm happy to say this — Yukon continues to see strong spending in the mineral sector. We can attribute this success to a few different things, but one very important element is that our government has changed the tone of our relationship with First Nations. We've gone from a previously very adversarial government and moved to a much more collaborative and thoughtful approach. Because of this shift, we're really starting to see positive impact and movement in our economy.

A specific example of collaboration between our government and a Yukon First Nation is the ATAC road. In March 2018, our government, in partnership with Na Cho Nyäk Dun, issued a joint decision document for the construction of a 65-kilometre all-season resource road north of Mayo to the ATAC Resources Tiger property. An agreement between our government and the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun was signed February 21, 2018, to establish a collaborative planning committee to create a local land use plan for the Beaver River portion of the Stewart River watershed and to work with ATAC to develop a road access management plan.

The planning committee is made up of two representatives of the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun and two representatives from the Yukon government. This is — and continues to be — a great demonstration of our government's commitment to advancing reconciliation with First Nations and to bringing sustainable development and tangible benefits to Yukon communities.

Another example of collaboration and investment to promote economic growth in rural communities like mine is the Yukon Resource Gateway project. This project will provide a bypass at Carmacks and approximately 650 kilometres of needed upgrades of existing road infrastructure in the Dawson and Nahanni ranges — two key areas of high mineral potential and active mining in Yukon. The project would provide sustainable employment for Yukoners, significant long-term economic opportunities for Yukon First Nations and skills and employment training to strengthen our communities. Our government continues discussions with First Nations to develop agreements that will provide additional capacity to participate in and to benefit from this project.

I would like to highlight an example of a situation where our government has worked collaboratively with First Nations within my riding, and that's in resolving an illegal situation on the McGregor Creek road. Several years ago, there was a 17-kilometre portion of a road built near McGregor Creek, about 47 kilometres north of Carmacks. Construction of this road was not permitted and it was an unauthorized environmental disturbance. I met with chief and council in Pelly Crossing, and I have spoken to my constituents in Carmacks. They have brought forward concerns around protecting this area and ensuring that the environmental integrity of this area is maintained. This road cut right through one of my constituent's traplines and has caused him significant grief. Irresponsible actions like this cause serious upset to my

constituents' traditional way of life and in no way promote reconciliation among our people.

I am very pleased that our government was able to recognize the great concern raised around this disturbance and has taken action to effect change. An interim mineral withdrawal to prohibit claim staking and exploration in that area has been put in place.

Further, amendments have been made to the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* to clarify and strengthen the act's penalty structures and to add a provision enabling a court order remediation and reclamation of natural resources damaged because of an offense. The previous penalties under the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* for this type of activity were limited and too narrow to sufficiently address reclamation or restitution orders. I am really happy to see that this act was amended.

Our government committed to continuing to work with affected First Nations and residents to resolve the issue with the McGregor Creek road. Working together to address these kinds of issues is an important piece of building trust and promoting reconciliation. Strengthened relationships with our First Nation governments on these kinds of issues help to enhance our ability to advance economic and social prosperity for all of Yukon. Resource development must be done in a social and environmentally responsible manner.

I would like to take a moment to recognize Victoria Gold Corporation as a leader in our territory in corporate and social responsibility and community enrichment initiatives. Victoria Gold Corporation began site construction on August 18, 2017. In 2017, the company carried out a \$6.2-million exploration program and began phase 1 of a \$400-million construction program for the Eagle Gold mine. They have done an excellent job in structuring large-scale contracts and breaking them down into manageable pieces to ensure that local vendors are provided an opportunity to participate. To date, a total of \$144 million in contracts has been awarded to Yukon companies; \$77 million of this includes joint ventures with the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun Development Corporation.

In October, we had about 250 Yukon residents working on the project. That represents around 44 percent of their total workforce. They are running a great recruitment campaign that I am sure many folks here today have seen. It's called the "Yukoners, It's Time to Come Home" campaign. Victoria Gold is encouraging Yukoners to work closer to home and get back to their roots.

They have also offered support to important local events. Notable items from 2018 include: the second Gathering of People Health Conference in Mayo; Yukon Hospital Foundation Festival of Trees fundraising gala; the Kwanlin Dün First Nation millennial town hall; Yukon Imagination Library; the Mayo roaming reader event; the Tahltan Strong benefit concert; the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun youth gathering; and the 41<sup>st</sup> Yukon Native Hockey Tournament.

Another wonderful initiative that Victoria Gold is responsible for is the Every Student, Every Day society. In 2018, this society raised \$175,000. Victoria Gold and the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun established a CBA scholarship

program in 2012. It is still being offered today. In the fall of 2018, nine students from my community were recipients of this scholarship, including Sheena McGinty, Jana Modras, Helaina Moses, Deanna Peter-Profeit, Ellenise Profeit, Erin Profeit, Victoria Skaper, Patricia Wallingham and Asia Winter-Sinnott.

Again, thank you to Victoria Gold for the wonderful work that they have done and all that they have contributed to our rural Yukon communities, specifically my community in Mayo.

Shifting back again to look at what our government is doing to promote reconciliation both on a government-to-government level and internally from a work-culture perspective, in 2018, 379 Yukon government employees completed the Yukon First Nations 101 course offered at Yukon College. We now have 16 trained in the Government of Yukon aboriginal recruitment and development program. We have formed 16 working groups to implement the joint action plan. We have also developed a dedicated online space on the yukon.ca website that contains a wealth of information, along with Yukon Forum newsletters, priorities and news releases.

Our government has added mandatory First Nation participation and northern knowledge and experience clauses to Yukon government requests for proposals. We worked with the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun to develop a management plan for the Lansing Post Heritage Site to guide the protection, conservation and interpretation of the area's history.

We have also worked jointly with the Selkirk First Nation and the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun to create a management plan for the Ddhaw Ghro Habitat Protection Area.

We provided hands-on training for log-building conservation at Fort Selkirk and Forty Mile historic sites in partnership with the Selkirk First Nation and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.

A lot of work has been done to date, and I am proud of the collaboration that I am seeing our government undertake. These are all steps in the right direction.

Just quickly, I will mention that, on the topic of Fort Selkirk, there are two open houses being held to review the final draft of the Fort Selkirk historic site management plan. There is one in Whitehorse on March 25 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre. The other is in Pelly Crossing from noon to 3:00 p.m. at the Selkirk First Nation Administration Building. These events are free to attend and all are welcome.

I would like to take a moment to recognize some exemplary folks in my riding who are both recipients of awards at the Arctic Indigenous Investment Conference earlier this year. They are: Joella Hogan of Yukon Soaps Company out of Mayo for winning Indigenous Business of the Year, and Dr. Greg Finnegan and Andrijana Djokic from Na Cho Nyäk Dun Development Corporation for winning Community Champion of the Year — congratulations to both.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to highlight a major announcement in yesterday's federal budget that falls under the category of economy reconciliation. I tabled a motion about it earlier today. The budget speech put it this way: "To support Indigenous communities' ability to invest in their own priorities, and to demonstrate the Government's commitment to recognizing Indigenous rights, Budget 2019 proposes funding of \$1.4 billion over seven years starting in 2018-19, to forgive all outstanding comprehensive claim negotiation loans and to reimburse Indigenous governments that have already repaid these loans. Forgiving and reimbursing loans will allow more than 200 Indigenous communities..." across Canada "...to reinvest in their priorities like governance, infrastructure and economic development that will increase health and well-being for all community members." Of course, several of those communities are here in Yukon, including Carmacks, Pelly and Mayo.

I want to congratulate Yukon First Nations on the forgiveness of all outstanding comprehensive land claim negotiation loans. They had been asking for this for a number of years, and I am pleased to see that it is happening. I know that this was on the agenda during meetings between our government, First Nation governments and the Government of Canada. This decision will have a significant impact on Yukon's economy. While the details are yet to come, the money coming back to Yukon First Nations will most definitely be in the millions of dollars. It is encouraging to see this issue finally being addressed, and it demonstrates real progress toward economic reconciliation.

I have every faith in our government that we will continue making positive advancements toward reconciliation with our Yukon First Nations. I hope that everyone here today can recognize that this is the right path forward.

I would like to thank all Members of this House for the opportunity to speak to this motion today.

**Mr. Hassard:** Thanks to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for bringing this important motion, Motion No. 326, to the floor for debate today.

To me, the strong presence of First Nation-owned companies throughout the Yukon is the best indication of the success that anyone can point to. First Nation businesses are woven into every aspect of our economy, including construction, accommodation, real estate, aviation and many others.

I think that it is important to put on the record that the previous government had a strong record of partnering with the First Nations.

I believe that, in listening to the member opposite just now, this is something this government certainly forgets to remember.

A few good examples of those strong partnerships are things such as the River Bend housing development, which was done in conjunction with the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. If I could just quote for a minute from a news release on April 12, 2016, which was titled "Da Daghay Development Corporation unveils design for River Bend housing

development": "The Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Da Daghay Development Corporation and Government of Yukon in partnership with the Government of Canada have unveiled the designs for River Bend, a 42-unit affordable housing development in the Whistle Bend area of Whitehorse."

"The development will consist of three low-maintenance, SuperGreen and high efficiency buildings, surrounded by naturally-occurring forest and an abundance of green space. Each building will contain 14 units ranging in size from one to three bedrooms."

It goes on to say, "The partnership will provide opportunities to Ta'an Kwäch'än citizens and Yukoners through employment and business by way of capacity development and skill transfer. An emphasis will be placed on Ta'an Kwäch'än youth mentorship."

Mr. Speaker, another great example is the work that our government did in conjunction with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation to fundamentally alter the land titles system to protect aboriginal title. Again, if I could quote from a news release dated July 5, 2016, which was titled, "New Land Titles Act regulations are first of their kind in Canada."

"The Government of Yukon has proclaimed the *Land Titles Act, 2015* and enacted its accompanying regulations, an unprecedented milestone for the territory and the country.

"The Yukon government is pleased to be leading the country with these groundbreaking legislative changes," Premier Darrell Pasloski said. "We are delivering on our promise to establish a framework to protect the integrity of the land titles system, secure interests of property owners, and provide new economic development options. With the instrumental support of Kwanlin Dün First Nation, we have introduced a new mechanism for registering Settlement Land while safeguarding Aboriginal rights and title. This will create new residential and commercial development opportunities."

"Four new regulations under the act establish: rules for registering First Nation Settlement Land in the Land Titles Office; requirements for plans of survey and other plans; general administration and operations provisions; and also set transaction fees.

"New provisions enable the Land Titles Office to keep pace with the volume and complexity of modern land dealings in Yukon and provide more accessible land titles information."

Those are just two examples. It's easy to see why we would vote in favour of this motion, but I think the government still has questions that need to be answered in terms of moving First Nation businesses forward, things such as: Where is the First Nation procurement policy? We know the Deputy Premier promised First Nations that it would be rolled out with the rest of the procurement announcements. He said it would not be a one-off, but in fact, that didn't happen. It appears it's going to be a one-off.

Another question, Mr. Speaker, is how will the carbon tax affect First Nation businesses and development corporations? We've been told that First Nations themselves will be rebated, but how will the businesses and development corporations be handled?

So as I said, we will be voting in favour of this motion, but I would just like to, in closing, say to the Premier that we need him, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that there is substantial mining activity so that First Nation companies, as well as all Yukoners, are able to continue to move forward and thrive here in the Yukon.

**Ms. Hanson:** In rising to speak to this motion, there are a couple thoughts that go through my mind. One is that when I first read this motion, I read it as a motion that encourages members of this House — this House — to support economic reconciliation with Yukon First Nations as a means of achieving a more prosperous and economically vibrant territory. I guess why I'm hesitating is that I'm really saddened to hear the two first speakers — basically one is doing what we've gotten so used to, which is to repeat the litany of all the wonderful things the Yukon Liberal government has done and trashing the Yukon Party, and then the Yukon Party getting up and saying the wonderful things they did and questioning the Yukon Liberal Party. Then they're questioning the Premier in terms of where they're coming from and what they're going to be doing.

I think from my perspective and from the New Democratic Party perspective, I don't know how many times we have talked about and raised the issues that emanate from what was expressed in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report in 2015. I have said many times in this House that the spirit and intent of much of what the TRC raised has underlain so much of the dialogue and the discussion among all the parties in this territory. It has been at times a very difficult conversation in this territory as we have worked to try to find our way forward as people working together — First Nation and non-First Nation.

I have to register that I'm really disappointed. I understand that people feel a need to champion one party or another, but we're talking about reconciliation here. We're talking about our role as elected members, regardless of whatever party we got elected as, because, you know what? That's pretty ephemeral; things change over time. Governments change over time, but ultimately it's the government and whomever is in that place. So it doesn't matter whether it was, or is today, a Liberal government, a Conservative government or an NDP government. Each one of them has, over the course of time, played an important role at different times moving the goalpost forward.

There have been setbacks — significant setbacks — but I find it disconcerting that we're using our Wednesday debates to reinforce the notion that's out there that it becomes the wasted Wednesday. This, as opposed to — we have a meaningful conversation to be had here to exchange some ideas about what we've learned from some of the initiatives that have gone forward and to exchange ideas about where we think the opportunities are as we go forward.

I think back over the last number of years and the number — I can certainly think of some of the roadblocks, and I'm glad the Member for Mayo-Tatchun raised this afternoon, the issue of the one statement in the federal budget that caught my

attention as well. I have to tell you how significant it was to see a major federal impediment to progress as equal parties to the conversation about reconciliation at a national level, which is really how we enter into and conclude effective treaties with First Nations as equals.

As having been somebody who has been on the federal side all my career and having watched the challenge, the absolute resistance and the brick wall that existed through Liberal governments — Conservative governments and Liberal governments — to ever consider removing the loans program as a means of financing the negotiation of comprehensive land claims and the challenges that Yukon First Nations faced as the negotiations dragged on and the costs mounted — we saw, in some cases, where some First Nations were going to owe more than they would get as a capital transfer or as a transfer with respect to what was called "compensation". That's not only unjust, but it's also very demoralizing for all the players at the table — all the people who are there representing the interests of their respective governments. That was a significant move by this federal government, and I give them credit for that. I give credit to the ministers who championed that and to the system change that it demonstrates.

One of my heroes with respect to the whole public dialogue about reconciliation is Senator Murray Sinclair, and he has been no slouch when he talks about the process of reconciliation. He talks about how hard it is. It is not a word to be bandied about. This is a process, he says, and it is hard. There are no quick solutions. Yes, we can have all sorts of little events or we can have all sorts of announcements, but unless we are fundamentally changing the goalposts against which those soccer balls — those markers — are being set, that's what we're doing, and we have a danger of mixing up process for progress. I caution against doing that mix because we will do a disservice not just to this current generation, but to future generations.

One of the things that Murray Sinclair has made clear — he says that there's very clearly a disparity in the perspectives on reconciliation. He says that reconciliation will not be achieved as long as one side sees it as a question of rights and the other side sees it as a question of benevolence, of what we're willing to give.

I hearken back to the language in the truth and reconciliation report — and there are a number of recommendations. I never can remember exactly which one it is — if it's 43 or 47 or whatever — but the recommendations that are embedded in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's report speak to the whole issue of achieving economic reconciliation and prosperity and an economic vibrancy for our future. They speak to the fundamental importance of questioning some of the legal underpinnings on which we base how we're prepared to engage. When I say "we", I'm talking about government because that's what we represent in this Legislative Assembly — the Yukon government.

We are still very far away from that in this territory. We have some fundamental challenges with respect to living up to

what we entered into — if we are truthful about what we entered into — in terms of a contract, an arrangement and an agreement with First Nations in this territory as a territorial government.

Until and unless we do, then I don't believe that we are going to achieve economic reconciliation, because it will be on our terms. Yes, we're prepared to enter into a process to talk with First Nation governments, but only as long as they're willing to play by the rules as we have established them. I'm referring here primarily to the economic vibrancy that will come once we have loosened our hold on what we define and how we define the whole issue of how we manage our natural, renewable and non-renewable resources — our whole resource sector.

We have made commitments in agreements to do that, but then we tell people, "You know what? Wouldn't it be nice if we just had a conversation? We'll deal with this part here and that part there, and we'll segment it out." Mr. Speaker, I think that may achieve peace on the waterfront for now, but I'm not sure in the long term that it will achieve reconciliation, nor am I convinced that it will work toward renewing and effectively achieving the long-term goals of reconciliation and those financial implications.

We have realized that, despite it all and despite all the various impediments that have been in place for the first four First Nations for 25 years or more, a number of the First Nations have, almost beneath the radar, become incredibly important economic players in this territory.

That became vibrantly clear during the Senate hearings on Bill S-6. I think back to the testimony of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. When Brian MacDonald, a current ADM in the Yukon government — but at that time, legal counsel for Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — testified in front of that Senate committee on behalf of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — but he also said that he wore a couple of hats at that hearing, and one of them was as legal counsel for their development corporation. We are talking about 2014, Mr. Speaker, and think about how things have changed in the last five years in terms of the growth of various development corporations.

Even in 2014, 10 years after their agreements, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations along with Teslin and others had effectively invested as much as they possibly could in the Yukon and were investing outside of the Yukon. At that time, their investment portfolio was about \$30 million. They had revenues of over \$65 million, and they were employing over 170 Yukoners. When you start multiplying that by the number of development corporations in this territory, you start realizing the economic potential that's there.

That is what I thought we would be exploring — how do we seize that and make it real? When I talk about the danger of trying to do this on our terms only, I am reminded again of the quote by the Mayo Indian Band of the day — the current Na Cho Nyäk Dun — when they made their submission. I will keep saying this until we actually get it, but when the Mayo Indian Band made a submission to the Penner commission on self-government — because you will recall that the Yukon

land claims initially failed in 1984 when Mayo took the lead and voted against the comprehensive land claim for a couple of reasons. The key one was that there was no mention of governance, because at the time, the federal government wanted to "buy out" — the territorial government clearly did, if you read the 1974 land claim offer that the territorial government offered — Indian rights, and Mayo said no.

It wasn't just Mayo that triggered the federal government into establishing the Penner commission that looked at what aboriginal governance would look like — the Indian self-government policy.

When the Mayo Indian Band made their submission, they quoted, of all people, Tolstoy: "I sit on a man's back choking him and making him carry me, and yet assure myself and others that I am sorry for him and wish to lighten his load by all possible means — except by getting off his back."

Sometimes when I think about how governments want to approach dealing with reconciliation, it's like, "We'll do it as long as we control the process." I'm not convinced that this is the path to reconciliation or economic vibrancy in our territory.

I am hopeful that there are other perspectives that will come into this conversation that will focus on what ideas and opportunities we see to build on the amazing work that has been done, not just by development corporations — when we see, since 2007, the trajectory of growth in terms of First Nation tourism and cultural activities — what was that little initiative around the Canada Winter Games that grew into Adäka? There are so many spinoffs and so many opportunities there. But it means — how do we do that in true partnership and not in a controlled partnership — because we know what that is like and we know the outcomes of that.

Mr. Speaker, I think I'll leave it there. I support what I believe is the good intent of this motion. We can move on from there.

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** I'm very pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 326 on the subject of economic reconciliation. I certainly thank my colleague the MLA for Mayo-Tatchun for raising this topic for debate today. It's very important and timely.

Given some of the questions that came up today in Question Period, it's a really good day to talk about economic reconciliation with our Yukon First Nations in our amazing territory.

I will make some comments throughout my presentation today on what I've heard in some of the comments from the members opposite.

Reconciliation with First Nations as a means of achieving a more prosperous and economically vibrant territory for all is a goal that I am committed to in my role as Minister of Tourism and Culture and Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate. It is also a personal goal of mine to live the vision that the elders had for us. This is something I often talk about when I'm talking to Yukoners and when I'm talking to visitors who come to the territory — that we are absolutely working toward living the vision that our elders had set for us,

whether we're working in First Nation governments or other governments. That vision was summarized in the 1977 preface of the publication of the 1973 *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow*, and this is what it said — and I quote: "... that all the Indians of the Yukon had the right to develop their lives fully in a society where their economic, cultural and social wishes and needs were capable of being met..."

This society is something that our government is committed to fostering. Today, Yukon is truly a case study of indigenous self-determination, with 11 of our Yukon's 14 First Nations having constitutionally protected, modern treaties and self-government agreements. This is incredible when one considers that there are only 26 modern treaties in total across hundreds of First Nation and other indigenous groups in Canada.

However, we have not yet achieved the elders' vision of full economic reconciliation. We have had a framework, though, for reconciliation in Yukon for decades.

This is why one of the goals of our government is to restore our relationships with Yukon First Nations and to evolve these relationships into true partnerships for the benefit of all Yukon citizens. This is something that drives my work each and every day and something that we are committed to within our government.

I am actively pursuing in my mandate as Minister of Tourism and Culture and Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate — the tourism industry provides significant opportunity for economic reconciliation. In 2017, I had the distinct privilege of hearing Senator Murray Sinclair speak at the International Indigenous Tourism Conference on the importance of tourism to cultural revitalization and economic reconciliation. He said that the world can learn from us. Tourism can be part of our storytelling culture. Our unique stories need to be part of what tourism is about. The tourism industry can contribute to languages thriving again and in our ability to speak about the earth in our words, in our own languages.

Mr. Speaker, through Senator Sinclair's words, I see that tourism is not only a vehicle for economic reconciliation; it's a pathway to cultural revitalization.

As the members of this House know, my department worked in partnership with stakeholders, including Yukon First Nations, to create the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*. The process of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* was in itself an exercise in economic reconciliation as First Nation partners sat with tourism industry representatives to help shape the path forward. There was a lot of sharing of perspectives and exploration of potential partnerships in those steering committee meetings. First Nation representatives on the steering committee included the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association, Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce, the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. What we did through this process is we came to that table as a partner, along with the entire industry — which includes, of course, Yukon First Nations — and created an ethical space in the centre so that we could have those discussions about

collaboration — real discussions about collaboration and developing a plan that was done in a very different and unique way.

During the extensive engagement process, the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* steering committee heard that the strategy must support the development of authentic and meaningful Yukon First Nation tourism experiences for First Nation governments, development corporations, organizations and citizens. Specifically, they heard that for a tourism strategy to be successful for Yukon First Nations, it must explore financial incentives to support Yukon First Nation experience development, increase Yukon First Nation capacity through skills development and training, explore opportunities to engage and involve Yukon First Nation youth in experience development, work with Yukon First Nations to explore the role of cultural centres in support of tourism and support Yukon First Nation experience development, including experiences that promote reconciliation.

The foundation of the strategy rests on four interconnected pillars. It is no surprise that one of these pillars — pillar 3 — is the celebration of vibrant First Nation history and culture. One of the actions that has already been accomplished through the leadership of the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association was a First Nation tourism summit held on December 18 and 19, 2018.

At the summit, we signed a memorandum of understanding with the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association and the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada to work together to promote the development of culturally relevant First Nation tourism products and experiences and to position Yukon as a premier destination for First Nation tourism experiences. This is also a goal in the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*.

CEO Keith Henry of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada made comments that Yukon is leading the way in terms of embedding indigenous tourism in such a significant way into the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* — and this we heard from Yukoners. This was part of the consultation that we did throughout the entire Yukon Territory. I truly believe that we can achieve this. Not only do we have a spectacular place to visit, we have First Nation self-government agreements that lead the way in increasing economic participation in the tourism industry.

At this point, it is important to remember that this strategy is again a Yukon strategy, not a Yukon government strategy; therefore, stakeholder partners will take the lead on many of the action plans outlined in the strategy, and it is absolutely critical that First Nation people lead all initiatives related to First Nation tourism. Otherwise, how is it economic reconciliation?

To this end, this government has identified \$300,000 of additional funds in the 2019-20 budget to support indigenous tourism development through the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association's new strategic plan. The Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association will leverage these Government of Yukon dollars to access other funding sources to increase the investment in First Nation tourism this

year. It has been 18 years since we had a new tourism plan in Yukon. The former plan wasn't inclusive of self-governing First Nations, even though we recently celebrated over 25 years of the historic beginning of self-government in the Yukon.

This plan is definitely inclusive. I was personally proud to bring the draft strategy to Yukon chiefs in September of 2018 at the Yukon Forum in Dawson City, where there was unanimous support for it. The Department of Tourism and Culture continues to be a champion of First Nation tourism operators. They help individual First Nation businesses become market- and trade-ready to fully reap the economic benefits that the tourism industry can offer. Staff can often be found in Yukon communities working with First Nation entrepreneurs.

For example, this week, department staff were in Old Crow working with a Vuntut Gwitchin entrepreneur to help develop the experiences he will offer to visitors.

First Nation businesses that are market- or trade-ready can access the tourism cooperative marketing fund.

That's a \$700,000 fund that's designed to help Yukon's tourism industry attract visitation, gain international exposure and strengthen the territory's tourism brand. First Nation businesses and cultural centres are key features of our familiarization tours, known as "fam tours", where media and influencers and travel trade from around the world come to see and learn about the Yukon.

You can see, Mr. Speaker, that the ongoing work of the department, the implementation of a one-government approach and the realization of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* all contribute to economic reconciliation with Yukon First Nations. Because this work is being done with them, not on their behalf and definitely not to them, is why the motion we are debating today in the Assembly is so very important.

Putting tourism and culture in one department has a definite advantage when considering economic reconciliation with Yukon First Nations. As it is First Nation culture, visitors — they want to see and experience the culture of the Yukon. Over the years, we have seen eight First Nation cultural centres open throughout the territory. In addition to being cultural hubs for First Nations, these centres provide venues for product sales and opportunities for cultural and creative industry demonstrations for visitors and citizens alike. The Government of Yukon is proud to provide \$800,000 in annual operating funding to these centres that are situated throughout the Yukon.

First Nation artists and performers regularly apply for existing Government of Yukon funds through the artist in the school program, the touring artist fund and arts fund, and we provide core funding of \$345,000 to the Northern Cultural Expressions Society and \$160,000 to the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association. However, the Yukon Liberal government knows that, like tourism, culture is another pathway to economic reconciliation with Yukon's First Nation people, a path we have just begun to explore. This is why we have allocated \$100,000 in the 2019-20

budget for the development of a creative and cultural industry strategy. With Yukon First Nation cultural practices being reclaimed and celebrated, focusing our efforts on the development of the strategy will lead to a solid economic foundation from which First Nation cultural activities in the territory can flourish.

A unified government-wide strategy that directs support for the creative and cultural industry provides the opportunity to make measurable and tangible strides in both economic and social development, fulfilling our promise to build healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities and moving forward toward economic reconciliation with Yukon First Nations.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how much time I have —

**Speaker:** Five and one-half minutes.

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I had more comments around the whole cultural industry, but I'll save that potentially for another time, or I'll come back to it at the end, because I do not want to miss speaking from the Women's Directorate's perspective.

It is a more sombre topic for sure to illustrate just how important economic reconciliation is to Yukon First Nation people. I am referring to the ongoing tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in our country and right here at home in our beautiful Yukon Territory — our Yukon communities.

The Women's Directorate, in conjunction with the Department of Justice, has represented the Government of Yukon in the work of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. I personally attended many of the hearings and heard the heartbreaking stories of so, so many indigenous women and girls who never ever came home again. Certainly the root causes are many, but one recurring theme I heard was poverty — women who could not leave an abusive relationship because they couldn't afford to take care of their children; girls who had no way to pay, for instance, for a ride to Vancouver, so they hitchhiked on BC's Highway of Tears, never to be seen again; women who sell their bodies to pay for the basics just to live, Mr. Speaker.

Economic reconciliation for these women literally means life and death. Economic empowerment of women in our Yukon communities means being able to make a living in good-paying, personally satisfying jobs in their own communities. This is why the Government of Yukon, in its final submission to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls commission cited economic empowerment of women as a solution to prevent such tragedies from happening over and over again.

I quote from our final submission: "We recognize that economic empowerment is one antidote to preventing violence against Indigenous women and girls. When combined with an enhanced knowledge of and pride in one's own culture and traditions, preventative effects are exceptionally improved."

Again, I have talked about this at the national level. I believe this to be one of the pathways to self-determination and certainly a way forward to look at long-term solutions for

the tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. I am happy that my colleague from Mayo-Tatchun spoke about Joella Hogan and the incredible honour that she was given by being chosen as Indigenous Business of the Year in the north. I hold my hands out to all the women who — and I will use my position in any way to really uphold our women and our territory to gain economic self-determination.

We are proud of the incredible amount of work that this government is putting into fostering First Nation participation in a strong, healthy and vibrant economy. As you can see, the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* is one of those accomplishments aimed toward this direction. With these thoughts in mind, I encourage all members to support this incredibly important motion and demonstrate that this House supports economic reconciliation with Yukon First Nations as a means to achieving a more prosperous and economically vibrant territory for all.

I hope that the leader of the Third Party hears the message clearly from my voice and from my heart on why I am here as a member of this Legislative Assembly.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I want to thank my colleague the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for bringing this Motion forward today. I agree with the member that the First Nations are our partners when it comes to developing our economy and that by working together, we can ensure all Yukoners share in the benefits of growing and diversifying our economy.

Strengthening relationships with First Nation governments enhances our ability to advance economic and social prosperity for Yukon. As the Member for Mayo-Tatchun noted, the Liberal government has made it a priority to improve our relationships with First Nations on the basis of respect and cooperation in the spirit of reconciliation. Our approach has been, Mr. Speaker, to reflect upon the behaviour and relationships of the past, to learn from them and to ensure that the way that we approach our relationships are done in a much more respectful manner and that litigation is not the tool that we use to settle our challenges.

I want to touch on the fact that reconciliation — I appreciate this motion, as I stated, from the member, but I would like to note that we might be cautious in the use of the word. A number of us in our caucus and also the Member for Takhini-Kopper King took part in a reverse town hall that took place a couple of weeks ago. It was interesting that the invited members who were there — mostly from the territorial government but also from First Nation and municipal governments — had an opportunity to ask questions of First Nation and non-First Nation youth from our community who were on the panel. I think one thing that was a great learning experience for many of us was the perspective of the word “reconciliation” and the emotional response from individual youth that were there. In particular, for me and the Premier upon reflecting on the response about reconciliation of a former employee of mine in the private sector who now is a youth counsellor for CYFN and in a leadership role with Selkirk First Nation — it’s not a word that’s looked upon favourably, actually, by him and many as they reflect on how

we got to this discussion. I think it’s just important to note that.

I know that all of us here — every one of us, all 19 of us — are referring to this in a very positive light. I just want to reflect that this is not always the case in our communities, so we should take that into consideration.

I would first like to touch a bit on what economic reconciliation is and will quote a few lines from Reconciliation Canada, an indigenous-led organization formed in 2012 with a vision to promote reconciliation by engaging Canadians in dialogue that revitalizes the relationship between indigenous peoples and all Canadians to build vibrant, resilient and sustainable communities: “Economic reconciliation aims to create meaningful partnerships and mutually beneficial opportunities based on a holistic, values-driven approach to attaining community economic prosperity. This shared prosperity approach draws on the values of the community to inform the structures, processes, and environments to stimulate action towards community resilience.”

Economic reconciliation works toward building opportunities for all people to achieve their full potential and shared prosperity. This is, of course, not a new concept here in Canada but is one that I believe has not received enough attention.

In doing some preparation for this motion, I came across an article by Adria Vasil, entitled “Meet the man brokering a path to economic reconciliation”. I would like to highlight a few points from that piece.

Over 30 years ago, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business was started by Shoppers Drug Mart’s founder, Murray Koffler, along with former Prime Minister Paul Martin and a number of others with the goal of reintegrating indigenous people into the Canadian economy.

As the current CEO of the organization, JP Gladu, points out, the indigenous people were Canada’s first economy, even before newcomers, with trade and commerce. Most of us in the Assembly would know that, if we reflect upon the history of the Yukon — whether it be the coastal Tlingit trade into Southern Tutchone country, which would be in the Member for Kluane’s jurisdiction, or in the beautiful Southern Lakes — we would look upon the work of the Tagish and coastal Tlingit around the interface with people coming during the gold rush. Of course, there’s a long history of entrepreneurship and commerce, and we have talked about it on a number of occasions here in the Assembly.

I would like to quote a few statistics that Gladu mentions in this article that really highlight where we are today and how much more we could be doing: “Today’s Indigenous economy is estimated to be around \$32 billion, with roughly 45,000 Indigenous businesses... But while Indigenous people make up 5% of Canada’s population, there still hasn’t been much in the way of economic reconciliation. Indigenous businesses only account for 0.3% of Canadian federal procurement contracts... That’s \$60 to 65 million...”

The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business is “... encouraging the federal government to commit to a 5% target

in five years...” This would equate to about \$1 billion. If all provincial and territorial governments also met this five-percent target, that would add an additional \$23 billion to Canada’s indigenous economy.

Mr. Speaker, I’m happy to say that at the federal-provincial-territorial table with other economic development ministers from across the country, both my counterpart in the Northwest Territories, Wally Schumann, and I have continuously brought this point forward and also brought forward the point that the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement*, which we have all collectively signed on to across Canada, in many cases speaks to some of the specific opportunities. When we look at things such as our abandoned mine projects, we want to ensure that the individuals and nations affected by these projects — but also our local companies that have great partnerships with these First Nation development corporations and governments — also have the greatest opportunity.

This is something that we’ve tabled. We have made it a key point at economic development ministers meetings and also at the energy and mines ministers meeting last year in Nunavut. Of course, those meetings will be taking place again in Cranbrook this year, and this is just something that’s really important. We want to make sure that Treasury Board is consistent for many years with the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement*. It’s important work, and I appreciate the collaboration with the ministers to date and look for further improvement there.

The work of this organization that Mr. Gladu is involved with aligns with our government’s commitment to strong government-to-government relations. In my mandate letter from the Premier, one of our overarching priorities is to support the development of a thriving, prosperous and diversified economy that provides well-defined benefits for communities, First Nations and Yukon as a whole and that integrates a high level of long-term environmental management. It goes on to say that our economy needs to be better able to absorb the downturns, and this means working with First Nation governments, businesses and industry partners and with federal and municipal governments to broaden our economic base and to build local capacity and competitiveness in new and existing businesses and services.

Over the past 2.5 years, our team has been collaborating with First Nation governments to bring tangible benefits to all Yukoners through many environmental, economic and social projects, both collectively through the Yukon Forum and individually through accords and agreements.

One of the first steps that I took as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to set proper groundwork in working together with First Nations was the signing of our mining memorandum of understanding. Officials from that table completed a work plan that was endorsed at the Yukon Forum and is now incorporated into the Yukon Forum’s five-year action plan. The MOU provides a collaborative process to explore and advance improvements to all aspects of mineral exploration and development and will create more certainty for industry in the Yukon.

Faro is another example of our government’s work to ensure that Yukon First Nations benefit from projects in their traditional territories. We worked with the Government of Canada to transfer the responsibility of care and maintenance operations. Through the process, we are ensuring that local communities and affected First Nations are benefitting from the remediation project.

We have entered into a three-year funding agreement with the Ross River Dena Council in the amount of \$330,000 to provide engagement support on the Faro mine project, including urgent works, care and maintenance and remediation planning. To date, several Yukon companies have benefited from recent urgent works contracts. In addition, several local First Nations entered into joint venture agreements with companies working on the Faro mine site.

Part of our negotiations with the federal government around this was just that — it was about economic reconciliation. Anyone who has taken the time to go back and read the Royal Commission report — and the work that was done around Faro and Ross River — understands the impacts that Ross River Dena Council and the people and the citizens of Ross River Dena Council experienced through a number of different projects that took place in that area. It was paramount to us in discussions with the federal government. We travelled last year to Ottawa. We were accompanied by Ross River Dena Council, and we sat with the federal government.

The Faro file was always a challenging file for our government and previous governments. It was co-management. We knew there were a lot of other mine sites that needed to be cleaned up, but I think everybody grappled with the fact that they really wanted to ensure that there was local impact — financial impact — but we also have to ensure that — as the previous government did and as we do — we respect the procurement process.

One of the key requests that we had was — that the federal government ensured that there was every attempt made with the tools they had, understanding and respecting the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement*, understanding the agreements to ensure that there was as much opportunity for the community of Ross River and for the Kaska people as this project was undertaken.

I am proud of Energy, Mines and Resources and the work that they did — and our team at abandoned mines — because now we look at companies like Pelly Construction Ltd., in partnership with Ross River Dena Council, which was just awarded a \$5-million contract to begin the upgrades on the Rose Creek channel. Tu-lidini Petroleum supplying the fuel at the site — and C McLeod, Norcope Enterprises and Castle Rock Enterprises were also awarded contracts. Involving First Nations in economic development and planning for their communities is absolutely important work. It results in better solutions developed by the community and in the community.

Of course, this also includes the implementation of chapter 22 of the final agreements, which covers economic development and is meant to provide opportunities for First Nations to participate in the Yukon economy, develop

economic self-reliance and ensure that economic benefits flow from settlement agreements. Our government and self-governing Yukon First Nations are reviewing chapter 22 to fully realize the potential. We have identified economic development as a joint priority at the Yukon Forum and look forward to advancing this important work in partnership.

First Nation development corporations are critical to growing and diversifying the Yukon's economy, and our government is supporting a diverse range of economic opportunities by funding First Nations and their development corporations to do a number of things, including: conducting energy needs assessments and developing renewable energy projects, considering feasibility studies for a multitude of initiatives related to housing — marinas, houses, hotels and resorts, to just name a few — and planning and building capacity for their organizations in future ventures.

I would like to specifically highlight a few success stories here from funding today. One that I am sure most of us — as well as the member representing this particular community — would say or would champion — and some members may not be aware, but I think most people are familiar with the biomass project undertaken by the Teslin Tlingit Council to which our government has contributed \$400,000 to the innovative renewable energy initiative. Teslin Tlingit Council has installed 10 biomass boilers as a district heating system for 13 commercial buildings owned by the First Nation. It is either today or tomorrow that Blair Hogan is leading, I think, a tour of their facility.

We are coordinating biomass training for Teslin Tlingit Council citizens and Teslin residents who are now operating the biomass district heating system. This system employs three full-time jobs and 15 part-time jobs in the community and is replacing the use of diesel fuel. I am absolutely beyond impressed by the success and impacts that this project has had, and will continue to have, on the First Nation and the community in Teslin. It is an exemplary example of economic reconciliation — how a First Nation, a government and a community have come together to create meaningful partnerships and mutually beneficial opportunities based on a holistic, value-driven approach to attaining community economic prosperity.

Through funding received from the Government of Canada, we are now working with 12 other Yukon First Nations on various research projects, assessments and feasibility studies related to biomass system implementation in their communities.

Since implementation in 2018, the innovative renewable energy initiative under the Yukon Development Corporation has provided \$1.5 million in support to First Nation development corporations for renewable energy projects at various stages. Our work is continuing through the development of a plan with Yukoners, First Nations and municipalities to address climate change, energy needs and green economic growth in the Yukon. It's important work, and we all have a part to play.

Our government is committed to supporting First Nations to build capacity and identify economic opportunities and

priorities in their communities. We are participating with representatives of First Nation governments, development corporations and municipalities on a steering committee that will guide the planning of delivery of a regional economic development forum in Haines Junction next month. I know that the Member for Kluane will be there and he is invited to also share some words. This of course follows the economic development conference we organized and hosted in Watson Lake this past spring. That conference brought together federal, territorial, municipal and First Nation governments, businesses, entrepreneurs, development corporations and non-governmental organizations to discuss challenges, successes and opportunities around local economic development. It provided a platform for the exchange of information, best practices and fresh ideas, which is an essential part of growing and diversifying our economy and helps to support Yukon's communities in achieving their economic goals. The conference was successful, and we achieved very good feedback.

Our government has demonstrated our commitment to building healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities by committing \$800,000 annually to the regional economic development fund so that First Nation governments and development corporations, along with municipalities and businesses and NGOs, can identify and plan for and create economic opportunities for the region. Some of these major projects this last fiscal year included support for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation to establish a community development corporation; support for the Selkirk Development Corporation to revitalize Minto Resorts; support for the Dena Nezziddi Corporation to create a Kaska minerals development strategy; and support for the Chu Níikwän Development Corporation for commercial land development scoping. I want to commend them, as I think they have just reached — not just securing their industrial lease, but also, in some conversations over the last week, have now been able to raise debt based on that legal agreement.

This will help these groups plan economic development and build capacity and identify opportunities and training plans to advance projects in their communities. These are great examples of First Nations creating opportunities for their communities, and they reflect an important shift in attitude when it comes to what economic development looks like.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the hard work of my colleague the Minister of Highways and Public Works and his team on an initiative that is a first for the department. We are partnering with Yukon First Nations to develop a First Nation procurement policy within our broader procurement policy. We are taking the time we need to get it right, but while the policy is still underway, our work with First Nation procurement is still in a holding pattern. Since June 1, 2017, we have tendered 189 value-driven tenders with mandatory First Nation participation as well as northern knowledge and experience classes. Significant examples include the Nares Bridge in Carcross as well as Whistle Bend subdivision.

Mr. Speaker, First Nations are partners when it comes to developing our economy, and by working together, we can ensure that all Yukoners can share in the benefits of a growing and diversified economy.

**Speaker:** If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard on Motion No. 326?

Member for Mayo-Tatchun, closing debate.

**Mr. Hutton:** I will keep my remarks fairly brief, but I do have to admit I was triggered by a couple of comments from across the aisle. I'm really saddened by the fact that, after 14 years in government, two examples of partnership were touted before the House today as partnership with First Nations — one partnership every seven years? Ridiculous, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the Yukon Party, however, for teaching our government that implementation by litigation was a dead-end path and that if we were going to advance, we were going to have to find ways to do things differently — so thank you for that.

I do take umbrage at something the Leader of the Third Party said, alluding to this being a wasted Wednesday. Anytime I get an opportunity to stand in this House to recognize the good work of my constituents in Mayo-Tatchun — Joella Hogan, the NND Economic Development Corporation — I would not consider that a wasted Wednesday.

**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. Silver:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Agree.

**Mr. Gallina:** Agree.

**Mr. Adel:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Agree.

**Mr. Hutton:** Agree.

**Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Agree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Ms. Hanson:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.

**Speaker:** The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.  
*Motion No. 326 agreed to*

## Motion No. 417

**Clerk:** Motion No. 417, standing in the name of Mr. Adel.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Member for Copperbelt North:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the City of Dawson to find a suitable replacement for the community's waste-water treatment facility.

**Mr. Adel:** I rise today to speak to the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the City of Dawson to find a suitable replacement for the community's waste-water treatment facility.

It is an appropriate thing to speak about, seeing as today is World Water Day. Mr. Speaker, water is life. The safety of clean water is ensured by the proper treatment of waste water before it is returned to the environment.

In May of 2000, in the small southwestern town of Walkerton, Ontario — my home town — the devastating effects of poor water treatment played out in a disaster that claimed the lives of six people, several of whom were very close friends and the rest I knew personally. Over 2,300 people fell ill to E. coli. This reminder of what can happen should make us all want to ensure the proper treatment of our water systems. Because of the devastation I witnessed, I value the importance of clean drinking water and also the effective treatment of waste water. That is why I am happy to rise today to speak to this important motion.

A bit of history on the Dawson waste-water plant — by looking back, it helps us make better decisions moving forward. In 2009, the Yukon government entered into a contract with Corix Water Systems Inc. to design and construct a waste-water treatment plant in Dawson City. In 2012, the construction of this project was substantially completed. Upon completion, the acceptance testing period commenced. During this period, the effluent did not meet the acceptance testing criteria. The criteria indicated the water has to pass tests for three consecutive months. This testing period and mediation continued until February 2015, at which time the plant finally passed the acceptable tests, but it will take several more years and adding a final filtration system to get the plant to work.

This was a lot of effort, time and money to get this plant up and running. It was unacceptable, really. Initially, the plant was intended to be operated and maintained by Dawson City. Since it came into operation, the plant has had numerous deficiencies. The plant has never operated at the standard to which it was designed, and operation and maintenance costs are significantly higher than anticipated and higher than any other Yukon community. The current cost of operating this plant is just under \$1 million per year.

Thankfully, the City of Dawson does not pay for all of that. They pay \$210,000 per year to offset the bill. Because of the steep operating costs, the City of Dawson could never take

over the responsibility for the plant operating costs. The city simply did not have the capacity to deal with an issue of this magnitude and its associated costs.

Haines Junction spends approximately \$40,000 — to compare this plant to waste-water treatment facilities in the rest of Yukon communities. Just to give you a sense of how high these costs are, the City of Whitehorse spends approximately \$150,000 per year and Watson Lake spends approximately \$10,000 a year.

If we look back to 2014, the previous government told Yukoners that the Dawson water treatment facility would cost \$340,000 per year to operate. It was quickly realized, once the plant began operations, that the O&M on this facility was several times what was promised on a \$25-million project that didn't work — or at least, didn't work as designed.

The Member for Kluane will be familiar with this, as he was then Minister of Highways and Public Works. He reassured Yukon citizens in this House many times that this facility would be great, that he had it under control and that there was absolutely nothing to worry about.

In April 2012, when questions were raised in the House around the cost changes and disputes on this matter, he stated — and I quote: “The project is actually progressing very well.” When the MLA for Klondike presented questions about delayed construction, completion dates and design changes that were continually occurring, the Member for Kluane responded — and I quote: “... I'll forward him a link to some YouTube videos of the construction of it.”

Then we have Currie Dixon, the former Minister of Community Services in April 2016 in this House, stating that perhaps the plant was simply — and I quote: “... a lemon...”

Nearly two years into operation, we saw this plant continuing to fail water tests. When you look at the history on this file, it's truly baffling how we even got there in the first place. When this project went out to tender, a local company — Ketza Construction — came in with a bid of \$16.5 million, proposing a traditional lagoon-style treatment system. At that time, there were over 100 of these lagoon systems operating effectively in Canada's north. The other bid came in from Corix, totalling \$25 million. It was for the installation of a deep-shaft system where sewage is stored and treated in vertical tanks.

The evidence at the time showed that there were only a few in operation in Canada and most were failing. One of these was located in Virden, Manitoba, which supports a population of just over 3,000. In 2009, Virden's manager of works and utilities came forward and said — and I quote: “Our system is definitely not working for us.” Another example is Portage la Prairie, where they had a deep-shaft system that the Province of Manitoba eventually replaced. There is another example in Homer, Alaska, which has been operating a deep-shaft system since 1991. In 2010, the system cost the town of Homer more than \$500,000 in operation and maintenance. Lastly, I will mention the Molson brewery waste-water facility in Barrie, Ontario. The same system was shut down in 2000.

Example after example of failing, inefficient and extremely expensive comparisons of operating this kind of waste-management technology should have been raising red flags. It was not sound financial management, and simply put, was not a sustainable solution to the waste-water problem.

NORAM, an engineering company that supported Corix in the implementation of this project, only had experience building two deep-shaft plants. Today, neither plant is operating.

Again, I'm very concerned; it wasn't a great track record. At the time, this project was being cited as North America's newest waste-water guinea pig by the *Yukon News*. Now we're paying the price, literally and figuratively. Yukon taxpayers deserve better than this.

Moving to the present day, Mr. Speaker, we're at a stage now where Community Services is managing the operation and maintenance of the plant with a senior operator and two junior operators in Dawson. Much work has been done to ensure that this plant is now marginally capable of meeting effluent discharge standards under normal operating conditions, but as Dawson grows, challenges of sustaining this facility will get even more difficult. Over the long term, this plant will not be financially viable. The costs and performance issues of this plant have caused the life cycle of this plant to be severely limited. These costs and performance issues will only increase as the plant ages.

Mr. Speaker, because of this, our government is committed to supporting the city of Dawson in the planning phase for a replacement waste-water treatment option, which we hope will be operational by 2026 or earlier.

I know that the Minister of Community Services continues to meet with the municipality of Dawson on this important issue, with Dawson City being the lead. Moving forward, I have every confidence in our Liberal government to make fiscally responsible and sound decisions in working with the city of Dawson and coming up with more appropriate, long-term, sustainable solutions to waste-water treatment.

**Mr. Cathers:** In rising to speak to this on behalf of the Official Opposition, I would have to note, to begin with, that the Member for Copperbelt North spoke of it being, in his words, “baffling” how we got here. The reason, in part, that the member may be baffled is because to understand how this issue started, you need to start at the beginning, not six years into the process.

First of all, I'm just going to briefly recap the history for people who may not recall it and who may have been confused in the somewhat selective history provided by the Liberal member who spoke. It's important to note that where this all originated was the Yukon government stepping in to solve a municipal problem that was beyond the means and capacity of Dawson to deal with on its own.

In 2003, the city of Dawson pled guilty to a violation of section 36 of the *Fisheries Act*, which prohibits the deposit of deleterious substances in water frequented by fish. In March 2003, the court ordered the city to build a secondary sewage treatment plant, which the court required Dawson to have

fully operational by the next year. Again, I'm going to repeat that part — in the March 2003 court order, the city of Dawson was ordered to have a treatment plant fully operational by the 2004.

What followed after this is a whole sequence of events that resulted and were connected to the City of Dawson becoming over-extended — having a financial crisis which led to an investigation that members will recall involved or included actions and inappropriate accounting of the former mayor, and it involved the Yukon government stepping in to manage municipal affairs in Dawson City while they were unable to do so.

It should be noted that from that point on, this was one part of the delay. What emerged after that through the collaborative work between officials of the City of Dawson as well as the Yukon government was that it was clear that Dawson did not have the resources to meet their court order on its own, and therefore, the Yukon government stepped in to work with them to help them comply with that court order.

It's important to note that the preferred option for implementing that court order of both the Yukon government and the municipality was construction of an aerated sewage lagoon. Aerated sewage lagoons have a long history of successful operation in the Yukon, but the residents of the City of Dawson initiated a petition in 2007 that requested a referendum vote for council to pass bylaws to prohibit development of a lagoon at the locations that had been selected by the Yukon government and the City of Dawson. It should be noted that those studies had included, by 2007, studies of 16 locations that had selected lots — 1058 and 1059 — at the bottom of the Dome Road as the preferred location for that lagoon.

After the referendum was triggered, the referendum was conducted in March 2008. As a result, the bylaw was binding on the City of Dawson and prevented them from moving forward with development of an aerated sewage lagoon on the lots that had been selected by the City of Dawson and the Yukon government. While the Yukon government was not technically bound by the results of the municipal referendum, government did support the municipality and accepted the democratic will expressed by the City of Dawson residents in that referendum. It would be interesting to hear the Premier indicate how he voted during that referendum.

It was clear, as a result of that referendum and public feedback, that there was not support by the City of Dawson for an open sewage lagoon at any of the areas that had been contemplated and identified by the Yukon government in the City of Dawson. That then led to both levels of government listening to the citizens of Dawson and seeking other options.

The successful option chosen was a mechanical treatment facility using the Vertreat system as a solution, with Corix Water Systems designed to contract and build the new facility to help Dawson comply with that court order. It's very important to note that, at the time, the government did think that this option would work and would be far more successful than it has proven to be.

I should also note that, for both the municipality of Dawson City and the Yukon government, the ability to explore other options was somewhat constrained by the court order and the fact that the court wanted to see governments making rapid progress to meet the court order that was issued in 2003.

Mr. Speaker, I would note that there have been doubts throughout the years by some about whether the facility would operate properly, and clearly it has not been the right option for the City of Dawson. But it should be noted for all the government officials and leadership that have served both in the municipality and the Yukon government during that time period that, based on the best information available at the time, the experts of the day thought that this option would be successful.

I think it is fair to now say that, knowing what we all do today, neither the citizens of Dawson, the City of Dawson or the Yukon government would choose the path that we have gone down together with regard to the Dawson waste-water treatment facility. But the information that is available to all of us now was not available at the time. Hindsight on this one is 20/20, but it should be noted that all involved in making the decisions did so with the best of intentions based on the best information available to them at the time.

I should note, then, in outlining the fact that it is important to understand why the mechanical facility was built in Dawson City rather than a lagoon — which was a cheaper and far more proven option — and understand that the proposal that the territorial government and the municipal government, indeed, had as their preferred option was construction of a sewage lagoon.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to reiterate the fact that for both the City of Dawson and the Yukon government, their options to explore other alternatives were somewhat limited by the court order and the judicial request for progress on implementing it.

With that, it is important to note that in July 2009, the Yukon government and the City of Dawson signed a memorandum of understanding for construction by the Yukon government and the eventual handover of the mechanical waste-water treatment plant. The MOU outlined agreed-upon roles and responsibilities, including a commitment by the Yukon government to assist Dawson in this area. I would note, as I touched on briefly there have been challenges throughout it, including, members will recall, that during my time as Minister of Community Services after I inherited the responsibility for this plant, I noted in 2014 that — and I quote: "... we have not been satisfied with its performance to date. We are working hand-in-hand with the City of Dawson to ensure that Corix is held to the terms of the contract."

With that, Mr. Speaker, I hope that refresher has helped end the bafflement professed by the Member for Copperbelt North and has helped to explain the record of this file. This, again, is an area where it is important to note that the Yukon government — and indeed the Yukon government under the Yukon Party watch — has, in fact, assisted municipalities across the territory with water and waste-water treatment

plants. The Dawson waste-water treatment facility is an outlier in terms of not operating the way that anyone expected or hoped it would, whereas investments that have been made across the territory in water treatment and waste-water treatment include those in the municipalities of Haines Junction, Watson Lake, Teslin — the list goes on of water plants and waste-water plants that have been invested in by the government that are successful. They include projects, as well, on the south side of town, with the investments in Tagish and Carcross as well as the Deep Creek water treatment facility in my own riding.

Again, we have been proud to assist municipalities with addressing their needs that were beyond their financial scope to address. We are pleased that most of these have indeed been sound investments and the projects have functioned as anticipated.

However, as I noted and clarified in this saga of the Dawson waste-water treatment plant that began in 2003 with a court order and has continued for some 16 years after that, the path, once started on, was limited to the options of either level of government to step off of that path, but there have been doubts throughout the years about whether the facility would operate properly. Clearly, it has not been the right option for Dawson, and as I noted, I think it is fair to say that knowing what we all do today, neither the citizens of Dawson, the City of Dawson or the Yukon government would choose the path that was taken with regard to the Dawson waste-water treatment facility.

With that, I would note that, while we expect we may hear some interesting rhetoric and revisionist history from members of the Liberal Party on this, I have laid out the account of information that actually occurred, and we will be supporting this motion because it is time for the Government of Yukon to work with the City of Dawson to come up with another option. The current waste-water treatment plant has never functioned to the level it was supposed to. It has been more expensive than it was supposed to be, and it is certainly time to proceed with identifying a more appropriate and more cost-effective option for Dawson.

**Ms. White:** In speaking to Motion No. 417 right now, I would highlight that there was a press release from the government dated January 15 of this year. The title of it is: “Dawson City wastewater treatment plant not sustainable, Government of Yukon begins work with City of Dawson on a solution.”

To quote from that, it says, “The Government of Yukon will actively support the City of Dawson in the planning of a new wastewater treatment option and will help secure appropriate infrastructure funding for a wastewater treatment facility.”

Then quoting the Minister of Community Services, it says, “We are committed to working with the City of Dawson to develop a sustainable wastewater treatment option.”

So it appears that the Government of Yukon is already working with the City of Dawson to find a suitable replacement for the community’s waste-water treatment

facility. So our questions are around other issues, such as how this plant will be decommissioned. You can’t just walk away and lock the door, so what are the environmental concerns and how will they be addressed? How long do we expect it to be up and running before it gets decommissioned?

In the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly, we asked a lot of questions — as did the Premier — about the actual cost of the facility. I think some of those questions are still relevant. What has been the total cost, including the operation and maintenance, that has been spent on this project to date? What costs will it take into the future until it’s decommissioned? One of the questions we have is: When is the end date? When will the new facility be up and operating? What will that cost have been? The unfortunate truth is that it never worked. I don’t think anyone has ever thought that it worked, so how much is it going to cost?

Not being the engineer behind the project and not fully understanding how it works, I would ask: Where do the contents of the shaft go when the plant is decommissioned? Where does it go? Does it stay? What does it do to the water table? Do we have a reverse vacuum? What happens to that?

So our question is really based on that January 15 press release. We understand the Yukon government is working with Dawson City, so it looks like we’re well on our way to having this motion completed, but what we want to know is: What happens? How does it become decommissioned? What’s the projected cost of that? What are the steps in between now and then?

We don’t disagree. Absolutely — it needs to change — but we are just curious about the costs, because we never actually got it — in the 33<sup>rd</sup> — about what the full cost of the project was. It would be interesting if those numbers had been run.

We appreciate that this has been brought forward. We also appreciate the January 15 press release that says it’s being worked on, and I look forward to hearing what the next steps are from the government.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, I would like to thank everybody for speaking to this motion today, and I would also just acknowledge very quickly that it sounds like we’re all in agreement with the motion, so I’m happy about that.

I’ll do my best to try to answer some questions and to add to the history that the Member for Lake Laberge presented, but I just appreciate the opportunity to speak to it. This has been an incredibly challenging file over time; I’m sure it was as well for the members opposite when they held posts here in Cabinet. As the Member for Takhini-Kopper King just said, we remain committed to supporting Dawson City to finding a long-term sustainable solution to waste water.

I’ve met with the municipality and mayor and council and City of Dawson officials, and we’re committed to support the planning and replacement process, fully respecting that the City of Dawson is the lead in determining the best outcomes and setting the priorities for the community.

We have extended our offer to support the city at a technical level to look at tried and tested solutions and

locations, and under the lead of the municipality, we will help identify infrastructure funding options that will provide capital dollars to support the municipality in developing its future waste-water treatment facility.

I want to just acknowledge, to begin with, that the City of Dawson has lots of priorities. We go to every municipality and to all First Nations, and we ask them what their infrastructure priorities are — we ask them to give us a list. They have many things that they would like to work on to see improvements in their community. I've had conversations with them recently about recreation infrastructure and its importance to the community. What I've said to them is that I don't want this project to displace other projects, but I want it to — I'm hoping that it will be added to the list.

Frankly, we're spending roughly a million dollars a year, and we know from looking at sewage lagoons around the territory that this is an extremely high price, and we don't want to spend that money. We want to be more frugal with taxpayer dollars; we want to be more responsible with taxpayer dollars. We want to make sure that we're serving all Yukoners, that we're accountable for the money that we're spending, that we're fair with that money — and this is not the ideal situation to be in.

To answer one of the questions that was raised by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, overall, we've said to the City of Dawson that 2026 is when we've sort of given as the outside date, but in my very first meeting with mayor and council, I said to them that if we can move that date up, we would really appreciate it. We're working together with them.

The questions about technically how the retirement of the existing facility goes — I'll get some technical responses and get a reply just so that we understand what will happen with the deep shaft and the effluent, but regardless, what I can say is that however we decommission that existing facility, we will make sure to abide by the rules. In other words, we're not just going to dump the existing effluent out. We will run it and process it in the same way that we would all of the City of Dawson effluent.

There are some technical questions, and I'm sure the City of Dawson will be interested in recommissioning that piece of property, because it is a valuable piece of property right in the downtown.

I'll turn in a minute to the Member for Lake Laberge and some of the points he made about the options that were available to them, but I just want to flag at this point that I don't think that this was the only choice that was faced. When I look back at the history of it — and I'm sure that it's easier to see through hindsight, but it doesn't look to me like this was the only option.

Let me just for a moment continue to talk about what's going on right now, and then I will look backward a little bit and then I will talk about the path forward.

With a great deal of effort and its significant cost over several years, the Dawson City waste-water treatment plant is now capable of meeting effluent discharge standards under normal operating conditions. However, it's unlikely that the current waste-water treatment plant will meet longer term

needs. It is simply not sustainable, given very high operating costs. Meanwhile, the Yukon government continues to operate the treatment facility at a cost that is approaching \$1 million per year.

I want to acknowledge — and the Member for Copperbelt North did acknowledge — that the City of Dawson is contributing to those O&M costs. They are paying \$210,000 a year, so the \$1 million — \$210,000 of it per year is paid for by Dawsonites, and the remainder is paid by us as the government. The \$790,000 or so is being paid out of taxpayer dollars. Again, that's not sustainable.

One of the things I want to say — and I'll pull out a quote in a moment from Hansard from several years ago, where we're just trying to look at these operating costs and see the distribution of the funds that go into those operating costs. I just want to flag that, right now, it's costing over \$360,000 a year just for the utilities — power and heat. If the target had been \$340,000, we're way off. That's not counting any of the labour costs or the maintenance costs or all the other costs that go into the facility, but \$360,000 — more than \$360,000 a year — just to keep the lights on.

It's my opinion — and let me also acknowledge the Member for Lake Laberge. I want to thank him for acknowledging that this plant, in hindsight, was not a good choice. It's my opinion that the plant should never have been built in the first place. The technology was not proven, and the cost to construct and operate was then — and is now — prohibitive.

As the Member for Copperbelt North has noted, the costs — when we compare them to more traditional technologies like sewage lagoons — it's just so apples and oranges. This year, the number looks like it's going to be \$989,000. That's what we have in the budget, \$989,000 — again, just below \$1 million.

As we go forward in time, additional costs related to the maintenance of the building will be a challenge. Sustaining this facility will only get more difficult as the plant ages and as Dawson grows. We want to work with the municipality as soon as possible to develop a cost-effective long-term plan that makes sense for the community.

The plant was intended to be operated and maintained by Dawson City. Waste water falls within the jurisdiction of our municipal governments. We as a government — the Yukon government — often supports capital costs, but operations are carried out by the municipality — and asset management, for that matter. In this case, given the concerns with the technology and the operating costs of the plant, in 2015, Dawson City requested that the Yukon government operate and maintain the plant until the plant was fully functional and financially sustainable.

I just want to say that it's not going to become financially sustainable. Let me turn to a quote. It's from the Member for Klune who, at that point, I believe, would have been the Minister for Highways and Public Works. I'm taking this from Hansard dated April 3, 2013. I quote now for and from Hansard: "My fellow colleague, the Minister of Community Services and I, as well as our deputy ministers and officials

have met with the City of Dawson on several occasions over the past few weeks. Discussions on the O&M costs are being shared with Dawson City right now and we continue to provide details as they become available.

“This treatment process has lower O&M costs when compared to the other types of mechanical treatment facilities. The Yukon government has invested significant additional capital in the development of the facility in order to minimize the longer term O&M costs for the City of Dawson. This includes the following: installing a second set of all process equipment, a heat recovery pump, extra spare pumps, R-48 walls and an R-60 roof; training in the first year; the biomass-fuelled boiler district heating plant using locally produced wood chips manufactured from waste wood, as opposed to an expensive fuel oil to heat the Dawson waste-water treatment plant and also the Dawson City water supply.

“This results in a substantial annual O&M cost savings for the City of Dawson.”

That’s just not the case. I can go back and I can dig back, and maybe we should, but I really do want to move forward. I probably can pull whatever the heat and light costs were over the lifecycle of the plant, but I did talk with a Corix operator recently, and he said to me that, even at that time, the lights and power for the plant were in the range of over \$300,000. That’s when it was just being commissioned.

Was that known? I hope so. I hope that was known by the members opposite; they are telling me that they shared that with Dawson City. I can’t find that information where it was shared, but even then, I think we should have known that this plant wasn’t a good plant. It took too long for that to come forward.

It’s disappointing for everyone in the Yukon that the technology doesn’t work and that we are in a place where we must plan to build something that is more cost-effective and sustainable over the long term. I have asked Dawsonites to please consider a more tried and tested technology, and I think they want that as well, because they want the operation and maintenance costs to be low as well, and they have to deal with asset management. It’s important.

Let me now turn to another quote. This, one again, from Hansard, May 1, 2013, by the Member for Kluane, who, I believe, was the Minister for Highways and Public Works at that time — and I quote: “The Dawson waste-water treatment plant is essential to the healthy and sustainable future of the community of Dawson. The Building Canada fund provided two-thirds of the financial resources required to see this project through its sustainable completion. The sewage plant is more than a robust, compact and environmentally appropriate system; it is using innovative technology — which I’ll speak to in a little bit — to better meet crucial infrastructure requirement needs of today and tomorrow.”

A little later on that same day, the Member for Kluane goes on to say, “It’s a willingness to rethink how we do things; it’s essential when budgets are tight, but even more, it’s expected of us to do the best we can for the taxpayers’ dollars.”

Just in the next paragraph, I pick up: “Some of the recent examples I’ll just bring up — the installation of Dawson’s first vertical shaft, waste-water treatment facility in Canada. This is the first in Canada.”

What I hear is that it’s being presented as being reasonable or even less expensive in O&M. What I hear is that it’s a sound technology being presented. This is in 2013, and by that point, the O&M costs were known and the challenges with meeting effluent treatment standards were known, so I think that we should have been working toward a solution. Let’s just acknowledge that this — close to \$1 million a year — is adding up every year. The sooner we get to a better solution, the sooner we will not be charging that back to Yukon taxpayers.

I just want to go back and talk a little bit about the history. The Member for Lake Laberge was talking about how it was in 2003 when the court decision came out. It would have been 2004 or 2005 when the Yukon government had the municipal role in Dawson City, but it was another four years before the plant came into place. Yes, there was a referendum, but that referendum very specifically talked about not having a sewage lagoon in a specific location. It didn’t say don’t have a sewage lagoon anywhere. It said that was not a location to have it in.

The then-Yukon government was not bound to choose this mechanical system. It was a choice. When I talked to mayor and council — and maybe everyone has different glasses when they look backward in time. But this mayor and council say that there wasn’t this overall opposition to a sewage lagoon. There was opposition to a sewage lagoon in that specific location. I think we landed with the wrong choice, and again I thank the members opposite for acknowledging that it wasn’t that and for their support of the motion.

As we start to plan for a replacement within the municipality, we continue to address deficiencies in the current plant. We will do our best to operate in a manner that is responsible to the Yukon taxpayers, but let me make it clear, Mr. Speaker: Our goal is to find a more sustainable, tried-and-true technology solution — working with Dawson.

We are working in all communities — in unincorporated Yukon, including Carcross, Ross River, Burwash Landing, Destruction Bay, Old Crow, Beaver Creek, Marsh Lake and Pelly. Current projects in our municipalities — to replace the aging water and waste-water lines in Haines Junction, Dawson, Faro, Mayo, Whitehorse; the replacement of lift stations in Faro, Mayo, Watson Lake; upgrades to sewage lagoons in Old Crow, Haines Junction, Faro, Watson Lake and Ross River; and improvements to Carmacks waste-water collection and outfall infrastructure. Simply put, waste water is important, and we need sustainable treatment in all of our communities. This is for the health and safety of our communities throughout the territory. We will continue to assess aging waste-water infrastructure in communities and prioritize and plan for the future.

We remain committed to improving community infrastructure in our territory and reiterate our support for

Dawson City in finding a long-term, sustainable solution to waste water and to other infrastructure priorities.

The responsibility of government is large. As we work to serve all Yukoners, we have to be accountable for the dollars that we spend. I am very challenged by the overall costs, and I will get numbers for the Member for Takhini-Kopper King about the overall cost of this project, in a capital sense, so that the number is shared. It is just so important that we account for that and that we find a way to fairly distribute the infrastructure dollars around the territory. We need to serve all Yukoners, and that is what we are trying to do. We are committed to support the replacement process, to establishing a plan and timeline for decommissioning, while fully respecting the lead of the City of Dawson in determining the best solution to meet the long-term, sustainable outcomes for the community.

Again, I thank the Member for Lake Laberge for acknowledging that this was not the correct solution, and I look forward to finding a sustainable solution with the City of Dawson.

**Speaker:** If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any member wished to be heard in debate on Motion No. 417?

**Mr. Adel:** I would like to thank the members of this House for their questions and for the history lessons — although some of them may be a little off from their final objective.

The Member for Takhini-Kopper King is quite right in putting the questions forward that she did, and I am sure our Minister of Community Services will be more than happy to work with her, as all of us in the House will, to get this important issue solved. As we all know, regardless of what we do, effluent happens.

All I am saying is that, moving forward, if we can work together and all support this particular motion, we will get Dawson City up and moving in a direction they need to. With that, I will conclude my remarks, other than — I would like to say to the Member for Lake Laberge, thank you for acknowledging the fact, as the minister stated earlier, that perhaps it wasn't the right choice. Perhaps the people of Dawson might have, with the referendum and with a little bit more consultation, come to a better conclusion, but let's forget that. Let's move forward, and let's get this done.

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

**Some Hon. Member:** Division.

### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

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

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Agree.

**Mr. Gallina:** Agree.

**Mr. Adel:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Agree.

**Mr. Hutton:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Agree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yeas, nil nays.

**Speaker:** The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.  
*Motion No. 417 agreed to*

### Motion No. 410

**Clerk:** Motion No. 410, standing in the name of Mr. Gallina.

**Speaker:** It is moved by the Member for Porter Creek Centre:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to invest in a broad range of housing initiatives.

**Mr. Gallina:** I am happy to rise today to continue an important discussion on the floor of this Legislative Assembly — a discussion about housing and that it impacts all Yukoners to one degree or another and is relevant to all MLAs in this House.

I believe this government has made great strides in addressing housing needs in all aspects of the housing spectrum — from housing with services to rental housing to home ownership. Today, I will highlight the progress this government has made, but with that, I also wanted to provide an opportunity for opposition members to bring their thoughts and ideas forward on where they see the housing needs and priorities are in this territory.

For many years, affordable and accessible housing has been an issue in our territory. We know this. Housing is a complex and challenging issue at both the territorial and national levels. A key commitment of this government was to address housing shortages at all levels of the spectrum. We committed to modernizing the government's approach to the provision of staff and social housing and to collaborate with the private sector to develop strategies for program delivery that support community economic growth. We committed to work with communities to create available developed land banks to keep lot prices affordable. We committed to advocating together with Yukon First Nations to ensure self-governing and non-self-governing First Nations are included in the federal First Nation housing strategy, and we committed to prioritizing federal funding toward the creation of affordable housing.

I see tremendous progress toward these commitments, and I'll talk a little bit about that now.

2018 saw many projects get underway, including \$1.5 million to First Nation housing providers to upgrade and retrofit housing in their communities to increase the number of safe, affordable housing units in Yukon — safe, adequate housing that meets the needs of families and individuals — particularly vulnerable populations — is extremely important.

In July 2018, we broke ground on a 16-unit Housing First residence in Whitehorse. We know that, in Yukon, a significant number of low-income individuals continue to be homeless, precariously housed or housed in substandard or overcrowded accommodations due to a lack of affordable housing stock.

Results from the 2018 homelessness partnering strategy point-in-time count for Whitehorse showed that on April 17 and 18, 2018, there were 195 people experiencing homelessness in Whitehorse, including 28 who were unsheltered, 27 in emergency shelters and 106 in provisional accommodations.

I understand that the Department of Health and Social Services has completed a detailed internal review of client data regarding housing and/or support needs. That review has helped to inform options and recommendations, including a suggested target audience for the Housing First complex. Mr. Speaker, this project is on track to be completed by the end of June 2019.

Our government's holistic approach to reducing poverty in Yukon includes partnerships with community groups and other governments. An example of this that we recently saw was the completion of the Steve Cardiff tiny home community. Our government provided funding to Blood Ties Four Directions to construct this tiny home community which will serve to house clients of Blood Ties. The units provide 240 square feet of living space for at-risk clients in urgent need of housing. Many positive steps have been taken by our government to ensure that our vulnerable populations have access to safe and adequate housing.

I would like to speak now about the announcement that the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation made in the House last week regarding the Jeckell Street mixed-income housing project. This will be the first project of its kind in the territory. There is \$18 million in the budget for this impactful project, which is scheduled to begin construction next spring. The selected site at 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Jeckell Street in downtown Whitehorse could support up to 48 new units, depending on the project design and layout. This project is well in line with the commitment as mentioned in the onset of my speech here today, which is our government's commitment to modernizing the government's approach to the provision of social housing. This innovative project will serve a diverse tenant base and help to fill a gap in the housing market.

I will shift now to talk about activity within my riding of Porter Creek Centre — specifically in Whistle Bend. In 2018, we saw 80 lots released for sale in Whistle Bend, including townhouse, multi-family and residential lots. Our government continues to work hard to increase the number of lots available to Yukoners in Whitehorse by working on the

Whistle Bend development. This summer, we expect to release 132 single-family lots, 54 duplex townhouse lots, 19 multi-family lots and 35 commercial lots.

In the summer of 2020, we expect to see 100 single-family lots released as well as 64 townhouse and two multi-family lots. Lot demand forecasting can be challenging and unpredictable. I am happy to see that we are working toward ensuring a goal of having a two-year supply of lots available at all times in order to help balance supply and demand and to keep lots affordable. A two-year supply has historically translated into a 200-lot inventory, which helps to buffer market volatility and reflects the two-year time frame of most of the large civil works contracts required to complete larger developments.

This spring, the City of Whitehorse is expected to submit to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board their final plan for future development areas surrounding Whistle Bend. When complete, Whistle Bend will have a town square, retail shops, school, plentiful greenspace and many kilometres of paved and unpaved trail. This neighbourhood will continue to grow and evolve over the years.

Last year, we saw the housing initiatives fund launched. We received 20 submissions for innovative housing projects. The housing initiatives fund was designed to support innovative housing projects to meet local needs. This year's budget contains \$3.6 million for this fund, and I was pleased to hear from the minister last week that, to date, 21 project proposals have been received.

Last week, on Thursday, March 14, the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation signed a bilateral agreement with the Government of Canada. This bilateral agreement is a 10-year housing agreement under the national housing strategy. This agreement will invest \$59.92 million to protect, renew and expand social and community housing and support Yukon's priorities related to housing repair, construction and affordability. This cost-sharing agreement demonstrates a joint commitment to prioritize affordable housing. This nearly \$60-million investment includes \$41.96 million from the Government of Canada and \$17.96 million from the Government of Yukon. These investments are in addition to the \$28.5 million of previous federal housing investments in Yukon through the social housing agreement over the next 10 years. The combined investments under the national housing strategy bilateral agreement will include new construction and the preservation of at least 543 existing community housing units in Yukon. The Government of Canada and Yukon also committed to working together to design and implement a new Canada housing benefit for the territory to provide affordability support to families and individuals in need of housing.

Mr. Speaker, I have touched on a lot of work this government has done to address the housing needs throughout the territory. I would like to take some time to help members opposite and Yukoners understand how this government prioritized housing needs and how the projects I have listed

are guided by the principles of the national housing strategy and the territorial housing action plan.

Canada's first-ever national housing strategy is a 10-year \$40-billion plan that sets to give more Canadians a place to call home. The success of this plan requires collaboration from many partners, including this government. The national housing strategy invests in provinces and territories so all regions can achieve better and more affordable housing. It invests in municipalities to empower communities to lead the fight against homelessness. It also creates new opportunities for the federal government to innovate through partnerships with the community housing sector, cooperative movement, private sector and research community, and fundamentally the federal government recognizes funding toward continuing the significant work to develop specific strategies with Yukon First Nations.

I wanted to touch briefly on the principles of the national housing strategy. There are three main principles in the strategy. They are people, communities and partnerships.

In the priority of people, every Canadian deserves a safe and affordable house. Housing investments must prioritize those most in need, including women and children fleeing family violence, seniors, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, those with mental health and addiction issues, veterans and young adults. Housing policy should be grounded in the principles of inclusion, participation, accountability and non-discrimination.

Under communities, housing programs should align with public investments in job creation, skills training, transit, early learning, health care and cultural and recreational infrastructure. Housing investments should support Canada's climate change agenda and commitment to accessible communities. Communities should be empowered to develop and implement local solutions to housing challenges.

Under the principle of partnerships, First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation housing strategies must be co-developed and founded in the values of self-determination, reconciliation, respect and cooperation. Good housing policy requires transparent and accountable partnership between the federal government, provinces, territories, municipalities, and social and private sectors and people with lived experience of housing need. The community housing sector must be prioritized, protected and grown.

When we look at the pillars of the national housing strategy, they include: that housing rights are human rights; federal re-engagement through the national housing co-investment fund; maintaining a resilient community housing sector; a new Canada housing benefit; progress through partnerships; enhanced support to provinces and territories; letting communities lead; evidence-based housing with research, data and demonstrations; and improving homeownership options for Canadians, including a gender-based analysis.

The national housing strategy and all of its connected pieces represent new and significant opportunities to support the implementation of Yukon's housing action plan and Safe at Home plan to prevent and end homelessness. Effective

implementation of our housing strategies will result in diverse and innovative housing solutions, economic growth in communities and vibrant, healthy communities where Yukon people can thrive.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the foundations of the Yukon housing action plan, I see the pillars that are in place, the housing continuum and the values and principles that guide decisions that this government makes when addressing housing in the territory. The first pillar of the territorial housing action plan is housing with services, with a goal to help people gain and maintain housing with services. Pillar 2 is rental housing, with a goal to increase adequate and affordable market and non-market rental housing and support for tenants and landlords. The third pillar is home ownership, with a goal to increase the diversity of home ownership options.

When we look at the continuum on the housing spectrum here in the territory, the Government of Yukon and its planning partners rely on the housing continuum to help frame and identify issues, challenges and potential solutions throughout the planning process.

The continuum consists of various housing options available to individuals and households at all income levels and life circumstances, ranging from emergency shelters for the temporarily homeless to home ownership. This includes emergency shelters, transitional housing, supportive housing, social housing, private-market rental and home ownership.

Finally, when I look at the values and principles laid out in the territorial housing action plan, we see values for people — diversity, dignity and compassion — wherever they are situated on the housing continuum. Housing is a key social determinant of individual wellness. Housing providers should tailor their approach to individual needs and circumstances, meeting people where they are at. There is no "us" and "them". Housing challenges and solutions belong to all of us.

Finally, the guiding principles must be adaptable and inclusive. Building on strengths and successes, they must be results-oriented and sensitive to local context.

Mr. Speaker, I bring forward the importance of the national housing strategy and the housing action plan for Yukon for several reasons. The first is to highlight the housing vision, guiding principles and objectives that are in place at both the national and territorial level — but more importantly, the decisions made by this government are guided by this established housing framework.

As I close, I would like to reiterate that housing is a complex and challenging issue. I am really proud of my colleague the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation and all of the work that she has done in collaboration with the many, many stakeholders and colleagues here in the Legislative Assembly to meet her commitment to address a multitude of housing issues throughout the territory. She has done an exemplary job to date. The recent signing of the bilateral agreement with the Government of Canada is an excellent example of our commitment to prioritize federal funding toward the creation of affordable housing.

The combined investments under the national housing strategy, which I mentioned, will see the construction and preservation of at least 543 existing community housing units in Yukon uphold our government's commitment to implement a community-based housing retrofit program to upgrade existing housing stock, improve energy efficiency and stimulate local Yukon business. In the past year alone, our government's investments toward Yukon Housing Corporation's programs are supporting development commitments of over 400 homes under programs such as: municipal matching rental construction grants; the housing initiatives fund; the affordable housing program; the First Nations partnership program; rental and secondary suite loans; home ownership loans; and other related programs.

Finally, this government is guided by both the national housing strategy and territorial housing action plan so that opportunities for funding can be fully leveraged and so that there is a clear road map in achieving the housing objectives this government has set out to achieve. I am very proud to be part of a team that has worked so diligently to uphold their commitment to Yukoners.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** I rise today to speak to Motion No. 410, as brought forward by the Member for Porter Creek Centre, which reads:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to invest in a broad range of housing initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I'm encouraged that this government is committed to investing in housing initiatives. However, the motion is rather broad. There isn't a person in this House today who would not endorse a continued investment in housing initiatives.

We have seen the wait-list for housing rise 150 percent in two years, and this is a major problem, with affordability being at the core of this problem. We are at the point where housing costs have been steadily increasing over a number of years with no indication of slowing down. With sale prices increasing, rent is increasing along with it. The two seem to go hand in hand.

Yukoners with a lower or even a middle income are finding it harder, if not impossible, to enter the market or afford any extras for their families after the rent is paid. This government has made some steps toward addressing the housing situation, but the steps they have made are just not enough. I'm sure the government, after the announcement of the housing project on Jeckell Street, was very pleased. However, I look forward to seeing how much of an impact this project has on the housing wait-lists, which continue to climb. The Housing First project is underway, and I applaud that initiative. This will house a certain segment of residents in Whitehorse.

I would also like to congratulate a number of private developers, First Nation development corporations, organizations and others that have shown some true initiative in tackling this crisis. We are seeing some real results outside the government, and it is wonderful to see. From the 42 units in Whistle Bend, the sixplex in Carmacks and the duplex in

Watson Lake, we continue to see initiatives drive forward outside of government, but more needs to be done. The previous government took housing initiatives seriously and continued to deliver. Needs were addressed throughout the years and wait-lists never rose to the levels we are seeing today. In fact, Yukon saw the completion of over 170 units over the course of the last mandate for social and senior housing. I see that as progress.

To be all things to all people is impossible, but creating basic housing opportunities for people is a good start. Increasing the number of units available to lower income residents helps to combat so many other issues we face as a society.

We found out today in our briefing by the Yukon Housing Corporation that the median rent for a one-bedroom unit in Whitehorse is \$950. That means for those low-income applicants to access the rent subsidy program, they must find a one-bedroom unit for under \$950 to be able to obtain a subsidy. Apparently this figure is tied to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, but I am not sure where such properties are located. If you look at the local listings, you would be hard-pressed to find anything under \$1,000 plus utilities — definitely out of reach.

We were also disappointed to see many decreases in the home ownership loan program under the Yukon Housing Corporation, because it appears that the funds have lapsed in previous years due to a lack of uptake, and applications are just not meeting the amount budgeted. Rather than spreading the word about these loan programs that are available to all Yukoners or perhaps broadening the criteria, the government chose to move those funds somewhere else. I hope we do not see further decreases in these programs, because they are truly a help to many families who are otherwise unable to enter the housing market.

On April 24, 2018, the minister had said she was working with the Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission on a new way of charging rents for staff housing and social housing. We were hoping that perhaps this would be the time to get an update on the progress and a consideration of those rent changes.

The opposition will be supporting this motion today because we do support housing initiatives. I look forward to hearing more details from this government on how they plan to process — which products they are going to produce and which partnerships they are looking at entering into to help us all address the housing crisis.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** It's with pleasure that I rise today to speak to the motion that's on the floor to continue discussion on the investment in a broad range of housing initiatives.

This government is committed to fostering happier, healthier lives for Yukoners. I am proud of the investments we have made toward housing over the course of our mandate to date. As the Premier noted in his budget speech, housing is one of the four main areas of emphasis in this year's budget. Our government is working hard to address these needs. We have almost completed construction of the 16-unit Housing

First residence in Whitehorse — the first of its kind in the Yukon. We have released 80 lots in Whistle Bend, including townhouses, multi-family and residential lots, with hundreds more to come this year. We completed a new sixplex in Ross River to house Yukon government employees so that we can provide critical services to that community. We funded the Challenge Disability Resource Group to help them buy land from the City of Whitehorse for their new mixed-use cornerstone housing project. We launched the housing initiative fund and received 20 submissions for innovative housing projects that will see 110 units of housing become available.

The Member for Porter Creek North noted progress and partnerships and wanted specific details. I would be happy to highlight those to date. With the launch of the budget for this year and last year, we have allocated another \$3.6 million to projects selected for this year under the housing initiative fund. We launched a new loan program to provide developers and housing providers with financing to build affordable housing in Yukon communities. We extended a municipal matching grant rental construction program in response to strong demand, helping support new rental homes in municipalities across the Yukon.

We provided funding for Blood Ties Four Directions to construct the Steve Cardiff Tiny House Community, which will house Blood Ties Four Directions' clients. We are engaging with stakeholders on a new approach to housing for Government of Yukon employees in communities. We are intensifying efforts to make residential lots available, allocating \$19 million to develop lots both in Whitehorse and rural communities in each of the next five years. We are releasing 240 lots in Whistle Bend subdivision in Whitehorse in the coming year that will include 19 multi-family lots. We are releasing an additional 20 new lots in various communities across the territory. Yukoners deserve a range of safe and affordable housing options. That is why this government is continuing to invest in a broad range of housing opportunities.

Last week, alongside Yukon's Member of Parliament, the Hon. Larry Bagnell, I announced a \$60-million fund of new housing money that will be allocated over the next 10 years. This funding represents a significant step toward building, renewing and expanding housing in Yukon. The Government of Yukon is investing \$18 million in this fund. The federal government is matching that with an additional \$18 million. The other \$24 million comes from Canada's National Housing Strategy. The National Housing Strategy is founded on the rights-based approach to housing.

Consistent with housing as a human right, we believe that increased affordability, quality and accessibility of housing will promote quality of life and the well-being of Yukon communities. The National Housing Strategy and all of its connected pieces represent new and significant opportunities to support the implementation of Yukon's housing action plan and the Safe at Home plan to prevent and end homelessness. We are committed to maximizing opportunities available through the National Housing Strategy by working with our partners to implement priorities as outlined in the housing

action plan, and we will continue to work with our First Nation indigenous partners on the National Housing Strategy for First Nation indigenous communities. Effective implementation of our housing strategies will result in diverse and innovative housing solutions, economic growth and vibrant, healthy communities where Yukoners can thrive.

Through partnership models and corporate stewardship, we will rebalance and renew housing stocks and programs throughout the Yukon. The National Housing Strategy sets out a target to increase rent-assisted housing stocks by 15 percent, along with renovations, 20 percent of existing social housing stock.

We are ready to work on these specific targets with Canada. Federal funding was previously an area of great uncertainty, but the National Housing Strategy and the working relationship with the federal government allow rent for Yukoners living in social housing to remain affordable and for opportunities to maintain and improve our housing stock.

We have taken a leadership role in housing as the chair of the provincial-territorial housing forum and as co-chair with Canada of the federal-territorial-provincial housing forum for the second year in a row. As we go into our second year of co-chairing the housing forum, we are supporting nation-to-nation, federal discussions with our Yukon First Nation partners to prioritize adequate funding to meet indigenous housing needs in Yukon.

We commit to advocating together with Yukon First Nations to ensure self-governing and non-self-governing First Nations are included in the federal indigenous housing strategy.

Starting on April 1, 2019, we will be accessing funding under the Canada Community Housing Initiative and the Yukon priority housing initiative. The funding will be cost-matched by the Government of Yukon. The Canada Community Housing Initiative is targeted funds used to protect, regenerate and expand social housing while reducing social housing wait-lists. We negotiated flexibility to ensure that the Yukon's priority housing initiative addresses our housing needs.

We are also accessing the Canada housing benefit funding stream. This funding will go toward housing affordability subsidies that will start in 2021. Our government is currently co-designing this program with the Government of Canada. We are negotiating flexibility in the Canada housing benefit to allow this program to be used to increase rent-assisted housing stock while also allowing individuals a choice when seeking affordable housing options.

In addition to funding that will flow directly to the Government of Yukon, a federally administered co-investment fund will provide loans and grants for the construction of affordable housing within an allocation of \$40 million set aside for Yukon projects. We will work closely with current and new partners to assist them in leveraging this fund.

We know that, from increasing social housing wait-lists, there are still affordable housing needs in the Yukon. These trends continue, and we will continue to look at our housing

units and rental supplement programs and enhance those as needed. We are using our guiding plans to work with our partners from all orders of government to address housing needs in each one of our communities. Together, we are partnering to address housing needs in Yukon. We are working in partnership on strategic housing investments that will help to create healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities.

We will continue our partnership with Yukon First Nations by extending the Yukon First Nation housing partnership program for one more year as work continues on the development of the indigenous national housing strategy. The Government of Yukon has committed \$1.5 million toward the First Nation housing partnership program. The First Nation housing program provides resources to First Nations to meet their specific housing needs. We are pleased to be able to offer this program for this fiscal year as well.

Under the First Nation housing partnership program, we reached agreements with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation for \$500,000 to retrofit 10 homes in Carcross. Under this agreement, we also reached an agreement with the Vuntut Gwitchin government on the construction of 10 utility buildings to house hot water tanks and electrical and mechanical utilities. We are providing the Selkirk First Nation with \$396,000 for mechanical and energy upgrades to eight housing units in Pelly Crossing. We also reached an agreement with Kwanlin Dün First Nation to provide \$500,000 for retrofits on 10 existing houses.

Our government has committed \$6 million over two years toward the Challenge cornerstone housing project in addition to expenditures to purchase land and for project development. This project will see 46 affordable and seven home ownership condos. The housing initiative fund is another way we are working to meet Yukon's demand for affordable housing.

Under the 2018 housing initiative fund, we have commitments for the construction of 110 new affordable housing units with 10 different partners. We look forward to additional affordable housing units being available from the 2019 housing initiative. The second intake just closed recently. For 2018, this fund received 20 submissions for innovative housing projects and approved 10 projects to proceed, including several communities and across the housing continuum. With that project, we saw a contribution of over \$26 million into the economy and into the housing continuum. Under this fund, we signed a transfer payment agreement to provide \$500,000 for the construction of 12 units in Whitehorse. This project includes two barrier-free units and one-bedroom and three-bedroom units that will increase the housing availability for families in low-income households.

We also signed an agreement with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation to build four units in Carcross. These two- and three-bedroom units will increase the number of homes available in Carcross for Carcross/Tagish First Nation citizens.

This fund allowed us to sign another agreement to build 18 units, including 10 affordable units with four barrier-free

units and eight market-rent units, and this project is located in Porter Creek.

In the community of Teslin, we signed an agreement with the Teslin Tlingit Council to build eight affordable units — two of which are special, accessible units.

For Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, we provided resources for 10 tiny homes. These will be rented at the low end of the market rent for single individuals and elders who need support in their homes. This project will also include construction training for First Nation citizens.

Pelly Crossing received funding under the housing initiative fund to build four units.

Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation received housing initiative funding to construct four units, three of which will be detached homes, with one mobile home.

We funded projects in Whitehorse through the housing initiative to create over 50 other affordable housing units.

Through the Yukon Housing Corporation's home ownership loan program, we provided over \$3 million in loans to help 11 households into affordable home ownership through the first mortgage and down payment assistance program.

Yukon Housing Corporation offers rent supplements, adding units to our stock and exploring options for partnership to assist those most vulnerable. The corporation has also steadily increased its rent supplement program, which now exceeds a budget of \$1.4 million, helping Yukoners in need into homes. In total, Yukon Housing Corporation assisted over 700 low-income households by providing safe and secure rent-geared-to-income rental housing in 14 Yukon communities.

We are continuing to work to meet the demand for affordable partnerships. We are doing this through partnerships with our private sector, other governments and non-governmental organizations.

Our 2018-19 investment toward housing programs and commitments to housing development supported over 400 homes through direct rent subsidies, repairs to rental units, building new rental housing, repairing homes, supporting homeownership and creating new supported housing units.

We are continuing that work into this year, creating affordable housing options through the housing initiative fund, the municipal matching rental construction program and First Nation housing partnerships.

That's not all we are doing. Last week, I announced that Yukon Housing Corporation will be starting work on the development of a multi-unit mixed-income housing project. This will be the first project of its kind in the Yukon. The location of this proposed development is at 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Jeckell Street in downtown Whitehorse. We have earmarked a total of \$18 million for this project, which includes planning, design and construction of the new building, beginning in the spring of 2020. This will mark our Liberal government's most significant investment in housing since taking office. The 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Jeckell Street site will be available to support up to 48 units, depending on the project design and layout. As part of the initiative, we will be fully engaging our housing

partners and stakeholders, the local neighbourhood and the City of Whitehorse to ensure this project addresses the needs of the communities.

We also recognize that stable, secure and affordable housing is a major challenge in the Yukon. It is not a problem that was created overnight. There is not a single strategy or a single project that will resolve this issue. Our government will continue to prioritize this issue and invest in a broad range of housing initiatives that will result in safe and affordable housing for all Yukoners.

**Ms. White:** Just in response to this motion and the suggestion that opposition could bring forward their ideas about housing, I have been talking about ideas about housing for just about eight years now.

The first question I have for government is: What is affordable? We have heard a lot of talk about social housing and what the Yukon government is doing for social housing. Again, I think that question of affordability needs to come around. What is affordable?

I just spent the last — I don't know — number of minutes on the Whitehorse property rentals page to see that "affordable" probably has a lot of different definitions. The Member for Porter Creek North said today in our briefing — we were told that the rent supplement money is tied into what is considered "median" rent as put forward by the Bureau of Statistics. Like I have said, every time I have talked about median rent in this House, I don't know very many places that would qualify for that amount.

When we talk about a broad range of housing initiatives, one thing I would like to talk about is co-housing and what that might look like. If you look at other jurisdictions, especially our European neighbours, there are a lot of co-housing options. Co-housing is the thought that each individual has private space, but then the common space can be shared. There are examples of co-housing where you almost have individual houses, but you have joint kitchens and joint recreation areas where there is the expectation that you participate in a community.

There is an example of co-housing out on the Mayo Road, and we know that there has been a group of people talking about wanting to do a co-housing initiative out in the Mount Lorne area. We can actually see that there's a condo building being built in downtown Whitehorse now that is trying to be based around the idea of community and what that would look like. So you're not only buying your unit, but you're buying into the prospect of community.

Tonight at 7:00 p.m. — in case anyone doesn't have their social agenda filled — the Vimy Heritage Housing Society has their annual general meeting. The interesting thing about Vimy is that they are not looking for \$25 million from government to build the facility. What they're looking for is the loan security. Vimy isn't social housing, but it's a model that would pay its own way once it got up and running. Tenants would be paying market value, so it wouldn't be subsidized for an apartment. Then they could choose the optional needs, whether meals, house cleaning or support.

We have talked a lot about small homes or garden suites, but what we haven't talked about is tiny houses. There was a report that was released in October 2016 called *Tiny Houses in Canada's Regulatory Context: Issues and Recommendations*, which I've brought up with the Minister of Community Services. The reason I brought it up is that there was a commitment by both the territorial and the municipal governments that we would tackle the issue of tiny houses. It's non-traditional housing, so even smaller than the 230 square feet that we see for the Blood Ties Four Directions tiny home community — they're even smaller than that. Some of the issues with tiny houses are that they're not necessarily designed to be plumbed in. They are independent and self-contained. If we want to talk about a broad range of housing initiatives, why don't we look at something like tiny houses?

One of the issues that I brought forward an awful lot is around mobile homes. I talk about the security of folks who are currently in mobile homes, but if we want to talk about housing initiatives, we have a condo corporation off of Range Road that was created by the Yukon Housing Corporation — Condo Corp. No. 69. We have mobile homes on city land in areas like Arkell. So if we want to talk about housing initiatives and an accessible way to enter the housing market, it's probably not with new builds in areas like Whistle Bend. If we're talking about affordability — I mean, what is affordable? Would a lot be considered affordable? I don't know the answer; I'm asking the question.

When we talk about different initiatives for housing, what we hear a lot of is the re-announcement of money that is being put forward. So we talked about up to 48 units on the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Jeckell, but what was highlighted by my colleague yesterday is that in the downtown area it would be nice to have that discussion. We're talking about mixed housing there, and my hope is that we look at intergenerational housing there. I've brought it up with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, but rural lot development has a minimum specified house size that can be built on it. I was contacted by a person who said, "I don't want to build a 600-square-foot house. I'm a solo person and I'm retiring, and I want it to be something that I can maintain; I want it to be energy efficient and I want to have the smallest footprint I can have while still being comfortable. 600 square feet is too big for me, and I've bought this lot and I'm being told the only thing I can build is 600 square feet."

If we talk about the environmental cost of that house compared to something smaller, this is a person who is trying to make the right choice. Maybe we need to look at our standards; maybe we need to be able to make sure that someone could build an alternative-style house.

I say all the time that had something smaller than my Takhini duplex been available in 2012 when I purchased, I would have bought something smaller. I don't need a four-bedroom house. I don't need a four-bedroom house, and in my ideal world, it certainly wouldn't be three floors; it would be substantially smaller.

Some of the things that bear talking about when we talk about a broad range of housing initiatives isn't so much of just

what government does through the Yukon Housing Corporation, but what government can do by land availability, what we can do by building codes, what we can do by — not necessarily grants, but loan programs.

It has been said on a regular basis that the repair grant program that was offered through Yukon Housing Corporation was just a loss of money, where people would have been happy to borrow the money and reinvest and it could have been reinvested in the process.

I appreciate that we are again talking about what Yukon government can do, but we are not really talking about what is affordable for someone who is not within Yukon Housing Corporation because we are not about social housing all the time — I hope not, anyway — and that we can talk about how someone who moves back to the territory can afford to be here, even with two jobs, because we have been told that this is the place to move back to. Like I said, looking through the Whitehorse property rentals was bleak. It was bleak — so much so that we have had a journalist writing articles for things like *Vice* talking about how this is a hard place to live, right? You know, people are being forced into house-shares. I don't think that's a bad thing, but it's certainly not co-housing. It's not everybody with their own individual personal space that can come together; it's individual bedrooms in houses.

So I think one of the things that I would love to hear answered at one point in time by government is: What is affordable? What does that mean? Are we talking about the CMHC definition of affordable, which is 30 percent of what you earn, or is there a new number — a new definition of affordable? When we talk about affordable lots, what does that mean? You know, I always have this question: At what point in time did the Yukon government stop selling lots for the cost of development, but started selling them at market value? I don't know the answer to that, but I have been trying to figure that out, because it's not the cost of development that they get sold for; it's market value. It's market value; it's what real estate agents would say it was worth, so that's a question I have.

One of the things I would like to start seeing us talk about is “affordable” and “affordability” and what that means.

I appreciate that we've heard about the initiatives through the Yukon Housing Corporation that we've heard about in budget addresses and that I am likely to hear in Yukon housing budget debates, but what I would really like to hear from government is how they see that housing can be different. What does the member think about co-housing? Is this something we could do?

Something that my friends and I talk about is aging. I am a lady in my 40s with no children. My dogs are not going to be very good caregivers, and I am going to outlive them. What does that mean for me? It means that I can start looking at alternatives. What about co-housing? What about building a place where I can age with my friends? That sounds pretty great. We've referred to it as a commune, but that would be something entirely different. So those are some of the things.

It'll be super fascinating — it would be great to see other members tonight out at the Vimy Heritage Housing Society. I

was thinking about the answer yesterday during Question Period. The answer is that Yukon government hooked Vimy Heritage Housing Society up with a lot in Whistle Bend, and I don't know why that wasn't known yesterday. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources made that announcement last year at the AGM where I was, so I heard that.

I think what we have with the folks from Vimy Heritage Housing Society is they are trying to find ways that they can age creatively — in a shared space, stairs aren't going to be so helpful. They are looking at tackling all those things, and they don't want government to pay for the building. They need government to bridge the loan until it opens and people start paying the rent so they will be able to take over that loan. It will be interesting.

I see the Minister for Energy, Mines and Resources is kind of making head motions, so I will look forward to seeing him there and having him tell them what is going on.

I do think that we want to talk about housing initiatives. What about purchasing mobile home parks and turning them into condo corporations? What about long-term loans so that the loan amount — the land amount — is attached to the mobile home so when it sells, that carries on? Maybe the \$375 — or let's be honest, the \$450 or the \$550 that people pay in pad rent — half of that could go toward loan repayment and half of that could go to condo fees.

I think there are opportunities. I don't think that they all have to fit within social housing. I don't think that they have to all fit in the half-million dollar stand-alone Whitehorse home. I think there are lots of options out there, and not everyone wants to live in a big house. Lots of people want to live in a house that they can walk away from. Why do we have the minimum standard of 600 square feet if someone wants to live in something smaller?

Those are my questions. I look forward to hearing about affordability and what the definition is that the member across uses as “affordable.” More than that, I look forward to a spectrum of housing that maybe doesn't look like what we have right now, but looks safe and secure and includes choices that people want. With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the end of the debate.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard on debate in relation to Motion No. 410?

**Mr. Gallina:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am encouraged to hear comments made by opposition members. My intent for the conversation that we are having today was to look at where we were, how we're guided by principles, objectives and priorities that see this government making decisions and investments in housing across the spectrum. I touched on that a fair bit, and so did the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation.

We both touched on the significant investments that this government has made and the opportunities to leverage

programs and federal funds and initiatives to address a need that's evident here in the territory.

I am encouraged by the contributions made by the Member for Porter Creek North. She touched on a number of aspects. I would disagree, in some cases, with the lack of success that we've had. I believe that we are seeing success and that this government is continuing to make investments to address wait-lists and to address all aspects of the housing spectrum. The member raises good points about seeing success outside of government and that those projects should be applauded. Those private projects should be applauded, and I am glad that she brought those forward.

The thought of broadening the criteria of the home ownership program is duly noted. I think that seeing a decrease in home ownership programs should be looked at. Does the program need to be broadened or redefined? I appreciate the comments made that dollars have been redirected to other programs, but good points made that maybe the scope of the program should be broadened.

To the Member for Takhini-Kopper King — she raised some good points and some interesting points, some of which I have considered and some of which I haven't. There are a number of considerations that need to be looked at — municipality and bylaw considerations when we look at the amount of square feet per home. I think that's a consideration. As I understand it, discussions are ongoing. I know the Minister of Community Services approached me to talk about some of the discussions that are ongoing.

Co-housing as an option, with buying into a house and a community — I think, for a number of members here, aging with friends — I find that appealing. In many ways, the houses we live in now and the communities we live in now, we do have that opportunity to spend our time with our friends and, as we grow older, to be able to continue that. That's an important aspect.

Tiny houses, alternative housing — these are opportunities that I know conversations have begun to take place with a number of departments and ministers. These are areas that I think require more exploration — and how do they fit into the housing framework nationally and territorially? I think they're good ideas, but I think we want to benchmark them and benchmark ideas against frameworks that are in place so that if we are considering them, there are proper measures and objectivity in place so that we can ensure that programs are serving Yukoners to the best of their ability.

When we look at addressing problems across the spectrum, I do want to make note — as the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation had made — that partnerships are critical to addressing the housing program. I will reiterate that — partnerships are critical to addressing housing challenges that we face here in the territory — partnerships with our federal counterparts, partnerships with our First Nation counterparts, with self-governing and non-self-governing Yukon First Nations, working in partnership with our municipalities, working in partnership with stakeholders throughout the territory —

whether it is NGO stakeholders or private sector stakeholders — as was alluded to earlier today in debate.

The Yukon government isn't going to solve this problem in silo. It is going to solve the problem in partnership. The minister touched on that briefly, and I think it is important to note.

To the Member for Takhini-Kopper King — just on the definition of “affordability”, and then I will look to close my comments. We know that affordability looks different for each individual, depending on personal circumstances and the type of housing that they need. If we were to define “affordability”, the generally accepted definition of “affordable housing” is housing rental or home ownership that costs no more than 30 percent of your gross household income. This is the definition used in the housing action plan for Yukon and our recently signed bilateral agreement with Canada.

This is different from the provision of social housing, which is a government housing program where tenants — in the case of Yukon Housing Corporation's rent geared to income program — are expected to pay 25 percent of their income as rent.

Emergency shelter, transitional or permanent supportive housing are typically provided at very little or no cost to an individual and require very deep subsidies to operate.

We support the National Housing Strategy's vision where Canadians have housing that meets their needs and that they can afford. The vision recognizes the complexity of housing as it speaks to both affordability and need.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I am proud of the housing investments that we have made over the course of our mandate. Construction is almost complete on a 16-unit Housing First residence in Whitehorse — the first of its kind in Yukon. We have released many lots in Whistle Bend. We've completed a new sixplex in Ross River to house Yukon government employees. We funded the Challenge Disability Resource Group to help them buy land from the City of Whitehorse for the new mix-used cornerstone housing project. We've launched housing initiative funds and received 20 submissions for innovative housing projects that will see 110 units of housing come available.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged by the debate that we've had this afternoon. With that, I look to all members of this House supporting this motion.

**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. Silver:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Agree.

**Mr. Gallina:** Agree.

**Mr. Adel:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Agree.

**Mr. Hutton:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** D'accord.

**Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Agree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Ms. Hanson:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yea, nil nay.

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

*Motion No. 410 agreed to*

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

*Motion agreed to*

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

*The House adjourned at 5:25 p.m.*